

LETTERS TO PATTY

at Micky to try to make him laugh, immediately assuming a serious and very intelligent look as the Sergeant turned; Rose, Netty and Jimmy were there, and Wishy-Washy-Pale-Tea, earnestly sucking a strand of her brown hair, till the Sergeant glared, and hastily she let it fall. And presently we were all marking time as loudly as the cocoanut matting would permit, and led by that alert squirrel-haired Philip, marching round the nursery, shouting "The Men of Harlech" at the top of our voices. (Desmond behind me just like a bee in a bottle, and treading on my heels too.) Our cheeks were flushed, our ears burned, and with the singing and the marching came an excited exhilaration that lasted all the evening; through milk, and biscuits of animals' heads and letters of the alphabet, through the buttoning on of boots, quarrelling for the button-hook and losing the paper the shoes were wrapped in, and through the being smothered in knitted jackets that made the sleeves of one's coat too tight, and on into the sharp, still winter night. Overhead glittered a myriad stars, underfoot broke the frail ice that reached from rut to rut, and the voices of the little Housemans came ringing through the darkness.

"Good-bye! Good-bye! Good-bye!"