

Winnie came as promptly as she could with the three-year old twins clinging to her. She scrambled through the hole in the board fence—it was just the size for a nine-year-old to scramble through conveniently—into the Everett back yard. The Everett back yard was ever so much nicer than the Martin back yard. The latter was strewn with broken bottles and old cans and almost every other kind of rubbish you could imagine. But the Everett back yard, small as it was, was as neat as wax. A row of current bushes ran all round it. Half of it was made up into a big flower bed, which was very bare as yet, but would blossom out into something wonderful later on. The other half was nice green grass where Marjorie could play ball and run with her kitten and have her dolls' playhouse. Whenever the two little girls wanted a talk, it was in the Everett yard they had it.

Marjorie Everett and Winnie Martin were 'p'ticular friends' and had been so, Marjorie would have told you, for 'ever and ever so long'—in short, ever since three months ago when the Martins had moved into the other end of the double tenement where the Everetts lived. Marjorie and Winnie had scraped an acquaintance through the hole in the board fence the very day of moving.

Marjorie's father and Winnie's father worked in the same big factory down town. But there is a difference in fathers, you know. Marjorie could never quite understand why Winnie seemed so frightened by hers, but she knew that Mr. Martin often came home, walking in, oh, such a queer way, and talking very loud and angrily. She was very glad her father never came home like that. Marjorie was not quite sure, but she thought that Mr. Martin's queer way of walking had something to do with the fact that Winnie never had any nice clothes. But Winnie never said anything about it, and Marjorie would not have mentioned it to her for worlds.

'What is it?' said Winnie. She looked very tired and pale. 'I can't stay long. Mother is busy and I have to watch the baby.

Goodness, Marjorie Everett, how your eyes are shining! You look as if something awful nice had happened.'

'Well, I just should think something nice has,' answered Marjorie jumping up and down. 'Papa told mamma and me to-day that he would take us out to the country to-morrow morning to stay over Sunday at Apple Grove Farm. That's where Grandma Everett lives. Oh, but I'm glad!'

'I s'pose Apple Grove Farm is a nice place,' said Winnie wistfully.

'It's the very nicest place in the world,' said Marjorie. 'I was there twice last summer, and oh, such a good time as I had! It is apple blossom time now, and the orchards will just be white, acres and acres of them. Think of it, Winnie! And great big fields, ten times as big as this yard, to run in. And a lovely big garden full of flowers. My Cousin Della is just as nice as she can be, too. And on Sunday we'll drive to the loveliest old church on a hill among beech trees. It just makes me feel real good to go there to church. Oh, it seems as if I could hardly wait until to-morrow!'

'I never saw the country in my whole life,' said Winnie, with big tears coming into her eyes. She could not help it. She did not envy Marjorie her outing but how she wished she could go too.

'Why—Win—nie Mar—tin!' said Marjorie in surprise.

'No, really I haven't. Once father said he'd take us all out, but he—he didn't. And—I don't s'pose I'll ever get there.'

With this Winnie laid hold on the twins and fairly ran. She must get away by herself and have a little cry, there was just no other way out of it.

Marjorie went slowly back into the house, found her mother and told her the whole story.

'Can't we take Winnie with us, mamma,' she begged.

Mrs. Everett smoothed the little maiden's tumbled curls and answered soberly:

(To be continued.)

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The Pencil-Tree.

Song of the Mother Whose Children
Are Fond of Drawing.

Oh, could I find the forest
Where the pencil-trees grow!
Oh! might I see their stately
stems
All standing in a row!
I'd hie me to their grateful shade,
In deep, in deepest bliss,
For then I need not hourly hear
A chorus such as this:—

Oh! lend me a pencil, please,
Mamma!
Oh! draw me some houses and
trees, Mamma!
Oh! make me a floppy
Great poppy to copy,
And a horsey that prances and gees,
Mamma!

The branches of the pencil-tree
Are pointed every one
Ay! each one has a glancing
point
That glitters in the sun;
The leaves are leaves of paper
white,
All fluttering in the breeze.
Ah! could I pluck one rustling
bough,
I'd silence cries like these:—

Oh! lend me a pencil, do, Mamma!
I've got mine all stuck in the glue,
Mamma!
Oh! make me a pretty
Big barn and a city
And a cow and a steam-engine too,
Mamma!

The fruit upon the pencil-tree
Hangs ripening in the sun,
In clusters bright of pocket-
knives—
Three blades to every one.
Ah! might I pluck one shining
fruit,
And plant it by my door,
The pleading cries, the longing
sighs,
Would trouble me no more:—

Oh! sharpen a pencil for me,
Mamma!
'Cause Johnny and Baby have three!
Mamma!
And this isn't fine!
And Hal sat down on mine!
So do it bee-yu-ti-ful-lee, Mamma,
—The 'Youth's Companion.'