

LETTERS TO PATTY

But I could never wear my cream frock with the black satin loops and the bustle again; to this day I have never heard Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand sung in church, and I never shall now.

Do you remember what pious children we were just then? Somebody had given you a little book bound in grass-green cloth, with silver lilies of the valley and black leaves upon it. Nellie, the heroine, was in the habit of asking herself in moments of doubt, "What would Jesus do?"

Now you and I were far too shy to say this outright, so our favourite formula was, "What would 'J' do?" We even went so far as to laboriously print it out and pin it over our beds. (Can't you see the dingy little half sheets of silurian paper, the faint, crooked letters, one here and there very black, after the desperate sucking of the pencil? And how the pins did bend and twirl helplessly round, as one tried to stick them into a hard wall!)

Ruthlessly Clémentine tore down the half-sheets. She had no idea what "J" was, but soon learned that "J" had most unfortunate results. So anxious were Patty and Baby to be unselfish like "J," that each insisted on the other always having the "muffin" off the loaf, or something equally desirable; and their firm mutual unself-