

CHAPTER II

LITTLE SISTER

This is my story, as I said, and the telling of it must be in my own way. That is why I am giving this chapter first — because it happened first — four years before the real story began. Another reason is that in the telling of it I can set forth the characters of the old general, my grandsire, who believed in fighting; of my Aunt Lucretia, his daughter, who believed in pedigrees; of Eloise, the beautiful and daring one, who believed in dancing and riding and shooting, and in making those who loved her miserable; of Colonel Goff, an Englishman, who believed in horses and hounds; and of Little Sister, who believed in Uncle Jack; and even of myself, Uncle Jack, who believed in trees.

Little Sister is the three-year-old daughter of my brother Ned Ballington, who, with his lovely wife, Thesis, and his major domo, Uncle Wash (a colored gentleman of the Old School), and his other live things and birds, resides on the farm adjoining ours.

But Little Sister, whose real name is Mildred,