

long ago had grown above the key-hole. October frosts seemed to have spared some of the brightest leaves for this especial occasion; and on Saturday the arched gate-way was hung with gay wreaths, red and yellow sprays strewed the flags, and the porch was a blaze of color with the red woodbine, that was in its glory when the honeysuckle was leafless.

Fortunately it was a half-holiday, so the children could trim and chatter to their heart's content, and the little girls ran about sticking funny decorations where no one would ever think of looking for them. Ben was absorbed in his flags, which were sprinkled all down the avenue with a lavish display, suggesting several Fourth of Julys rolled into one. Mr. Brown had come to lend a hand, and did so most energetically, for the break-neck things he did with his son during the decoration fever would have terrified Mrs. Moss out of her wits, if she had not been in the house giving last touches to every room, while Randa and Katy set forth a sumptuous tea.

All was going well, and the train would be due in an hour, when luckless Bab nearly turned the rejoicing into mourning, the feast into ashes. She heard her mother say to Randa, "There ought to be a fire in every room, it looks so cheerful, and the air is chilly spite of the sunshine;" and, never waiting to hear the reply that some of the long-unused chimneys were not safe till cleaned, off went Bab with an apron full of old shingles, and made a roaring blaze in the front room fire-place, which was of all others the one to be let alone, as the flue was out of order. Charmed with the brilliant light and the crackle of the tindery fuel, Miss Bab re-