

hearts. But neither have I any intention of being a stepmother. I want to be your friend and helper and *chum*. Don't you think that would be nice, Una—if you and Faith and Carl and Jerry could just think of me as a good jolly chum—a big older sister?"

"Oh, it would be lovely," cried Una, with a transfigured face. She flung her arms impulsively round Rosemary's neck. She was so happy that she felt as if she could fly on wings.

"Do the others—do Faith and the boys have the same idea you had about stepmothers?"

"No. Faith never believed Mary Vance. I was dreadfully foolish to believe her, either. Faith loves you already—she has loved you ever since poor Adam was eaten. And Jerry and Carl will think it is jolly. Oh, Miss West, when you come to live with us, will you—could you—teach me to cook—a little—and sew—and—and—and do things? I don't know anything. I won't be much trouble—I'll try to learn fast."

"Darling, I'll teach you and help you all I can. Now, you won't say a word to anybody about this, will you—not even to Faith, until your father himself tells you you may? And you'll stay and have tea with me?"

"Oh, thank you—but—but—I think I'd rather go right back and take the letter to father," faltered Una. "You see, he'll be glad that much *sooner*, Miss West."

"I see," said Rosemary. She went to the house, wrote a note and gave it to Una. When that small damsel had run off, a palpitating bundle of happiness,