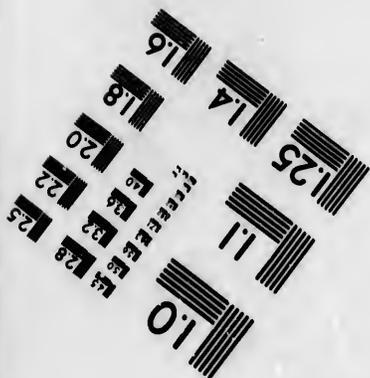
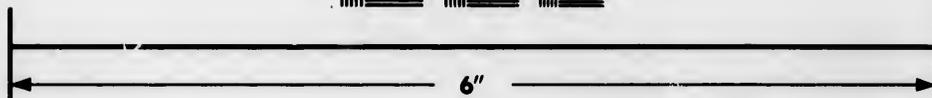
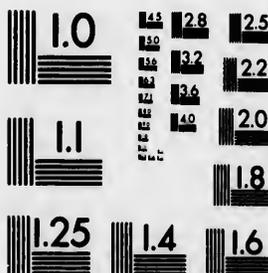


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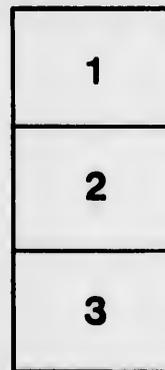
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“The Boat Drifts Away.”

See p. 113.

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ELEA

Meadowhurst Children

And Other Tales.



BY
ELEANOR LESUEUR MAC NAUGHTON.



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1898.

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MEADOWHURST CHILDREN

—AND—
OTHER TALES.



CONTENTS.

	<i>Page.</i>
Our Play - - - - -	1
Our Picnic - - - - -	6
Our Bazaar - - - - -	17
Our Surprise - - - - -	28
Our Wedding - - - - -	43
Our Heroine - - - (PART FIRST).	57
Our Heroine - - - (PART SECOND).	68
Our Birthday - - - - -	77
Our Summer Visitors - - - - -	91
The Children's Rock - - (PART FIRST).	104
The Children's Rock - - (PART SECOND.)	114
FOR VERY LITTLE ONES.	
Moonbeam and Topsy - - - - -	125
Where They Found The Kittens - - - - -	133
A Snow Story - - - - -	141
King Bruce On the Barn - - - - -	146
A Very Kind Cat - - - - -	149



PREFACE.

In view of the abundant provision apparently made for the literary needs of the little ones of today, the statement that there is a real lack of suitable stories for children may, to many, seem surprising; yet I believe that those to whom a constant supply of stories of the right kind is a necessity will not dispute its correctness.

The ideal child's story should, I have thought, be couched in such language as to make the constant interpretation of elders unnecessary; it should be lively and interesting, yet free from sensationalism or wildly improbable incidents; it should help to kind and noble living without being oppressively "goody goody," or the vehicle of narrow sectarian teaching. Furthermore, it should not be filled with the remarks and reflections of grown people, but should truly mirror the life of children, not depicting them as being the suns and centres of existence, but as happily occupying the natural position of loving dependence on and submission to their elders. It should not glorify mischief, present morbid conditions

Preface.

of mind, or contain anything terrifying to the childish imagination, or harrowing to childish feeling.

The difficulty of finding, in sufficient numbers, stories fulfilling the above requirements, led to my writing those which I now offer to the public. That I have fallen short of my ideal I am deeply conscious, yet I hope they may be found to contain some of the virtues positive and negative above indicated, and thus make good their *raison d'être*. I venture to hope also, that constant association with children during a fairly long life, has given me a knowledge of their needs and likings that will make my work find favor with them. If it shall prove that I have really added something to the innocent happiness of the little ones into whose hands my book may fall, then indeed I shall feel that my labor has not been in vain.



MEADOWHURST CHILDREN AND OTHER TALES.

OUR PLAY.

It was "The Babes in the Wood," and Peggy Brown and I got it up because we wanted to earn money to buy Annie Dermot a present. She is nurse's sister, and was run over on the street two months ago and hurt so badly that she has had to lie on her back ever since, and Dr. Grant says it will be a long, long time before she is able to walk even with a crutch.

We had the play in Peggy's back yard, because there are trees there, and we had to have a forest, and besides that we had to have ruffians, and Peggy has two big brothers. I don't mean that they are ruffians—they are very kind boys—but they were able to lend us clothes to dress up in, and they showed us how to blacken our faces with burnt cork. I have a brother, too, but he is small, so small that he wears frocks and sashes. We thought he would do for one of the babes, so we tried him one day,

but when Peggy and I began to fight (we were the ruffians) he got frightened and cried so hard that nurse came and took him in. And that night he waked up crying and saying that there were "bad mans in de yard," so mother wouldn't lend him to us any more. It was a great pity, for it was very hard to get a boy babe. Little boys don't like to act anyway, and they hate being babes; so at last we had to get Larry Milligan, the milk-woman's little boy, and he isn't the least bit pretty. He has red hair and grey eyes and freckles, but he was very quick at acting, and did just what we told him, and in one way he made a very good babe, because his face was "all besmeared and dyed," though not with blackberries, but really molasses did just as well.

Christabel Clarke was the girl babe and I just wish you could have seen her. She is the sweetest little pet, with shining brown curls, big brown eyes and the cunningest dimples. But we couldn't get her to wear a dark dress and a pinafore like little Jane in the picture. She said: "Me mus' wear me's bess d'ess to party." So we had to let her, but her pretty embroidered frock and red silk sash made her look so different from Larry in his raggety sailor suit. Peggy said the people would just

have to think that the wicked uncle liked her better than the boy babe.

Our greatest trouble was about robins. When first we thought of having the play, we meant to catch some of the robins that come for crumbs every morning, and teach them to cover the babes with leaves, but you never saw such disobliging birds. Though we had fed them and petted them all summer they wouldn't let us touch them, so we had to give that up. Then I tried to teach my pigeons to act, but I do think that pigeons are just the very silliest things in the world. They would eat all the peas we chose to scatter in the yard, but as for even looking at the babes or the dry leaves, they would not think of it. And when Peggy and I were nearly crying, they would put their heads on one side and seem to be saying: "What's the matter now?" So we gave up trying to teach them, and decided to have the end of our play a tableau. So after the ruffians fought and one was killed, the curtain fell, and when it rose showed the poor babes lying all covered up with leaves; and just to show that there had been robins, Peggy stood her stuffed parrot with his mouth full of leaves beside little Christa's head. And he really looked a good deal like a robin because she painted his back brown and his breast red.

In the story the ruffians drive to the wood with the babes, but we only had Fred Archer's express cart, and it would'nt quite hold Larry and Christa. Their legs were hanging over the sides, which, perhaps, looked a little funny, for when Peggy and I came driving them through the trees, everyone laughed and shouted and clapped their hands.

I think that Peggy and I made pretty good ruffians. She wore a pair of muddy football trousers, a black peajacket and a very large straw hat, and I wore long black trousers, an old brown cape coat, and a beaver hat with a broken crown. We both had our faces blackened, and Peggy wore a red wig, and we had pieces of wood for swords. We had a splendid fight, and the boys who came to our play liked it the best of all. Peggy and I had practiced it ten times, and still we were nearly frightened of each other, we made such fierce faces; and when at last I fell down and pretended to be dead, and the curtain fell, the clapping must have been heard in the next street.

We charged people five cents to come to our show, and Fred Archer stood at the gate and took the money, and when we counted it afterwards there was \$1.80; and next morning we all went down town to buy the present. It took us a long time to choose it, because every-

one wanted a different thing. Christa always wants to buy dolls, and Larry thought all the money ought to be spent for molasses candy. He said that was what he would like if he were ill. Fred wanted to get a bird, but we hadn't money enough, and though Peggy and I both liked a shawl, she wanted pink and I wanted blue, and we were all beginning to get cross when we saw just the loveliest china bowl in a shop window. It pleased us all, for it was pink and blue and had a bird on one side and a dear little dolly face on the other, and it only cost \$1.65, so there was money enough left to fill it with molasses candy and to buy a pea-shooter. It was Larry who would buy the pea-shooter, and after all Annie liked it very much, for when we took her the present she laughed most at it, though she said the bowl was lovely and would make her broth taste twice as good as when she had it in a tin cup.

OUR PICNIC.

We had our picnic just two weeks after our play, but it was not nearly so nice. Peggy Brown and I were out of friends for more than an hour afterwards, and we didn't speak to Fred Archer for two whole days. Peggy and I got our dresses spoiled and Fred's hat blew away, but we felt worst about Christa, for she ate too much candy and was sick all night. Mrs. Clarke was very kind about it and said she was sure that Peggy and I had tried to take care of her, but her old nurse was very angry and when we went to ask how she was, scolded us till we both cried. She said: "Sure and 'twill be a month of Sundays before ever I let the blessed darlint go wid yez again." It was a great comfort that nothing happened to Larry, but perhaps that was because nothing can happen to him. His cloth polo cap fits so tightly over his red curls that it can't blow away, and his sailor suit is too strong to tear and too old to get spoiled. He never wears boots or stockings, except to church, so he never gets his feet wet or takes cold, and nothing that he eats ever makes him

sick. I think that Larry is a very happy boy.

Mother says that perhaps one reason why the picnic was not so nice as the play, was that when we had the play we were thinking of pleasing some one else, while at the picnic we only wanted to please ourselves, and, perhaps, that was some of the reason; but I do think that if Fred had not wanted to go up the pine tree hill there would not have been any trouble. Fred says the trouble would never have begun if Larry hadn't brought that jug; but I think the best way will be to begin at the beginning. Peggy and I always like to have our picnics on the beach. There are such lovely shady places there among the trees at the foot of the cliff, and there are big flat stones that do for tables, and clam shells to use for plates and dishes, and a stream of clear, cold water. And all summer you can get berries of some kind on the beach; the blackberries and choke-cherries were ripe the week of our picnic.

But we couldn't get Fred to go to the beach this time. He said that it was too stupid to go always to the same place, that he meant to be an explorer when he was a man, and the best way to begin was to look for new places while he was a boy. We didn't know what explorers were, but Fred said they were men that went about discovering new countries. He said

they found kings and queens and dwarfs and giants and jungles, and icebergs and gorillas, and told us such lovely stories about them that Peggy and I agreed to begin to explore at once; and we asked Fred where he would like to go, and he said we might begin with the pine tree hill. The pine tree hill is a high ridge running behind the houses on the village street. Right on top of the ridge there are seven beautiful pine trees and the top of the middle one is the shape of a star. None of us had ever climbed the hill, but the pine trees looked so lovely standing against the sky that Peggy and I often longed to go up. So we agreed to have our picnic up there if our mothers would let us, and we fell asleep that night thinking what fun it would be to explore.

Mrs. Brown and mother said that they thought we would not like the pine tree hill as well as the beach, and that the climb would tire us very much, especially Christa, whom we had promised to take with us, but since we wished it so very much and as Fred was so kind and careful they would let us go. And mother said that as Larry had been so good-natured in helping with the play, we might ask him, too; "But Olive," she said, "it may not be very convenient for his mother, who is so busy, to put him up lunch, and as you and Peggy are sure to have plenty,

tell him he need not bring anything, and perhaps it will be nicer to tell Fred that too. If the boys carry the baskets and take care of you and Peggy, and dear little Christa, that will be enough for them." When we told this to Fred and Larry, Fred said that even though Peggy and I brought lunch he would like to bring some fruit and candy. Gentlemen at picnics often brought little things like that, he said, and Larry said he would like to bring some little thing, too.

We agreed to meet at Fred's house, because it is the nearest to the hill, and at two o'clock we were all there. Peggy and I had each our baskets, but neither of us knew what the other had brought, because we wanted to be surprised. Fred's pockets were all bulging out and Christa had a box of chocolate creams. Larry had a big brown paper parcel, but he wouldn't tell what was in it. It looked like a jug, and we thought perhaps Mrs. Milligan had sent some milk.

I think we looked very nice when we set out. Fred walked in front, carrying both baskets, and Peggy and I, with Christa between us, came next, and then Larry with his parcel. Fred wore his new striped sailor suit, Peggy and I our red frocks and clean white pinafores, and

Christa was dressed in white. Larry had washed his face and hands very clean.

There is no road to go up the pine-tree hill, only in one or two places a narrow footpath. The best one is behind old Miss Primmer's house, and to get to it we had to pass through her yard. Peggy and I went to her front door first and asked very politely, telling her we wanted to go up and explore, and she said we might go for once, but there was nothing that she hated more than a pack of children tramping through her place, and she wondered at our folks letting us go off on such a wild-goose chase. This made us feel very uncomfortable, and we hurried out on to the hill as fast as we could. "What did she mean, Olive?" said Peggy, when we had walked a little way up the hill, "We never even knew that there were any wild geese on the hill, and if there are I am sure that we won't chase them." "No, indeed!" said I; "for I am frightened of tame geese; they have such long necks and angry faces, and father says that when he was a little boy a goose chased him and bit his leg so hard that there was a big bruise on it for more than a week." "Oh, Olive," said Peggy, "you are frightening Christa. She is nearly crying."

"Don't cry, Christa," said Larry. "I have my pea-shooter, and if we meet any geese you'll

soon see them fly. Look here," and Larry put down his parcel, took his pea-shooter out of his pocket and sent off such a shower of peas as might have frightened a whole flock of geese. But the tears were still in Christa's eyes as she said, "Me is 'fraid of de wild dooses," and I think she would really have cried if a dear little red squirrel had not been met at that moment running right across our path. It had a nut in its mouth, and Fred said he likely got it off the hazel trees on top of the hill; and then he told us some funny stories about squirrels, and we all laughed, and Christa forgot about the geese. By this time we had walked a long way up the hill and were all beginning to feel hot and tired. Larry said he thought the pine trees must be walking, too, for they looked just as far away as ever. "Don't be a go—" "Hush, Fred," said Peggy. "A silly, I mean," said Fred; "I don't think you need be tired; you are not carrying two baskets."

"Let me help you, Fred," said Peggy.

"No, the boys must carry the baskets," said Fred, "but Larry might take one and you and Olive take turns in carrying his parcel."

We did this, but Larry's parcel was very hard to carry, and though we walked and walked we hardly seemed to get any nearer the top of the hill. We had rested once or twice for Christa,

but now she sat down and said, "I can't do any furzer." Fred gave me his basket and tried to carry her, but she was too fat, and after a few steps he had to put her down.

"We are all tired, Fred," said Peggy, "and I think we had better not go any further. We have been out a long time, and our mothers will be anxious if we are late getting home."

"What do you want us to do?" said Fred rather crossly.

"Supposing we have a picnic here," said I. "Over there amongst the trees the ground is not very steep and I think by holding on to them we could manage to sit down without slipping."

"We can try," said Fred. "But if I were alone I would go on exploring, and next time I shall come alone."

"Well, you may," said Peggy, "but I think you are very unkind to talk that way."

"He's hungry," said Larry, "and that's what makes him grumpy. I am so hungry myself that I could eat a loaf."

"I'm not hungry," said Fred, angrily, "and if I were I wouldn't mind it. Explorers go ever so long without eating, and for their dinner they only have a little sea biscuit and a frozen pemmican."

"I won't be an explorer, then," said Larry. "I wouldn't eat a frozen penny can for any one."

"Here we are," said Peggy. "Yes, Olive, I believe we all can get seats under these trees, and room to spread our cloth, too. Here, Christa, pet, sit by me and I'll keep you from slipping, and now I think we'll open the baskets."

I was carrying Larry's parcel, but I gave it to him and took my basket, and Fred set Peggy's down and we all seated ourselves as well as we could where we could hold on to the trees and keep from slipping. Larry was sitting a little above the rest of us, and he propped his parcel up against a tree. It was too funny when Peggy and I opened our baskets. Mother had said that Mrs. Brown baked such lovely cakes; she was sure Peggy would bring plenty, so she would pack bread and butter and ham sandwiches, a pot of jam for me, and Peggy had just exactly the same, for Mrs. Brown had had a sick headache the day before, so that she could not bake. "Really, Olive," said Peggy, "you might have told me that you weren't going to bring any cake."

"Indeed, Miss Margaret Brown," I said, "who was it said we were to surprise each other?"

"But I didn't want such a mean surprise," said Peggy.

"Don't quarrel," said Fred. "No one need

grumble over such a good lunch as this, I'm sure, eh, Larry?" and he handed him up a pile of sandwiches.

The lunch was good and we were too busy eating for a few minutes to care to talk; then Fred pulled out his parcels and said: "See what I have brought; it will do for dessert."

There was a bag of candies and one of nuts, and six big bananas, and they looked lovely spread out on the towel which Peggy and I had managed to spread for a cloth.

"I have brought something, too," said Larry, and he undid his parcel and took out a jug which he tried to hand to Fred, but it slipped and before it could be stopped rolled down right into the middle of our lunch, where it upset and sent a stream of molasses all over everything. We snatched things out of the way as quickly as we could but it was no use, the molasses ran everywhere and we only got it all over ourselves. Fred's new suit was spattered and our pretty frocks, and as for Christa, she was daubed all over. Three of the bananas rolled down the hill and nearly all the nuts.

"Oh, dear, I'm so sorry," Larry said, and then he suddenly got red in the face and his cheeks puffed out like a trumpeter's. I thought he was going to take a fit but he suddenly burst into such a laugh that he nearly rolled down on

us. "Oh, oh, oh!" he said, "he, he, he! oh, Fred, I can't help it, you do all look so funny."

"You're a mean little rascal," shouted Fred. "You have none of the horrid stuff on yourself and you dare to laugh at us after spoiling our picnic."

"You shouldn't scold Larry," said Peggy; "the molasses wouldn't have been spilled if we hadn't been sitting on a hill, and it was your fault that we didn't go to the beach."

"It wasn't my fault that we stuck here instead of going to the top of the hill," said Fred; "but I'll know better than to bring a pack of babies up here again," and Fred got up and walked away.

The sky had been getting very dark for some time and Peggy thought we had better gather up our things. Larry helped us, but everything was so sticky that it was very disagreeable. Bits of moss and pine needles and dried leaves stuck to our fingers and clothes and even got into our hair, and our things kept rolling down the hill all the time. We had just finished when such a wind began to blow that we could hardly keep on our feet, and some big drops of rain fell through the trees. We jumped up in a hurry and saw Fred running down the hill to meet us. He had been up to the top and found nothing there but a field of oats, and the wind had

whirled away his hat somewhere into the very middle of them, he didn't know where.

We ran down the hill, but before we reached the bottom it was pouring rain, and by the time we got home we were soaked through. Christa is well now and we have made up friends with Fred, but Peggy and I have made up our minds that we will never have any more picnics to the pine tree hill.

OUR BAZAAR.

I think we would never have had our bazaar if it had not been for Larkie Adams. She is Fred's cousin and came to stay at the Archer's the week after we had our picnic. Her real name is not Larkie, it is Isabel, but almost as soon as she could speak she began to sing, and sang so sweetly that her father used to call her his little lark, and her name soon came to be Larkie. Peggy's big brother John said it was a good name for her, because she was so fond of larks; and Peggy and I said we would be too, only we could never find any. John said it was a lark to hear us talk, and I thought it was very kind and polite of him, for of course he meant that we had very sweet voices. It took us a little while to get accustomed to Larkie. I like people that look like Peggy, and she likes people that look like me, but Larkie was not the least bit like either of us. Peggy has very soft yellow hair waving on her shoulders, big blue eyes and pink cheeks, and I have dark hair plaited in a pig-tail, and brown eyes. Peggy is rather short and fat, and I am thin and a little taller, but

Larkie, though only a little older, was so big that she made us both feel small. She had black eyes and freckles, and old gold hair. At first we thought her hair was red, but mother said it was better to call it golden, and that she had seen an old gold locket just that color; so we came to think it pretty, and we soon came to love her, too, she was so bright and merry, and full of fun. We had known her for nearly two days before we told her about our picnic, and then she laughed so much that she nearly fell out of the apple tree in Fred's garden, where we were all sitting.

"What are you laughing at?" I said; "we didn't think the picnic funny at all."

"Why it was every bit funny," said Larkie, "the funniest thing I ever heard of. Poor Fred trying to carry that fat lump of a Christa, and all of you holding on to trees while the bananas rolled down the hill, and then Larry's molasses. Why! a cat would have laughed. Oh, dear!" and Larkie went off again, and this time she did fall out of the tree, but the ground was soft and she wasn't a bit hurt, and in a minute had scrambled up again. "I only wish I had been here for the picnic," she said, "but since I wasn't, could we not have something while I am here?"

"What could we have?" said Peggy.

“Why, we could have—let me see—we could have a bazaar.”

“A bazaar?” said Peggy, “why we could never have that. At bazaars you need to have cushions, and tea-cloths, and coseys, and all sorts of lovely things, and Olive and I have no money, and can make nothing but bags.”

“Well, let us make bags,” said Larkie. “Let us each make one and then see if we cannot get something to fill them. I shall gather cones. I am sure lots of people will buy them. Mother always likes to have them to throw on the grate fire to make a blaze winter evenings, and they are used for fancy work, too.”

“I could gather acorns,” said Fred. “I read a story about a boy that made a portiere out of them, and sold it for ever so much money. I can’t make a portiere, but I shall sell mine to some boy who can.”

“I shall put nuts into my bag,” said Larry, who had come into the garden and was lying on the grass under the tree; “people always like things to eat, and I know a place where I can get bushels.”

“What shall you gather, Peggy?” I said.

“Immortelles,” said Peggy. “Mrs. Clark wants enough to stuff a little bed for Christa, and perhaps your mother would like to make one for Basil”—Basil is my baby brother. “And

Olive, you might gather pine and balsam fir for pillows, but what can Christa do? She must have a little bag, too." "Suppose she gathered pretty pebbles," said Larkie, "and I could buy them. Mother asked me to bring home some for a little lame boy that she goes to see, and she wants a bag of fine sand for him, too. He likes to play making a beach."

"Has he ever seen a real beach?" asked Larry.

"No," said Larkie. "His mother is very poor, and he has lived all his life in a dark back street. Last spring he had a fever, and ever since he has been so lame that he can only walk about a little with a crutch."

"Will he always be lame?" said Fred.

"I am afraid he will," said Larkie, and the tears came into her eyes. "The doctor says he can never be strong again unless he can have plenty of good food and fresh air, and some one to take really good care of him; and oh, if you could only see the close little room he lives in, and a great part of the time he has to lie all alone, while his mother goes out working. Mother has been trying to get him sent to the country, but there are so many poor children in town that she has not been able to get the money."

"Let us give him all the money we make by the bazaar," said Fred. "and then he can come and live here."

“Oh, that would be beautiful,” said Larkie, “would you really all like it?”

“Yes indeed we would,” we all said, and Peggy added: “We had better begin the bags now.”

“Yes,” said Larkie, jumping out of the tree, “I shall go right in and ask auntie for some pieces.”

So Larkie went in and in a few minutes came out with thread and needles, and a bundle of pieces of pretty colored cotton. “These are to make little bags,” she said. “Auntie said that she would like to help us, and would make us each a big bag of strong cotton on the sewing machine.”

“Where shall we have the bazaar?” said Fred, when we were all busy sewing.

“On the beach,” said Peggy, “there are such nice flat stones for tables.”

“No,” said I, “there are nice flat stones here and there, but we should want a lot all together: real tables would be better.”

“In Peggy’s yard,” said Larry; “the play was so nice there.”

“And suppose it rains,” said Larkie, “all our things would be spoiled. I think we ought to have it indoors.”

“Would our parlor do?” I said; “I am sure mother would let us have it there.”

"Too fine," said Fred; "our mosses and cones and stuff would not look nice on fancy tables mixed up with fal-de-rols. I think the best place would be in our new barn."

"Why, of course it would," said Larkie, clapping her hands; "I wonder we did not think of that at once. The barn is new and clean and the new hay piled up in the loft smells so sweet. It will be a splendid place, and we can dress it up with greens. And now what shall we call the bazaar?"

"The Pine Tree bazaar," said Larry.

"No," said Fred, "I think we had better not call it the Pine Tree anything. Supposing we just call it the barn bazaar; that is good and plain."

"But it is not pretty," said Peggy; "the barn is a lovely place, but barn bazaar does not sound well. We ought to have a name that will make people think of outdoors, where all the lovely things grow that we are going to sell."

"Then call it the Outdoors bazaar," said Larry.

"No, we cannot," said I, "for it will be indoors. I think the best name would be the Fresh Air bazaar."

"Lovely! lovely!" said Larkie; "You are a dear, Olive, to think of such a sweet name."

"We couldn't get anything better," said Peggy, and as the boys liked it, too, we agreed that that would be the name.

Our new bags were finished now, and we had to go to our homes, but the next day and for ten days after we spent nearly all our time outdoors and I cannot tell you all the lovely things we found or how happy we were. Larry turned into a perfect squirrel for finding nuts. Whenever we met him every pocket seemed to be bulging out and sometimes he was carrying his cap full.

Christa and Basil used to go to the beach with their nurse and Christa filled ever so many bags with pretty little stones and shells that she gathered herself, and Basil, who is not three years old, sifted sand through an old colander till he had a biscuit box full. Fred and Larkie gathered bushels of acorns and cones, and Peggy and I filled everything we could get hold of with immortelles and pine needles and balsam fir tips.

At last the day of the bazaar came and I could never tell you how pretty the barn looked. John and Alfred, Peggy's brothers, had helped Fred to decorate it, and the walls were nearly all covered with green branches mixed with red berries and leaves and big bunches of asters and golden rod. Larkie and I had our table at one end. It was covered with a red cloth and the little cone frames and baskets and boxes that Mrs Clarke had taught Larkie to make, looked very pretty lying on it, and so did my big trays

of pine and balsam. In front of the table we had strings of cones, big and little, hanging from one of the beams of the barn, besides two big hanging baskets filled with wintergreen, twin-flower and other lovely woodsy vines and plants. John made the baskets for us out of twigs and Alfred filled them. I had some bunches of yellow and white sweet clover too, and Larkie had a big basket of milkweed pods.

Fred and Larry had the other end of the barn and they had all sorts of things besides acorns and nuts. They had wasps' nests and twisted sticks, and cat-tails and empty birds' nests, and a snake skin, and some funny things off trees, that John called fungi.

Peggy's table was just opposite the door and I think it was the prettiest. She heaped up immortelles all over it till it looked like a bed and piled them higher at one end for a pillow. She had wreaths and bouquets of immortelles, too, and some baskets of green and grey moss, besides pots of ferns. Basil and Christa had their table in the middle of the barn and they were very proud of it. They had a bright tin cup to measure their sand with, and their shells and pebbles looked very pretty spread out on a blue cloth.

I think everyone in the village came to the bazaar, and it was just wonderful how they

wanted our things. Some ladies staying at the hotel bought all my gum and balsam, and said they would have liked more. And Peggy could hardly keep enough immortelles for Christa's bed. Though Larkie had a barrel full of cones, she sold them all and had to cut down her strings. Mrs. Clarke bought both the hanging baskets and Peggy's pots of ferns, and Mrs. Brown and mother took all my sweet clover. Fred and Larry had a crowd of boys round their table all the time, and when they cleared away a little, there was not a nut left. Farmer Flaxman bought Fred's acorns and father gave him \$2 for his fungi. We were so surprised, for we laughed at Fred for thinking anyone would buy them, but father said that they were very fine specimens, and that a friend of his who was making a collection would be glad to give that much for them.

Miss Primmer was the first person who bought anything from Basil and Christa. She has ten canaries, and when she saw Basil's nice, clean sand she said she must have a bucketful to keep for their cages, and it was so pretty to see Basil measuring it. She gave him a cent for each cupful, and when he had finished and said: "Now, you's dot loss of sand," she suddenly kissed him. He pulled her dress and said: "Muss tiss Cissa, too," and she kissed

her and bought five cents' worth of shells. Everybody was so surprised, for no one thought that Miss Primmer cared a bit for children.

When the bazaar was over and John counted the money we had \$13, and Mrs. Archer said that would be enough to bring little Hugh to Meadowhurst and pay his board for a month; and Larry's mother, who used to be a nurse and knows everything about sick people, said she could let him have her spare room. So two or three days later Larkie's father came out from town and brought a thin, white, weak little boy with him. Mrs. Archer took him to Mrs. Milligan's. He was so tired that after drinking some fresh, new milk he had to go right to bed, and for two days he slept nearly all the time. It made us think he was very ill, but Mrs. Milligan said it was the best thing for him, and whenever he was awake she brought him something good to eat. The third day he was able to sit in an easy chair under the big butternut tree and look at Larry turning somersaults and standing on his head; and after that he walked about a little every day. At the end of a week his cheeks were pink, like Peggy's, and he was able to play with Larry's pea-shooters, and two weeks later, when Larkie's father came to take her home, he did not know Hugh, he was so fat and rosy.

The next week was to be his last, and we were all feeling very sorry about it for we had grown so fond of him; and besides, though so much stronger, he was still lame, and Dr. Clarke, Christa's father, said that to be really cured he would need to stay in the country and have good care for a year. So we were all wondering what could be done about it when something just wonderful happened so that he did not go after all; but this story is so long already that I must wait till another time to tell you all about it.

OUR SURPRISE.

Peggy and I were very lonely after Larkie went home, but we would have missed her more if it had not been for little lame Hugh. He was such a pet that we all loved him, and it was so nice to see him getting stronger and rosier every day. Peggy said it reminded her of how we used to play "lost child" when we were quite small. We used to get tired of pretty, well-dressed, comfortable dolls, and then we would take old china Mary Ann and put on a dirty, torn dress, and leave her out in the cherry orchard for a little while, and then pretend to be very much surprised when we found a poor lost child lying in the grass. We used to pick up the darling and carry her home, and while I washed her face and hands and warmed her toes, Peggy used to make her carrot soup out of orange peel and water. After a while we used to say that the poor dear seemed to be feeling a little easier, and at the end of a week, when we had painted her cheeks and put new stiffening in her body and dressed her up, and she had taken all the medicine Fred had

brought her, we used to be so proud to see her looking fat and rosy again. But with Hugh we did not need to pretend. His cheeks did grow red and he was really able to enjoy the nice broth Mrs. Milligan made for him. He was quite a clever little boy, too. We were so surprised to find that he could read, for he was only six and had never been to school, but he said that Larkie had taught him. We thought it so sweet of her, for at home she goes to school and has hard lessons to study, and very little time for play. Hugh said she used to come and sing to him, too, when he had to stay in bed all the time, and that it used to make his pain go away.

Mrs. Milligan tried to keep Hugh outdoors nearly all the time, and as soon as he was strong enough she used to let him drive around with her in the milk cart, and soon all the village people came to know him. Everyone took a fancy to him, even old Miss Primmer. She used to give him little bunches of marigolds and sweet peas out of her garden, and one day when he seemed tired she asked Mrs. Milligan to let him come in and lie down and she would bring him home herself after dinner. We were really frightened when we heard of it, for one day she boxed poor Larry's ears just because he climbed upon her fence to see if his ball was in her garden: at least he only meant to look, and it was not his

fault that he fell over on her strawberry bed or that Tansy, her big Tom-cat, was sleeping there. I am sure it was the terrible meow-ow that Tansy gave that brought Miss Primmer flying out of the house. But Hugh said he had had a splendid time. Miss Primmer told him lovely stories, while he lay on the sofa, about a little boy that wanted to be an explorer like Fred; and when he was rested she took him into the garden and showed him her beautiful Royal Rose apple tree, all loaded with fruit, pink on one side and pale gold on the other. No one else in Meadowhurst has an apple tree like it, and the greatest favor Miss Primmer can do anyone is to sell them a dozen of her apples. She generally sends them all to the city, but before they are gathered the tree is one of the sights of the village.

“I wonder what made her be so kind to you,” said Larry. “I don’t know,” said Hugh, “except that I have the same name as the little boy she told me about. I expect he was her little brother, and I think that perhaps I look like him. She looked at me a great deal and once when she thought I was asleep, she said, ‘No, I am not mistaken, there is a likeness,’ and then,” said Hugh, “of course I opened my eyes right off and did not hear any more.”

From that day Miss Primmer and Hugh were

great friends. She used to send him cookies and new laid eggs and cunning little saucer pies, and at last just the day before he was to go home, she brought him down herself a basketful of Royal Rose apples. We could hardly believe it, when Larry came running over to tell us and to ask us to come to an apple feast under the butternut tree, but, of course, we went over and found Hugh sitting at the head of a table that Mrs. Milligan had brought out, and put under the tree.

There was a pile of Royal Roses in the middle of the table, a pitcher of rich new milk at one end and a plate of bread and butter at the other and a blue mug and plate at each place. Little Hugh was smiling all over. "Isn't Miss Primer kind?" he said. "Wasn't she good to send us these apples?" "She sent them to you," Peggy said, "and perhaps she won't like us to eat them." Hugh looked puzzled, for he never can understand anything being only for himself, but he looked happy again when Mrs. Milligan said, "She sent them to make Hughie happy, and what he likes best is to share with his friends."

We were in the middle of our feast and were listening to a wonderful story that Fred was telling us, about a real sailor whom he had met on the beach that morning, when the garden gate opened, and a man whom we had never

seen before came up the garden path. "Why, here he is:" said Fred, and getting up he said, "did you wish to speak to anyone, sir?" "Ah!" said the man, "so this is my little friend again. Yes, I am tired and thirsty and was told that the good woman here would let me have a glass of buttermilk." "I am sure she will," said Hugh, "please sit down, while Larry goes in to ask her:" and then he added shyly, "we are glad to have you at our party, Mr. Sailor, won't you have one of our apples!"

"I shall like one very much," said the man, "I have not seen such lovely apples since I was a boy. Do they taste as good as they look?" "You bet they do," said Larry, who had come back, taking a great bite of his. "Just taste one yourself and see if you don't say a Royal Rose is worth a dozen other apples."

"A Royal Rose!" said the man, giving such a start that he nearly spilled his buttermilk. "Do you call these apples Royal Roses?"

"Yes," said Larry, "and it's not a bit too good a name for them."

"No indeed," said the man who had now tasted his, "but it sounded strange to hear that name, because as far as I know it is not the real name of any apple, but one that I gave myself more than twenty years ago to the apples that grew in a certain garden that I thought the

loveliest place in the world. It is odd that these apples that look and taste just as those did, should be called by the same name. I should like to see them growing, it would take me back to my boyhood. If the tree that bears these grows anywhere near at hand I should be much obliged if one of you little men would show me the way to it."

"There's only one Royal Rose tree in the village," said Fred, "and I can take you to it in five minutes."

"I wish I could show you the way," said Hugh, "but I am lame and take so long to go anywhere that it tires people."

"It would not tire me," said the man looking very kindly at Hugh. "But it is better for you to rest. I hope though that we shall see each other again. We ought to be good friends, for I hear them call you by my name, and besides you look like a dear friend I had long ago."

He walked away with Fred, and Peggy said, "What a nice, kind man; but how odd that Hugh looks like his friend too. He seems to be like a good many people."

"I am glad that I am," said Hugh, "it is nice to remind people of their friends. It makes them so kind."

Our feast was over and we were gathering up the plates when the garden gate burst open and

Fred came dashing up the walk as if a bull were chasing him. "Mrs. Milligan!" he shouted, "Mrs. Milligan! Will you go to Miss Primmer's right off. Something is the matter with her. She has a fit or has fainted, I don't know which, and there's no one there but the strange man."

Mrs. Milligan went off without waiting to say a word, and when Fred got his breath he told us that when he and the man reached Miss Primmer's gate the man said he would go to the door and ask if he might buy a basketful of Royal Roses. Miss Primmer opened the door and when she saw the man she stared, and he stared, and then the man said, "Hannah!" and Miss Primmer said, "Hugh!" and then she nearly fell down, but the man caught her and carried her in to the sofa and told Fred to run for help.

We heard nothing more till that evening when Mrs. Milligan came over to mother's and told her a strange story.

Long, long ago Miss Primmer was young and pretty and lived on a farm far away from Meadowhurst, and a little boy called Hugh Ashley lived near her and played with her just as Fred does with Peggy and me. And when he was big he wanted to marry her, but her mother was dead, and her father and little blind brother needed her so much that she couldn't leave

them, and that made Mr. Ashley angry, and at last after he had asked her a great many times he said he would never ask her any more; and he left home to be a sailor and Miss Primmer never heard any thing about him. After more than a year her father died and the farm was sold and the money nearly all had to go to pay bills, so Miss Primmer went away to a big city to get work and took nothing with her from the farm but a Royal Rose tree growing in a pot; and she lived in many different places, but no matter where she went she took the little tree with her because it reminded her of the farm and the apple feasts that she and Hugh Ashley used to have. By and by her little brother died and she went to keep house for an old man who was very cross and hard to please while he lived, but when he died it was found that he had left Miss Primmer the little place here where she has lived for the last fifteen years. As soon as she came, she planted her apple tree and it made her think of Mr. Ashley every day, but she always thought he was dead and that she would never see him again. So when Fred brought him up that afternoon—the sailor was Mr. Ashley—she got such a surprise that she fainted. But when Mrs. Milligan arrived, she was already feeling better, and Mr. Ashley was

telling her his adventures, how he had been shipwrecked, and then fallen ill in a strange country, and how when at last he got home and went to look for her he could not find her anywhere. For a long time after that he did not care for anything but just went on one voyage after another, but at last he thought he would like a little home of his own, and in the town where he was staying then he got married and was very happy with his wife. They had a dear little baby boy, and when he was a year old Captain Ashley--for he had got to be captain--went on one more voyage, but before he returned home a dreadful thing had happened. His wife had come with him to the port from which he sailed and he had left her and the baby in a boarding house there because he thought it would be more comfortable for her than keeping house alone. But he had only been gone a month when the boarding house was burned and a great many of the people in it were burned too. Mrs. Ashley was found in her bed, not burned, but the smoke had killed her, and the baby was not with her and he was never found afterwards. This was what Captain Ashley heard when he got home two months later, and it nearly killed him. He was in a hospital for months, and when at last he came out, he went right to sea again, and for

three or four years was hardly ever on land. The day he came to Meadowhurst he was on his way to see an old uncle in the country and by mistake got off the train at the wrong station.

You may think how excited we all were when we heard this, but a greater surprise came the next morning. Captain Ashley had gone to Mrs. Milligan's for the night and the next morning at breakfast he was telling them about sailors and how they tattoo themselves, and Mrs. Milligan told him about the old tattoo mark on Hugh's arm, and said she always thought his father must have been a sailor.

"Why, is he not your son?" said Captain Ashley.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Milligan, and she told how Hugh came from the city, where his mother was a washerwoman. "She is not my real mother," said Hugh. "When I was so ill last spring that the doctor thought I would die, and I felt afraid, she told me that I had a dear angel mother in heaven who would know me and love me even though I had forgotten her. She said God had sent me to her when I was very small, and she had taught me to call her mother and given me her name because she thought I would be happier."

Captain Ashley began to tremble all over, and

asked Mrs. Milligan to let him see the tattoo mark. So she took off Hugh's blouse and turned up his shirt sleeve and showed the little anchor on the inside of his left arm; and then Captain Ashley cried out loud and said he was sure that at last God had let him find his dear little son, for he had made just such a mark on his boy before he left him and his mother. "And when I did it," he said to Mrs. Milligan, "I laughed and said to Milly, 'It will not be easy to lose Hughie now. There is not another man can make just that mark;'" and then he took Hugh in his arms again and hugged him as if he could never let him go, and it was at that moment that Peggy and Fred and I came into Mrs. Milligan's kitchen with some little keepsakes that we had brought to Hugh.

Mrs. Archer telegraphed to Larkie's mother and she sent Mrs. Morrison, the woman with whom Hugh had lived, out by the afternoon train, and when she had told Hugh's story to Captain Ashley, there could be no doubt that he was his long lost little boy. She had been engaged to do washing at the boarding house just two or three days before the fire, and the night it broke out remembered seeing one of the housemaids with a little boy in her arms. She said his mother had a headache and she was going to keep him for the night. Mrs. Morrison and

her two little girls slept in the next room, and they and a lot of other people were only saved by the firemen putting up a ladder. Her children were taken down first and when she joined them they had the little baby boy between them, and a kind woman who lived nearby took them all in for the night.

Next day and for a great many days she tried to find some one belonging to Hugh, but she did not even know his name. The people who kept the boarding house said that they thought he was Mrs. Ashley's little boy, but she was dead and they knew nothing about her relatives or where her husband had gone. So the good kind woman kept the baby herself and did the best she could for it, but with a baby it was hard to get work and her husband had been dead for three years. She heard that pay was better in the city where Larkie lives, so came there with the three children when Hugh was about two years old, but she had to pay so much for a room and things to eat that she got poorer all the time, and when Larkie's mother found her she was in great trouble. Hugh was ill then and she could not leave him to work and they had neither food nor fire. She had taught Hugh to call her mother, and even Mrs. Adams did not know that he was not her own little boy. She had always kept the little shirt

and nightgown that Hugh had on the night of the fire, and they were both marked "H. A." I think there were never happier people in the world than at Meadowhurst that day. Miss Primmer was happy because she had found Captain Ashley, and Hugh was happy because he had found his father. But Captain Ashley was happiest of all because he had found both Miss Primmer and Hugh. He said we must have a celebration, and then Larry remembered that it was Hallowe'en, and Mrs. Milligan asked us all to come over after tea and dip for apples and pull candy in her big kitchen.

It was the loveliest Hallowe'en party that we ever went to. Our mothers and fathers came with us, and Miss Primmer was there with Hugh in her lap, looking so kind and happy that we hardly knew her. She had on a pretty dress, and her eyes looked so bright and her cheeks so pink that Peggy and I thought she looked quite pretty, and even Larry forgave her when he heard that she had sent down half a barrel of Royal Roses. Mrs. Brown brought over a basketful of the little cakes that she always bakes for Hallowe'en, and Miss Primmer got the one with a ring in it. Hugh got the sixpence for money, and Peggy got the thimble, that means you will be an old maid,

but Fred told her not to mind because he felt pretty sure that he would marry her by-and-by.

When the fun was over, and we began to feel quiet, Captain Ashley sang us some splendid sea songs, and then he made a little speech and said he wanted to thank all the good friends who had been so kind to his dear little boy, especially Mrs. Morrison, whom he could never thank enough. He said he meant to buy a house at Meadowhurst, where he had found so much happiness, and would buy a little cottage for Mrs. Morrison, too, so that she could live with her children in the sweet country air and see Hugh every day. When the speech was ended we all clapped, and then as Hugh was looking tired, and Christa and Basil were rubbing their eyes, we said good-night and walked home through the moonlight. We were very quiet for a little while, and then Fred said, "What are you thinking about, Olive?"

"About Larkie," I said, "and wishing she could have been here, for it all seemed to begin with her. If she had never come to Meadowhurst we should never have known Hugh nor had any of these lovely surprises."

"I am thinking of Larkie, too," said Peggy, "and of how happy she will be when she hears that Hugh has found his dear father. And, Olive,"

she added softly, looking up at the sky that seemed so far above us, "I am thinking, too, of the dear Father of us all. At first I felt sad about Hugh's mother, but when I think of how good He is, and what lovely surprises he can give us here, I think that perhaps she had the most splendid one of all when He took her to His beautiful home to live forever with Himself."

OUR WEDDING.

There is just one month that Peggy and I do not like, and that is November. Summer and autumn are over, and winter has not yet come. There are no flowers, fruits or nuts and even the pretty leaves are nearly all whirled away and the trees look so sad and bare. It rains so often that we can hardly ever play outdoors, or if the sun does shine the roads are sure to be muddy, and there would not be much time to play anyway for the days are so short and we are not allowed to stay out after dark. Fred says that November can't help being that kind of a month and that the right way would be for people to plan pleasant things for it instead of having them all in the other months that don't need them. He says that he means to have all his children's birthdays in November so that at least there will be plenty of parties and presents. Peggy and I are not sure whether this would be a good plan or not for perhaps the children might not like it themselves, so we have not decided about it yet. Larkie Adams, who spent November once with her Aunt Isabel in the United

States told us what a lovely Thanksgiving holiday they had there in November; and Peggy and I said that we wished they would keep Thanksgiving that way here instead of just going to church, but Fred was very angry with us and said we were not true to our country to talk that way and that it was greedy to care so much about pies and cakes. It was not the pies and cakes though, that Peggy and I cared about, but the wagon loads of uncles and aunts and dear little cousins that Larkie told us about, and the fun they all had together. Mother says we can be true to our country even though we love others, and wish to copy what is good from them, but Fred thinks the only way is to want to fight other countries and to think all our own ways best. But I was going to tell you that the November after the Hallowe'en party turned out to be one of the happiest months of all the year. The weather kept so fine that it was more like having two Octobers and Peggy and I had lots of fun playing in the fallen leaves. One night about a week after the party there was a high wind and the next morning they were piled so high on the sidewalk that they almost covered our boots, and after we had finished our lessons with mother we went out to have a leaf fight before dinner. We had splendid fun throwing armfuls of leaves at each other,

and then we made a storm by throwing old baskets filled with leaves high up into the air and letting them shower down upon us. Then it was time for Peggy to go home and she asked me to try a race to her gate, kicking the leaves all the way. We started off and I would have won the race, for my legs are longer than Peggy's and I can kick higher, but just as I reached her corner Fred came dashing round and we ran into each other and both fell and Peggy too, for she was so close behind that she could not stop herself and tumbled right over us. We were not a bit hurt for we fell into a bed of leaves and red pine needles; but I was angry at losing the race and I said, "Really, Fred, you ought not to come dashing round corners that way without looking where you are going."

"Well, that is good," said Fred, "I just wish you could have seen yourself, Olive, and you wouldn't talk about other people dashing."

"Oh, but that is different," said Peggy. "Olive and I were racing and had to dash."

"No, you hadn't," said Fred, "for girls don't need to race and I think you looked very indignant."

"What a funny word, Fred," I said. "I don't believe it is a right one."

"He means undignified," said Peggy, "and I expect we did look queer,"

"Yes, and you look queer now," said Fred, "all stuck over with leaves and pine needles, but I was really in a hurry, for I wanted to tell you some news. What do you think! Captain Ashley and Miss Primmer are going to get married."

"Oh, Fred, how lovely!" said Peggy. "Olive and I have never seen a wedding. There has not been one in Meadowhurst since I can remember, but they are beautiful for I have read about them. Miss Primmer will be a bride and have a long, trailing white gown and a wreath and a veil, but are you sure it is true? Who told you about it?"

"Captain Ashley," said Fred; "he came to see father last night and told him all about it. Miss Primmer wanted to wait till next summer, but Captain Ashley said they had waited long enough, and besides he wants to get a home for little Hugh at once."

"Where are they going to live?" said I.

"In town for about a month after the wedding," said Fred, "because Dr. Clarke wants Hugh to be treated by a very great doctor who lives there. After that they are coming back to Meadowhurst, and will live in Miss Primmer's cottage till their own home is ready, and oh, Olive, guess where that is to be?"

"We could never guess," said Peggy, "do tell us, Fred."

"In the big gray stone house at the head of the hill, just past Miss Primmer's," said Fred.

"Why that is the haunted house," said I.

"Yes," said Fred, "and I told Captain Ashley all about it but he only laughed. He did not believe ghost stories at all, and he wants a house near the cottage so that the Royal Rose tree will still be in their garden, which will reach down far enough to take in Miss Primmer's orchard."

"And will nobody live in her cottage?" said I.

"Oh, yes," said Fred, "he has bought that for Mrs. Morrison so that she can be near Hugh and see him as often as she likes, but it will be nearly spring before his own house is ready, so she will not come till then."

Just then we heard Peggy's dinner bell ringing very loud, and we all jumped up and ran off to our homes as quickly as we could.

I was in a great hurry to tell mother the news when I got home, but she had heard it already, and after dinner she went to see Miss Primmer and did not come back till after the lamps were lighted. She looked so grave then that I said: "What is the matter, mother? Has anything happened to trouble you?"

"No, indeed, Olive," she said. "I have

everything to make me happy, but I have been sitting with Miss Primmer most of the afternoon and she has been telling me a good deal about her past life, and there was so much trouble and sorrow in it that it made me feel as if I had more than my share of happiness. I wished, too, that we had tried to be more friendly with her all the time she has lived here."

"But, mother," I said, "I have often heard you and Miss Brown say that she never seemed to care to know anyone and that it was no use trying to be friendly."

"That is true, Olive, but I think if we had known what we have lately heard about her hard life, and her brave struggle to do right, we might have tried more than we did."

"But, mother, her troubles were all over when she came to live here," I said, "and I think it ought to have made her happy to have such a dear little cottage and garden."

"Why, should you be happy, Olive, living in the dearest little cottage in the world, all alone, without father or Basil, or Peggy, or me?"

"Oh, mother! it would be dreadful," I said. "I don't think I could live a day, but I thought it was different for grown people."

"There is a difference. Of course grown people can take care of themselves, but they can feel just as lonely as little people, and when sad

thoughts come to them it is harder to send them away. For seven years before Miss Primmer came here she had been working hard all the time, and that helped her to bear her trouble, but when she came to live here quite alone she could not help thinking about how happy she had once been and how changed her life was. She was not well, either, and that makes everything harder to bear. So it was not long before people began to say that she was cross and queer, and they left off trying to be friendly, and she settled down into her quiet life and became what we have always known her. But all these years her life might have been very different if when first she came here there had been some kind friend who knew all, to care for her."

"Well, she is going to be happy now, mother," I said.

"Yes, I think Captain Ashley will make her a good, kind husband, but she is not to be married for three weeks and I think that just now she is feeling a little puzzled about getting ready, so I have been speaking to our friends and we would all like to try to help her."

"Oh, mother, how nice," I said, "and can Peggy and I help too?"

"Perhaps you may be able to. What is settled so far is that as some repairs have to be made to the cottage, Miss Primmer will come

and stay with me till she is married and the wedding will be from this house. Shall you like that?"

"It will be lovely to have the wedding here," I said, "but I don't know if it will be nice to have Miss Primmer. I don't think she likes children."

"I think you are mistaken, Olive," said mother, "she has not been used to children for many years, but do you not remember how she kissed Basil at the Bazaar, and see how she loves Hugh already? Of course it will seem a little strange at first to have her here, but I am sure that I can trust you to be very kind and polite to her."

"Yes, indeed, mother," I said, "when is she coming?"

"Not till Saturday evening. She will be busy at her cottage all to-morrow and then she is going to town to buy what she needs. Mrs. Clarke is going with her to help her choose things, and they will be away three days."

"That is very kind of Mrs. Clarke, and she will be sure to choose pretty things. What is Mrs. Brown going to do?"

"She is going to make the wedding cake, and Mrs. Archer, who has so much taste about a house, is going to look after all the work that is to be done at the cottage so that Miss Primmer need have no trouble about anything."

Mother and I were very busy the next day getting our guest room ready, and we did all we could to make it look pretty. Mother put up fresh white curtains, and made new cushions for the old red lounge, and hung the hanging basket she bought at the bazaar, in the bay window. Father sent up his nicest easy chair from his study and I hung my picture of white kittens jumping at each other through a branch of lilacs, over her bed. Nurse has two old brass candlesticks that belonged to her mother and she polished them till they shone like gold and put them on the mantelpiece. Basil brought in his Peter Waggy and made me fasten it on the wall. I didn't want to because it is a funny little man made of cardboard, and when you pull a string his legs and arms fly up and I was afraid Miss Primmer would not like it in her room, but Basil thinks it lovely and I could not bear to grieve him.

When father brought Miss Primmer home Saturday evening, I scarcely knew her. Her clothes were different, and her hair, and everything, and she looked just like a pretty auntie come to stay with us. I wondered why we had ever called her old and mother said we should not have done so, for she was truly only forty now. Of course that is pretty old, but we used to think she was nearly a hundred. Mother

says that it always makes people pretty to be happy, and that by trying to make people happy we are working for God, who wants all his children to match the lovely world they live in.

The two weeks before the wedding went very quickly, there was so much for everybody to do.

I went to Peggy's every day to help her to crack nuts, stone raisins, beat eggs and cut up dates and figs for the wedding cake, and other nice things that Mrs. Brown was making. Fred and Larry wanted to help, but we only let them try once. We were stoning raisins that day and the boys stoned all the inside out of theirs, so after that we only let them run errands. They used to go and watch the workmen up at the cottage for Fred said they would work better if they had some one to look after them. Mrs. Archer stitched tablecloths and sheets and pillowslips on her machine and Peggy and I, who have both worked samplers, marked them. Mrs. Clarke helped Miss Primmer about her clothes and mother just did all she could to make her happy and comfortable. Basil helped too. He used to go in every morning and say to Miss Primmer, "I is come to muse you," and then he would squeak his woolly lamb, and make his Peter Waggy jump, and say, "Is you mused now?" and she laughed so much that I am sure she was,

The wedding was to be on the first of December and we were hoping the fine mild weather would last, but the day before it turned very cold and snow began to fall, and when I got up on the wedding morning everything was white. The dead leaves, dry grass, bare trees, the houses, fences and barns were all covered with the softest, loveliest snow, and mother said it was a real wedding morning. We were to be at the church at 11 o'clock and as it was a long drive we started at half past ten. Miss Primmer did not wear a white gown with a train, but she looked very nice in a suit of soft brown stuff and a bonnet to match with yellow flowers in it. She asked Peggy and me to be her little maids and stand beside her, and we wore our new brown frocks and cream colored hats. Little Hugh was not in church because his father had already taken him to town and left him at the hospital where Dr. Leonard is to treat him; but excepting Mrs. Milligan who stayed at our house to get the lunch ready, all the friends who were at the Hallowe'en party were there. Basil would bring the Peter Waggy. He said the funny little man wanted to see the lady get married.

When the service was over we all drove back to our house and had lunch in our big sunny dining-room. Mother and Mrs. Clarke had dressed it up the evening before with all the

flowers they could get and the bay window was almost filled with ferns and chrysanthemums. The table was set with mother's best glass and silver and the purple china that once belonged to great-grandmother. But Fred said the prettiest thing on it was the lunch, and it really was lovely, as nice, I think, as a Thanksgiving dinner. Besides the wedding cake, there was oyster soup, cold turkey and ham, chicken pie, jelly, whipped cream, celery, salad, some beautiful fruit and plenty of lemonade and coffee. After lunch we all went and sat around the parlor fire and told stories and jokes, and while we were there Basil came in, drawing his toy ship loaded with boxes of candy that Captain Ashley had brought from town. There was one for everybody, and as Basil unloaded the boxes Christa handed them round, and then they both sat down on the floor and began to feed the Peter Waggy out of their own boxes.

"Olive," said Peggy to me, as we sat in the bay window eating our candy, "is it not funny to see such a lot of the village boys on the street in front of the house? Do look at them, and others seem to be joining them all the time. Do you know what they want?"

"No indeed," I said; "and look, Peggy, they are all carrying parcels. What can it mean? There are six more coming around the corner,

We had better ask Fred to go and see what they want." But Fred was not in the room, or Larry either, and just then we had to leave the window to say good-bye to Captain and Mrs. Ashley, for the sleigh had driven up that was to take them to the station.

When we went back to the window the boys were standing like a procession, four abreast, right behind the sleigh. Larry was amongst them and Fred was on the sidewalk, and just as the Ashleys stepped into the sleigh he raised his right hand and all the boys cheered and shouted till I think they must have been hoarse. Then as the sleigh drove off Fred raised his left hand, and each boy pulled an old shoe of some kind out of his parcel, and when Fred called out "Fire" they all threw together so that the air was just black with old boots and shoes.

It looked so funny that nobody could help laughing; but father said it would never do to leave them all lying about the road, so he told Fred he must march his little army down and make them gather them all up. While they were doing this Mrs. Brown cut a slice of wedding cake for each, and when the boys came back Fred brought them up on the veranda and Peggy and I went out and handed round the cake. Then the boys marched off and Fred came in with us and the wedding was over; but we talk

about it nearly every day still, and Basil's favorite play is to make his Peter Waggy marry Miss Primmer's, I mean Mrs. Ashley's big Tom-cat, who is to live with us till his mistress comes home:

OUR HEROINE.

PART FIRST.

One of our very nicest plays is "Barbara Frietchie," and the nicest place to play it in is our garret. It is so big that we can make Fredericktown right in the middle of it, and there are lots of old paper flowers that we can stick in the cracks to make the apple and peach trees fruited deep. Then the stairs leading out on to the roof do splendidly for the army (that is Peggy and Fred and I) to come winding down, and we call the old pieces of furniture houses, and stick paper flags on them. There is an old bureau that has only the frame of a looking-glass left, and when we push it up against the window it is just the right height for Basil, standing on the high window seat to lean out of. We have one real flag made of bunting and we fasten it on this old bureau and cover the frame with tissue paper, so that at first no one can see Basil. When the trampling is heard Larry rushes and pulls all the flags down and then hurries

to join the army, while Basil pulls his flag up again by a string. By this time the army are crossing up the street, and Fred has jumped on the old rocking horse that we have ready, so that he may be Stonewall Jackson riding ahead. When he says "Halt!" the dust-brown ranks (and I am sure we look as dusty as the real rebels), stand fast, and when he says "Fire!" Larry fires off all his pea-shooters one after another to make the rifle blast, and Basil shivers the tissue paper and lets the flag drop a little way and then leans out and snatches it, and shakes it forth with a royal will. Then he stands straight up with the flag in his hand and says: "Soot if you will, zis old dray head, but you mus' not soot dis flag." Of course that's not quite right, but it's the best he can do, and he looks so sweet that we can hardly help kissing him. But, of course, that would not do when we are soldiers and have to stand still while Fred says: "Who touches a hair of yon gray head dies like a dog!" At first when he said that Basil would shout out: "Ze dog mus' not die," but now he knows better. When Fred says, "March on!" we go tramping through Frederick Street till Basil is tired of letting the torn folds rise and fall.

We had been playing this one stormy afternoon in the beginning of March, and when it

was over and nurse had taken Basil down to have his bread and milk, Peggy and I curled ourselves up in one corner of grandmother's old lounge, and the boys in the other, and we all began to talk of Barbara, and how brave she was to lean out and wave the flag when she knew that the next moment she might be shot. "It was grand," said Peggie, "but, oh, Olive, how could she do it! I know that I never could. Why, if I even heard that an enemy's army was coming to Meadowhurst I'd be so frightened that I couldn't sleep nights."

"Pooh!" said Fred, "what a goose you are, Peggy. Why, I should love an army to come, and if there were any flags that ought to be up and the enemy hauled them down, Larry and I would pull them up quicker'n winking if we got the chance. Wouldn't we, Larry?"

"Yes, after the army had tramped away," said Larry.

"No," said Fred. "We'd haul them up while the enemy were there all pointing their rifles at us, at least I would; you could be a coward if you liked."

"Oh, ho!" said Larry. "I'd like to know who was coward last year when we met the snake?"

Fred turned very red in the face. He can't bear snakes and one day in the autumn when we

were gathering cones and mosses for our bazaar and met a big black and yellow one, he turned white and ran away.

"I wasn't afraid of the snake," he said. "It could do no harm, for father says none of the snakes here are poisonous, but it was so ugly it made me feel sick."

"Well, the enemy would make me feel sick," said Larry.

"How silly you both are," I said, "to dispute about what is never likely to happen. There is no war now and no enemy likely to come to Meadowhurst, and though I should like to do something brave just as well as you, Fred, I don't believe I'll ever get a chance, not till I'm big, any way, and perhaps not even then. Heroes and heroines are nearly always great people, kings or queens or generals, or they live when something exciting is going on, like Barbara Frietchie. Of course in war time there must be lots of chances."

"Everybody has chances," said Fred. "Our school teacher was telling us that just the other day. He said that the world was a battle-field and that everyone had a chance to be a hero, and he is making us learn a good rattling piece about it. I don't know it all yet, but just listen to this verse," and Fred jumped off the sofa and stood up very straight while he said:

"In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle;
Be a hero in the strife."

"There, now, what do you think of that?"

"I don't know what it means," said Larry.

"Do cattle go to battle?"

"Of course not," said Fred.

"Well, why does he say not to be like them?"

"He means—why he means not to act as they would if they did go, you stupid."

"I don't see how he knew anything about it," said Larry, "and I don't think he knew much about cattle either. If they did go to battle and were any thing like Farmer Flaxman's bull they'd make things pretty lively and not be dumb, either."

"Oh, Larry, do stop teasing," said Peggy. "Your verse sounded splendid, Fred, and it is lovely to think that we all may have chances, and I hope that you and Olive may have, but I'm afraid that I could never be brave. I feel as if I should always like to stay at home with people I love and do little things to help them and make them happy."

"Well, Peggy," said Fred, kindly, "of course there must be some people like that to be proud of the others, and perhaps it may be just as well for you and Olive, too, since she's a girl, to be something like the cattle, kind and harm-

less and useful; but, you bet when my chance comes I'm going to take it, and then perhaps you will both be learning a piece about Fred Archer instead of Barbara Frietchie."

"Do cattle learn pieces?" Larry said, but Fred took no notice of him, and as the garret was beginning to get dark we all went down stairs.

A few days after this Mrs. Brown went down to town to spend a few days with Larkie's mother and Peggy came to stay with us till she came back. One morning after breakfast mother said, "I am feeling worried, Olive, about that poor French Canadian family who are living in the little yellow cottage on the beach. You have heard of them, have you not?"

"O, yes, mother," I said, "Fred told me about them. Their name is Moreau and they came here in the Christmas holidays. Mr. Archer gave the father work in his mill. He had not been working for three months before and when Mrs. Archer went to see them they had no food or fire or clothes or anything."

"Yes, those are the people. Mrs. Archer was very kind to them and I was able to help them a little, and as the father gets pretty good wages now they might get along nicely if the mother were strong. But Dr. Clarke says that he is quite anxious about her. There is a little baby

only a month old and Mme. Moreau has never been strong since it was born. Lately she has had some bad fainting fits and it does not seem right for her to be alone, especially as she lives so far from any neighbor. There are two children to look after besides the baby, and Lucien, the eldest, is only four years old."

"I have seen him," said Peggy. "He is such a funny looking little fellow, as dark as an Indian, and with the brightest black eyes you ever saw, and Fred says he is full of mischief. He runs away from his mother and gives her terrible frights."

"Poor woman," said mother. "We must get her some help. Mrs. Milligan has been there a good deal but some one is needed to stay all the time and that is what I wanted to speak to you about. Mrs. Archer and I have heard of a woman at Ste. Fidele who might be able to come, and we mean to drive out this morning and if possible bring her back with us. But meantime we want to make sure that Mme. Moreau has nourishing food for this morning, so Mrs. Archer is going to send Fred down with a can of soup and some of her nice bread, and I have put a pot of jelly and two or three other little things in a basket which you and Peggy may take to her. When the sleigh is ready you may drive with me as

far as Mrs. Archer's so that you may all walk to Mme. Moreau's together. It will be much pleasanter as it is quite a long walk."

"We shall like to go over so much, mother," I said, "and perhaps we may be able to help Madame a little."

"Yes," said Peggy, "we might mind the baby, or make her some tea, or take Lucien out to play if he was noisy."

"You can help in any way you like," mother said smiling, "and after you have done what you can you might have some sliding, so bring your toboggan along. It can be fastened to the back of the sleigh and afterwards you can draw the basket on it. But you had better run off and get ready, for the sleigh is to be at the door at 10 o'clock."

In a few minutes we were all packed into the sleigh. Peggy and I had on our big blue blanket coats and red sashes and we each had a little parcel of sandwiches tucked into our pockets, for mother said we were sure to be hungry before we got home.

Fred was all ready so we bade our mothers good-bye and started for Mme. Moreau's. We slid on the toboggan nearly all the way down Fred's street, and then we had about half a mile to walk on the beach road before we reached the little yellow cottage.

Poor Mme. Moreau was lying on her bed looking very white and tired. The new baby was lying beside her, and Elise, the little girl, was sitting on the floor eating a piece of bread and molasses. She had been crying and her face was stained with tears and molasses, and her little hands were purple with cold. There was a big double stove in the room but the fire in it was nearly out.

“How do you do, Madame?” Fred said. “I think you have seen me at my father’s mill, and these are my friends, Peggy Brown and Olive Everett.”

“*Bon jour, m’sieur,*” Madame said. “I am mooch glad to see you and your frenz, but I haf shame dat you see all so dirty; ma leetle girl not dress and de vaisselles not wash, but I so sick I can do notings. De fire he is out, and de baby she cry, and ma petite ’Lise she hon-gree, but ven I try to make de menage I have no strengs at all; I haf to lie down.”

While she was speaking, Fred put some wood on the fire and stirred it up so that it began to burn, and I poured some of the soup into a little tin pan that mother had sent, and put it in the oven. Then Peggy went softly up to the bed and said: “Poor Madame, you have had a hard time, but perhaps we can help you a little. Olive will bring you some warm soup in a min-

ute and I can make some bread and milk for Elise. Fred has made the fire burn nicely, and when there is warm water we can wash the dishes." While Peggy spoke she patted and smoothed the pillows and drew a shawl that was at the foot of the bed up over Madame.

"Where is Lueben?" Fred said. "While the girls tidy up I'd like to take the little chap out to play. It must be sort of lonesome for him here." "Yes, he find dat dere be no leetle boy round here and dat w'y he sometime run away. But his fader haf make him a leetle sled and dat please him. He go out shust before you come."

"I think I see him," said Fred. "He is away out on the ice."

"I tell him not to go dere," said Madame; "his fader say it is too dangerous, but he is a naughtee leetle boy and mind not what I say."

"I'll run and get him," said Fred. "It isn't safe for a little fellow like that to be on the ice alone, for if he runs far enough he will come to open water. I'll run down and get him, and suppose while the fire burns up you come too, Peggy. The little chap might come back with you sooner than with me."

So they ran off and I watched them a minute from the window. Our river is a large one with a tide, and opposite Meadowhurst never

freezes right across, so that it was dangerous for Lucien. But for older children it was a grand playing place, and down nearer the village lots of people could be seen skating and sliding every day.

The soup was hot now, and I brought some to Madame and propped her up with pillows so that she could take it comfortably. There was more than she needed and I put it in a saucer and crumbed some of Mrs. Archer's bread into it and fed little Elise. She had taken the last spoonful when the door burst open and Fred came in. He was shaking all over and his teeth chattered as he said: "Olive! Olive! The ice has floated out with Peggy and Lucien on it."

PART SECOND.

Madame gave a scream and fell back on her bed. "Run to the mill for help, Fred," I said, and almost before I had finished speaking he had gone. I ran down to the beach, and saw in the greatest of peril, far out on a large piece of ice separated by a great sheet of water from the shore ice, Peggy standing with Lucien beside her. "Peggy ! Peggy !" I called out, "darling Peggy, don't be frightened. Fred has gone for help." And I waved my handkerchief. She waved hers back, and I could just faintly hear her calling: "Don't fret, Olive. I'm not afraid. Everything will be all right." I watched her for just one minute and saw her stoop and say something to Lucien and put her arms around him, and then I heard Madame's baby crying, and I ran back into the cottage.

For a minute I could not see anything clearly. All the room seemed to be going round and I slid down on the floor by the bed. Soon I felt something cold and found it was Madame's hand hanging over the side of the bed, and then I remembered that I must try to help her. I drew

the pillows from under her head so that she could lie flat, and chafed her feet and hands. Then I covered Elise and the baby as warmly as I could and opened the door to let in fresh air and put some milk that I found in a jug in the cupboard on to warm. When it was hot I managed to get a little into Madame's mouth; she swallowed it and a little color came back to her face and soon she opened her eyes. When she saw me she said: "Oh, mon Lucien! *Mon cher petit bonhomme.*" And I think she would have fainted again, but the baby which had quieted off began to cry again, and I put it close beside her and then I began to cry myself and that seemed to help her.

"Poor leetle one," she said, "your friend is gone, too, me for one minute I forget dat. But let us not despair. *Le bon Dieu* loves de leetle childs and He is with dem."

"Yes, God is with them," I said. "And Fred went right off for help. I think the boats will be out now."

"And you will stay wid me, *n'est ce pas?*" said Madame. "And help me care for dese bebes?" And she clutched my hand very tight.

"For a little while," I said, "but I must soon go. I must find out what is being done."

"Yes, yes, you must go." Madame said, and

she tried to sit up, but turned very white again and had to lie down.

“Don’t try to move,” I said. “Drink a little more of the milk. I’ll stay with you till some one comes; you must not be left alone.”

“Oh, tank you, tank you,” Madame said. She drank the cup of milk that I brought her and then she was able to nurse the baby, and soon after fell asleep with it on her arm.

Then I looked out of the window, but the ice with Peggy and Lucien had floated down the river and where it had been there was open water. I don’t just remember what happened next, but think I must have slipped and fallen down, for I felt little Elise pulling my arm and found that I was on the floor at the foot of the bed. Madame was still sleeping quietly, and oh, I wanted so much to run away, but I knew that I could not do any good and I had promised to s’ay. So I put more wood on the fire and then I washed little Elise and made her look as neat as I could. She was a dear little thing about two years old, with big blue eyes and just enough soft brown hair to cover her little head. I put her in the big rocking-chair while I washed the dishes and made the room tidy and she chatted away nearly all the time, though I could not understand more than half of what she said. There was a big clock in the room and when it

struck twelve I thought Elise might be hungry, so I made her a bowl of bread and milk and she ate it all, and soon after fell asleep in the chair with her arms round a big gray cat.

Then I began to feel dreadfully lonely. While I could hear Elise chatter it wasn't so bad, but now everything was so still, and when I looked out I could only see the snow and ice and the cruel river that had taken Peggy away. Every moment I hoped that some one would come but no one did, though it was now one o'clock. I tried not to cry, but the tears would run down my cheeks and I was glad when I saw that Madame was awake and looking at me.

"*Pauvre petite,*" she said, "you are ver good to me. I pray *le bon Dieu* to bless you. I think die if you not stay."

"I am glad I stayed, then," I said, "and now you must try and drink some more soup. I have some warm water." I brought it to her and while she was drinking it I thought I heard a sound of bells; Madame heard it too for she put down her spoon and began to listen. "It is de bell of de shursh, *cherie,*" she said, "ope de door and we hear better."

I opened the door and we could hear our church chimes quite plainly. They seemed to be ringing louder than I had ever heard them before.

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” they were saying.

I shut the door and looked at Madame. She was lying back on her pillow but her eyes were sparkling and she clapped her hands. “Dey have got de child,” she said, “dey ring de bell for dat. *Go, ma petite*, I shall not be long alone now.”

I tried to get up, but something was the matter with me for I could not move from my chair, but I knew that Peggy was safe and I was happy.

In a few minutes we heard the sound of sleigh bells outside and the door opened and Philippe Moreau with Lucien in his arms, Mr. Brown with Peggy by the hand, Mrs. Archer and mother and the nurse they had gone to fetch, all came in together. At first we could do nothing but hug and kiss each other and some of us were crying. I put my arms round Peggy and mother put hers round both of us, and if I live to be a hundred I'll never feel happier.

Poor little Lucien was terribly hungry, though Peggy had given him all her sandwiches, so mother made them both drink some soup, and Mrs Archer made a cup of tea for everybody, and then she and mother and Peggy and I drove home.

It was not till the next day that I heard what

had happened. Fred and Peggy had to run quite a long way out on the ice to get Lucien, and they took the toboggan to bring him back quicker. As they were running towards the shore, Fred heard the ice cracking and they ran as fast as they could, but soon came to a great gap getting wider every minute. Fred jumped at once and stretched his hand to Peggy, but she would not leave Lucien. Fred coaxed her and said they could send help at once to him, and it only made things worse for her to stay; but Peggy said, "No, Fred, Lucien is so little he does not know what to do, and when the waves get rough he might fall off. I must stay with him and you must run for help. Run quickly! Don't lose a minute." So Fred rushed to the shore, and after speaking to me ran without stopping to his father's mill, the nearest place where help could be had. Mr. Archer stopped the mill and sent the men to the beach to get out the ice canoes while he drove up to the village himself and brought down Mr. Brown and Captain Ashley. The boats were now ready and plenty of men for each. Mr. Brown and Philippe Moreau were in the first boat that pushed out, and Mr. Archer and Captain Ashley in the second. Peggy and Lucien had floated a long way out and down the river. The ice was breaking up all round and there was great danger that they might

be crushed. There were six canoes out in all, but the river had become very rough and was so full of floating ice that it was hard to get along. The men had often to jump out and pull their canoes along. Most of the time they could see Peggy and Lucien. They were sitting on the toboggan, which Peggy had drawn as far from the water's edge as possible, and she had her arm around Lucien. Captain Ashley said that Mr. Brown and Philippe Moreau rowed like giants and the boat they were in was always ahead. They were getting near the children when a great lot of floating ice jammed around them and they could not move the canoe. The ice in front was so high that they could not see over it, but Philippe Moreau jumped out and climbed over and right on the other side were Peggy and Lucien standing upon the toboggan. The ice had crushed around them so that they had just room to stand but they were not hurt and the men soon dragged them out. Mr. Brown signaled to the other canoes to come up as quickly as possible, and before long they had all safely embarked and started for the shore. Half the time the men had to get out and drag the canoes, but at last they got into clear water and made straight for the shore. The beach was crowded with people. M. Laurent, the priest,

and Mr. Bonham, our minister, were there saying prayers together, and when the canoes came in everyone shouted and cheered and clapped their hands and Mr. Bonham sent Larry to tell the sexton to ring the chimes.

Mr. Brown, who had never let Peggy out of his arms, wanted to take her right home, but she said, "I must go to Lucien's for Olive is there," and so they brought her. On the road they met Mrs. Archer and mother driving back from Ste. Fidèle and that was how they all came together.

But I forgot to tell you that poor Fred ran so fast to the mill that when he had told his father what had happened he just dropped down on the floor and began to tremble and laugh and cry all at once. Mr. Archer got the wife of the care-taker of the mill to put him right to bed and at the time Peggy and Lucien were brought back he was fast asleep.

Mother says we must all be very proud of Peggy and that she is a real heroine. "For heroes and heroines, Olive," she said, "are people who have so much love in their hearts, that if they can do good to anyone they cannot think of themselves. I don't mean good to those they love, but to anybody. Peggy could not love Lucien for himself, she hardly knew him, but he was a little child who needed help

and she was willing to give up everything that was dear to her, even her loving and lovely life, rather than desert him; and because in that she was like the bravest man and greatest hero that ever lived, our little Peggy may truly be called a heroine."

And I think that mother was right.

OUR BIRTHDAY.

I don't think I have ever told you that Peggy and I have the same birthday. It is on the first of May, and when we read how little English children are able to spend the day outdoors dancing round May'poles and making garlands for May queens, we sometimes wish it would be a little warmer in Meadowhurst, where, on the first of May, the trees are just about in bud, and the fields beginning to get green. There are often great blocks of ice still floating in the river, and Mr. Bonham remembers once, long ago, the river being frozen across on May day, and some people put up a pole and danced round it in their fur coats and caps just for fun. However, we have lovely long, light days and lots of sunshine, and sometimes it is quite warm and pleasant, so that we have always thought that our birthday came at a very nice time.

The May day after Peggy's adventure on the ice was our tenth birthday, and about a week before I came down into the parlor one afternoon and found Mr. Bonham and M. Laurent, the priest, sitting with mother. I was surprised,

for though they are very good friends and would never think of wanting to kill each other like the Catholics and Protestants we are learning about in our history, they do not often pay calls together. I was very glad to see them, though, and they seemed to be very glad to see me. They laughed when I came into the room, and M. Laurent said as he shook hands: "Why, here is the little *gardemalade* (sick nurse) herself," and Mr. Bonham patted my head and said: "Dr. Clarke was getting jealous of me for making his patients well quicker than he could." I knew they were joking, but mother was smiling, too, and looking so pleased, that when they were gone I said: "I am sure you know something nice, mother. Do tell me what it is?" "I should like to tell you, Olive," she said, "but can you keep a secret?" "Why, of course, mother. Don't you remember how many secrets Peggy and I have kept together?" "But this must not be told to Peggy. Could you manage that?" "It would be hard," I said, "but if Peggy isn't to know, it must be about something nice for her, and I am sure I could keep from telling her till the right time came." "That is my wise little woman," said mother, "and now I shall tell you. You know how much the village people admired Peggy's bravery in staying with Lucien, and, as far as we

can see, saving his life. Well, they have been wishing ever since to give her some little present as a token of their love, but until the matter was decided I thought it best not to let you know, and at first Mr. and Mrs. Brown would not consent." "Oh, mother, why?"

"They thought that Peggy, being the loving little girl she is could not help doing as she did, and that it might even grieve her, for people to act as though it were a strange thing, for she thinks that anyone would do the same. So when M. Laurent told them what Mr. Archer's mill people, who were the first that thought of it, being fellow-workmen with Philippe Moreau, wished to do, they would not consent. But the mill people would not give up the idea and kept bringing their little offerings to M. Laurent, and meantime some of the English people spoke to Mr. Bonham, so this afternoon the two clergymen together succeeded in persuading Peggy's parents to let the present be given on certain conditions, and they called here to tell me of their success."

"What are the conditions, mother?"

"One was that the present must not be very valuable, the second that it must be given rather as a token of love to Peggy on the occasion of her being rescued from danger than as a reward for bravery: and the last I have been asked to keep

quite a secret for the present, but I may tell you later on."

"What is the present to be, mother?"

"That is just where we hope you can help us, Olive. It is hard to think of getting anything for Peggy, for she is always so satisfied. I never remember hearing her wish for anything for herself."

"She loves animals, mother, and I heard her say once that she would like a great big St. Bernard dog."

"Captain Ashley thought of that, but her parents would think it too expensive, and for myself, I like the idea of something that could be kept in the family for Peggy's children and grandchildren to see by-and-by."

"Oh, mother! How funny to think of Grandmother Peggy, but I know the very thing—a silver cup, and she would like it. I heard her say so after we had been reading 'The Angel of the Cup.'"

"I don't remember the story, Olive. Tell it to me."

"It was about a cup given to a knight for some great service done his king, and when he died he left directions that it should forever be passed on to that one of his descendants, decided in family council to be the noblest, the really noblest, I mean, the bravest and most loving;

and so it went on for hundreds of years, and the cup was held by all sorts of people—young, old, rich, poor; men, women, priests, sailors, soldiers—and the hope of every child born into the family was that he might one day gain it. But the family became smaller, for the men in those days were always getting killed in battle and the women going into convents to pray for them, and at last there was just one little girl left to hold the cup, and she wished nothing so much as to be able to do something worthy of it; so she grew up and was about to be married, when the plague broke out in London, where she lived, and instead of hurrying away from town, as all the people did who could, she stayed and learned how to care for the sick and went from house to house tending them, till they died or recovered; and because she always had her cup with her and used it to give the poor suffering people cooling drinks, she was called ‘The Angel of the Cup.’ After she had tended more people than I can remember, she took the disease herself and died, and the cup was buried with her.”

“What a pretty story, Olive; and I am so glad to know of something that Peggy would like. I shall write a note to Mr. Bonham about it and you might take it for me when you go to look for hepaticas this afternoon, for the elm tree field where you always find the first is quite near

the rectory. That is where you meant to go, is it not?"

"Yes, mother: but Peggy has a cold and is not coming, so there will be only Fred and I. Does he know the secret?"

"He may, but if not you can tell him, for we meant as soon as the matter was quite settled to let all Peggy's friends know. You had better run for your hat and jacket, for I see Fred coming down the street and Larry is with him. You may tell them both and perhaps, between you all, you can think of a pretty motto for the cup."

We were soon walking along the road and the boys were as pleased as they could be to hear about the present, and promised not even to look as if they knew a secret before Peggy. About the motto. Larry said there would be no trouble, for he knew lots.

"But perhaps they're not the right kind," I said. "We want a suitable one."

"Well, what could be suitable than this." said Larry: "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep?"

"That's not a motto at all," said Fred, "it's the name of a song."

"Is that so?" said Larry. "Well, never mind, I know lots more. I've writ more'n a hundred of them in my copybook. Here now, 'A new broom,' no, 'A rolling pin gathers no moss,'

'Nine stitches save time,' oh, bother! They seem to be getting mixed and I can't think of the right one, Hurrah! here it is: 'Time and Tide wait for no Man.' There's a beauty, and the suitablest of all, for if it hadn't been for the tide the ice wouldn't have floated off."

"Those are all proverbs, Larry," I said. "They're not mottoes."

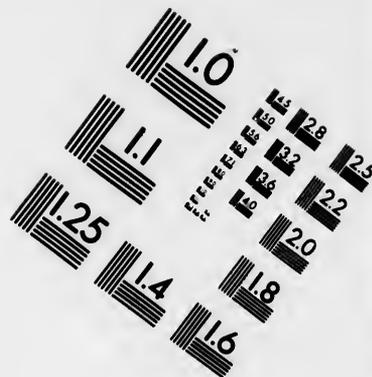
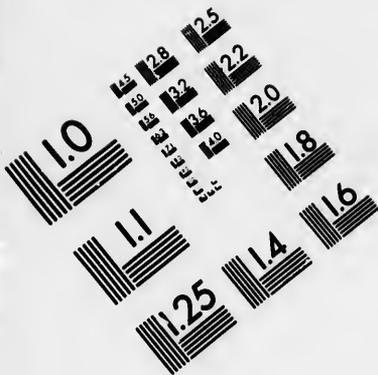
"Well, I know a motto, too, sure and certain," said Larry, "and it's the proudest motto for the young. It says so in our reader. 'Write it in lines of gold,' but silver would do, and it has a holy, cheering, power, 'There's no such word as fail.'"

"I wish you'd let up, Larry," said Fred, "and let some one else talk. We don't want anything like that. It's more a sort of a saying you'd like, Olive, isn't it?" Something like the 'Always Ready' on the fire engine, or the mottoes families have. If the cup was for me I'd like 'God Save the Queen' better than anything else, but how do you think Peggy would like 'Onward and Upward?'"

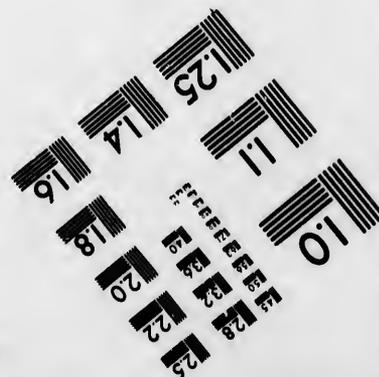
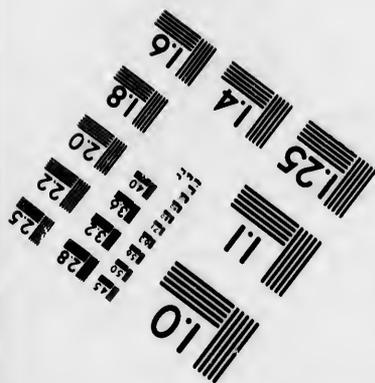
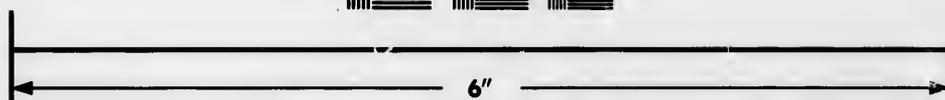
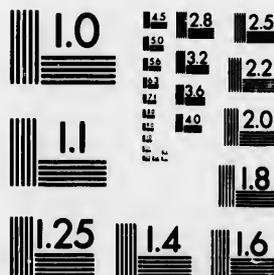
"It wouldn't do at all," said Larry, "there was no upward to it. The tide was running down just as fast as ever it could."

"That is more the kind I would like, though," I said, "but suppose we ask Mr. Bonham. Here we are at the rectory."





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"I think that nothing could be more suitable than the cup," said Mr. Bonham, when he had read mother's note, "and now you want a motto?"

"Yes," I said, "and it seem so hard to get just the right one. It ought to be something that would remind us of the day, and of Peggy herself, besides being sweet and good to look at and helpful to her all her life."

"Well, there is one word that does and is all that," said Mr. Bonham, "and that word is love. It was love that made Peggy do as she did, so that must be our first word. And because all hard tasks become easy when done through love, it is often said that love conquers everything. I think we could not get a better motto, but we might put it into Latin, as it is a little shorter, and mottoes are generally written in that language. '*Caritas vincit omnia.*' Do you like that?"

We all thought it a lovely motto and said so, then after thanking Mr. Bonham, we bade him good-bye and went to look for our flowers.

On our birthday morning I was awakened by Fred and Larry firing their brass cannons under my window for a salute and I jumped up and found that it was a lovely warm day. As soon as I was dressed I ran down to the dining-room, where I found breakfast ready and a basket of

sanguinarias and hepaticas, which the boys had brought, in the middle of the table. Mother, father and Basil all kissed me and wished me many happy returns, and then I looked at my presents, which were spread out on a little table near my place. There was a dear little china tea set from mother, and silver tea spoons from father to go with it, a little brass hot-water kettle from nurse, and a tiny silver butter-knife from Basil. The little table was from father and mother and the pretty cloth and napkins from Peggy, who had worked my initials on them herself. I was so delighted that I could hardly thank everybody enough, for I had been wanting just such things for a long time. My old tea set was so small that the cups had to be filled a dozen times before people had enough, and so many of the plates were broken that we had to make out with oyster shells, and my butter-knife was an old ink eraser.

"These are all good things, Olive," said mother. "You are ten years old now and can be trusted to take care of nice cups and saucers, and these will do you for a great many years to make tea for your friends."

"I'll take great care of them mother," I said. "I'll try to have every one to show to my children by-and-by." At ten o'clock Peggy came as usual to have lessons with me until half past

twelve, and when they were over and she had seen my presents I went home with her to see hers. They were a sweet little silver watch from her father and mother, a little blue cushioned rocking chair from Alfred, a hammock from John and the "Katy" books from me. The dearest present of all, though, was a lovely African kitten from Norah, Mrs. Brown's cook. Her young man, who lives in town, got it from the mate of a ship and sent it out to Norah on purpose for Peggy. It was just a beauty, striped in two shades of Maltese blue.

In the afternoon Mrs. Brown, mother, Peggy and I drove to Kinloch, six miles out on the mountain road back of Meadowhurst, to see old Mrs. Keith, who was Mrs. Brown's nurse when she was a little girl, and after she was married nursed her children. This is always one of our best birthday treats, for the mountain air is so fresh and sweet and it is so lovely to drive through the woods when everything is just waking up. Mrs. Keith, too, is just the dearest old lady. She came from the Highlands of Scotland, where she used to live with Peggy's grandfather, and she speaks in such a soft, sweet voice. She calls us "bairnies" and Peggy her "puir sweet lammie," and she always gives us barley scones and a drink of new milk when we go to see her. I have not time to tell about our

visit, except that she gave Peggy a quilt made out of pieces of Mrs. Brown's dresses from when she was a baby till ten years old; a basket of trout fresh out of the lake near her house, and some shortbread and Scotch bun that she had baked on purpose for her "lammie's" birthday. We got back to the Browns' just in time for tea and found Fred and Larkie waiting on the veranda. We were so surprised to see Larkie. Mrs. Brown and mother and Fred knew she was coming, but they had not told us because they wanted us to have a surprise. Larkie was taller than ever and told us that her mother had taken her from school because she was growing too fast, and had sent her to Meadowhurst for a little change. She brought us each a tea rose and a box of chocolate creams.

After tea, as the evening had turned rather chilly, Mrs. Brown had a wood fire lighted in the parlor and we all sat round and had what Peggy calls "a happy talk 'n' time." Larkie had lots to tell us about her life in town, and mother and Mrs. Brown told us stories about when they were little girls. While we were talking we heard the door-bell ring ever so many times, and quite a lot of people came in, but they all went into the library. Mr. Brown went to speak to them and in a few minutes he came back and said, "Olive and Peggy are wanted in

the library by a number of friends who have come to wish them many happy returns of their birthday." "How kind they are," said Peggy. "You will thank them for us, won't you father?"

"No, little daughter," said Mr. Brown, "you must speak for yourself." So we followed him to the library, which we found just crowded with people. M. Laurent, Mr Bonham and all our friends, Christa and Basil, with their nurses, Philippe Moreau with his wife Lucien, and a lot of work people from Mr. Archer's mill, were all there. When we came into the room Mr. Laurent said, "We wish these young ladies a very happy birthday," and then everyone clapped and cheered. When they were quiet Peggy and I stepped a little in front and Peggy said, "Thank you all very much. Olive and I shall always remember your kindness and we hope you will all stay and have some birthday cake." They all clapped again, especially Larry, who called out: "Every time, Peggy," and Basil said: "Ess, Cissa and me will eat ze take." Everybody laughed and then Mr. Bonham said: "We shall all be very happy to accept the kind invitation of Miss Margaret Brown and Miss Olive Everett to share their cake with them, and in return we hope that they will accept a little gift from us. I am sure that no one here forgets that terrible day, when for some hours two

precious little lives were in great danger, when one would almost certainly have been lost had not one of these dear little girls freely risked her own and kept up her courage through a trial that would have been too much for many a strong man. And her little friend at the same time, in a lonely cottage by a sick bed, putting her grief aside and doing from moment to moment just what she could, showed as true courage, and our good friend, Dr. Clarke, tells me that her care and thoughtfulness also saved a life." "Mr. Bonham speaks what we all feel," said M. Laurent, "and as a token of our love and gratitude to these little ladies we hope that they will accept from us all, these silver cups." As he spoke he lifted up a white cloth and took from beneath two beautiful silver cups which he handed to Peggy and to me.

We just couldn't say a single word, so Mr. Brown got up and said: "As these little girls seem too surprised to speak for themselves, I must thank you in their name for these handsome cups, which as a token of your love will always be very precious to them, while the motto you have chosen, 'Love conquers all things,' will, I feel sure, help them to live as our heavenly Father, whose dearest name is Love, would have them. And now I think they must try to say something for themselves."

So Peggy and I went around thanking people as well as we could and showing the cups. They were goblet-shaped, lined with gold, had a sweet angel face on one side, and on the other our initials and just below, "Meadowhurst, March 10, 189—." Peggy's had daisies chased all over it and mine, olive leaves and flowers. The motto was the same on each and was engraved around the base. When all the visitors had gone I said, "Mother, I don't understand why they gave me a cup, and I'm sure I don't deserve it. I did nothing brave, only stayed with poor Madame Moreau when there was no one else there, and I didn't even want to do that. I would have liked to have said so, but I couldn't."

"Why, Olive, you dear," said Peggy, "that was just it—that you did it when it was hard, and you didn't want to, and you were really useful, too. Now, I did nothing but stay where I was. They ought not to have given me a cup, and I would never have taken it if they hadn't given you one, too."

"Peggy is right, Olive," said Mrs. Brown. "I told your mother when first she spoke to me, that I could not let Peggy accept any gift unless you were equally remembered."

"Yes, Olive," mother said, "that was the other condition, and all who were concerned agreed with Mrs. Brown."

OUR SUMMER VISITORS.

Peggy and I were ever so glad to have Larkie Adams back in Meadowhurst. If there had been nothing else to make our birthday happy, it would have been enough to have her come. But at first we were a little afraid that she would be lonely, for Fred had to be at school nearly all day, and Peggy and I had lessons in the morning. But Larkie never seemed to think of such a thing. "Why, no, Olive," she said once when I asked her, "I can't be lonely when there are so many nice things to do all the time. I love to help Uncle Fred with his garden. You know we have no garden in the city; only a grass plat in front. Then I take care of the chickens and auntie lets me help her in the house. Besides, I often go to the Ashley's, and I always have fun there. It is such a treat to see little Hugh strong and well again."

We were all very happy about Hugh. At the time his father married he was sent to a hospital in town to be treated for his lameness, and at first the doctors thought he would be cured in three months, but it was only the week before

our birthday, after nearly five months' treatment, that he was quite well and able to be sent home. He had found it very hard to be away from his father for so long, and some of the treatment was very painful; but Captain Ashley, who went often to see him, promised that if he would do his very best to be patient and cheerful, he would make him a present of anything he liked to ask for when he was cured. Hugh did try, and was so brave and bright that all who helped to take care of him wondered at him, and now that he had come home well and strong, his father was ready to keep his promise, but Hugh seemed to find it hard to decide what to ask for.

"It wouldn't take me long to make up my mind," said Fred one warm evening near the end of May that we were all sitting under the trees in the cherry orchard. "I'd ask for a bicycle, and then I'd explore the country for miles around and make all sorts of discoveries."

"I'd rather have a boat," I said. "I like exploring on water better than on land, and, besides, you could all come with me, and perhaps if a steamer upset I might be able to row out and save somebody's life."

"That would be splendid," said Peggy, "but I think, perhaps, I would choose a pony, a pure white pony. It seems a little selfish, for, of

course, I couldn't bring you all out riding with me, but I could let you have lots of turns. What would you like, Larry?"

"A whole barrel of molasses made into candy," said Larry.

"Oh! how greedy you are," said Fred.

"No, sir! I'm not," said Larry. "You'd be a lot greedier asking for a \$100 bicycle that only you could ride. My candy wouldn't cost nearly so much and I could give some to everyone in the village, so there! I'm the ungreediest of you all."

"Yes, indeed, Larry," said Larkie, "yours would really be a sweet choice, and I dare say Fred would enjoy a treat of that kind as much as anyone."

Fred looked cross for a moment, but it is hard to be cross with Larkie, so he said: "Well, I suppose I might, but still I'm sure Captain Ashley wouldn't like Hugh to choose that."

"No," said Larkie, "I think he wants him to choose something that will last. I told him that I thought a little gold watch would be nice, and he said he would like it, but there was something he wanted more, but it would cost so much he didn't like to ask his father for it."

"Did he tell you what it was?" asked Peggy.

"No, for Captain Ashley came in just then,

and though Hugh loves his father dearly, he is still a little shy of him; but I am going to see him again to-morrow, and I'm sure I can coax him to tell me. Why do you look so grave, Olive?"

"Oh," I said, "I was just thinking it was odd for Hugh to want an expensive present. He was such a simple little fellow and used to little; but you haven't said what you would choose, Larkie."

"I'll not tell this evening," said Larkie, "but I think that perhaps Hugh and I want the same thing and if I'm right, Olive, you won't be disappointed."

Peggy and I were asked to drink tea at the Archer's the next day, and when Larkie met us at the garden gate, her eyes were just dancing with joy.

"Come on to the summer house," she said, "Fred is there, but I wouldn't tell him anything till you came."

We were soon in the summer house and then Larkie told us that what little Hugh wanted most of all was to have some poor children from town sent out to spend a whole month at Meadowhurst just as he had been, but had been afraid to ask his father for so great a favor on account of the trouble and expense.

"Has he asked him now?" said Peggy.

"Yes, and, oh! Peggy, Captain and Mrs. Ashley have been so good. Hugh asked for six and they said he might have twelve."

"Twelve," said Fred. "Oh, cricky! Where will they all sleep?"

"They are to camp in the Ashley's big new barn," said Larkie. "Twelve camp beds are to be put up in the loft, and the lower part is to be divided by curtains into two parts, a dining-room and a play-room, where the boys can have games on rainy days. At the back of the barn there is to be a little kitchen and a wash room."

"Who is to choose the boys?" I said.

"Hugh has given the names of six who are to come from the hospital, and mother is to choose the other six," said Larkie. "She will choose them from amongst her mission school children."

"When are they coming?" asked Fred.

"Not till the first of July. There is a good deal to be done first and those who go to school will not have their holidays till then. I shall not be here," added Larkie, "but I can help mother in town to get the children ready."

We thought it would be very long to wait till the first of July, but really we hardly had time to do all we wanted to. We hunted up all the pretty pictures and Christmas cards we could, and the boys decorated the barn sitting-room

with the best and Peggy and I made the rest into scrap books. Even Christa helped to cut out, and Basil picked up the clippings. We found a great many picture books too, and mother put linen covers on them. Fred, who is clever with tools, made some toy boats, and he and Larry painted and rigged them. Mrs. Archer cut out a lot of wild animals, bears, tigers, lions, etc., and stuffed them, and Mrs. Clarke had a hospital for mending broken toys. The children Hugh had chosen were, as he had been, not very strong, and we wanted to have lots of things to amuse them. You may think it was pretty hard to keep on at our lessons till the 24th of June, but we managed to do it, and Fred even got a prize, of which he was very proud.

The visitors were expected on the first of July, and on the afternoon of that day a regular procession drove down to the station to meet them. First Captain and Mrs. Ashley, with Hugh and Basil in the wagon, and then followed three hay carts with big straw beds laid down in them, covered with clean cotton carpet and the sides trimmed with green boughs. Peggy, Christa, Fred, Larry and I drove in the first and the other two were empty, ready for the city boys. We had only been at the station a few minutes when the train came puffing in and Captain and Mrs. Ashley went on board at once and brought

out the twelve boys. The two smallest were about Hugh's size and all the others were older, but the eldest was not more than ten, and at first we were disappointed for they were not laughing and singing and shouting as we were, but looked rather frightened and most of them were so pale and thin and had such sad, old faces that Peggy and I could hardly keep from crying and none of us knew what to say. I mean no one in our cart, but little Hugh knew very well. He shook hands with them all and said, "I'm very glad to have you here to see me," and Basil, who likes to copy Hugh said, "Velly dlad dood boys tum to see me." "Here are Tod and Teddy, father," Hugh went on, "who used to come and see me when I lived with Mrs. Morrison, and this is Billy, who was in the hospital with a broken arm, and his brother Dick. We're just going to have a fine time."

"Wait a minute, boys," said the captain. "I want to have your photograph taken just as you stand." So that was done and then they were all tucked into the carts and we started for the barn, or rather as Fred insisted on calling it, the camp.

Mrs. Morrison, who was to cook for the boys and have them under her care, was standing at the door with her two little girls as we drove up and as she had known some of the children in

town they soon felt at home with her. Hugh, Fred and Larry showed them all over the barn, and it really looked very pretty with all the pictures and green boughs that we had nailed up. In the dining-room a long table was spread with flowered crockery and ornamented with bouquets of daisies and buttercups. In the play-room there were two or three smaller tables with picture books and some of the toys laid out on them, and there were two big, old-fashioned sofas that made the room look very cozy. The loft which Fred tried to make us call the dormitory looked almost the nicest. It was divided by curtains into four rooms, each holding three camp beds, three chairs and a set of three shelves. The beds were covered with bright patchwork quilts and a pretty picture hung at the head of each. At the end of the loft a door opened into the two rooms above the stable where Jerry, Captain Ashley's man, slept. When they had seen everything, they were brought down to the wash-room to bathe their hands and faces, and were just through when the tea-bell rang and they all filed into the dining-room, Hugh leading the way. Mrs. Morrison had a lovely supper ready for them, country bread and butter, rich new milk, wild strawberries and some delicious seed cookies that Mrs. Brown had sent over.

It would fill a whole book to tell about all the good times those boys had during the next month. It took two or three days just to show them all the wonders inside "bounds," as Fred now called the Ashley's grounds. There were the horses, Bob and Charley, who worked on the farm; Black Bess, Captain Ashley's black mare, and Blonde, Mrs. Ashley's bay pony; Dapple, the big spotted cow, and Daisy, the little black one, with their calf babies; besides Keeper, the watch dog, and Sylvie, the water spaniel. There were the chickens, geese and ducks; the turkey gobblers, the proud old peacock, and Hugh's rabbits, besides the sheep and lambs in the hill pasture, and Sir Joseph Porter, the big black ram. Then there were all the pleasant places, the trout stream, where Hugh had his water wheels, the duck pond, the flower and vegetable gardens, and the orchard where we all had our favorite seats in the gnarly apple trees. But best of all, was the pine grove at the back of the barn. It was always cool there, and besides two big swings Captain Ashley had four hammocks slung, and in a cleared spot there a long table and benches, and three or four times the children had their supper outdoors.

Hay-making was just beginning when they came, and none of them had ever seen it before.

Some did not even know that hay was made of grass, and they could hardly believe till they saw it that the sun would change the fresh green grass into dry brown hay. Even to see the cows milked was a treat to them, and the first time that Billy Blake, the boy who had been in the hospital, found a nest with three warm new eggs in it, he just trembled with joy, and could hardly carry them in to Mrs. Morrison. The boys weren't allowed to go out of bounds without some grown person with them and permission from Captain Ashley, but twice a week he arranged to have someone take them to the beach for an afternoon, so that they could swim and wade and play in the sand and gather shells and pebbles to take home. Once he took them all with Hugh, Fred and Larry for a sail down the river in a schooner to a curious place called Caliban's cave. Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Ashley, Mrs. Clarke and mother all treated them to hay-cart drives and each morning and afternoon Mrs. Milligan took one of them out with her when she drove round with the milk, and this was one of their greatest treats, especially when she let them drive old Dobbin. Something they liked very much was helping with Mrs. Archer's flower mission. Every Saturday morning she and all who could help her met in the school-house and packed baskets of wild and garden

flowers, which they sent in by the noon train to Larkie's mother, who sent them that same afternoon, not to the hospitals, but to poor people's houses, especially where there was sickness or trouble.

There were not many rules to break. The boys had to be in their places at meal times and in bed by nine o'clock. No fighting was allowed or wrong words, and they each had to do an hour's work each day, weeding, gathering fruit, making hay or helping Jerry in any way he wished. Each boy was taught to make his own bed and after meals two of them helped Mrs. Morrison to carry out and wash up the dishes. Any work more than this was paid for and some of the largest boys earned three or four dollars in the month. From nine to ten every morning many of the boys that liked had a chance to study a little. Mrs. Ashley was ready to help them at that time and two or three of them never missed a day.

Every Sunday the Ashleys brought them all to church in the morning, and in the afternoon they had Sunday school in the pine grove. It was really a story school, for though they were taught a few verses, nearly all the time went in telling stories out of the Bible. Mr. Bonham always came and had a little talk with the boys and then they sang hymns for half an hour.

The rest of the day they spent as they liked, but no one was allowed to go out of bounds. There were only five rainy days and the boys hardly minded them, because they found so many pleasant things to do indoors. The toys and games and picture books were brought out then and one wet afternoon Mr. Archer brought his Mother Goose magic lantern and showed them "Little Boy Blue," "Jack Horner," "Mistress Mary," "Miss Muffet," "Bopeep" and all the rest, and as each picture was shown Fred recited the rhyme. Another rainy day Larry came. He had a very red face from carrying a heavy jar. It held a gallon of molasses, which he had bought with money he had earned himself and he coaxed Mrs. Morrison to let them have a grand candy pull, and Fred, who was there, enjoyed it as much as anyone.

Fred and Larry were allowed to play with the boys as they liked, but Peggy, Christa and I only went down to see them with our mothers or when there was something particular like the magic lantern. It was funny to see the boys looking at Christa. They seemed to think her a fairy or an angel or something of the kind, and I didn't wonder, for she always wears white and has such shining eyes and curls.

But the last day came and the hay carts once more drove up to the barn to take the children

back to the station. But they did not look like the same children. They were all brown and rosy now, and some of them had grown quite stout and they laughed and shouted just as we did. They all had parcels, too, the toys which had been divided amongst them and things that they had gathered in the woods and on the beach, and Mrs. Brown had given each a bag of cookies.

Captain Ashley had them photographed again just as they stood when they came out of the barn, and then they piled into the hay carts and we all drove down with them. While they waited at the station they gave cheers for Captain and Mrs. Ashley, for Hugh and Mrs. Morrison and Meadowhurst. Then the train came in and Captain Ashley took them all on board. "Good bye, good bye!" we all shouted. "Tum aden! tum aden! dood boys," Basil called out, and then the train rolled away and was soon out of sight round the curve.

THE CHILDREN'S ROCK.

On a sunny afternoon in late August petit Jean Labranche and his sister, petite Marie, were playing on the beach at St. Isaie. They played there every day, for though Jean, a dark-eyed, dark-skinned, thoughtful looking lad was but seven years old, and petite Marie a plump, fair child with long, light hair and soft gray eyes, scarcely five, grandmère always felt that they were quite safe when on the beach, which was flat and sandy and sloped so gradually that when at high water the village children went in to bathe, they had to wade a long way from shore to get even waist deep. There were no steep rocks off which little ones might slip into deep water and no poisonous growth of any kind on the beach. So the children played there for hours every day, sometimes in and sometimes out of the water. They had scores of plays. Sometimes they dug wells in the sand, which the incoming tide would fill with water, or planted Gardens of Eden, such as good M. le Curé had told them of, and in which a large black stone

represented Adam and a slender, white one, Eve, while a long dulse tail did duty as the serpent.

It did not matter that he was generally longer than the garden. The larger wickedness he represented. At least this was petit Jean's idea, and petite Marie, who did not yet go to catechism herself, devoutly believed all that he told her. The tree in the middle of the garden bore all manner of fruits, according to the season. On this afternoon the seductive serpent was offering a bunch of choke-cherries to Eve. Another favorite play was keeping shop. On a large, flat stone they would spread their wares, shells, sand, berries, flowers and marbles, which petit Jean made out of the clay to be found at low tide. Again they tried their hand at modeling cups and saucers, which they dried in the sun and Jean had made a bowl which truly would hold water.

But the children did not spend all their time in play. Every morning petit Jean wheeled the strong little cart, that was his greatest treasure, down to the beach and brought home two or three loads of drift wood, while petite Marie, trotting beside him, filled her little basket with chips, so that in summer grandmère needed no other fuel than that sent her by the sea. Many an hour, too, the children spent gathering the delicate little shells, pale pink, blue, yellow, or pure white, to be found in abundance in the

sand, and with which grandmère decorated the picture frames and boxes by the sale of which she gained a little money. And when at low tide, Père Marcotte visited his fishery Jean would help to carry the fish home, gladly taking in payment a bowl of silvery smelts or pale green sardines.

Every Sunday Jean and Marie went to mass with grandmère and when the service was over passed into the cemetery at the side of the church, and walked to the low, green mound, beneath which they had always been told that their parents and baby sister slept in the care of the good God. Only a plain black cross marked the spot, but each Sunday the children strewed the grave with fresh flowers. Petite Marie could not remember her parents at all, but petit Jean had never forgotten the sad September day nearly three years ago, when brave papa went off alone in his boat to fetch the doctor for maman, who was ill, and returned to them no more. A fearful storm had broken shortly after he left and it was supposed that his little boat had been swamped and sunk. Two days later his body had drifted in at L'Esperance, nine miles lower down, and been brought back to them by the kindly people of that parish. And maman, who lay in her bed with a tiny baby girl beside her, had not even wept when they told her the sad

news. She only asked grandmère to bring Jean and Marie to her bedside, and she had kissed them and stroked their hair and bade petit Jean to always remember dear papa, and how kind and brave and honest he had been, and to love and obey grandmère, and help her care for petite Marie. Then Marie got sleepy and grandmère carried her away and Jean sat alone with maman holding her thin hand in his little brown one, and resting his dark curls against her soft cheek. In the next room grandmère was softly singing:

* *Dors, Bébé, dors, fermez tez beaux yeux;*

Dors, Bébé, dors, dormons tous les deux,

and as she sang petit Jean, too, became sleepy and nestled closer to his mother, who, tightening her clasp on his hand, softly joined in grandmère's lullaby, *Dors, Bébé dors, dormons tous les deux*, and so they both fell asleep; but with maman it was the sleep that knows no waking, and two days later she and papa were laid in the same grave, which before long, opened to receive Rose Blanche, the wee baby whom all grandmère's care had not been able to keep alive.

What Jean best remembered after this was the house being full of neighbors, who took away with them beds, tables, chairs and many other things, so that the pretty home looked big and bare. But that did not much matter, for

the next day they moved to the little red-roofed cottage by the beach. He was sorry though when some one came and took away their cow and pig and chickens, and could not quite understand why grandmère should let them do it even though they gave her pretty silver money instead. But she told him that now brave papa was gone, she needed money to buy food and clothes for him and Marie, and it was not long before many things helped to make him understand that now they were poor. Grandmère, who used to sit in her *chaise berceuse* and nurse petite Marie or tell him stories while she knitted warm stockings and mittens, now was glad to go and wash and scrub for the village people. And when she came home tired at night she must make their ménage, wash and sew and cook for him and Marie. When other work failed she went into the woods and dug up roots or gathered herbs for which le Doctor Belleau paid her a small sum. She was always working, and yet it was becoming plain even to petit Jean that all her earnings barely sufficed to pay for their daily needs. He longed to help her, and at the time our story opens had already turned over many plans in his mind.

He and Marie had been gathering shells all afternoon, and now their little basket was full and they sat down in the shade of a tall boulder

to rest. There were many boulders on the beach, and petit Jean had often seen the summer visitors to St. Isaie chip off little pieces with hammers and carry them carefully away. Xavier, the schoolmaster's son, had told him these were taken to the great city far away, and sold for money. One immense boulder, however, they could never reach, for it stood so far out that at dead low water it was still far beyond wading distance, while at high tide only the top, shaped something like a castle, could be seen. About this boulder Xavier, who had an oriental imagination, had told petit Jean many wonderful stories. It was said to be sparkling all over with garnets. His own uncle had gone out and broken off a piece which he had sold for—Xavier was not sure how much, but the oftener he told the story the larger the sum grew, and at present it was ten good piastres. Ten good piastres! What a sum that seemed to petit Jean, all whose purchases were made with sous. And there were a hundred sous in one piastre. What might he not buy for grandmère with ten? For weeks he had brooded over the idea of going out to the rock himself, but dreaded to ask grandmère's permission, lest she might refuse it. On this afternoon, as he sat looking at the boulder, the desire to go so possessed him that he felt he must speak of it if but to petite Marie. "Petite

Marie," said he, "dost thou know that grand-mère is very poor?" "But yes," said Marie, who had all a little French girl's instinct for dress, "her shawl is faded and her robe for Sunday has been mended many times. It is not like the fine robe of Mme. Paquin."

"No," said Jean, "and, oh, petite Marie, thou and I, we have milk with our bread, but grand-mère eats hers dry, and she works when she is tired and while we sleep, and it makes me sad here," and petit Jean put his hand on his heart, "for if brave papa had lived he would have taken care of her and made her happy, and now she must work hard, not only for herself, but for thee and for me. Oh, little sister, if I had money I would buy her a Sunday robe and a shawl and shoes."

"And I should buy her a bonnet," said Marie, "for truly, Jean, it is of an ugliness that which she wears."

"And she should have a fauteuil," continued Jean, "and rest all day, and old Thérèse should come and make the ménage."

"And we would go to the magasin and buy her tea, and sugar, and butter, and sirop, and galette," said Marie, whose imagination could go no further; "but, oh, Jean, where can we get money?"

"Dost thou see the big rock out there, pe-

tite Marie?" said Jean. "Xavier has told me that it is sparkling all over with precious stones, and if I could go out and break off a piece, I might sell it for ten good piastres, as did the Uncle Barbeau; and see, there is Père Marcotte's boat, and the sea is rising now and is as smooth as glass."

"And there is a hammer in the boat," said Marie, her eyes sparkling, "for Père left it there after he mended his fishery this morning. Oh, Jean, let us go out."

"Nay, little sister," said Jean, "thou must stay here. Grandmère might let me go, for I have often pulled the boat out to the fishery, but thou hast never been in it, and I dare not take thee without leave."

"But I will go," said Marie; "thou shalt not leave me here alone, Jean," and her soft eyes filled with tears. Jean hesitated. He felt that grandmère might not even let him go, much less Marie, but he could not bear to see his little sister cry, and otherwise he would not feel safe to leave her alone, and old Catherine, who kept house for M. le Curé, and often gave grandmère work, had come down for her that afternoon and Jean knew she would not be home before 6 o'clock. He felt sure that he could care for his little sister, so, after a moment's indecision, he helped her into the boat

and they were soon paddling out into the river.

Jean rowed well for such a little fellow, but the distance to the boulder was very much greater than he had imagined, and before he reached it the angelus was ringing, but out on the water the children did not hear it.

* * * * *

The boulder on the side which faced the shore was almost perpendicular, but rowing round to the other side Jean found that it sloped gradually to the water in a succession of ridges, which gave it something the appearance of a rugged staircase. He landed without difficulty, and carefully helped Marie to get out, then fastening the boat rope to a spur of rock, the children climbed to the top of the boulder, which to their surprise they found sank down in a hollow, in which they could stand as in a stone pulpit. This hollow was large enough to contain three or four people, and so deep that Marie's sunny head could hardly be seen as she and Jean stood in it, curiously examining its sides in hope of seeing some spur of rock off which a piece might possibly be chipped. There were several, and they did seem to be sparkling with something, and Jean hammered away vigorously with Père Marcotte's hammer till he finally succeeded in breaking off a good-sized piece.

"Oh, Jean," said Marie at this moment, as she peered over the side of the boulder, "what shall we do? Père Marcotte's boat is gone and is drifting, but drifting fast up the river, and he will be so angry if his boat is lost, and our shells are in the boat, Jean, and my sun-bonnet, too."

Jean eagerly turned in the direction indicated by Marie, and there indeed, was the boat, which had become unfastened with the rising tide, and was already at some distance from the boulder.

PART II.

When Jean saw the boat drifting away, he gave a cry of despair and wrung his little hands. Its loss and the anger of their somewhat surly old neighbor would indeed be a serious matter; but the dreadful truth that at once flashed upon him, was that he and petite Marie had now no means of return—that they stood alone on the boulder with the tide rapidly rising and night coming on. Indeed it was already dusk, and a thick fog rising which he knew would make it impossible for them to be seen by anyone from the shore. Jean would not cry, but he could not help his voice trembling as he said: “Yes, the boat has gone, Marie, and we must wait here till some one comes to look for us.”

“Will they come soon?” asked Marie.

“I do not know, little sister,” said Jean. “Perhaps not very soon because they do not know that we are here, but we will call as loud as we can and they may hear us.”

He had no hope of this himself, but knew that the idea would divert Marie and, while mechanically shouting with her, made up his childish mind to hide his worst fears from the little

one whom he had promised maman to care for. He would do his best to protect and comfort her till help should come. But as he looked at the rising tide he shuddered. It rose he knew almost to the height of the boulder, and in high tide completely over it, in which case the water would pour into the hollow where he and Marie were standing—but he would not think of that. If it were not a high tide he and petite Marie would be safe in their rocky hollow till daylight, when he would surely be able to signal to some one on shore.

“You are not calling, Jean,” said Marie, “and I want someone to come. I am hungry and I want to see grandmère.”

“Be patient, little one,” said Jean. “There is, perhaps, no one on the beach to hear us, but while we wait we will play that this is our boat and that we are sailing to Cap des Oiseaux, and—see, Marie, here is supper,” and Jean drew from his pocket a good sized cake of pain d'épice which old Catherine had given him when she came to seek grandmère, and which he had saved to share with Marie when at play.

“And I have blueberries in my little pail,” said Marie, and for a short time she was diverted and happy; but the brief twilight of late summer was soon over, and as darkness gathered about them, a feeling of desolation that

she could not describe, came over the little one, and to Jean's despair she burst into tears, sobbing pitifully.

"Oh Jean, I like it not here. I want to go home; I want to go to bed; I want grandmère."

"Thou art sleepy, little sister," said Jean. "Lie down and I will cover thee with my blouse and sing to thee as grandmère does, and I shall stay awake and watch so as to wake thee up when some one comes."

"But I am afraid to sleep here, Jean," said Marie, "the sky is so far away, and the water is so black and it is so lonely. Can *le bon Dieu* see us here, Jean?"

"But yes, dear little one," said Jean. "M. le Curé has often told me that He is always with us and He can see us and love us and care for us here just as at home. It is His sky that is over us, and His waves that are around us;" and though here petite Jean's voice trembled a little, his hands were steady as he wrapped Marie up warmly in his jacket and stroked her fair hair gently while he sang the little hymn asking God's blessing, which he and brave papa before him had learned at grandmère's knee; but his voice would quaver and at the verse:

"Pour que la route suivie
Tot ca tard me mene au port,
Benissez-moi dans la vie,
Benissez-moi dans la mort."

he broke down for a minute, but Marie murmured sleepily, "Sing on, dear Jean," and with a supreme effort he continued:

Soit qu'un prompt trepas m'enleve,
Soit que mon destin s'acheve
Dans l'ordre de vos desseins,
J'irai chanter vos louanges,
Jeune, au milieu de vos anges,
Vieux au milieu de vos saints."

And now petite Marie was fast asleep. The tide would be high about 9 o'clock and Jean thought it must be nearly that now, so as gently as possible withdrawing himself from Marie he stood up and found that the water had nearly reached the top of the boulder. Would it rise any higher? He watched intently. Yes, it was still mounting. He let his hand droop over the water with his fingers just above it and soon felt its cold touch. Now it was not more than four inches from the top of the boulder and petit Jean straightened himself and spread his arms along the ledge in a last effort to protect his little sister. He looked steadily at the dark water and murmured softly:

"J'irai chanter vos louanges,
Jeune, au milieu de vos anges."

And now the water had risen an inch more and had not the sea been like glass would have washed over. A faintness came over Jean and he sank down on the rocky floor. He was not frightened at that moment. He could never tell what he felt. It was awful, it was wonderful

to be alone here with God and Marie and just a stone circle a few inches wide preventing the wide waters from rushing in on them. He seemed for a short time to lose consciousness of everything but immensity—a sort of greatness that overpowered and yet upheld him. How long this lasted he knew not, but Marie stirred in her sleep and the spell was broken. He started to his feet and dropped his hand over the edge of the boulder. He could not touch the water, the tide had turned!

And now Petit Jean could pray. He thanked the good God and begged his protection and succor, and he prayed for grandmère, too. Dear, old grandmère, who he felt sure would be watching and waiting and praying for them. How wrong he had been to come away without her permission. How wrong and how foolish. He realized this as he sat nestled down in the dark by Marie. But grandmère should never again be anxious on his account. He would help her by obeying her, and wait patiently till God made him strong enough really to work for her. Jean had meant to watch all night, but worn out with fatigue, excitement and hunger—for he had only feigned to taste the cake—his eyes began to close, and fearing that he might be overpowered by sleep he tried to think of some signal that he could hang out from the

rock to let those who he felt sure would come to seek them know that they were there. Turning out his pockets he came to a fishing line, to one end of which he tied his little red cloth cap, and letting it hang over the boulder on the shoreward side, he fastened the other end firmly round his wrist, and then sinking down by Marie was soon fast asleep.

Meantime the excitement on shore had been great when it became known that the grandchildren of good old Mère Labranche were missing. She had returned from the presbytery at 6 o'clock, and though somewhat surprised that the children had not come in from their play, was not at first alarmed, and set to work to prepare their simple evening meal. Then beginning to feel uneasy, she started out and walked some distance down the beach, and again in the opposite direction. She next sought them at the house of the only near neighbor, Père Marcotte, an old fisherman who lived all alone in a hut on the beach, but the place was shut up, Père Marcotte having gone to pass the night with his son at L'Espérance. Thoroughly frightened, the poor old woman returned to the presbytery and told her trouble to the kind old priest. He suggested inquiries at the village postoffice, school house and hotel as well as the principal shop, and

himself accompanied grandmère; but nothing could be heard of the missing children, and he returned with her to the beach, followed by a number of kind-hearted men who had volunteered to assist in the search, but were soon obliged to abandon it on account of the gathering darkness. As they stood on the shore looking out over the lonely waters a small black object was seen coming in with the tide, and soon they made this out to be a boat—yes, surely, old Père Marcotte's boat. One of the men waded out into the water and, seizing the rope, drew the little craft ashore. It was indeed Père Marcotte's boat, and in the stern they found the children's basket of shells and petite Marie's blue sunbonnet. Grandmère reeled and would have fallen, but the kind old cure supported her, and with the help of Maitre Paquin, the schoolmaster, brought her tenderly to her home, where several of the village women, including old Catherine, offered to remain with her during the night. There was but little doubt in anyone's mind that the children had been drowned, nevertheless they all tried to cheer and encourage grandmère, while the men agreed to go out with the earliest light and coast along the beach for some miles in either direction.

So it was not much after four in the morning

when Maitre Paquin and Xavier rolled Péro Marcotte's boat down the beach and got her afloat. They went up with the rising tide and in about ten minutes found themselves opposite the boulder against the side of which the little red cap could be plainly seen. Xavier spied it first. "Oh, papa," he cried, "I see little Jean's cap, his red cap which makes us laugh at him and call him bonnet rouge. Look, papa, right against the rock."

Maitre Paquin crossed himself. "It is truly p'tit Jean's cap and must have drifted on to the rock. The poor little ones are undoubtedly drowned!"

"But no, papa," said Xavier excitedly, "it has not drifted there. It could not rest on the steep rock. It is held there. Oh, papa! pull quickly."

Xavier was trembling so with excitement that he could hardly hold his oar, but with a few strong strokes Maitre Paquin brought the boat up to the boulder and round to the sloping side where, having landed, they climbed quickly up and found the little brother and sister asleep in each other's arms.

"This is our boat," said petite Marie, who was the first to wake when their names were called, "and we have been sailing to Cap Des Oiseaux, and we had supper in our boat, and I

did not like the dark, but Jean sang to me; and Père Marcotte's boat went away, but he must not scold Jean, for it was the tide that did it, and my sunbonnet is lost, but grandmère will make me another."

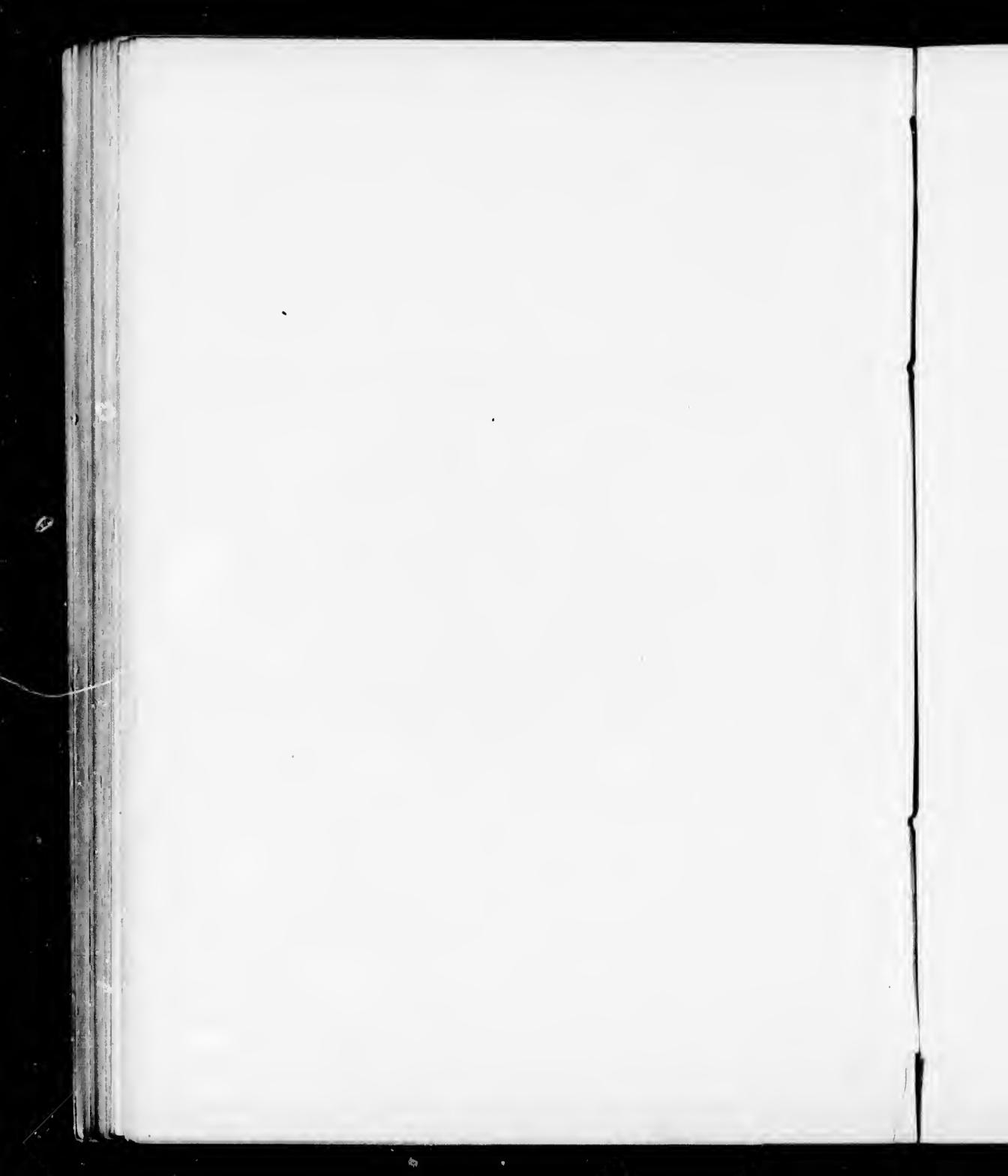
They were in the boat by this time. Petit Jean brought his piece of rock but was greatly disappointed to learn from Maitre Paquin that by itself it was valueless though a fair price had really once been paid to his brother for a collection of specimens of the rocks at St. Isaie. But now they had reached shore and in five minutes more were in grandmère's arms, petite Marie prattling gaily of her adventures while petit Jean sobbed out his grief for the pain he had caused. "But cry not, good brother," said Marie, "the boat is found and our shells and my bonnet, and Catherine is making us hot bread and milk." But Jean continuing to sob and cling to grandmère, she added coaxingly: "See, I will give thee my pretty stone," and she drew from her pocket a lovely pale pink transparent stone, relined with deep red and as large as a pigeon's egg. The neighbors crowded round and examined it eagerly. "It is an agate," said Maitre Paquin, "and finer than the agate of Baie des Anges which was sold for twenty-five piastres. Where did'st get it, petite Marie?"

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In Grandma's Arms Once More.



"Amongst the pebbles by the big stone where Jean and I have our shop. I found it when digging a well and put it in my pocket to give Jean on his fête which is next Sunday, but he may have it now if he will cry no more."

But little Jean, who, besides being overwrought, had taken a slight chill, was now both shivering and sobbing, and old Catherine would allow no more talking, but insisted that after he had taken his bowl of hot bread and milk he should go to bed at once, and also grandmère, who had not slept all night. When they were at length quietly sleeping, old Catherine returned to the presbytery, taking petite Marie's stone with her to be examined by M. le Curé, who pronounced it at once to be a rare and unusually perfect agate, and having learned that Jean would gladly part with it for grandmère's benefit, he succeeded in disposing of it for \$35: and the children had the joy of providing their beloved grandmère not only with the comforts of which they had dreamed, even to the sirop and galette, but also of buying her a cow, whose milk, besides furnishing them with a large part of their living, brought in quite a little revenue, and grandmère no longer needed to work so hard.

No agate had ever been found before at St. Isaie, nor, though agate-hunting raged for some

time afterwards amongst the village boys, was any other discovered. But the story of petite Marie's wonderful find is still related, along with that of the children's night on the boulder, which, nameless before, is now pointed out as "Le Rocher aux Petits Enfants," or the children's rock.

* * * * *

*Translation of Mon Pere, Benissez-Moi.

And as the ordered way,
Or soon or late leads home,
Bless me through life's brief day,
Bless me when death shall come.
And let me swiftly go,
Or linger here below,
Whate'er Thy will may be,
Young with thy angels bright,
Old with thy saints in light,
Praise shall I sing to thee.

MOONBEAM AND TOPSY.

FOR VERY LITTLE ONES.

They were a pair of pretty little sister kittens with golden backs and tails, and white faces, breasts and paws. Moonbeam was so called because she had an odd light mark down the middle of her back that people said looked like a moonbeam, while Topsy was named after a funny little maiden of whom we have all heard, though I really don't think she was as mischievous as her pussy namesake. Little Milly May, who owned the kittens, did not know what to do with naughty Topsy sometimes, and though Mrs. May was one of those sweet mothers who love and understand pussies she used often to say that Topsy would have to be given away. Milly used to talk to her very gravely. The day that Topsy ran away with grandmother's knitting, and after pulling out the needles, wove it into a spider's web up in the big maple, where she was found chewing all that was left of the pretty white sock, Ted, Milly's big brother, heard her

say, "When I am dead and you has no little mother, Topsy, you'll wish you hadn't been so bad!" But Topsy only hit Milly's lip softly with her little white paw, and then took a sudden leap into Aunt Nan's basket of embroidery silks, tipping it and herself over on the floor. One of her favorite tricks was to pull the pins out of pin-cushions. She learned to do this when very small, drawing the pins out with her teeth and dropping them on the floor, and when the last one was out would purr with delight.

Moonbeam was a gentle, quiet little kitten, and when Topsy had been very bad used really to look ashamed of her sister. She was fond of rubbing herself up against her little mistress, or cuddling beside her while she swung in the hammock. She generally sat upon a chair beside Milly at meals and would purr softly and pat her arm now and then if she wanted a taste of anything. Topsy was not allowed in the dining-room at meal times at all since one dreadful occasion, when she sprang from the sofa on to the back of old Mr. Clark, who was dining with the Mays, dragged his wig to the floor with her and startled him so much that he dropped his cup of hot coffee. Now Mr. Clark was the minister, and even Milly felt that such an irreverent kitten must be kept out of the way till she learned better manners. It happened one

day that Mrs. May was expecting some friends to spend the evening with her, and all that morning she and old Kezia, the cook, had been busy making good things, and when they were made and put away in the pantry, it was quite a treat to see them ; at least, so Milly thought, who trotted in after her mother. She was very happy, for two of her own little friends were coming early in the afternoon and they were to have their tea under the big maple in the yard. The little friends arrived in good time, and after the dolls who were to come to the party had all been dressed, Milly asked her mother if she might get the willow tea-set out of the pantry and set her table herself; and as she was a careful little girl Mrs. May consented. So Milly, Grace and Ada went down together, but had only been gone about five minutes when Mrs. May heard a crash, followed by queer sounds of scratching and screaming. She got up to see what was the matter, when suddenly Topsy flew into the room looking so funny that though Mrs. May was frightened she could not help laughing. For poor Topsy was covered with cream and yolk of egg and eggshells and flour and bits of sponge cake ; but there was not much time to look at her, for she rushed out at the open window just as the three little girls came into the room, looking nearly as bad as Topsy.

"What has happened?" asked Mrs. May.

"Oh, mother," said Milly, "when we went into the pantry we found Topsy sitting on the sponge cake, and I told her she wasn't 'lowed in the pantry, and tried to catch her, but she jumped into the bowl of whipped cream, and when she was getting out it upsetted and fell into the basket of eggs, and the jug of custard fell, too, and poor Topsy was nearly killed, but she climbed into the flour barrel and then jumped out and runned upstairs, and we runned after her." Milly stopped to take breath, and Mrs. May, after ringing for the nurse to take the children to the bathroom, went down to the pantry. We need not tell what she saw there, but she told old Kezia, who was Topsy's declared enemy, that as soon as they had all gone to the country for the summer she might give her away just as soon as a good home could be found.

But though a week later Mrs. May, with Milly, baby and nurse left town for their country home, Topsy was not given away, and I shall tell you why.

Ted and Archie, the two boys, had not been able to go with Mrs. May, as they had two weeks more at school, but it was arranged that they should go up each Saturday and spend that day and Sunday with their mother and sisters.

Milly would have liked to take her kitties with her, but had been persuaded that they would be safe in their town home, and Ted and Archie had found the cunning little things great company. For they were both clever kittens, and could do a great many funny tricks. Ted had taught them to jump through a hoop and to beg, and they could play "peep" and "hide and seek." Moonbeam would also sit on a table, and if anyone ran past her catch them with her paw, and this Millie called "giving tag." The boys knew that she would really miss her pets dreadfully, and when the first Saturday came, Ted said to Archie on waking in the morning, "Suppose we take Milly's kittens up to see her today."

"Oh, Ted," said Archie, "Mother would not like that; she said they must stay in town."

"But I don't think she would mind having them up for a day if we took care of them," said Ted. "It would make Milly so happy, and we could bring them right back to town."

Archie was soon persuaded and after breakfast they got two baskets, made a soft bed in each, packed the kittens, who had been well fed, carefully in, and started for the station, for their country home at Ste. Rose was reached by a two-hours' trip on the cars.

The pussies behaved very well in their baskets.

Topsy scratched a little and Moonbeam gave a gentle mew now and then, but that was all until the train started; but no sooner did they feel the motion of the cars and hear the noise than the poor little kittens became wild with fear. They went into fits, escaped from their baskets and dashed wildly about the car. Ted and Archie tried by wrapping them up in their coats to keep them from hearing the noise that so frightened them, but it did no good. The very life was frightened out of the tender little creatures. They had to die. And strange to say it was Topsy who went first; strong, merry, tricky little Topsy. It was not long before she stopped struggling and lay panting on her side. Soon she ceased breathing and in less than half an hour after the train started she lay quite dead. Gentle little Moonbeam fought hard for her life and it was only half an hour before they reached Ste. Rose that she quieted down to die. And now a strange thing happened. For a few minutes she seemed to lose her fear and lay on the cushioned seat by Archie, breathing quietly as if asleep. Suddenly she opened her eyes and tried to crawl towards him, looking sadly up as if she were saying, "I want to live, dear little master. Try to help me." Archie bent over her and stroked her softly. She tried to purr, put up her paw and caught weakly at his

jacket in the old playful way, and then her little paw dropped lifeless. Little Moonbeam had "given tag" for the last time.

I cannot tell you how bad the boys felt. Archie sobbed aloud when he thought of how grieved his mother and Milly would be, and both boys felt that they had done wrong in bringing the kittens without feeling sure that their mother would be willing, but sorrow could not bring the dead pets to life again. The train had now reached Ste. Rose, and Ted and Archie, after leaving it, carried the kittens to a grove of trees on property belonging to Mr. May, and after hiding them carefully walked down to the house, where they were told that their mother with nurse and the little sisters had gone to the beach; so there they went. Mrs. May and Milly were watching for them, and wondered to see them walking along so slowly and sadly. But when they came up and told their sad story I think everyone cried but Baby. Even Ted could hardly keep the tears out of his eyes, while Milly threw herself on her face in the sand and would not be comforted. At last Mrs. May said that after dinner they should all go up to the grove and have a funeral, and this seemed to comfort Milly a little. So they all went and the boys dug a grave, and Milly laid flowers on it, but it was many days before she was quite the

merry little girl that she had been, and I do not believe that she will ever again love any little kitten quite as much as she did Moonbeam and Topsy.

WHERE THEY FOUND THE KITTENS.

Ross and Rosie were spending the holidays with their grandmother in the country and having so much fun that I could never begin to tell you all about it. They helped to feed the chickens and ducks and calves and pigs.

They saw the cows milked and the butter made and Rosie learned to churn. They helped to toss the new hay and rode home on the hay cart: they went fishing with Uncle Nat and berrying with Aunt Nelly; they hunted for eggs and climbed trees and sailed boats in the duck pond and built dams in the stream and were just as happy as the day is long. Rosie heard Aunt Nelly say that one day, and she said to Ross: "What does it mean, Ross?"

"What does what mean?" said Ross.

"Why, being as happy as the day is long," said Rosie.

"Oh, that means," said Ross, "that every minute that the day lasts we are having fun, and

it would be quite true if we did not have to say lessons every morning."

"Oh, Ross," said Rosie, "I think lessons are fun, too. We only have to do them for one hour, and how much nicer to say them to Aunt Nelly on the cool veranda than if we were in the hot schoolroom in town."

"Yes, it is nicer," said Ross thoughtfully; "but no lessons can be fun and I am glad they are over for to-day. Come with me, Rosie, and see Lady Mary."

Lady Mary was a beautiful white hen with a topknot of snowy feathers that Ross said a queen might be proud of. Grandmother had given her to Ross for his own pet the very day he came, and if she hatched chickens he was to be allowed to take two home. Rosie had been given a pet, too, the family cat, a lovely maltese with pale green eyes and a fur as glossy and shining as silk. She was not only a beautiful cat, but a very useful one, and kept grandmother's house completely clear of rats and mice. Indeed, Diana, for that was her name, was too fond of hunting. Aunt Nelly had with great trouble taught her not to kill birds, but she spent nearly all her time hunting mice in the barn. "She won't play with me at all," complained Rosie one day, "or even let me cuddle her up."

"Never mind, dear," said Aunt Nelly, "she will get kittens some day and they will play as much as you like, and you shall take one home."

"But I don't think she knows how to take care of kittens. She only knows how to hunt," said Rosie. "And perhaps she will run away and leave them."

"Oh, no," laughed Aunt Nelly. "Diana will be willing then to stay in her box all day long."

Two or three mornings after this, when Ross and Rosie came down to breakfast, Aunt Nelly took them into the kitchen, and there in her box in a snug, warm corner lay Diana, purring with happiness as she clasped her paws round three sweet little kittens, two pure white and one like herself. "Oh! the darlings!" said Rosie. "Ain't they sweet, Ross, and how happy dear Diana is. She is just as happy as the day is long, isn't she Aunt Nelly?"

"Yes," laughed Aunt Nelly, for Rosie's funny way of picking up her elder's speeches amused them all, "but you and Ross must come to breakfast, for the bell has rung twice."

So they went in to the good breakfast ready for them every morning at grandmother's. A little blue mug filled with rich milk stood at each place and they each had a big brown egg, a saucer of white raspberries and as many slices

of bread and butter as they could eat. After breakfast Rosie wanted to rush back to the kittens, but Ross asked her to come and gather the eggs with him, and before they had visited all the nests and stayed awhile to pet Lady Mary, who was now sitting on six of her own white eggs, the lesson bell rang and the children went at once to the veranda, where Aunt Nelly was waiting for them. She was really a delightful teacher, and the hour which their mother wished them to study each day to make up for time lost during the winter passed so pleasantly that even Ross thought it fun. As soon as they were released the children ran back to the kittens—at least they meant to—but when they reached the box no kittens were there nor any cat. Rosie burst into such loud crying that Aunt Nelly came in a hurry and soothed her by saying that mother cats, particularly if their kittens were handled too much, often hid them.

“We shall be sure to find them, Rosie,” said she; but though she and Ross and Rosie, and Uncle Nat and even Bridget, the cook, looked for them, no trace of the kittens had been found by dinner time.

After dinner even grandmother helped to look for them; cupboards, closets, drawers, band-boxes and all such places as mother pussies love were searched, but searched in vain.

"We must wait till evening," said Aunt Nelly, "Diana will be sure to come to be fed and then we can follow her and find where she has put the kittens."

About 6 o'clock Diana did come and eagerly lapped up her saucer of milk. Rosie sat trembling with impatience and would have flown after the cat the minute she left her saucer had not Aunt Nelly held her back.

"Don't frighten her, Rosie," she said, "we must watch her quietly."

And so they did and saw her trotting down to the barn. They cautiously followed, entered on tip-toe and beheld Diana calmly crouching down by a mouse hole looking as unconcerned as if she had never had a kitten in her life. They waited till they were tired, but she would not stir and Aunt Nelly had to return to the house with the children, feeling herself completely puzzled. Rosie could not be comforted. "I am not as happy as the day is long now, Aunt Nelly," she sobbed; "I am only about an hour happy."

"Perhaps Diana put her kittens down the mouse hole or caught them by mistake for mice," said Ross, at which awful suggestions Rosie's tears flowed afresh.

The next morning Bridget reported that Diana had come for her breakfast and returned to

the barn, where the children, when breakfast was over, again found her watching for mice. "You hateful, mean, old thing," burst out Rosie, "don't you know it is very wicked not to take care of your babies? Where are your white babies and your gray baby? What would Ross and I have done if our mother had hidden us in some horrid place and gone mouse hunting? Don't you know that your babies will die?" and here Rosie's eyes filled again and to cheer her up Ross hastened her off to see Lady Mary.

There was nothing wrong about that queenly bird. She sat on her nest looking as stately as if she were a queen and empress both. "How lovely she is," said Ross. "And how kind," said Rosie; "I believe that you would take care of three sweet kittens if you had them." And she stooped and gently patted Lady Mary's back. As she did so the hen moved slightly and Rosie started violently and turned quite pale.

"What is it?" said Ross.

"Oh! Ross, Ross, listen," said Rosie excitedly, "I heard such a queer little squeaking noise when I put my head down."

"It must be a chicken," said Ross.

"No, no," said Rosie. "Listen; oh! Ross! there it is again; don't you hear? I do believe it is a kitten."

Ross gently put his hand beneath Lady Mary's wing and drew out in succession a snow-white, a maltese and another white kitten.

They were all mewling now and loud enough, and Diana came flying into the stable, gathered them up to her warm breast and cuddled and purred to them till even Rosie was contented. But when the little creatures had dropped to sleep she gently poked them under Lady Mary's wings and returned to her beloved barn; nor could anything induce her to take charge of the kittens again. She came regularly to feed them, and it was an odd sight to see her stretched out beside Lady Mary and sometimes twining her paw around that stately fowl's neck; and the funny thing was that Lady Mary seemed perfectly willing to be the kittens' nurse. She spread her soft, white wings over them as if they had been chickens, and when they were old enough to run about led them out into the yard just as she might have done a brood of her own. At first they would follow her, and many people came from a distance to see the pretty hen strutting about with her odd children. When they began to run away from her and climb trees she was very much distressed and would cluck mournfully. Diana fed them as long as they needed her, but beyond that took no notice of them. They grew up, however,

into splendid kittens and did great credit to Lady Mary.

But I must not forget to tell you what Rosie said to Aunt Nelly the day the kittens were found.

“How happy are you now, Rosie?” Aunt Nelly had said, and Rosie replied:

“Oh, Aunt Nelly! I'm happier than the day is long. My happy will have to run over into the night.”

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Sinking in the Drift.

A SNOW STORY.

Marian and Flossie lived about a quarter of a mile from the school, but as the road was a safe and quiet one, and there was only one corner to turn, mother was not afraid to let them go alone. She told them always to keep together, and Marian, who was eight years old and a quiet, careful little girl, was very proud of being trusted to take care of Flossie, who was only six.

The walk to school was very pleasant at any time, but the little girls liked it best in winter. The trees used to look so lovely. Sometimes they wore feathers, Flossie said, and sometimes diamonds. Then the snow made the roads so high that the children could see a great deal further across the country than in summer. There were two or three little hills, too, down which they could slide on the toboggan they drew after them, and as for the cold they were so warmly wrapped up that they did not mind that at all.

One bright day in February the little girls were walking home, Marian, as usual, holding Flossie by the hand. Flossie was in a great

hurry to get home, because she was bringing her copy book to show mother. It was the very first she had ever written, and she was very proud of the nice, clean pages and neat letters; so she kept pulling at Marian's hand, but Marian, who was not feeling very well, did not care to hurry, and at last Flossie broke from her and ran on ahead as fast as she could. Marian would have run after her, had they not been near their corner, just half-way-home. She watched Flossie turn it, and then, feeling sure she was safe, walked slowly on, stopping for a few minutes at the home of Lucy Scott, who had been absent from school, to give her next day's lessons.

Meantime, just as frisky Flossie ran around the corner, a sudden gust of wind caught her copy-book out of her hand, and whirling it high in the air, landed it on top of an enormous snow-drift at the side of the street. Thinking of nothing but her precious book, Flossie ran lightly up to the top, and had just grasped it when the light crust of snow broke, and she went through, sinking at once above her knees. She tried to struggle out, but only sank further. She was not a bit frightened, but laughed as she thought how surprised Marian would be to see her stuck up there, and what fun there would be pulling her out. But Marian did not come, and now the snow reached nearly to her waist.

Flossie began to struggle violently, but, alas! she not only sank deeper, but dislodged some snow from the back of the drift which was higher than the front, and now she was buried up to past her waist.

Marian had just turned the corner when she heard a piercing cry, and looking up to the drift she saw two little white fur arms, ending in green mittens, stretched out imploringly, and a white fur cap over a tangle of golden curls, from which a frightened tear-stained face looked out. That was all that could be seen of Flossie. She had called for help, but no one had passed, and the wind had carried her voice away from Marian. Now she was really frightened, and the tears would come, when suddenly her sister came in sight. Then between joy and terror she gave the cry that Marian heard.

But, alas! Marian could not help her. She tried to climb the drift, but being heavier than Flossie, the crust broke at every step and she could not even get near her sister. She saw, too, with terror, that quite a mass of snow from the back was threatening to fall. She must run for help, and there was not a minute to be lost.

"Why, Flossie, I must run and get someone to dig you out."

"Oh, Marian, don't leave me," sobbed the little one. "I'm sinking deeper in the snow."

“I must,” said Marian. “But I shall be back soon with father—just think, Flossie, father! He calls you his brave little girl; be brave now; and oh, darling, you may call for help, but keep very still. Now see me run.” And off Marian flew like a bird. Home was the nearest house. Could she reach there and bring help in time? She dared not think, but flew on till she reached their own door, where, oh, joy! she met papa just coming out. He had come home to lunch and finding that his little girls had not arrived was starting to meet them. Marian dropped at h’s feet, gasping out: “Oh, papa, papa, Flossie is sinking in the big drift. She is nearly gone.” Mr. Ray carried her into the house, seized the big wooden shovel which stood always ready for use in the hall, and in less than two minutes had reached the drift. He had not come too soon. Flossie’s arms were now up in the air and she was holding her head back to keep her mouth clear. Just as Mr. Ray touched the drift the snow fell from behind and Flossie was buried completely. But in one minute she was out and safe in warm, strong arms, and next thing she was in the snug little dining-room at home, with her arms around mother’s neck.

“It was my fault,” she sobbed. “I was naughty to run away from Marian, but my copy-

book was the bestest in the school and Miss Allen said you would be s'prised, and I was in such a hurry to s'prise you; but now you will never see it, for while I was stuck the wind blew it away down the street," and here Flossie sobbed afresh.

"No, no," said Marian, "it was my fault. I ought to have run after Flossie and not have gone into Lucy's." But here Bridget brought in some hot soup, and after the little girls had drunk it mother put them snugly to bed, and they were soon asleep in each other's arms.

And mother saw the copy-book after all, for someone picked it up and, finding the address on the cover, sent it through the post to its rightful owner, and Flossie's neat work gave great pleasure to her parents.

It took Marian a long time to get over her fright, and she was very glad when the bright spring sun turned the big drift into a merry little stream which soon found its way to its home in the sea.

KING BRUCE ON THE BARN.

Marian and Flossie lived in a country where the snow is so deep in winter that out in the country the fences are all covered, and in town the roadway often stands six feet above the sidewalk, which is kept shovelled out.

Sometimes, after a big storm, they could not get out at all till a place had been shovelled for them, and their brothers, Will and Walter, often had to put on their snow-shoes to go in to school.

But you must not think that Marian and Flossie minded the snow. No, indeed. Excepting in the very worst storms, they went out every day and played for hours.

When the snow was hard they could slide, and when it was soft they helped the boys to build snow forts and men, and molded snow puddings and iced cakes.

But what they liked best of all was to climb on the roof of the big barn and take flying leaps into the soft bed of snow beneath. Mother, watching them from the window, used to call them her snow-

drops, for they wore dark green blanket coats with white sashes and hoods.

But it was only when the snow was piled *very* high that they could do this, or get on the barn-roof at all; so you may be sure that Marian and Flossie were never sorry when the big storms came.

It happened one year that the snow did not come till much later than usual, and winter was nearly over before it had piled high enough against the barn to make it safe to try to climb up.

At last a day came when mother thought it might be possible, and the merry little maids trotted off to the barn.

But the roof was still so far above them that even Marian, who was the taller, did not get up till she had tried a great many times; while poor fat Flossie could not manage it at all.

Marian tried to pull her up, but without success, and at last she gave up and, climbing to the top of the sloping roof, sat proudly down, while poor Flossie, powdered with snow from head to foot, and winking hard to keep the tears out of her eyes, stood sadly looking up at her from the snow heap.

Just at this moment mother, who had been watching them, was called away, and when she

came back to the window five minutes later both the little girls were on the roof.

"How did you get up at last?" she said to Flossie when, tired of romping, the little girls finally came in.

"Oh," said Flossie, "I tried and tried and tried just like King Bruce of Scotland, but I couldn't get up, and then I thought I would not give it up, but just try once more.

"So I looked up at Marian, and said, 'The spider up there defied despair, she conquered, and why should not I?' and I gave my very best jump and the next minute I was on the barn, and mother, I am so glad that you taught me about King Bruce."

A VERY KIND CAT.

It was a lovely morning in the end of May, and as little Molly Gray tripped gaily along the broad shady road leading to her friend Ailsie Dean's house, she thought that surely she must be the happiest little girl in the world. For this was Ailsie's birthday and they were to have more treats than could be counted on the fingers of one small fat hand. She was going now to call for Ailsie and they had leave to go together into the fresh green fields and fill their baskets with violets; for the little girl who was born in the violet month liked to have a bunch of her favorite flowers to give each friend bidden to her birthday party, and a garland to hang around the neck of Muff, her dear tiny terrier. And Molly was to stay and help make the bouquets and the garlands, and when she returned home she was going down town to buy Ailsie a present. Then in the afternoon she and Ailsie and four other little friends were to have a long

drive into the country, and after that they were to return to Mrs. Dean's for a merry tea and games and all sorts of fun. Thinking of a'l this she reached Ailsie's house and was surprised not to see her waiting at the gate. Molly blew her sailor whistle once or twice, and soon a little figure was seen coming down the garden walk. But what was the matter with Ailsie? She walked slowly and sadly and her pretty blue eyes were all red and swollen with crying. "Why Ailsie," said Molly, "what is the matter? Has anything dreadful happened?"

"Oh yes," said Ailsie, "something terrible; my dear Muff, my darling little doggie is dead. He is *dead*, Molly. He was run over last night after I had gone to bed. At first father thought he was not very much hurt. He brought him in and laid him on a cushion, but this morning when I came down he was dead." Here Ailsie burst out crying again and the tears were running down Molly's cheeks too. Hand in hand the little friends went in to see the dead pet and when they saw the little paws that had been so frisky stretched out stiff and cold and the bright eyes closed forever, they both cried harder than before.

Soon after Molly walked slowly home. She did not care now to gather violets but she longed to think of some way of comforting her

friend. When she reached home she said to her mother, "Where is Snowballer?" And her mother said, "I think he must be in Dolly's cradle in the nursery." For Snowballer was a great, big, fat, lazy Tom-cat who spent nearly all his time sleeping in Molly's best doll's cradle. Perhaps you will wonder how he got his funny name, so I will tell you that he was called Snow because he was pure white and Baller as a compliment to Mr. Baller, Mrs. Gray's grocer, who had given him to Molly when he was so small that he was sent home in a paper bag. Molly had had him now for more than three years and he was her very dearest pet.

About half an hour after Molly's return home Mrs. Gray saw her in the garden with Snowballer, or Snobby as he was called for short. She was trying to make him walk from one flower to another and gather them as he went with his forepaws. It was very hard work, for Snobby did not like to walk upon his hind legs. He would turn round and try to climb up his little mistress, fastening his claws in her pretty muslin pinafore. When he came to a tree he would try to spring into it. Once he and the small girl got tangled up together and both fell to the ground, and once he hissed so loudly at poor Molly that Mrs. Gray could hear him in the house.

“What are you doing, Molly!” she called. “Come and tell me.” So Molly gathered the flowers, that Snobby had picked, into her pinafore, came into the house and stood beside her mother, her cheeks rosy with the efforts she had been making and the tears still in her sweet gray eyes. “Oh, mother,” she said, “Ailsie’s doggie is dead, her dear, dear little Muff. He was dead when I went there this morning, and when I came home I went upstairs to tell Snobby for I knew he would feel sorry; and at first I couldn’t make him understand. He was so sleepy that I had to tell him a great many times. I said ‘Oh, Snobby, dear little Muff is dead. Do you hear me Snobby? He is dead, dead. He will never come and dance around you and bark little playful barks at you any more! And at last Snobby understood and I know he was dreadfully sorry for he began to purr.’”

“But Molly,” said Mrs. Gray, “pussies purr when they are pleased. How do you know that Snobby was sorry?”

“Oh, by the way he purred, dear mother,” said Molly, “it wasn’t a pleased happy purr, but a sad, slow, solemn one. I put my head down to him and it sounded like ‘poor, poor, poor,’ and then I knew he was trying to say, ‘poor Muff,’ so I said to him: ‘Snobby, would you like to gather some flowers to lay upon

Muff's grave?' And he stood right up in the cradle and was going to say 'yes' only he had to yawn just then, so I took him into the garden and you can't think what trouble he took to pick the flowers all right, and dear mother, don't you think it will comfort Ailsie a little to know that dear Snobby was so sorry and so kind?"

"I think it will comfort her," said Mrs. Gray, "to know that some one was so sorry and so kind," but little Molly never thought for a minute that mother could mean her.

