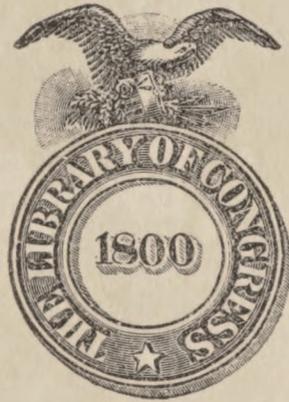


Chimney Corner Tales



Caroline Stetson Allen



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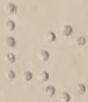


“ This is the creamiest milk I ever saw ”

Chimney Corner Tales

By
Caroline Stetson Allen

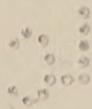
Illustrations by
Galen J. Perrett



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TO MY LITTLE
JACK AND CHRISTINE
IN MEMORY OF SHINING HOURS

I wish to thank the editors of *St. Nicholas*, *Little Folks*, *The Christian Register*, and *Every Other Sunday* for their courtesy in allowing me to use in this book stories and pictures which they have already printed.

My especial gratitude is due to Mr. Galen J. Perrett, who has given his thought and skill so unstintedly to the illustrating of these little tales.

CAROLINE STETSON ALLEN.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?

R. L. STEVENSON.

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CHIMNEY CORNER TALES

A REAL LITTLE BOY BLUE

ONCE there were four little brothers. The oldest had black eyes. He was called Little Boy Black. But I haven't time to tell about him just now. The second little brother had brown eyes. He was called Little Boy Brown. But I cannot tell you about him either. The third little brother had gray eyes, and was called Little Boy Gray. There is a very nice story I could tell you about him, but I am sure you would rather hear about the fourth little brother.

For the youngest little brother had blue eyes; and his father and mother, his grandfather and grandmother, and every one else, called him Little Boy Blue. His eyes were very blue—as blue as the flowers you find down by the brook. You love the blue flowers, I know. And so I will tell you about Little Boy Blue.

His jacket was blue, his trousers were blue, his stockings were blue, and even his little shoes were blue.

One day Little Boy Blue's mother said to him: "Do you want to go and visit Aunt Polly?" "Who is Aunt Polly?" asked Little Boy Blue. "Aunt Polly lives on a farm, on a high hill. She has horses, and cows, and pigs, and hens, and ducks, and geese—" "And elephants?" asked Little Boy Blue. "No, not any elephants. But she has a woolly white lamb." "Oh, then I will go," cried Little Boy Blue. So his mother went up-stairs and found a little blue traveling-bag. And in the little blue bag she packed some of Little Boy Blue's clothes. Then Little Boy Blue and his mother went to visit Aunt Polly, who lived on a farm on a high hill.

Little Boy Blue's mother stayed two days, and Little Boy Blue stayed ten days. When his mother was going home, she said to Aunt Polly: "Little Boy Blue likes to play, but he likes to work, too. So be sure to give him some work to do every day."

"Very well," said Aunt Polly. And so by-and-by Aunt Polly went to find Little Boy Blue. And she said to him: "Dear Little Boy Blue, what can you do to help?" He thought a minute, and then he said: "I can eat apples to see if they are ripe. And I can pull the roses in the garden, if you have too many."

"The apples are not ripe, and I have just

enough roses in the garden," said Aunt Polly. "Can you drive the cows out of the corn?"

"Oh, yes, I can," said Little Boy Blue, "if Towzer can come too." Towzer was the dog.

"And perhaps you can look after the sheep?"

"Yes, Aunt Polly, I can do that," said Little Boy Blue.

On the shelf in Little Boy Blue's room stood a little blue clock. And every morning at five o'clock the door of the clock flew open, and a cuckoo came out. The cuckoo said "Cuck-oo!" five times, and then went into the little blue clock again, and the little door closed after him. Then Little Boy Blue knew it was time to get up.

When he was dressed, he came down-stairs, and Aunt Polly gave him his breakfast. He had new milk in a blue bowl, and johnny-cake on a little blue plate. These he always carried out onto the door-step because he liked, while he was eating and drinking, to see the green grass bending in the breeze, and the yellow butterflies dancing here and there in the sunshine.

"This is the creamiest milk I ever saw," said Little Boy Blue.

"That's nice," said Aunt Polly. "Do you want some more?"

"Yes, please," said Little Boy Blue. So Aunt Polly brought the blue pitcher, and poured more

creamy milk into his little blue bowl, and Little Boy Blue said: "Thank you, Aunt Polly."

When Little Boy Blue could eat no more golden johnny-cake, and drink no more creamy milk, he jumped up from the door-step.

First he put his arms around Aunt Polly's neck, and gave her a hug and a kiss. Then he went into the house to get his horn. The horn was a little blue one, and it hung on a peg near the kitchen door.

What do you suppose the horn was for? Why, Little Boy Blue watched the cows and the sheep. Then if they got into the wrong places, and trampled on the crops, Little Boy Blue blew the horn. One of the men always heard the horn, and came to help drive the cows or the sheep back where they belonged.

All this was very pleasant. But one day—what do you think? The sheep ran away, and jumped over a stone wall into the meadow, and the cows got into the corn. Nobody knew how it happened. Little Boy Blue had gone out that morning, just as he always did, to look after them; and no one had heard any horn. At last Towzer ran up to the barn, barking loudly. That was to give the alarm—about the sheep and the cows.

"How queer!" said Aunt Polly, who was in the barn-yard feeding the chickens.

“How strange!” said Uncle Ben.

“Where’s Little Boy Blue?” asked the men.

“I’ll call him,” said Aunt Polly. So she walked, and she walked, all around the farm. As Aunt Polly walked she looked here, and she looked there. And she called:

“Little Boy Blue! Come blow your horn.

The sheep’s in the meadow, the cow’s in the corn.”

Where do you think Aunt Polly found him? When the head-farmer asked her, “Where’s the



He fell sound asleep, and dreamed about the woolly white lamb.

little boy that looks after the sheep?” Aunt Polly said: “He’s under the haycock, fast asleep.”

“Shall we go wake him?” said the head-farmer.

“No, no; let him lie,” said Aunt Polly. “For if we should wake him, he’d cry, cry cry.”

You see Little Boy Blue got up so early, he

grew sleepy. And the sun was hot. And the haymow made a soft pillow. So he fell sound asleep, and dreamed about the woolly white lamb.

But on the day after that, Little Boy Blue took a nap, first, so that when he looked after the cows and the sheep he could keep awake. He never again had to be told to blow his horn.

When Little Boy Blue's visit was over, Aunt Polly said: "You've been a dear little helper. I'm going to give you something to take home. And, oh, joy! it was the woolly white lamb!"

THE DAPPLE-GRAY PONY

“O WHAT is it, Jack? You’ve lost your new ball? No? Your sled didn’t know enough to stop when it got to the foot of the hill? What a stupid sled! And so it sent you bang into the stone-wall.”

“Come here, then, and I will tell you about—let me see—”

“About ‘I had a little pony.’ ”

“Oh, yes. Once there were four little brothers, Tom, Dick, Ted and Maurice.

“Tom liked to sail boats. He planned to be a real sailor when he grew up, so he learned early to swim, and was often to be found near the water. He liked to watch the fishermen hauling in their nets, and to listen to the tales of old sea-captains. Sometimes the captains sat on big coils of rope, and sometimes on an over-turned dory; and they told wonderful things.

“Certainly it was very pleasant that Tom had these good times by the sea. But there was one troublesome thing about it. He took a dislike to school. ‘If only Dick will do better!’ said their mamma.”

“Did he?”

“No, it was the hardest work to start Dick at lessons. Grandpa couldn't do it, Grandma couldn't do it, Papa couldn't do it. And Mamma, though she made her eyes red with weeping, couldn't do it. No one had any effect, but Uncle Bob; and the way he managed was by saying, ‘See here, young man,—if you ever want to take my *bat* again . . .’ He never had to finish the sentence. Dick would have out his arithmetic in a jiffy. Dick could beat all the boys at ball, and grew as strong as a young lion. But could he say the easiest multiplication-table?—I mean right through, in a flash, without stopping? Not he.”

“I guess Ted could, then?”

“Why, I'm sorry to tell you, but Ted so hated study that he even hid his geography under the flour barrel. The barrel had just come from the grocers, too, that very morning, so it was weeks before the book was found.”

“What *did* Ted like to do?”

“Ted liked gardening. And it was hard not to forgive him for playing truant, when he brought into the kitchen such plump tomatoes and crisp lettuce, all of his own raising. He found a bunch of ladies' delights, placed on teacher's desk, had a good effect too.

“No, it couldn’t be said that either Tom, Dick or Ted was a born student. So when little Maurice was five years old, and began school, Mamma sighed a great sigh, and said ‘I suppose it will be the same story over again!’ She meant she thought Maurice, too, would have to be urged to get his lessons. But mercy! she needn’t have worried.

“Maurice took to school like a duck to water. The whole family were astonished at the way he shot ahead. He soon caught up with Ted, and a year or two later saw him in Dick’s class. Papa and Mamma felt quite bewildered when they found he must be held back.

“For the old family doctor shook his head. ‘Not enough *outdoors*, ma’am,’ said he. ‘All this study is foolery. The boy’s as thin as a herring!’

“‘But what can I do?’” asked mamma, almost crying.

“‘Do? Get him a pony,’ answered the doctor, ‘Good morning, ma’am.’

“A *live* pony?”

“Yes, a beautiful, strong dapple-gray pony. And at first, indeed for several weeks, all went well. The pony soon learned to love his little master as well as Maurice loved the pony. Every fine day

they were to be seen trotting over the lanes and downs, and when the doctor happened to meet them he looked pleased.

“But one day on the high road Maurice met a lady who looked very hot, and who was having a hard time trying to keep her skirts out of the dust.

“ ‘Little boy, won’t you let me take your pony awhile?’ asked she. ‘I will pay you well if you will.’ Maurice said she might, and he jumped down and held the pony until the lady was mounted and away.

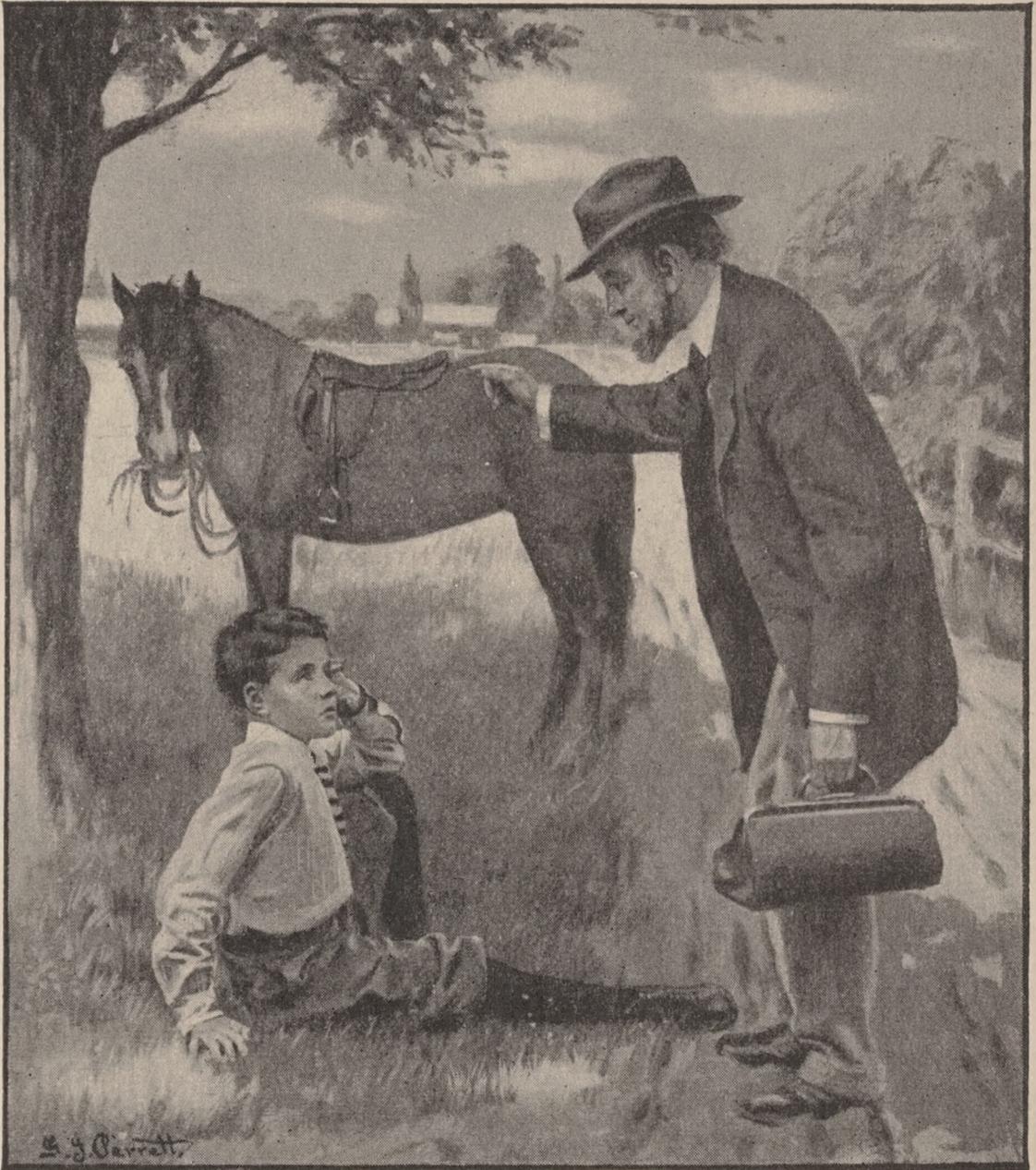
“An hour later as the doctor went his rounds, he saw on the grass beside the road a small boy lying face downward. When he got closer to the small boy he found it was Maurice, and that he was crying bitterly.

“ ‘What’s the matter, little Maurice?’ asked the doctor.

“ ‘I had a little pony’ answered Maurice, sitting up, ‘And it was d—dapple-gray,’ he went on between his sobs. ‘I lent him to a lady. She rode him far away.’

“ ‘Well, what of that?’ asked the doctor, ‘since he is here beside you now, and cropping the grass happily.’

“ ‘She *whipped* him! She *lashed* him! she rode him through the *mire!*’



“I had a little pony”

“ ‘But I see she paid you well,’ said the doctor, for two gold coins lay near Maurice’s hand.

“ ‘Yes, but I would not lend my pony more for all my lady’s hire!’ cried Maurice.

“ ‘I don’t blame you,’ said the doctor. ‘Come, I’ll help you rub him off.’

“So Maurice wiped away his tears, and between them he and the doctor soon made the pony as clean and glossy as ever. That noon, after his usual dinner of oats and hay, the pony had an apple and an extra lump of sugar.

“The lady never rode him again; but Maurice and he learned all the roads thereabout. Maurice grew to be as strong and rosy as Tom, Dick or Ted, and on bright mornings was to be seen on his dapple-gray pony cantering ‘over the hills and far away.’ ”

LITTLE OLD-TIME SUNDAY

ONCE upon a time all the Day Children (it was a large family with stacks of relations) met and had a party. They came together in a great, spreading twelve-room house, which had been built so long ago and had lasted so very many years that every one had a most comfortable feeling about it. "It has stood all this time, so it surely will keep on standing," said they. "And, even if it doesn't, it's so old that it's no matter!" So the children were allowed to jump about, play ball against the walls, slide down the banisters, and shout at the tops of their voices.

Only a few of the rooms were quiet ones. The August room, as it was called, was one of these. Somehow, on first entering it, one began to feel sleepy. The furnishings were of soft but rather faded green, a tall clock ticked drowsily in one corner, a bowl of water-lilies scented the air, and on coming in one made a bee-line for one of the many lounges and easy-chairs. In the August room were rows of charming story-books—"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," "Sandford and Merton," "Robinson Crusoe," "Little Susy's

Six Servants," "Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances," "Hans Brinker," and, oh, ever so many more! This room was so different from all the others—from the December one, for instance, where all was life and motion, often a molasses candy-pull going on, and the generous round tables covered with bright silks, moroccos, card-board, paste—in short, all sorts of desirable materials for making Christmas presents.

Well, as I said, the Days had come together in this fine old house for their party; and, when it was all over, little May Day clambered up into her mother's lap and told her all about it. Mrs. Day was immensely interested, and, that she might not lose a single word, even laid aside the yellow and white tissue paper basket she was weaving.

"Who were there, dearie?" she asked.

"O mother, so many I can't remember half their names. There was New Years. They say she is fond of parties, and especially of making calls. She had a bright, glad face, and made us all feel good and want to play fair. Lots of the girls told me they found themselves making resolves the minute she came in the room."

"Which room were you in?"

"Well, it happened to be the January room on the top floor when she came; but it was pretty

cold up there, and we soon went into the February one, to see if 'twould be any warmer there. It wasn't much; but Cousin Valentine was in there, sitting in the middle of the room, and he jumped and warmed us up, chasing us around and trying to kiss us. He gave me this sprig of pussy-willow. See! The pussies on it are 'most out.'

And so little May chattered away to her mother, telling of one or another boy or girl.

“Was Thanksgiving there?”

“Yes, and not a mite greedy this year. He and I pulled the wish-bone. He brought a big box of goodies—turkey and mince pies and nuts and raisins and oranges. He divided them around, and we did have such a feast!

“There was one girl there I didn't exactly like, She carried 'round a pile of school-books, and kept talking about Arithmetic and Geography, and said we'd made a mistake about the party, and that it was the day for school to begin.”

“But I hope, darling, you were all kind and pleasant with one another.”

May hesitated and fingered a piece of her frock; a pretty frock it was, of dimity—little nosegays of arbutus on a background of light green.

“There was a dreadful time when we were playing blind-man's-buff in the July room, and

Fourth of July and Sunday came together and knocked each other flat. I don't know why, exactly, but the children all said it was the worst thing that could happen, and most of them cried. I guess it was because Fourth of July is such a favorite. He's noisiest of all, to be sure, and upsets us; and he has the funniest round red face! But you see, mother, he's so jolly! We call him the Glorious Fourth. We like him almost best of any of the Day cousins—except Christmas, of course. Christmas is as sweet-tempered as—as—as you are, mother! She didn't even get cross when her sister Eve took away her fir-tree. She'd got all the pop-corn wound on the boughs and the candles ready to light when Eve said it belonged to her last year, and that she was going to have it this year too. Didn't father say once that Eve was the one who started all the troubles in the world?"

"Father was joking, my blossom, and meant somebody else," said Mrs. Day, smiling. "Were any new children at the party?"

"Yes, there were two little Sunday girls. One of them I'd seen before, but hadn't really known either of them. When they came walking up the path, the children saw them from the windows; and asked, 'Who are they?' The boys and girls all gathered about me and spoke very quickly,

before the little girls should come in the front door.

“ ‘They’re the Sundays,’ they said—‘Nowadays Sunday and Little Old-time Sunday. One of them you’ll like, and the other you won’t. One’s tiresome and the other’s a dear.’

“I’d heard of them before, so I felt pretty sure that Little Old-Time Sunday was the tiresome one. They came in and took off their hats and jackets. Little Old-Time’s hat was a small round one of white, with a dark blue ribbon around it. I guess Nowadays had lost her own hat, and had to wear her big sister’s, it was such a monstrous one. It had great red poppies on it, and lots and lots of red ribbon. (She lent some of it afterward to help trim the Christmas tree.)

“And at first we all thought Nowadays Sunday was the nicest. She could dance and knew ever so many new funny games. And she said she believed in doing what you please all the time. She could say such bright things, and kept us laughing so!

“But, though at first we were having the splendorous time ever was, by and by we felt tired and wanted to stop playing awhile. But Nowadays Sunday said it was stupid to sit still, and made us keep on with ping-pong. And then, mother, little Old-Time Sunday came and took my hand,

and led me out into the garden where it was cool and still.

“We sat under an old apple-tree that was pink and white with blossoms. At first we didn’t talk, and it seemed to me nothing had ever been so good as that quiet; for you see, mother, we’d played so hard, so many of us Days together! And, when Little Old-Time Sunday did speak, her voice was so sweet and gentle it was only another kind of quietness. She had a blue-covered ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’ We read together. And there were pictures in it of all kinds of people—Christian, Obstinate, Pliable, the Interpreter, and lots of others.

“Then we walked along the road and picked some hepaticas and innocents—here they are, mother; I saved them for you—and, when we got back to the other Days, I felt all rested, and not a bit ruffled up and cross as I had before. And, O mother, I don’t know what the others think, but I *love* Little Old-Time Sunday!”

JOHNNY'S NEW RIBBON

THERE was once a dear little boy named John and Johnny and Jack. For his father called him John, his mother and little sisters called him Johnny, and a little boy next door called him Jack.

Johnny liked nothing so well as bright colors. When he and his two sisters, Letty and Mary, were shown the full moon coming up behind Grandpapa's barn, Letty said: "Oh, how *big* it is!" And Mary said: "How *round* it is!" But little Johnny cried: "It's like my orange ball!"

And when Aunt Greta took the children to the village store, and let them each choose something, Letty wanted a hoop, and Mary chose a doll's cooking-stove, but Johnny asked for a book.

"But you can't read yet, deary," said Aunt Greta. "See here! look at this trumpet."

"I just want the book, please," said Johnny.

"He wants it because the cover's such a bright green," said Letty.

So Aunt Greta bought the green book, and Johnny took it to bed with him every night.

Johnny was almost always merry and glad, be-

cause there are so many beautiful colors everywhere. In the spring he saw the purple violets and pink May-flowers and the green grass.

In the summer he saw the changing colors of the sea, and of the shells. He thought the shells looked like bits of the sea, grown hard.



The Village Store

Johnny asked for a book.

Then in the fall he liked to fill his hands with shining brown nuts. But he liked even better to gather the bright red and yellow leaves.

When winter came, the colors were quite different, but Johnny liked to run, in his scarlet coat and cap, to look at the frozen pond. The

pond was a silver mirror, and he could see the blue sky in it.

But one thing Johnny didn't like at all. Letty and Mary wore hair-ribbons, and he didn't have any. "You're a boy, Johnny," said Mary. "And *boys* don't wear hair-ribbons."

But Johnny still looked longingly at the yellow ribbons tying Letty's brown braids, and the blue bow topping Mary's yellow curls.

"I want a ribbon," said Johnny. Now when Letty's birthday came, Mama was in bed with a bad cold. So Letty couldn't have any party. But Mama said that she and Mary might, after school, go to the fair.

The fair was in Miss Lucy Hale's parlor; and one could buy toys and lemonade and other things.

"Shall we take Johnny?" asked Mary.

"Oh, dear, no!" cried Letty. "He would be such a bother."

So the two little sisters got ready, and went to the fair. Mama had given each of them some pennies to spend, and at first Letty felt very happy, and didn't give a thought to Johnny.

She bought a little doll's pump. It was a real pump, and if you put water in, and then worked the handle, up and down, the water would run out of the spout.

Mary spent all of *her* pennies buying glasses of lemonade. "It's *so* good, Letty!" she said.

When Mary had finished, she looked all about for Letty, but Letty was nowhere to be seen.

The truth is, Letty had asked if she might exchange the toy pump for a piece of ribbon. It was a charming ribbon—sky-blue.

Letty had remembered Johnny, playing alone at home, and how he wanted a hair-ribbon.

So Letty ran home with her parcel. First she went up to her mama's room, and, softly opening her door, said: "Oh, Mama, *can* Johnny go to the fair?"

"Why yes, darling. I don't mind if you take him for a little while. But put on his thick coat and his new fur bonnet. Don't forget his mittens!"

Then Letty hurried to the nursery. There sat Johnny, all by himself in the window-seat, for Nursie had slipped down to the kitchen to gossip with the cook. Johnny looked quite forlorn.

Letty ran over to him, and how bright his little face grew when he saw her! She drew the pretty blue ribbon from her pocket, singing:

"Johnny shall have a new bonnet,
And Johnny shall go to the fair;
And Johnny shall have a new ribbon,
To tie up his bonny brown hair.

“And why may not I love Johnny?
And why may not Johnny love me?
And why may not I love Johnny,
As well as another body?”



“And Johnny shall have a new ribbon.”

So Johnny had a hair-ribbon at last! And he went to the fair and stayed a whole half-hour, and had a beautiful time with Letty and Mary.

WHEN POLLY PUT THE KETTLE ON

THERE was once a little girl who was always somewhere else. When breakfast was over, and her two sisters all ready to start for school, this little girl was never to be found.

Then her mother would say, "Where *can* Polly be? See if she is up-stairs, Molly." Molly would look in all the rooms, and say, "No, I can't find her. She must be somewhere else."

At last her mother told a wise fairy all about the trouble she had with her little daughter. And the wise fairy told the mother just what to do. Then the mother called the child to her, and said: "This is too bad, Polly dear! I shall have to do something to help you to be in the right place at the right time."

"I had rather be somewhere else," said Polly. She did not see that, while speaking, her mother took a bunch of blue larkspur and waved it three times before the face of the clock.

In a flash Polly found herself in the middle of a wide green field. Polly knew it was a long way from home, because she had played in all

the fields within two miles of their house. This field she had never seen before. Many pretty daisies whitened the grass, and Polly thought, "How nice it is here! I will make a long daisy-chain."

So she picked a lapful of daisies, and sat upon the soft green grass, and made a chain. "I am glad I am somewhere else," said Polly to herself. "When tea-time comes, I won't have to put on the kettle."

I must tell you that Molly and Sally and Polly had, through the day, their little tasks about the house; and one of these tasks was to help their mother to get ready the good hot supper.

Well, Polly made the daisy-chain, and then she made a daisy-bracelet. A meadow-lark flew over to where she was sitting, and sang to her. So Polly was glad.

This was all very well. But by and by the sun grew hot, and Polly became very hungry. So she walked over to where she saw a cow in one corner of the field. The cow looked at her kindly, with its big, round eyes, so Polly went up quite close to the cow and said:

"Cushy cow bonny, let down thy milk,
And I will give thee a gown of silk,
A gown of silk and a silver tee,
If thou wilt let down thy milk to me."

But the cow said: "Moo-oo-ooo! I'd rather be somewhere else!" And the cow jumped over the wall into the next field, and ran away.

At this, Polly felt a little sad. But she said to herself, "Oh, well, I'll go to the old woman." For

"There was an old woman,
And, what do you think?
She lived upon nothing
But victuals and drink!"



There sat the old woman upon the door-step.

So Polly felt pretty sure of getting *something* to eat.

She walked to the old woman's cottage, and there sat the old woman upon the door-step.

"I am hungry," said Polly. "Will you please give me some bread?"

“You surely don’t need food!” cried the old woman, “for

‘What are little girls made of? made of?
 What are little girls made of?
 Sugar and spice, and things that are nice;
 And that’s what little girls are made of!’

“As for me, I’d rather be somewhere else.” And she jumped up and went into the cottage.

“Cross patch,
 Draw the latch,
 Sit by the fire and spin,”

muttered Polly, for she felt quite upset.

Just then she saw a little boy under a mulberry-tree. He had a small dish in one hand, and in the dish was something brown. “Perhaps it is pudding,” thought Polly, “and perhaps the little boy will give me some of it.”

So she went closer, and said: “Little boy, I am hungry. What is in your dish?”

“Mustard,” answered the little boy, sadly, and he began to cry.

Polly knew he was Jacky; she remembered

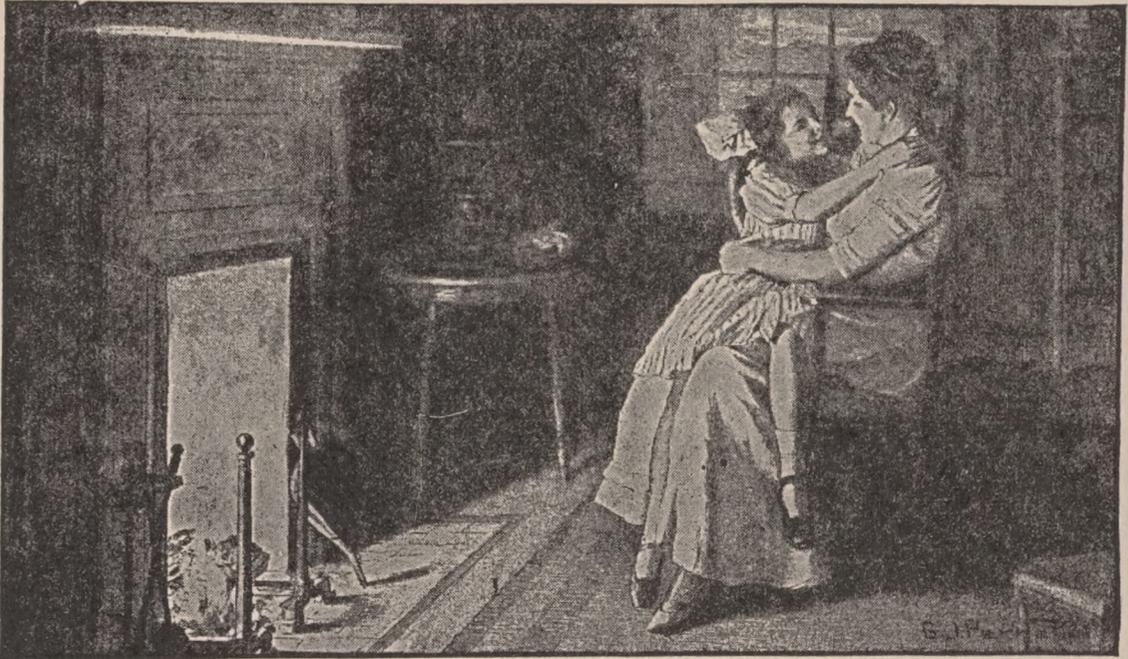
“When Jacky’s a very good boy,
 He shall have cakes and a custard;
 But when he does nothing but cry,
 He shall have nothing but mustard.”

“I wish you had been good,” said Polly.

“Are you good?” asked Jacky, wiping his eyes.

“No, I’m not. But I’m *going* to be,” said Polly. And she ran home as fast as she could go.

When Polly got home she found her own dear mother rocking by the fire. Polly climbed up into her lap, and gave her a hug.



“I want to be a help,” said little Polly.

“Home is good! And I want to be a help,” said little Polly. Then Polly’s mother looked very happy. She smiled, and she smiled.

“Is it almost supper-time?” asked Polly.

“Yes,” said her mother. “It is almost six,

‘Molly, call the muffin-man,
Sally, blow the bellows strong,
Polly, put the kettle on,
And we’ll all take tea!’ ”

And Polly fairly flew to put on the kettle!

THE OLD OLD WOMAN WHO LIVED
IN A SHOE AND HOW SHE
TOOK BOARDERS

ONCE there were three little sisters named Mattie, Patty, and Prue. They loved each other dearly, and played together happily.

But one winter Mattie and Patty had scarlet fever, and so Prue had to go from home. She went to Great-Aunt Ann's.

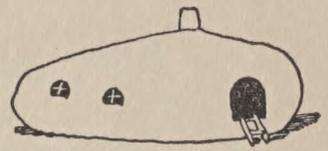
Great-Aunt Ann had thin straight red hair,—but what frosted cookies she always kept on hand! Her nose was rather unshapely, but how good-naturedly she looked at naughty children! Her gowns were scant and plain,—but she knew dozens and dozens of stories!

So when Nursey told Prue that she was to sit still, and not fidget while her hair was brushed, because she was going on the next train to Great-Aunt Ann's, she clapped her hands. "*Goody!*" cried she.

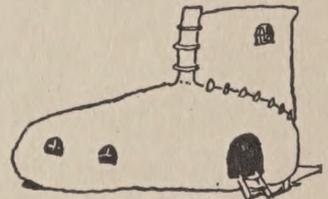
And that very night at bedtime, Great-Aunt Ann cuddled Prue in her arms, and told her the story of "The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe, and How She Took Boarders."

“You won’t leave out any, darling Great-Aunt Ann, *will* you?” asked Prue, patting Great-Aunt Ann’s thin cheek.

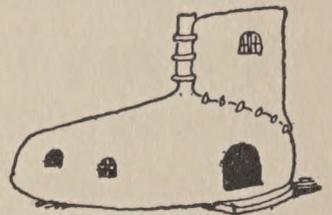
“Not a word. Once upon a time there was an old woman who lived in the oddest house you ever saw. At first it had been built with rounded ends. Then, as more dear little boys and girls were born into the family, a large back-room was built on. And, finally, when a small front porch was added, the old woman’s house looked, for all the world, exactly like a shoe.



“By this time she really didn’t know what to do, because she had so many children, and children *have* to be fed. And where was the money to come from? You can’t expect children to live on bread and potatoes. Grown-ups might, but you see *children* need



a number of things,—plum-puddings (Jack Horner could tell you that), tarts of a Sunday, and now and then, barley candy.



“So the old woman sat herself down to think. And the upshot of her thinking was that she decided to take boarders. She at once put out a sign, fastening it to the blue pump-handle in her

front yard, where it might easily be seen by all wayfarers stopping for a drink. The notice read:

DO BOARD HERE.
I AM USED TO CHILDREN.

“Why, the boarders came by sixes and sevens! But the old woman was very careful about what



Why, the boarders came by sixes and
sevens!

sort of folks should live in the Shoe, as it was called.

“Now it happened that one day the old woman’s niece, Daffy-Down-Dilly, came up to town, in a fine petticoat and a green gown. She wanted

to visit the theatres, but there wasn't a *thing* going on. She went to all the shops, and bought, among other things, an Easter bonnet and three-eighths of a yard of yellow silk, with which to mend her fine petticoat. But time hung heavy.

“ ‘Such dullness!’ sighed Daffy-Down-Dilly. ‘I believe I’ll run out to aunt’s, and see how she gets on with her boarders. Bobby Shaftoe wrote me a letter all praise of her muffins.’

“ ‘So Daffy-Down-Dilly started off. Her way, after she had left town, led up Primrose Hill, and Primrose Hill was dirty. There she met a pretty miss, who dropped her a curtsy.

“ ‘Can you tell me the road to the Old Woman Who Lives in a Shoe?’ asked Daffy-Down-Dilly.

“ ‘Why,’ replied the pretty miss, ‘there *was* an old woman lived under the hill, and if she’s not gone she lives there still. Baked apples she sold, and cranberry pies, and *she’s* the old woman that never told lies.’

“ ‘Of *course* she didn’t!’ said Daffy-Down-Dilly, quite angrily. She hurried on and soon came to her aunt’s house.

“ ‘There sat the old woman in the front porch, with all her children about her, but not a boarder was to be seen.

“ ‘How do you like taking boarders, aunt?’ asked Daffy-Down-Dilly, taking off her yellow

bonnet, and kissing the five youngest children.

“ ‘*Very* much,’ said the old woman. ‘Such a useful experience!’

“ ‘But where *are* the boarders?’ asked her niece, peering in at the open door.



“How do you like taking boarders, Aunt?” asked Daffy-down-dilly.

“ ‘They’ve all left,’ said the old woman quite cheerfully.

“ ‘But—but’ began the niece—

“ ‘I’ll explain,’ said the old woman. ‘Wait a bit, and I’ll name ’em off. There was Old King Cole; yes, even *Royalty* came to me!’ and she

drew herself up proudly. ‘*He* was a merry old soul, if there ever was one! But, my dear, he was *always* calling for something, so that I had to be forever on the trot. He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl, and he called for his fiddlers three.’



“Your Majesty, you must go.”

“ ‘It must have got on to your nerves, aunt,’ said Daffy-Down-Dilly.

“ ‘Oh, dreadfully! I had at last to say, “Your Majesty, you must go.” Then there was the Crooked Man.’

“ ‘What was the matter with *him*?’

“ ‘The Crooked Man was well enough in his way, but he never paid his board. Finally, one day, he found a crooked sixpence against a

crooked stile. Thinks I to myself, he'll pay me now. *But*, no! if you'll believe it, he bought a crooked cat.'

“ ‘Shameful!’ cried Daffy-Down-Dilly.

“ ‘It caught a crooked mouse. I'll say that much for the cat.’ The old woman then went on:

“ ‘Peter boarded here a week: but then my pumpkins gave out. He wouldn't so much as taste of anything else. I felt pleased when Little Tommy Tittlemouse came. He was an easy boarder. Every day he would start off after his breakfast with his fishing-rod, and I'd not see sign of him till sun-down. But—how can I tell it?—I found out that *he caught fishes in other men's ditches!* So, of course, I had to let *him go.*'

“Daffy-Down-Dilly had felt a little shy about asking for one of the boarders, but finally her curiosity got the better of her.

“ ‘What,' asked she, 'has become of Bobby Shaftoe?'

“Then all the other children shouted in a chorus, 'Didn't you know? Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea!'

“ ‘He had silver buckles on his knee,' said one of the little girls.

“Daffy-Down-Dilly murmured to herself, 'He'll come back, and marry me—pretty Bobby Shaftoe!'

“ ‘And how about Mr. and Mrs. Jack Sprat?’ she said aloud.

“At this question, the old woman’s cheeks grew very red. ‘Talk of *cranky* people! Jack Sprat could eat no fat,—his wife could eat no lean. There was never any suiting them. Children are the only satisfactory boarders. Little Boy Blue was the most obliging little fellow,—always ready to blow the dinner-horn for me. And little Miss Muffet,—the *best* child! While the Sprats were fussing over their platter, she’d sit on a tuffet, eating her curds and whey. Even when there came a big spider and sat down beside her, she never cried a tear, though sadly frightened. But how I *am* running on! Here it is five o’clock. Jack and Jill, run up the hill, and fetch a pail of water. Jack! be nimble. Jill! be quick. And you, Polly, put the kettle on, and we’ll all take tea.’

“ ‘If you’ve no boarders, how do you live?’ asked Daffy-Down-Dilly.

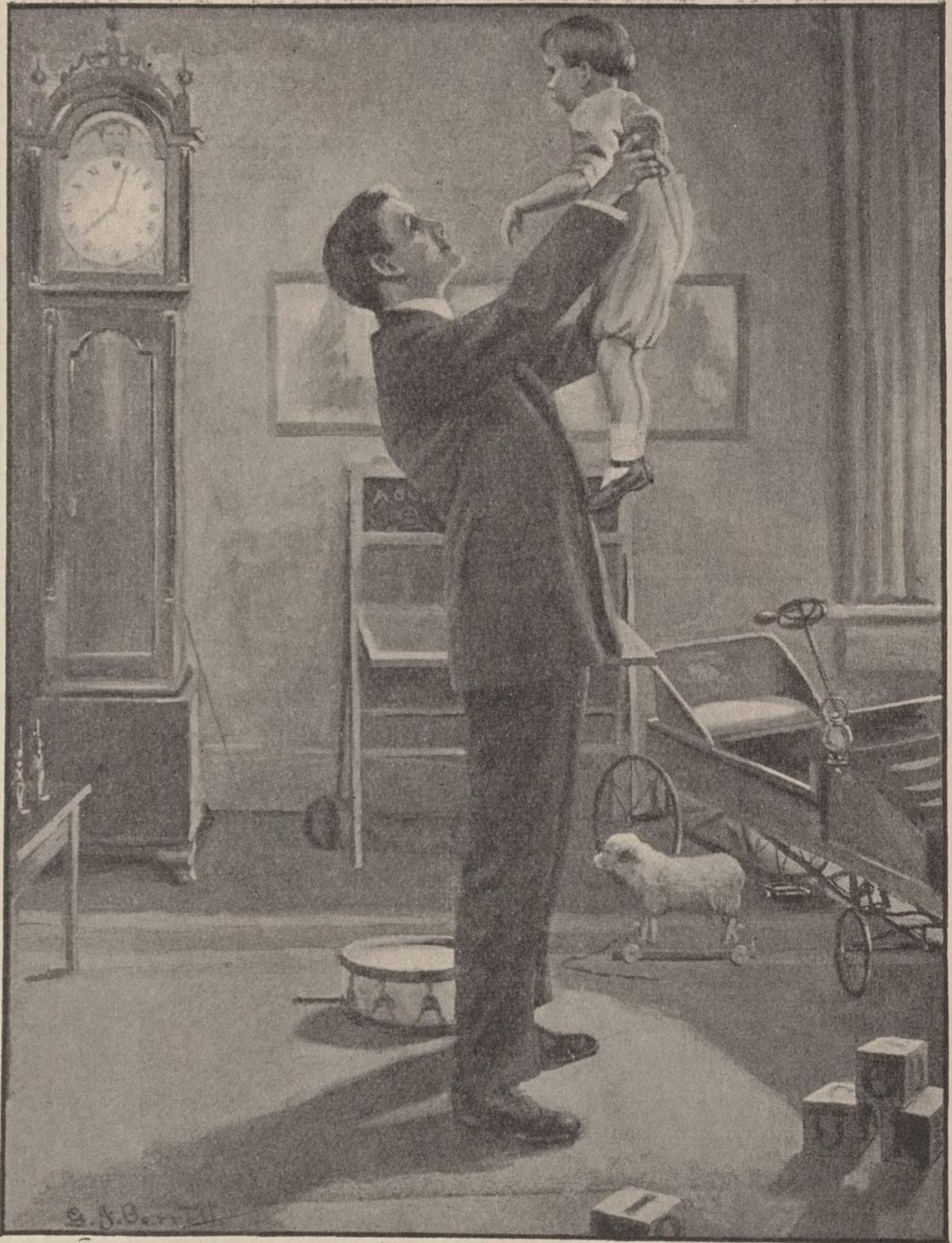
“ ‘At first it was pretty hard,’ said the old woman, ‘but luckily I happened to remember a cousin of mine, and—what do you think?—*she* lived upon nothing but victuals and drink,—*nothing!* So I made up my mind we’d do the same. Of course, that made everything simple enough. Clothes alone had been such a bother. Daddy had

to go a-hunting day in and day out. Now, he has a new master (because he can't work any faster), and his wages are but a penny a day, yet I manage beautifully. When my dear children are very hungry, there's pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, pease porridge in the pot, nine days old.'

“‘But,’ objected Daffy-Down-Dilly, ‘will the gum-drops hold out?’

“‘However, the gum-drops *did* hold out, as well as the pease porridge, and—of a Sunday—the tarts. And ever afterwards all went well with the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe.’”

Prue liked this story so well that when Mattie got over the scarlet fever, and came to Great-Aunt Ann's, it had to be told to both little girls. When Patty got well she, too, came to Great-Aunt Ann's. And then Great-Aunt Ann, with an arm around one little girl, and an arm around another little girl, and a third little girl in her lap, told the story to Matty and Patty and Prue.



Papa was sure to sing a charming verse

JIMMY'S TWINKLING STAR

JIMMY had a fairly good time all day, but his happiest hour was the cuddley one when Mamma came into the nursery to put him to bed. She still called him her baby, although he was fast outgrowing his frocks.

Morning was very well in its way. As soon as Papa's breakfast was over, he came upstairs, and caught Jimmy in his strong arms, and tossed him high in the air. Papa was sure, too, to sing a charming verse (though it began with rather long words—Latin perhaps)

“Hickory dickory dock!
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down.
Hickory, dickory dock!”

When Papa came to “The mouse ran down,” Jimmy always turned his head to look at the tall clock in the corner. Never yet had the mouse been seen to run *up* the clock, but Jimmy held a fast hope that, if only quick enough, he would some day at least see it run *down*. It was very exciting!

Next came the bath, beginning with a strange and unnecessary soaping by Nursey. This was made bearable only by her way of singing, with every vigorous pass of the sponge,

“Here we go uppy-up-uppy!

Here we go downy-down-downy!

Here we go 'round and 'round and 'round!

(Nursey's cheeks grew fiery red at this point)

And here we go roundy-round-roundy!”

The bath ended with a great splashing, which on one proud occasion sent Pussy in a flying leap quite to the other end of the nursery.

After Jimmy's breakfast, and while Nursey ate hers, he was allowed to play by himself in the garden. At least, the grown-ups *thought* he was playing, but he was really making discoveries,—of the most interesting kind, too. For where were those silver bells and cockle shells? And perhaps Kitty Fisher found Lucy Locket's pocket in some garden path; what was more likely? Lucy Locket was a very careless girl, and had no doubt lost her pocket again. True, there was not a penny in it,—but *that ribbon around it!* The ribbon might be blue, or still better yellow! Jimmy wished Nursey would spend more time over her breakfast.

Naptime came quickly, and the rest of the day was full of pleasant play. Robin and Jean and

Daisy came home from school. And Jimmy sat on the grass, and watched them build London Bridge and call "Here puss! puss! puss!" from the apple-trees. Sometimes the children sat in a sedate row, and a button was mysteriously passed from hand to hand. What was it all about? Jimmy didn't know, but he liked to see all that went on. And once,—oh, joy! he was placed at one end of the row, and Daisy pressed the button firmly into his plump hands.

Accidents sometimes happened. Jimmy's forehead got a big bump the day Robin was Jack-be-nimble and Jean was the candle-stick. But Nursey made a plaster quite like the one told of in the Jack and Jill story. And Robin gave him the stub of a blue pencil. There was a chorus of "It's *not* green, Nursey!" when the pencil went into Jimmy's mouth.

Yes, the day was very well, but it was nothing to the hour when Mamma came home. You see, Grandmamma was ill, and Mamma went every day to take care of her. But by Jimmy's bedtime she was sure to be at home again.

Nursey might think *she* could cuddle babies. Why, she didn't know the A B C of it! When Mamma's arm came around Jimmy it was swans-down and roses! And Mamma never wore stiffly-starched aprons. Her gowns were of soft com-

fortable woolen. The fire was wont to start up and crackle cheerily after she came in. Pussy would show black against the yellow tiles, and wave her tail peacefully.

On one particular night Mamma wore a gown of heavenly blue, and at her throat was a tiny diamond star. Now Jimmy, since he went to sleep by sundown, had seldom seen the real stars. But on one wakeful night Papa had carried him to the window, and pointed them out to him. So now, as Jimmy lay in Mamma's lap and watched the glistening jewel within the blue of her gown, he thought it must be one of those bright stars. He murmured something sleepily.

“What did baby say, Robin?” asked Mamma.

“He said ‘Twinkle, twinkle, little star,’ ” replied Robin; and Robin finished the verse:

“ ‘How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.’ ”

Jean and Daisy had just come into the nursery to kiss Jimmy goodnight, and they went on with Robin:

“ ‘When the radiant sun is gone,
And he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your welcome light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.’ ”

A LONG AGO BABY WHOSE CRADLE WAS GREEN

ONE bright May morning little Alice Dale and her mamma went to sit in the apple-orchard. The sky was blue, and the air sweet with the scent of apple-blossoms.

When they were seated under one of the trees, Mamma took out her sewing, and Alice began to play with her doll.

Mamma was making a pink dimity frock for the doll. The frock was low-necked and short-sleeved, and it was to have a sash of pink-and-white ribbon.

The doll's name was Posy. "I think I will give Posy her nap now," Alice soon said. "But what can I use for a cradle, Mamma dear?"

Mamma thought a moment and then she said, "Why, I know what will make a *very* nice cradle!"

And Mamma took up her straw work-basket, and turned it upside-down in her lap. That was to let the thimble, and scissors, and needles, and spools, and the doll's pink frock fall into her apron.

Under the trees the petals of apple-blossoms lay so thickly it was like a soft carpet.

Alice ran here and there over this carpet, and in a short time had picked up enough petals to line the basket-cradle.

“And I will pile them up high at one end,” said little Alice, “and that will be the pillow.”

Then she put Posy in the cradle, and covered her with a soft mulberry-leaf.

It was easy to fasten the basket to a low branch of one of the apple-trees. Posy shut her eyes at once, while Alice, as she rocked the cradle, laughed to see a fat robin perched close to the doll, as if to keep guard.

Mamma and Alice liked to sing little songs together; and now they sang:

“Rock-a-by, baby,
On the tree top!
When the wind blows
The cradle will rock.”

By-and-by Alice got a little tired of rocking Posy, so she lay down upon the grass, and nestled her head against Mamma.

“Won’t you tell me a story?” asked she; and she added, “About a baby, please.

Mamma had told stories to so many children

that she always had one on hand. She now began promptly:

“I will tell you about a baby who lived a long time ago, in a land called Egypt. The King of Egypt was not a kind man. Just think! he did not love little babies.”

“Why, *Mamma!*” cried Alice. “Now in Egypt,” went on Mamma, “there was a little baby boy. And this baby’s mother was afraid that the bad King might not let her keep the darling baby. So of course she wanted to hide him where the King should not see him.

The baby’s mother thought of four or five places. And at last she put the baby in the place she felt would be safest of all. She made a sort of little cradle of green rushes. The rushes were woven together, and smeared with pitch. She tucked the baby snugly up in this cradle, just as you tuck up Posy.

Then she let the cradle float, like a nice little boat, on the edge of a river. All around the boat grew tall green bulrushes.

The baby had a big sister, whose name was Miriam. Miriam loved her little brother dearly; and through the day she used to go many times to the bulrushes.

There was a King’s daughter. A King’s daugh-

ter is called a princess. The princess came down to the river to bathe. And she happened to come to the very place where this baby boy lay floating in his pretty green cradle.

Now this was a good kind princess; but you know babies are sometimes startled when they see a new face." "Yes, I know," said Alice. "Posy cried today when she saw the organ-grinder."

"Well, the baby, when he saw a strange lady looking at him, began to cry loudly. The princess felt sad to see his tears, and wanted to comfort him. She took him gently in her arms, and soothed him. "I will name him Moses," said she to herself. She thought she would take Moses home to the palace, so that she might cuddle and love him to her heart's content.

But the princess knew she would have to find someone to help take care of the child. So she bade Miriam come to her, and asked "Do you know of somebody who would be a good nurse for this baby?" Miriam answered "Yes." "Will you bring the woman to me?" Miriam said she would.

And Miriam hurried home, and brought her mother. For who else could be to little Moses such a good nurse?

"I guess Moses smiled when he saw his Mamma coming!" said Alice. Just then, crack—



The Princess came down to the river to bathe

crack! went something above Alice's head. Perhaps she should have tied Posy's cradle to a stronger branch. Or perhaps Posy awoke, wanted to hear the story, and bounded about too much. At any rate, the bough broke, the cradle fell, and down came the dolly, the cradle, and all!

ONE I LOVE, TWO I LOVE
OR
A SURPRISE ALL AROUND

IT was the thirteenth of February, and valentines, which for the past three weeks the children of Listening Hollow school had talked about steadily, were now more than ever the subject of the day.

Jimmy knew pretty well who was going to get *his* valentine—the blue-and-gold wonder he had last Saturday paid out all his pocket-money for at Miss Cruddle's variety-store. He looked at Flossie Sylvester, just now the centre of a group of very little girls. They had come into the school-room from coasting, and were warming up. It was twenty minutes to nine, and they crowded about the fiery-eyed stove, and jumped up and down, glancing back often at the relentless hands of the clock. A scorching odor came from one pair of too venturesome mittened hands.

Jimmy thought he was studying his spelling lesson. R-e-c-e-i-v-e and B-e-l-i-e-v-e,—when should he be sure of those second syllables?

“Huh!” said Bobby Weston, “If you think it’s *e-i*, spell it *i-e* and you’re all right.” Jimmy copied “achieve” nine times, but meanwhile his mind was only on the chatter around the stove.

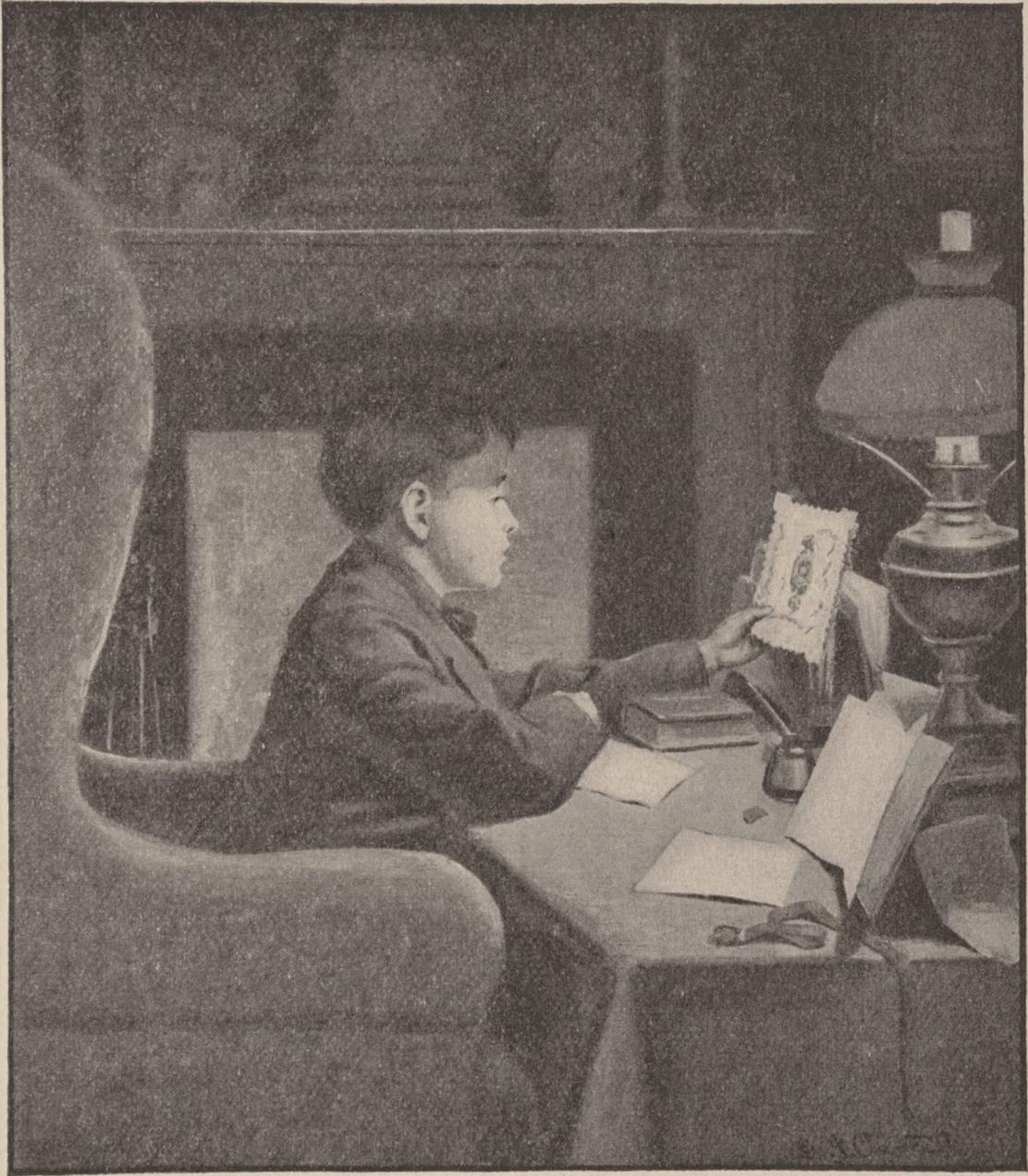
“I guess I’ll have lots of valentines!” said Flossie, tossing her yellow curls. “I had eight last year.”

“I had five,” said dimpled Marjorie. Then all the little girls joined in telling of their valentines, all except blue-eyed, short-haired Nancy. Jimmy wondered why Nancy said nothing. She didn’t seem sorry. No, she was looking eagerly at the others in turn, and when Flossie and Marjorie and Jane and the rest minutely described their valentines, a glad look came into her eyes, “just as if ’twas *her* valentines!” thought observant Jimmy.

Just then his six-year-old sister Alice came into the school-room, crying with the cold. While sliding in the yard she had fallen from her sled, and her little coat, hood and mittens were mostly white instead of the scarlet in which she had set forth, and she brought quite a snow drift to Flossie’s feet. “Do get away, you sopping little thing!” cried the golden-locked one, edging away. “And, girls, you remember the pink and silvery valentine with rosebuds and cupids? Well, I *think*,”—her voice lowered impressively, “I *think*

it was *made abroad!*” She looked at Nancy to see the effect of her words, but Nancy was no longer listening. She had already begun to take off the dripping garments from shivering, sobbing Alice, whispering some magic words that brought a bright smile to the child’s face, and one much like it to Jimmy’s over the speller. “Will you truly, truly, make me a wal’time?” said little Alice.

Then it was nine o’clock. The bell rang, and the first lesson was Spelling. Jimmy tried valiantly, but failed on four words, and Nancy went above him. When, after school, he and Bobby and Nathan passed the girls in the hollow, he heard Flossie say, “How stupid some of the class were in Spelling today!” And then Nancy’s sweet voice said, “But how well Jimmy reads; don’t you think so?” Jimmy straightened up and ran home very fast. That evening, after he had done his sums, he got out the wonderful blue-and-gold valentine, and looked at it a long time. Then he wondered whether Flossie ended in i-e or e-i. Then, slowly and with great care, he squeezed the pretty laced paper into its envelope, which was rather too small to hold it comfortably. He dipped his pen into the ink, rubbed his rough sleeve over a blot that *would* come, and suddenly wrote on the envelope.



He got out the wonderful blue-and-gold valentine

Miss Nancy Gray.

Oh, how surprised he was! And next morning, St. Valentine's Day, when Nancy got it, oh, oh, how surprised *she* was!

HOW DOROTHY LENT A HAND

MOTHER was putting the last things upon the table, ready for the twelve o'clock dinner, and giving occasional glances out of the window to see if the two little girls were in sight.

The school-house was only a few minutes' walk from the home, to which their healthy young appetites hurried them at noon. Somehow the return walk always looked longer, though the girls did not stop, as did most of the boys, to dip their heads in the brook that tumbled through the meadow and under the road just before you reached the school-house. The boys, to be sure, came into school with dripping locks, which maintained a stout defiance to the hasty application of pocket-combs; but, as the "Ugly Duckling" observed, it was "so refreshing to feel the water close over your head!" and the boys thought they could study better after the cool dip. If I remember correctly, however, the mistakes made in the morning reading lesson were not seldom repeated in the afternoon.

Presently Mrs. Gray saw Ann, the elder of the two children, coming alone. On entering the

room which served for kitchen and dining-room she began, somewhat vaguely, to explain that Dorothy had gone to find something their teacher had lost on the beach, but would be back soon. While speaking, Ann's eyes were fastened on the odorous stew her mother knew so well how to concoct, and which was evidently responsible for any present incoherence.

Did you ever attend a little country district school? If so, do you remember how sumptuous a repast the homely noon dinner always seemed? Probably some of you fare daily in a much more elaborate manner, yet I doubt if you get anything more palatable than the smoking stew, suggestive of fresh vegetables from Mrs. Gray's back garden, those generous slices of brown bread so hot as to melt the creamy home-made butter in no time; and for dessert cold pandowdy, such as they know how to make in remote Massachusetts villages; at least they did some years ago in this one.

Meanwhile Dorothy, in her haste to secure the teacher's book, was scrambling through woods and fields in a vain attempt to reach the beach by a short cut. I wish I could make you see how pretty she looked, brown hair and short skirt alike flying—no, *pretty* isn't exactly the word, either. My little Dorothy wasn't strictly pretty. Her

features were not very regular, and, moreover, were thickly covered with freckles. But a *pleasant* sight she was. Her eyes were a deep blue, and their expression beautifully tender and earnest; and just now the wind, fresh from the sea, brought a bright wildrose hue to her cheeks. Everything seemed to cling to her blue calico skirt and try to hold her back; but at last she found the desired outlet by the aid of two thick rows of primroses, which reached up high, as if to show her, by the pale light of their yellow blossoms, the path which lay between. She could look beyond the low cliff to the shore, and not very far off lay the book near a rock; the tide was almost upon it now, and Dorothy was very glad she had come in time.

It was nearly one o'clock when she reached the road again. It would never do to be late to school! But here was Ann, who said she was "thankful *enough* that book had been found!"—she "knew Miss Winslow set lots by it," and she guessed Mother would save Dorothy's dinner till four o'clock.

Dorothy was a shy child. "You give it to her," she whispered, thrusting the little brown-covered "Evangeline" into her sister's hand as they entered the low-ceiled school-room, where the other pupils were already seated, and the



She could look beyond the low cliff to the shore

afternoon sun streaming so broadly that the boys' dripping locks bade fair to dry rapidly.

“Here's your book, Miss Winslow!” said Ann in her clear voice, and Miss Winslow flushed with pleasure and said, “Oh, thank you, you dear child!” She kissed Ann warmly and added, “Now take your seats quickly.”

She never knew the trouble the other silent child had taken in her behalf. But Dorothy, in spite of being hungry, felt somehow very happy, and the afternoon session didn't seem as long as usual, she had such a pleasant picture in her mind of the sea and the kindly primroses.

WHEN SILENTLY FALLING THE SNOW

“In flakes of a feathery white,
’Tis falling so gently and slow!
Oh, pleasant to me is the sight
When silently falling the snow.”

LUCY was a dear little girl six years old. She was born on St. Valentine’s Day, and thought February the most jolly part of the whole year. You see, in that month we get so much snow. And what is better fun than coasting?

On Lucy’s last birthday, while she was eating her breakfast, a loud rap-tap-tap came at the front door. “I guess it’s the postman!” said Lucy, running to peep out of the window. “No, it isn’t; it’s a man with *such* a big bundle!”

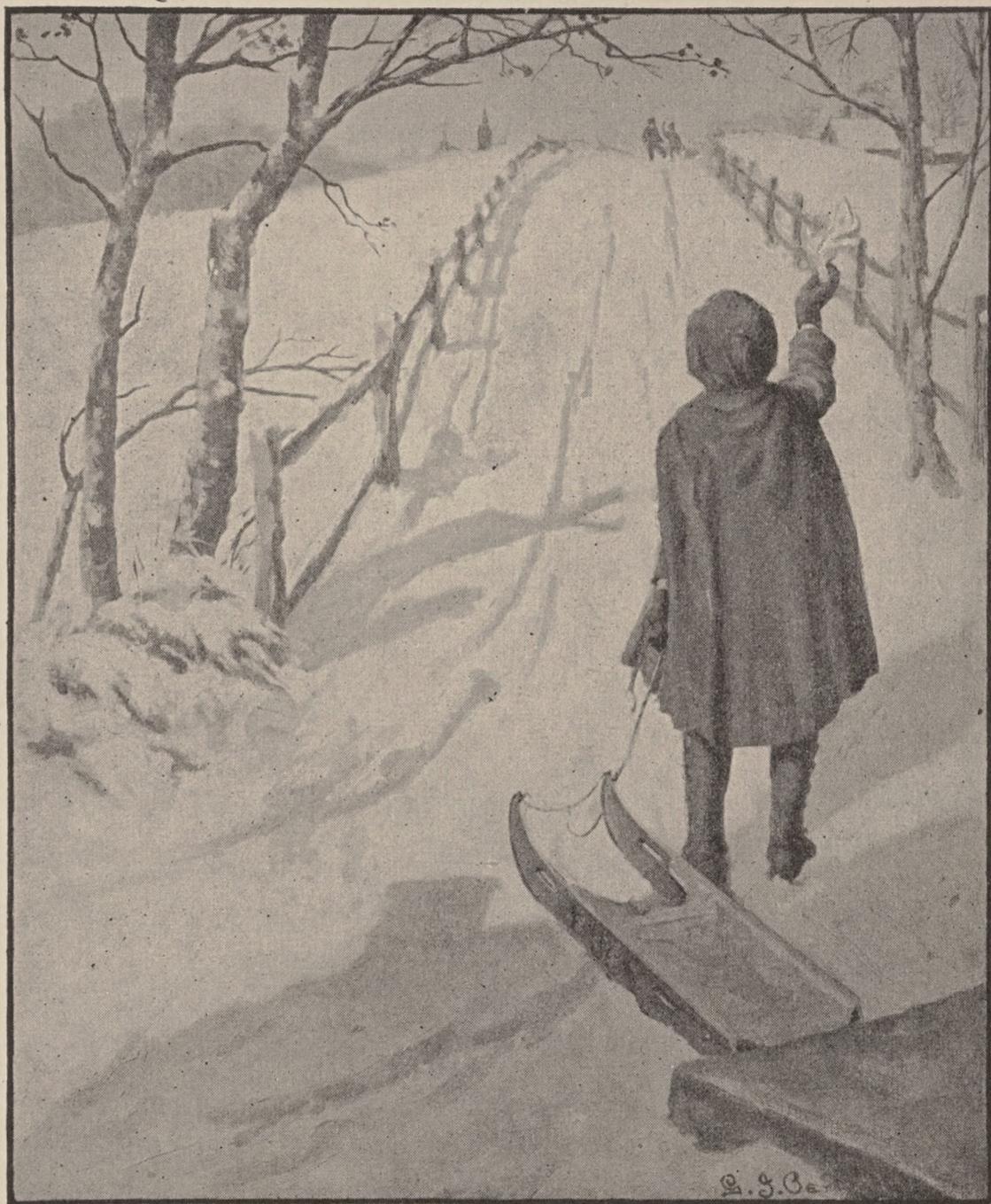
Sure enough, it was the expressman.

“Does any little girl named Lucy Hall live in this house?” asked the expressman.

For he saw Lucy’s blue eyes in the doorway, peeping around the maid’s apron.

“Oh, yes, sir, *I’m* Lucy!” cried she, jumping up and down.

“Well, this is the biggest valentine *I* ever



There are George and Nellie

saw!" said the expressman. "Most *too* big, isn't it, for such a small girl?"

"Oh, no, sir, it isn't!" cried Lucy, jumping up and down harder than ever.

So the box was brought into the front hall. It was of wood and very big indeed; and in the middle of the cover was painted a smiling Cupid. Cupid's arms were full of red roses.

"It *is* a truly valentine," said Lucy. And then she began to untie the string.

Now what do you think was in the big box? It wasn't a doll, nor anything for a doll. It wasn't books. I will tell you at once. It was a sled.

Lucy was so glad when she saw the scarlet sled that she forgot to finish her breakfast.

"It has my name on the side!" she cried, spying LUCY in large white letters. "Oh, Mamma! There are George and Nellie, coming over the hill with their sleds! I want to show them mine."

So Lucy hurried into her coat and hood, in which she looked like Little Red Riding Hood, and she had a jolly morning coasting with George and Nellie.

When they said good-by to one another, they promised to meet on the hill next day for some more fun. But by the following morning, the snow fell so thick and fast that Papa said it was a blizzard, and Mamma began to be afraid that

the milkman would not be able to make his way to the house.

Lucy had a lesson in reading from Papa, and a lesson in arithmetic from Mamma. Then she climbed up in the window-seat, where for awhile she watched the whirling flakes, and wished rather sadly that she could coast with the new sled.

“Why not use it, after all?” thought she. “I’ll bring it up in the nursery, and play store. It will make a beautiful red counter.”

When a row of toys was placed upon the sled Mamma came into the nursery with a little basket in her hand.

“Your store looks so bright and cheerful this stormy day, I really *had* to run in,” said she. “I have some charming bits of pink velvet, and am looking for a small doll to dress.”

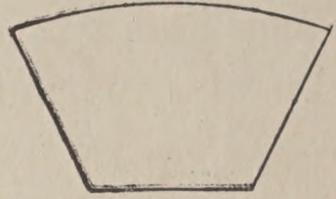
“Here is a little doll without any clothes,” said Lucy, smiling and holding up a pretty china doll. “Will that do?”

“Yes, it is just what I want. I think a pink hood would look well on her brown curls.”

“Have you any furnace-cuffs?” then asked Mamma. “Why, no,” answered Lucy, “but if you will tell me what they are, perhaps I can get some.”

“Well,” said Mamma, “furnace-cuffs are made of newspaper, or any wrapping-paper. They are

shaped like this:" And she showed Lucy how quickly the cuffs could be cut out with scissors, and then how pinned on. "You see how well they will protect my nice sleeves when I am fixing the fire or doing anything of that sort."

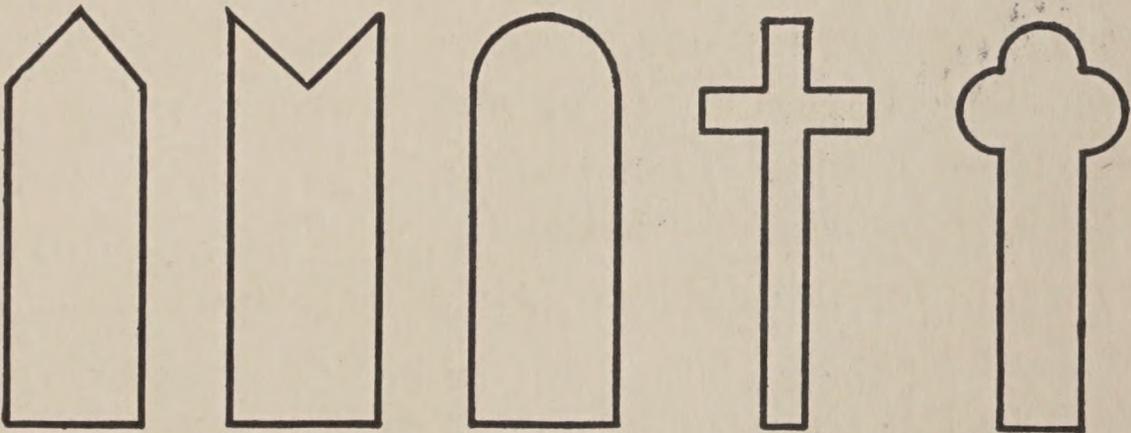


"I can make some!" said Lucy.

"Very well, then. I will order ten pairs," said Mamma.

This was a good customer, don't you think so?

Papa, too, came in to buy, and he said he must *at once* have a great many bookmarks, as there was sad danger of his losing his place in the books he was reading.



The book marks were of simple shape, cut by Lucy from colored papers. Such brisk trade made the hours fly quickly, and at bedtime Lucy said an *indoors* snowy day was quite as good fun as an *outdoors* one.



HOW JACK AND JILL MADE THE COAST

JACK and Jill were twins, you know, and looked exactly alike, excepting that Jack had short, curly hair and Jill had long, straight hair. They lived in the country, and were out-of-doors

nearly all the time, and so their cheeks were very rosy, and their clothes apt to be too small. My, how they grew!

The house where Jack and Jill lived was a long way from any other house, except the little one where Tommy Tittlemouse lived. So they seldom played with other children. But one winter day—it was just a week before Christmas—

Jill came running out to the barn. Jack was sitting in the barn, mending one of the runners of his sled.

“Oh, Jack!” cried Jill.

“Don’t shake me!” said Jack. “I’m trying to nail this runner on.”

“But guess who’s coming to visit us!”

“Cinderella?”

“No, she has to stay at home, and do all the work.”

“Bobby Shaftoe?”

“No, he has gone to sea.”

“Is it Mary, then?”

“No, and I’m glad it’s not. She’s *quite* too contrary!”

“Who is coming, Jill?”

“Why, little Miss Muffett!”

“Oh, bother!” said Jack, throwing down his hammer. “*She* won’t be any fun! A girl that’s afraid of even a *spider!*”

“I’m sure she wouldn’t be afraid now,” said Jill. “When that big spider sat down beside her she was a little bit of a girl, almost a baby. So no wonder she ran away.”

Just then the mother of Jack and Jill came out to the barn. She told them quite a lot about little Miss Muffet. She said Miss Muffett lived in a great big city, many miles away.

“This will be the first time she has stayed in the country. So you must try to make her have a very jolly time.”

“I hope she can skate,” said Jill.

“I’ll take her coasting on my sled,” said Jack, “if only it snows.”

“It feels like snow now,” said his mother.

And, sure enough! soon soft flakes, like downy white feathers, floated from the sky. At first they fell slowly, but before long they came so fast and thick, it was like a giant pillow-fight.

The next day little Miss Muffet came from the city. It had stopped snowing. When she had eaten dinner with Jack and Jill, they all ran out-of-doors and tried to make a coast. And my, what a good time they had digging that coast! They heaped the snow on both sides of the path, which was a very long one, and when it was done it was time to go into the house.

Jack’s father saw that he looked sober.

“What’s the matter, my boy?” he asked.

“It won’t be much of a coast,” said Jack, “the snow is too soft.”

But at that moment the supper-bell rang, so nothing more was said about the coast.

Father sat at one end of the supper-table, and Mother sat at the other end. Little Miss Muffet and Jack sat at one side, and Jill sat opposite

them. They had griddle-cakes for supper, with maple-syrup. And the griddle-cakes were steaming hot, and very good. But everybody was thirsty, and there was no water on the table.

“Oh, dear!” said the mother, “I forgot the water, and our well is dry. Jack and Jill, you’ll have to go up the hill and fetch a pailful.”

So Jack and Jill went up the hill. They went to Mrs. Tittlemouse’s house. And Mrs. Tittlemouse gladly filled their pail with water, for her well was not dry.

Then the twins started home again. “Let’s walk down the coast,” said Jack.

“All right,” said Jill.

But just then they thought of the steaming hot griddle-cakes and the maple-syrup. Jack and Jill were as hungry as two little bears. So they ran as fast as they could. And just as they started Jack fell down, giving his head a great bump. Jill came tumbling after. The pail tipped over, and away ran the water all the way down the coast.

Do you think Jack cried? Not a bit of it. Up he got, and home did trot, as fast as he could caper. Still, it was a huge bump. So when he went to bed his mother bound it up nicely with vinegar and brown paper.

I forgot to say that Mrs. Tittlemouse sent Tommy down with another pail of water.

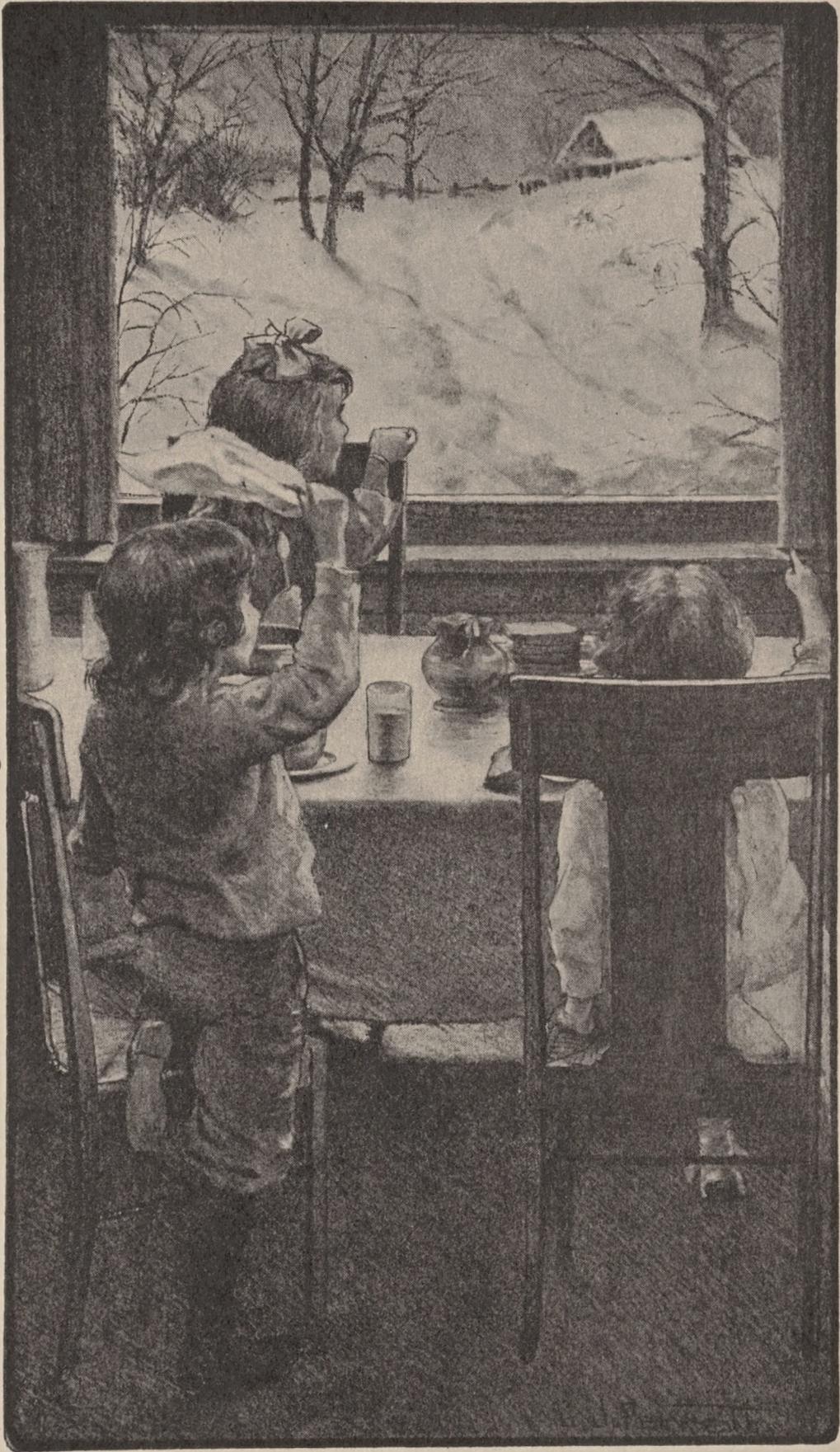
Tommy went slowly and with great care, so *he* did not fall down. When he got to the house where Jack and Jill lived, supper was over and the family was thirstier than ever. So every one was glad to get a nice drink of cold water.

Now little Miss Muffet's place at table was opposite a window. From this window the snowy hill could be plainly seen. And at breakfast next morning, little Miss Muffet kept looking out of the window. For it was a lovely day, all blue and white, like all fine days in the winter-time.

Pretty soon Miss Muffet gave a joyful start. Jill turned her head, and looked out of the window. She clapped her hands. Then Jack looked out. He jumped out of his chair, and shouted "Hurrah!" at the top of his voice.

For who would not start, and clap, and shout hurrah? The coast lay like a silver ribbon in the sun. Where the pail of water had run over the snow was a clear path of shining ice. There would be fine coasting that day. And all because

"Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water."



The coast lay like a silver ribbon in the sun

A CHEERFUL LITTLE GIRL AND HER CHEERFUL LITTLE DOLL

CHAPTER I

CHOOSING THE DOLL

DEAR little girl, how much do you love your doll? Do you love her so that when you put her to bed at night you carefully tuck in the blankets? Does she sit close beside you at breakfast, and share your bread and butter? And would you willingly give her some of your yellow egg, too, only Mamma shakes her head? Does she sit in your lap when you coast, with brother Robbie steering in front? And then, in the June days, when you and your doll are out in the fields, do you put her hand on the daisy petals, and teach her

“One I love,
Two I love,
Three I love I say”?

I knew a little girl who loved her doll quite as much as you love yours. This little girl's name was Maria, and she lived in a pleasant vil-

lage. No one called her Maria. "It's such a *long* name!" said her brother and sister, and they asked to call her by her middle name. And when they heard her middle name was to be Elizabeth they said that would do very nicely.

Now Elizabeth had long been wanting a new doll.

"But there's Edith Grace Ermyntrode," said Mamma.

"Yes, but she looks so grown up, and her ears have melted off," said Elizabeth.

"And there's Jamie Gordon," said Aunt Ellen.

"Yes, but boys aren't so much fun. Besides, he has only a bathing-suit to change with," said Elizabeth, still more sadly.

"And there's Susie Jane. You surely love *her*?" said Cousin Eleonora.

"Oh, yes, I love *her*!" And Elizabeth flew to catch her up from her willow cradle. "But Susie Jane needs a sister near her own age. She's growing selfish."

So on Elizabeth's seventh birthday Mamma told her to put on her second-best hat, the one trimmed with brown ribbon and butter-cups, and said they would walk to Miss Field's shop to buy a new doll. Elizabeth jumped up and down five times with joy, and ran as quickly as she could to the closet under the stairs for her hat.

“May Susie Jane come too, Mamma?” she asked. Mamma was going to say no, because Susie Jane looked as shabby as shabby could be; but she glanced at Elizabeth and said yes. People meaning to say no often, to their own surprise, said yes, when they looked at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth and her mamma, Mrs. Dale, walked out of the front door, and down the path to the gate. The path was bordered with box; and when Mrs. Dale looked toward the fence on *her* side she saw hollyhocks growing; and when Elizabeth looked toward the fence on *her* side she saw sweet-peas growing.

“Ours is a pretty garden, Mamma,” said Elizabeth, skipping five skips.

“Yes, dear,” said Mamma, “don’t scuff up the gravel, love!”

And they raised the latch of the low green gate, and walked out into the narrow lane, and down the lane where a wood-thrush was singing, and so to the street which led to the shop.

I am glad we have got to this part of the story, because I know you would like to go into this shop. It wasn’t like any other toy shop. It was kept by a young lady who, even though she was grown up, was very fond of dolls. Her shop was arranged in three rooms, and as Elizabeth and

her Mamma came up the street, they saw a doll looking smiling out of the front window of each room.

One room was devoted to dolls' dress-making; and two girls sat in this room, constantly cutting, fitting, and sewing the dearest little petticoats, frocks, pinafores, bonnets and what not. How their fingers flew to be sure!

In the second room a girl was making birthday cakes, and fruit tarts, candies and mottoes, to be used at children's tea-parties. When Elizabeth came to the shop with Aunt Ellen she was whisked through this room, because Aunt Ellen abominated sweets for children. When she came with Mamma she was allowed her choice between gumdrops and peppermints. But when she came with Grandpapa it was a red letter day. "I know your candies are all pure," Grandpapa would say, smiling upon the girl behind the counter, and after choosing three delicious kinds, he would look at Elizabeth and buy still another red-striped bagful.

The third and last room was most important of all, for here sat rows upon rows of dressed dolls,—rubber dolls, wooden dolls, china dolls, wax dolls, and other kinds, of all sizes, ready for sale. Miss Field herself, who was as pretty as a pink and old enough to wear her hair on top

of her head, stayed in this room and waited on the customers.

Now Mamma supposed it would take, at the very least, half an hour, and perhaps longer, for Elizabeth to choose a doll; but five minutes had not gone by when she said decidedly, "*This one, Mamma dear, please!*"

And no sooner had Mamma looked at the doll when she knew why it was chosen. The reason was that its cheeks were so pink. Perhaps you think they were as pink as apple-blossoms? Pinker than that. As pink as the inside of a shell? Pinker! As pink as Baby's corals? Fully as pink, and I really think a trifle pinker. I am unable to tell you the exact shade, but it certainly was charming; and as she gazed at the doll, Elizabeth's own cheeks grew very rosy indeed.

Mamma thought about buying the doll. And while she thought, her face was studied by her little daughter,—anxiously to be sure, but still with strong hope; for who could resist those lovely cheeks? The doll had soft brown hair (curly), bright blue eyes, a cheerful mouth, and she could cry,—but only when wanted.

Mamma thought.

"I won't climb trees with her,—not ever," said Elizabeth.

Mamma thought.

“It is indestructible,” said Miss Field softly.

And then Mamma said;

“Yes, we will take it. And now I would like to look at those little parasols.”

Guess whether she bought one, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

NAMING THE DOLL

SHE did! The parasol had blue-and-white stripes, with the tiniest forgetmenots sprinkled over the white stripes. It opened and shut easily. Elizabeth carried the doll home. It was carefully wrapped in soft tissue-paper, but Elizabeth kept uncovering the head to admire and kiss the cheerful face. You mustn't think Susie Jane was forgotten. She was carried, with equal love and care, under the other arm.

When they reached home and turned in at the green gate, there was Uncle Nathaniel; and he looked very much frightened, and jumped behind the nearest apple-tree.

“What is the matter, Nathaniel?” asked Mamma.

“Scarlet fever!” cried Uncle Nathaniel, pointing at the new doll's cheeks. (The paper covering had slipped aside.) Elizabeth chased him into the house, and up into the nursery, where he found, in the cupboard, a two-inch red flag, and hung it out of the window. “It's safer for the neighbors,” said he.

Don't you find it interesting to choose names? I do. It is half the fun when there is a new baby in the family, even if in the end Father's and Mother's choice is widely different from yours, as when Sophie wanted Charlotte to be named Rosamond Honoria Elaine. And with one's own doll, and a free and wide choice, no wonder Elizabeth looked beamingly happy, as she sat in her little rocking-chair, with the new doll in her lap.

"Haven't you thought of a name *yet?*" asked her brother Jack after a few minutes. "I could name the thing right off! Call it Ann,—that's as short as any."

"Oh, Jack," said Elizabeth, "you don't know in the least about naming a child! *Shortness* isn't all. It must be a *pretty* name, and it must be *after* somebody,—somebody I love *ever so*; and it must be a name the children around here haven't got for *their* dolls."

"Don't name her Dorothy then. There are six on this street," said ten-year-old Sophie. "I'll tell you what! Let's all write the name we like best, and put them in this box; and then you shut your eyes and take out two."

"Well," said Elizabeth.

So she called in Grandpapa and Grandmamma, and Mamma, and Uncle Nathaniel, and Aunt

Ellen, and Cousin Eleonora, and big brother Bob. To each was handed a slip of paper, and Sophie passed around pencils. Everyone wrote, and these were the names they chose. Grandpapa wrote Daisy, because he thought that the name a little girl of seven would prefer. Grandmamma wrote Elizabeth, thinking her little granddaughter would like to give the doll her own name. Mamma wrote Grandmamma's name, Lucy. Uncle Nathaniel wrote Crimsonia, just for fun. Aunt Ellen wrote Maria ("the child ought not to scorn her own name," said she). Cousin Eleonora wrote Alice, because she thought it the most beautiful of names. Big brother Bob wrote Jemima, the name of their last-but-one cook, famous for her waffles and pop-overs. Sophie wrote Elsie, Charlotte wrote Beatrice, and Jack (with a defiant air) wrote Ann. Down in Yarmouthport lived Aunt Alice, who was a perfect love, and the name Elizabeth herself wrote was Alice, because of this aunt.

And now a strange thing happened. When the papers had all been put in the box and shaken up by Jack as hard as he could shake, Elizabeth shut her eyes tight, and drew out two of the slips. She then opened her eyes, and read the name, and "Oh, what *do* you think!" she cried, "They're *both* Alice! And Alice is the very

name I wanted!" And then all the family clapped their hands, and big brother Bob and Cousin Eleonora especially clapped so hard that Teddy Hallowell ran over from next door to see "what those Dales were up to *now*."

Everyone, even Jack, agreed that the doll's name certainly ought to be Alice. And that very afternoon Uncle Nathaniel went himself to the Doll Shop, and bought a little book called "The Doll's Treasure: a Book of Harmless Recipes," and wrote on the fly-leaf "Alice Crimsonia, from her great-uncle Nathaniel." But, in spite of her pink cheeks, the doll's middle name *wasn't* Crimsonia,—in fact she didn't have any middle name, as none could possibly be found pretty enough to go with Alice.

The real naming was next day at three o'clock, in the clover-field back of the house, with only the family invited, though the calf Clover seemed to like looking on with the rest. Aunt Ellen didn't come. She said she must go to a meeting of the Tuesday Club. But Grandpapa gave up his afternoon nap to come, and complimented Elizabeth on the becomingness of Susie Jane's new buff frock, and on Alice's complexion, surprisingly healthy for one who had lived for some months in a shop.

They sat in a big spreading circle on the soft

green grass under a butternut tree. All the little girls wore girdles made of daisy chains and Jack a daisy in his button-hole. Edith Grace Ermyntrude, Jamie Gordon, and Susie Jane (you remember these were Elizabeth's other dolls) were made to look as if holding one another's hands, and the children sang for them a favorite song, "Brothers and sisters, hand in hand." Perhaps you too have sung it, with your brothers and sisters, Sunday evenings at home.

Next, Mamma made a little speech, and this is what she said: "My darling children, I am glad we have such a bright sunny day, and I only wish your Aunt Alice could be with us. I am sure it will please her when she hears that her name was chosen for your doll. Everyone loves Aunt Alice, because she is true, and is careful about making people happy. When you are playing with this doll, try yourselves to be like this dear auntie, and teach the doll to have kind ways. She can let other little girls' dolls share her hammock, her books, and her toys of every kind. We will try and they will try to treat all these things carefully. But if any of the playthings are injured, Alice must be patient, mustn't she, dear? I hope you will dress her simply; a doll should never wear jewelry on the street. Don't give her rich food, for I am

sure you wish her to keep those rosy cheeks.”

Then Mamma who, while she made this speech, had been standing, sat down, and Grandpapa stood up. “Your Mamma is, as usual, perfectly right,” said he, “but the sugar used at the Doll Shop is so extremely pure that we may, on great occasions like the present, indulge in a little candy.”

With these words he put his hand in his pocket, raised it high in the air, and let fall a perfect avalanche of sugar-plums,—pink, brown, yellow, green, red and white; and the circle was for a few moments broken up, as the children scrambled hither and thither to pick them up. Grandpapa’s speech, though short, was thought to be very good.

It was followed by another song. Then Elizabeth brought her doll forward, and said “I name my child—” “Ann!” said Jack, loudly. “No, *Alice!* I name my child Alice, because Aunt Alice is kind, and because I want my child to grow up just like her.”

“She won’t, then!” said Jack, “She won’t grow up at all.” “Come here, old chap!” called Uncle Nathaniel to Jack. Then Cousin Eleonora spoke. She said “Here in the brook is a stone that has lain many years. At first, all gray and

bare, it was not, perhaps, very pretty. But do you see how the soft feathery green mosses have spread over it, how these bright little pebbles have come to cling to it, and how, in some of the cracks, a few tiny blossoms are springing forth? Grandmamma's name, Lucy, is plain, but how many memories, bright and tender, cling to it, and make it for us a dear name! You know a wonderful poet named Shakespeare wrote many plays. In one of his plays called 'Othello' somebody says

“ ‘He that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.’ ”

Fathers and mothers wish so much for their children's names to grow valuable! If Charlotte is generous and honest, then how we learn to love the sound of her name! If Jack is helpful and earnest, then the name Jack has a pleasant sound. I hope all the dolls in the neighborhood will be glad when they hear that your doll Alice has come to see them.”

Cousin Eleonora then sat down, drawing her pink muslin skirts about her. The breeze by now had freshened. Far away a hermit-thrush sang.

Last of all, two poems were read. Sophie read the first one, and this is it:—

MATILDA ANN.

By ALICE W. ROLLINS.

I know a charming little girl
Who'd say, "Oh, see that flower!"
Whenever in the garden
Or woods she spent an hour.
And sometimes she would listen,
And say, "Oh, hear that bird!"
Whenever in the forest
Its dear sweet note she heard.

But then I knew another—
Much wiser, don't you think?
Who never called the bird a "bird,"
But said "the bobolink,"
Or "oriole," or "robin"
Or "wren," as it might be;
She called them all by their first names,
So intimate was she.

And in the woods or garden
She never picked "a flower"
But "anemones," "hepaticas,"
Or "crocus" by the hour.
Both little girls loved birds and flowers,
But one love was the best;
I need not point the moral;
I'm sure you see the rest.

For would it not be very queer
If when, perhaps, you came,
Your parents had not thought worth while

To give you any name?
I think you would be quite upset,
And feel your brain awhirl,
If you were not "Matilda Ann,"
But just "a little girl."

Every one heartily clapped these verses.

Father read the closing poem. It was supposed to be for the grown-ups, but Grandpapa had fallen almost and Grandmamma wholly-asleep. Mamma was trying to decide whether to have cream-toast and fish-balls for breakfast next morning, or if the fish-balls wouldn't be a little rich for the children, in which case she would have an omelette. Uncle Nathaniel was thinking of a June day like this, 'way back in 18—, when—but I haven't time to tell you of his thoughts, which were half sad and half pleasant. Cousin Eleonora was thinking, "I wonder if Tom will call this evening. If I was *sure* he would, I'd put on my fresh white." And big brother Bob was trying, without her finding out who was doing it, to tickle Charlotte with a long spear of grass. Father glanced up from his book now and again, and saw the grave faces of the grown-ups and the smiling ones of the children, and then went on placidly with his reading. He little suspected who, after all, were his *real* listeners. The children, although they couldn't understand

all, liked parts of the poem very much. This is one verse of it:—

“Spring is strong and virtuous,
Broad-sowing, cheerful, plenteous,
Quickening underneath the mould
Grains beyond the price of gold.
So deep and large her bounties are
That one broad long midsummer day
Shall to the planet overpay
The ravage of a year of war.”

Then the family jumped up from under the butternut-tree. They said goodbye to the babbling brook, and to the calf Clover, and walked home. For the party was over, and Elizabeth's doll had for always the beautiful name Alice.

“Don't you think *my* speech was best?” asked Grandpapa.

Guess if the children said yes, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

DRESSING THE DOLL

THEY did! Well, now would you like to hear about dressing the doll? Up in the attic stood an enormous old chest. Pieces of cloth were stowed away in it. And one day, soon after the doll's naming, Mamma went up to the attic with Elizabeth, and together they chose a number of pretty scraps, of which to make clothes for Alice.

“Be sure to make button-holes,” said Aunt Ellen. “Pins are a shiftless substitute.”

“And I'll help you,” said Cousin Eleonora. “I'll make the underclothes and the things that aren't so much fun to sew on.”

“A ruinous plan!” sighed Aunt Ellen.

“Make a veil,” said Uncle Nathaniel, “You don't want her cheeks to get sun-burned!”

“I'll knit her some stockings,” said Grandmamma,—“three pairs; and you may choose the colors.”

“Blue, pink, and brown,” said Elizabeth.

She ran happily for her work-basket, and

Sophie and Charlotte got theirs, too; and they all sat down to sew with Cousin Eleonora, while Grandmamma reached for her knitting-needles.

Now of course Alice's clothes, even the most necessary ones, and even with Cousin Eleonora to help, were not made in one day. No indeed. That would be too much to expect, when little girls have so many things to do, such as weeding the garden, practicing on the piano, stringing beans, and playing hop-sotch. But by taking rainy Saturdays, and spare time other days, and the time after supper when Father read "Hiawatha" or "Uncle Remus" aloud, the little girls after a time had Alice very nicely fitted out.

Elizabeth had for this doll a little bureau with three drawers. In the top drawer she kept Alice's handkerchiefs (six, and all neatly hemmed and marked with A, made by Elizabeth herself), her hair-ribbons, sashes, locket, beads, and other little ornaments. In the middle drawer she kept Alice's hoods, hats, knit jackets, and her morning, afternoon and Sunday pinafores. The morning pinafores were of brown-and-white and blue-and-white checked gingham, and were high-necked and long-sleeved. They were to wear while working. The afternoon pinafores were also high-necked and long-sleeved, but were made of white barred muslin. The Sunday pinafores

were dotted white muslin, low-necked and short-sleeved, and were daintily edged with narrow lace. They also had pockets, edged with lace.

Cousin Eleonora had filled the lowest drawer with such neat piles of snowy underwear! Grandmamma said it really was a joy to look in that lowest drawer. The stockings she knit were in it too. Oh, and I want to tell you that she finally decided to knit *six* pairs,—three pairs of stockings and three pairs of short socks. These socks, worn with ankle-tie slippers, were much admired by Elizabeth's friends. The party slippers were pink, the Sunday ones bronze, and the everyday ones black.

Alice's best hat was one she had worn home from the Doll Shop. It was truly exquisite, made of the finest white muslin, with a wreath of eleven pink rose-buds. It fastened under the chin with pink satin ribbon, three-eighths of an inch wide. Her everyday hat was of white piqué, the wide brim cut in little scallops all around.

Among the scraps taken from the chest in the attic was a piece of green-and-blue plaid, and Cousin Eleonora found that, by piecing under the hood, there was just enough of it to make a waterproof. It was the Gordon plaid, which you know has a yellow thread in it, and Cousin

Eleonora lined the hood with yellow silk to match.

As to Alice's frocks, she had a white lawn, a "Dolly Varden" muslin, a pink cashmere, and a blue piqué. These were all for best wear. Then she had useful gingham frocks, some striped and some checked, made by a simple pattern, with just a plain hem, and drawn in at the waist by a narrow brown leather belt. I wish you could have seen her in one of these everyday frocks, (they had bloomers to match), climbing a currant-bush to get at an especially large juicy red currant she spied at the top. Elizabeth was all ready to catch her if she fell. And wasn't it lucky she was in-de-struc-ti-ble?

Alice looked very cunning, too, in her new bathing-suit. This was made of white flannel, trimmed with light green braid.

As Sophie and Elizabeth and Charlotte sewed on these tiny garments, and watched Cousin Eleonora taking such dainty stitches and doing all with such nice care, they from day to day showed real improvement in their work.

"I am quite proud of you!" said Cousin Eleonora. "Some day you will be able to make a shirt for big brother Bob."

"And for Uncle Nathaniel," said Elizabeth.

They sometimes sewed out in the meadow, the

same meadow where Alice was christened. Here a bobolink sang to them,—

Bobolink! bobolink!
'Tis Alice I think
Who wears these gay clothes you make.
And see! here's *my* babe awake,
In brown, white and black arrayed.
See, see, the fine nest we've made!
Bobolink! bobolink!
To the blue sky let's drink!

And the brook flashed in the sun, and babbled its low crooning song, to which the daisies nodded drowsily. Sometimes a bright blue darning-needle thrilled the children by alighting near them. Butterflies,—brown, yellow, or white,—tilted on the swaying grasses. Clover, the calf, was lowing, but not unhappily now. She was content; and the children were very happy. Their little silver thimbles were as busy as the bees at work there, deep in the clover-heads, and much more modest; they were quite noiseless.

Jack thought it rather stupid under the butternut tree. He liked better to fly his kite, and to dash with it from end to end of the field, Geist, the puppy, at his heels. The dolls sat in a row, facing their young mothers. How quickly supper-time came! *Would* Mamma remember that

they wanted their bread-and-milk on the piazza instead of indoors? Guess whether she remembered or not, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE DOLL WORKED

SHE didn't! Ah, I caught you that time! But wait a moment! It made as it happened, not one bit of difference that she forgot, because Uncle Nathaniel *did* remember, and just as the blue-and-white bowls were being put on the dining-room table, reminded Mamma of the children's wish.

The next Monday, as Elizabeth and Charlotte were starting, directly after breakfast, to play in the nursery, Mamma said,

“My dears, I don't like to see you playing so early in the day. Have you made your beds?”

So they ran to make their beds, for they were good little girls, and anxious to please their Mamma. But the new doll with her pink cheeks was waiting for them, and they looked a little sober when, on returning to the nursery, they were met by Aunt Ellen, who said “Come! *this* is no time to be playing with dolls. It is high time you were put to steady uninterrupted work every day. This morning I shall teach you——”

“Aunt Ellen,” said Cousin Eleonora, meekly, “Isn’t this the hour for your Monday Club?”

Aunt Ellen gave one wild look, and then she ran from the nursery down the two flights of stairs, and straight out of the front door. Never before had she been late at the Monday Club.

Cousin Eleonora came and sat down between the two little girls, and put an arm around each. “Aunt Ellen is right about wanting you to be useful,” said she (their faces grew long), “and I’ve thought of such a nice plan!” (their faces grew short). “Hannah has a bigger wash than usual this week, and I mean to do some of the napkins for her. We’ll all go out under the cherry-tree together, and while washing napkins I will teach you how to wash, rinse and starch your dolls’ frocks and pinafores in the best way.”

Elizabeth and Charlotte were charmed. They ran for their pink gingham sunbonnets, for it was a warm day. And they ran for baskets in which to collect the soiled clothes. These were breathlessly placed under the cherry-tree. And then they ran to Hannah, and begged for two little tubs to wash in.

“Sure, I’ve no tubs, at ahl, at ahl. An’ will pails do?” asked Hannah.

Yes, pails would do. Hannah good-naturedly

looked about till she found them a stray piece of clothes-line, and Jack fastened it very nicely for them between the cherry tree and the fence.

“Suppose you bring Alice down,” said Cousin Eleonora, “and let her help.”

That was a good thought! So Alice was brought, (she slid down the bannisters), and her blue gingham sleeves rolled up to her elbows. She sat in the lowest crotch of the cherry-tree, and held some of the clothes pins in her lap.

“Such dear little helpers as you are,” said Cousin Eleonora, herself scrubbing heartily away at some napkins, “will, I know, be careful not to waste the soap. Use only a third of that cake, Elizabeth. Charlotte, darling, I’m sure you have a generous make-up, you made your starch so thick. But it doesn’t need to be thick like that. It should be about like the cream-of-chicken soup Hannah cooks for you.”

“I know!” said Charlotte happily. “How Hannah *must* look forward to Mondays!” she thought. The sky was as blue as possible, with the fleeciest little white clouds floating upon it. Right over their heads a song-sparrow was singing its little heart out.

Cousin Eleonora made the work like a sort of play.

“Alice’s frocks, when they go in, making the

water all brown, make me think of Autumn leaves," said she.

"And then they grow blue in the face because Winter comes!" said Elizabeth, shaking more drops from the blueing bottle.

"And then Spring comes, and covers them with lovely cherry blossoms," said Charlotte, heaping her suds with brown dimpled hands.

"Now it is Summer, and they may go sailing in a sea of sunshine," said Cousin Eleonora. "Alice, dearie, will you please hand me a couple of those clothes-pins?"

"At play?" asked Grandpapa, passing through to the vegetable garden.

"No *indeed*, Grandpapa," answered Elizabeth, "We're *working* very hard."

"We're learning to wash," said Charlotte.

"Bless your bright eyes!" said Grandpapa, "Don't work too hard." And he passed on to see how his tomatoes were coming along.

Leaving the clothes to flutter and dry in the breeze, Cousin Eleonora brought from the kitchen a pan of peas, and suggested that Elizabeth teach Alice how to shell them.

"She will enjoy helping you just as you enjoy helping me," said Cousin Eleonora.

So Elizabeth sat on the top step of the side porch, and she held Alice in her lap, and showed

her how to run her thumb along the edge of the light green pod. Pop! Why, this was as good as torpedoes on the Fourth of July! Out tumbled the peas, with a merry clatter, into the shining pan. Three peas bounced out onto the path.

“Be careful, dearie,” said Elizabeth, “Your Mamma isn’t as young as she was once.” And she hopped down, nimbly in spite of her seven years, and picked up the peas. Alice took great pains with the next pod.

“Playing?” asked Uncle Nathaniel, coming up the steps with the morning mail.

“No, Uncle Nathaniel, I’m *working* hard,” said Elizabeth.

“Don’t work *too* hard,” said Uncle Nathaniel, stooping to kiss the loveable mouth.

“Sure, ’tis the rale litthle hilp yez are!” said Hannah, when Elizabeth brought her the peas, all ready to be boiled for dinner.

After that, until the dinner bell rang, Alice took a sound nap in her own little red-and-white hammock, while Cousin Eleonora and Sophie and Elizabeth and Jack had a game of croquet. But as the days and weeks passed on, the doll was taught many kinds of work. When Baby’s cradle was made up, she smoothed the pillow and tucked in the down coverlet. When Elizabeth

tidied the nursery, Alice, too, held a wee duster, and dusted her own little bureau and rocking-chair. When the table was being set, she helped put around the bibs and napkins. And once—I think it made her feel an inch taller—she filled the salt-cellars! Oh, a doll, if she is obliging and well-bred, can do many useful things. Guess if Mamma was pleased when she saw her little girl and her little girl's doll helping so cheerfully, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE DOLL GOES A-MAYING

SHE was! She said the doll was a blessing in the house. Think of that!

One bright May morning Elizabeth awoke earlier than usual. She almost always slept soundly till seven o'clock, but on this morning she awoke at seventeen minutes past six.

First she leaned over and reached to Alice's crib which stood close to her own little cot bed.

"Would you like to come into Mamma's bed, darling?" said she. And not waiting for a reply, because she could see by Alice's cheerful smile how happy the suggestion made her, she lifted the doll up beside her. Susie Jane was there too. She always slept with Elizabeth. Each doll received a good-morning kiss. Then Elizabeth propped Alice on her knee, and taught her to play

"Bean porridge hot,
Bean porridge cold!
Bean porridge in the pot,
Nine days old."

And Elizabeth made her voice loud enough for two.

“What a racket you *are* making!” said Aunt Ellen, popping her head, in a stiff night-cap, in at the door, “Have you *no* consideration for your elders?”

Alice’s head dropped back on the pillow, and Elizabeth thought the robin’s song, just outside her window, not so cheery after all. But just then who should come softly tiptoeing into the room but Cousin Eleonora.

“Oh, Cousin Eleonora, you look so *sweet!*” whispered Elizabeth.

Cousin Eleonora’s thick black hair fell in two braids over her shoulders. Her primrose-colored kimona was strewn with white cornell blossoms, and on her softly treading feet were primrose bed-slippers tied with white ribbon. She stepped lightly over to her little cousin’s cot, and lay down beside her.

“Do you want to hear a secret, and would Alice and Susie Jane like to hear one too?” she whispered.

Elizabeth’s answer was a regular bear’s hug.

“Well, then! But keep as quiet as mice, all three of you, while I tell you. By and by, when you’ve had breakfast, we’re all going a-May-ing!” Elizabeth bounced up and down on the

bed, and pressed her lips tightly together to keep from shouting.

“Mr. Tom Gray has invited the whole family, and Teddy Hallowell’s family too; and we’re going in a barge.”

“Is Aunt Ellen going?” asked Elizabeth.

“No. We’d like to have her, but she has to go to a special meeting of the Wednesday Club,” said Cousin Eleonora, “She has to read a poem.”

“I thought Aunt Ellen didn’t *care* about poetry,” whispered Elizabeth. “She said I was silly to like

“ ‘Sleep, baby, sleep.
The big stars are the sheep;
The little stars are the lambs, I guess,
And the loving moon is the shepherdess.
Sleep, baby, sleep!’

She said it was ‘next door to lies.’ ”

“We’re going to Hadley’s Meadows,” went on Cousin Eleonora, “though why it’s called ‘Meadows,’ I don’t know, for it’s all woods, except where parts have been burned over. Uncle Nathaniel says he’ll drive, and Sophie and I are to put up the lunch.”

“May I help, dear Cousin Eleonora?” asked Elizabeth.

“Oh, how kind of you! I’d be *very* glad of your help,” said Cousin Eleonora. And then she

looked at her watch, and said they needn't whisper any more, for it was time for everybody to get up.

Elizabeth, now that she was seven years old, could dress herself entirely, except some of the back buttons. Sophie buttoned those for her, and Elizabeth in turn helped little Charlotte who was five.

After breakfast Hannah brought into the dining-room several loaves of bread, some pats of butter, and a large roast chicken. Cousin Eleonora did the slicing, Sophie buttered the bread, and Elizabeth laid the half slices neatly together with chicken in between. When the sandwiches were all made, and packed with the sponge cookies, Cousin Eleonora, who was hunting high and low for the lemon-squeezer, said,

“Oh, here's the most fascinating little tin box! What can we put in it?”

“Let *me* have it, please, for Alice's lunch,” said Elizabeth eagerly. So the box was given to her; and first Elizabeth cut a nice piece of white paper to go inside. She then put in the box two tiny sandwiches, (one of chicken, and one of lettuce), two oyster crackers, a radish the size of a strawberry, an olive, a raisin, a freshly-baked ginger-snap, and a little bottle of milk. Uncle

Nathaniel said he should know where to come if he hadn't enough to eat.

Promptly, as the old hall clock struck nine, Mr. Tom Gray drove up to the front gate with the barge. He jumped down to help the ladies into the barge, while Uncle Nathaniel climbed up to the driver's seat and took the reins. Big brother Bob got up beside him. All the rest were seated inside.

Along one side sat Jack (who liked to be near the horses), Mamma, Charlotte, Elizabeth, Alice, Cousin Eleonora and Mr. Tom Gray. And facing them, in another long row, were Papa, Teddy Hallowell, Sophie, and four other Hallowells. So you see there were sixteen people in the barge.

Elizabeth held Alice up to see everything they passed. At a cottage door, at the first turn of the road, a little yellow-haired girl of about Elizabeth's own age spied the doll in the barge and held up her own rag doll, and waved the doll's hand. Quick as a flash Alice took out a little handkerchief from her jacket pocket, and waved it to the doll in return.

When they came to a brook, which tried again and again to elude them, running with mischievous laughter under the road, the barge was stopped that the horses might drink. The

horses' names were Arithmetic and Geography, but they were called Mettie and Jog for short. Alice was thirsty too, so Elizabeth jumped out of the barge with her, and filled an acorn-cup with the cool clear water, and held it to the doll's lips.

Alice wore a pink dimity frock, and a cunning little sun-bonnet to match. Over the frock she wore a white knitted jacket with pink buttons. Her rubbers (she brought rubbers in case the woods should prove wet), were firmly tied to her little tin lunch-box, and the box was at the bottom of Elizabeth's own pocket.

After about two hours of driving merrily along pleasant country roads, they came to Hadley's Meadows, which, you remember, weren't meadows now, whatever they might have been once.

Everyone got out of the barge, and Mettie and Jog were hitched to a tree, patted, and given each a lump of sugar and an apple. Nearly everyone ran, while a few walked, into the woods, and Elizabeth and Alice so longed to see and smell the waxy fragrant mayflowers that they ran fastest of all. The flowers were so cunningly hidden away that many a grown-up might easily pass them by. But not so Alice! Down she went on her knees, peeping here and there under the trees, and lifting the damp thickly-

matted leaves. How soft the mosses were on which she knelt! Her blue eyes were so bright that she soon spied the dainty blossoms. Trailing arbutus is one of their names, and epigaea is another. Aunt Ellen always said "epigaea repens," but *we* will call them mayflowers as did Elizabeth and Alice.

How could the mayflowers be afraid of Alice? She was very small, and clothed in their own color. She didn't pull roughly at their roots. She knew the blossoms would not be seen again next year if she did that. So, as their courage grew, the mayflowers seemed, of their own accord, to peer out at her from their secret places, and didn't at all mind being drawn gently from the moist ground, and put into the green nest of her basket. This basket, when heaped full, was emptied into Elizabeth's larger one. Guess how many times Alice filled her basket before the sun sank low and everyone had to leave the spicy-smelling woods. Guess, little girl, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOLL AT THE SEA-SHORE

ALICE filled her basket *seventeen* times.
Will you believe it!

That summer Mrs. Dale went away for a long visit. She stayed four days. Oh, it was a weary while! On the day before she came back everyone flew about, putting the house in apple-pie order. Sophie, who as a rule disliked dusting more than any other of her duties, *asked* to dust Mamma's room and the parlor. Here are some rhymes about it, written by one of the grown-ups.

WHEN SOPHIE DUSTS THE ROOM.

When Sophie dusts the room, my dears,
Then look, and look in vain,
For books and papers, ink or pen,
Or aught you want again.
Dear long-familiar spider-webs
No more black nooks illumine;
Nor man nor beast count in her scheme
When Sophie dusts the room.

When Sophie dusts the room, my dears,
Oh, how the chairs walk round!
And all the morn what whacks and thuds
Throughout the house resound!
The iceman looks a trifle awed;
My breast is filled with gloom;
(He thinks, I'm sure, I'm keeping school
When Sophie dusts the room).

When Sophie dusts the room, my loves,
The cat no longer frisks,
But tiptoes with unnatural mien,
Avoiding any risks.
My cherished pictures—where are they?
My fern notes,—found by whom?
All order's lost; confusion reigns
When Sophie dusts the room.

When Sophie dusts the room, my loves,
Why bear we all so meek?
Because, though comfort's gone to-day,
Reward's not far to seek.
There cometh one for whose sweet sake
Let march forth every broom!
A recompense we trustful wait
When Sophie dusts the room.

When Sophie dusts the room, my dears,
Oh, never yield to grief!
Be sure the morrow's rose opes fair,
Though sere to-day the leaf.
Outdoors a coming joy I feel;
The tardy wood-flowers bloom;

All Nature hastes a welcome, while
Small Sophie dusts the room.

When Sophie dusts the room, my dears,
The brown thrush sings in glee;
All houses round may whirl, e'en fall,
But, oh, what careth he?
And what care I, when 'neath his tree,
I think of her who soon
Will make her whole home bright; 'tis sure
When Sophie dusts the room!

Well, dear Mamma came home from Lexington, and to celebrate her glad arrival all the family went to pass a day at the seashore. This time breakfast had to be very early indeed, in order to catch the morning boat in Boston. I said *all* the family went, but, just at the last minute, as they were filing out through the low green gate, Aunt Ellen turned back, saying she remembered a semi-yearly Conference of the Thursday Club.

“See what you’re missing already,” called back Uncle Nathaniel, as he took up the basket Aunt Ellen had started out with, and adjusted his valise which held the family bathing-suits.

Now you are eager to know what Alice wore to-day. The weather was unusually warm, even for the middle of July, and she wore a thin white muslin frock, her white piqué hat, and carried

the blue-and-white parasol. On her feet were short blue socks and ankle-tie slippers. The white frock was her Sunday one, to be sure, but then, one didn't go to the seashore every day. In a snug little parcel tied to the tin box was the doll's bathing-suit.

The trip began with a ride in the train to Boston, the first time in all their lives Baby and Alice had ever been in the cars. I am sorry to say that, for awhile, neither of them behaved very well. Baby made up a horrible face, thrust aside his milk-bottle, and cried loudly. And Alice tried to push Jack (her own uncle!) away from his place by the window. Jack had got there first, and I think if Alice had not been cross, and had not said "Get *away!*" and had not thumped him so hard (with Elizabeth's hand over her own), Jack would soon have given her the place she wanted. As it was, he grew red in the face and thumped back.

"Ellen, Ellen, thou hast the wisdom of the serpent!" said Uncle Nathaniel.

"Suppose you hold Baby a few moments, Bob," said Mamma. "He often quiets down for you."

Big brother Bob threw down "Virginibus Puerisque," and took his little brother; and, sure enough, when Baby Hugh felt himself in those

steady strong arms, he looked undecided whether to cry any more or not, and then laid his head comfortably against Bob's hard shoulder. Big brother Bob looked proud, and even prouder when, some minutes later, Baby's brown eyes shut fast.

While this was happening, Cousin Eleonora was, in her turn, a peace-maker. She asked Jack if she herself might have his place next the window awhile, and she took the doll in her lap. She said Elizabeth and Jack should take turns, and while one sat beside her the other should sit with Mamma.

"Alice is going to count all the dogs we pass on this side of the train," said Cousin Eleonora, "and you, Jack, count all you see from your side."

Within fifteen minutes Alice had seen six and Jack eight dogs.

When Jack's face was no longer scarlet, Cousin Eleonora told the two children how grieved she felt when they quarreled. "A journey on a hot day can be uncomfortable if we think only of how hot it is, and of what *we* want; or it can be a pleasant journey if we get interested about helping somebody else. Good brother Bob has stopped Baby's crying, so now your

Mamma can read her magazine. Let's each think of something kind that Alice can do."

"She can give me her seat!" said Jack, promptly.

"She can take your shawl, and fix it for a pillow under your head, dear Cousin Eleonora," said Elizabeth, helping Alice to so arrange the shawl.

Jack looked ashamed. He felt that his wish had been a selfish one, but he did not know how to say so. Cousin Eleonora knew what he was thinking. She softly patted his hand, while she thanked Elizabeth.

"Jack may sit by the window now," she said.

"Charlotte can," said Jack. And he ran to where Charlotte was sitting with Grandmama, a few seats ahead of them, and said "Charlotte, you look like a lobster! Cousin Eleonora wants you." He slipped into the seat beside Grandmama, and Charlotte, looking rather indignant, trotted obediently down the aisle.

At one end of the car was a water-cooler. Cousin Eleonora said Charlotte might take her rubber cup and hold Alice so that the doll could turn the faucet, and get a drink for Grandmama. And Elizabeth got one for Grandpapa. By and by Baby waked and cried again, until Alice jumped up and down on the cushioned arm of the

seat. He stared at her till she blushed rosy red, and although it wasn't the weather one *chooses* for gymnastics, she amused him most kindly until the train drew into Boston.

In the city they drove to the wharf. Then, oh how happy the children were as they sniffed the salt air, and found themselves on the steamboat! It was painted white, and along the side, in large navy blue letters was the name, *Robert Louis Stevenson*.

Papa told them what a brave man Stevenson was, and how once, when in great suffering with sciatica, and obliged to lie in a darkened room, he made all the poems in the book Elizabeth had at home, and which the children so loved, "A Child's Garden of Verses." Do you, too, know that dear book? Can you say the verses,—

“My bed is like a little boat;
Nurse helps me in when I embark;
She girds me in my sailor's coat,
And starts me in the dark.

At night, I go on board and say
Good-night to all my friends on shore;
I shut my eyes and sail away,
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,
As prudent sailors have to do;

Perhaps a slice of wedding cake,
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer;
But when the day returns at last,
Safe in my room, beside the pier,
I find my vessel fast."

And do you know these verses?

"Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are
at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea—
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they
can be,
The wicket is the harbor and the garden is the shore."

"That part in the beginning of the book, written to his nurse," said Sophie, "always makes me think of Aunt Alice." And she repeated some of the lines.

"For the long nights you lay awake
And watched for my unworthy sake:

For your most comfortable hand
 That led me through the uneven land:
 For all the story-books you read:
 For all the pains you comforted:
 For all you pitied, all you bore,
 In sad and happy days of yore:—

.

From the sick child, now well and old,
 Take, nurse, the little book you hold!"

"It sounds like Cousin Eleonora, too," said Elizabeth.

"I can tell a poetry!" said Charlotte; and she took hold of Papa's hand, and repeated the lines Mamma had taught her when she had the measles.

"When I was down beside the sea,
 A wooden spade they gave to me
 To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.
 In every hole the sea came up,
 Till it could come no more."

"What would Ellen say to all this poetry?" said Uncle Nathaniel, bringing a camp-stool into the stern of the boat, where Papa was standing with Sophie and Elizabeth and Jack and Charlotte.

They sailed, and they sailed. Alice stood on

the railing, and saw many other boats, some with flags. Behind the *Robert Louis Stevenson* streamed a broad white ribbon of foam; and there, in the steamer's wake, the waves were bigger, and a fisherman's dory bobbed up and down upon them in such a jolly way that Jack quite burned to be in it.

Baby liked the fresh salt breeze in his face, and smiled to see Mamma's bonnet-ribbons flutter so prettily. He stretched out his little arms toward the sea-gulls that made wonderful sweeping curves in their flight and dipped in the blue sea.

It was a long sail, so long that luncheon was unpacked and eaten before they left the boat.

They had egg-sandwiches, lamb-sandwiches, great black cherries in plenty, and plum buns. Besides her own 'special sandwiches, Alice found in her lunch-box two cherries and a little bottle of lemonade which Elizabeth had thoughtfully provided.

Salt air makes one very hungry, and all were thankful Aunt Ellen's basket had not been left behind, although it was found to contain chiefly Boston crackers. In one corner was a small lemon, in case of seasickness. But nobody needed the lemon.

"This is too bad!" said Uncle Nathaniel, "I

think *somebody* might feel just a little *little* seasick."

"Alice does," said Elizabeth. "Oh, *do* let me see if her cheeks are pale!" said Uncle Nathaniel.

"No, she has to go in the cabin and lie down," said Elizabeth. And she ran inside, and placed the doll on a soft cushion. When she came out she found Jack and Charlotte fishing for brown and green seaweed, with bent hair-pins fastened to long lines of strong twine. Jack fixed a line for Elizabeth, and the three children fished till the *Robert Louis Stevenson* touched the landing.

On reaching the shore, the family walked along the beach till they came to a quiet part, where the sand was very fine and white. Here the children and the little curling waves ran to meet each other. Papa began to sing.

"The sea, at last the sea!
The mighty ocean, whose soft folds of blue
Are edged above with white,
As were't a heavenly garment!

.
Show them a face ever fair of heavenly blue,
Thy voice to them the gentlest of murmurs,
And wear for them thy rosiest smile.
With children thou shouldst play,
Caress them with thy touch,
O thou cradle of blue, O sea!"

Papa found a nice shady place for Grandmamma and Mamma and Baby Hugh in the shelter of a great gray rock. Sophie, Elizabeth, Jack and Charlotte at once pulled off their shoes and stockings, and waded to their knees in the refreshing water. Elizabeth thought she would teach Alice to swim. A fruit-basket turned upon its side made a good bath-house, and she took off the doll's clothes and placed them in the basket. Then the little white bathing-suit, trimmed with light green braid, was brought forth, and popped over Alice's head.

"Won't her hair get wet?" asked Sophie.

"Oh, *dear!*" said Elizabeth. "See if this will fit her," said Cousin Eleonora. She had foreseen that Alice would be aching for a salt bath, and so she had brought, and now handed to Elizabeth, a tiny bathing-cap made of oiled silk. It *exactly* fitted the doll's head; and all Alice's pretty brown hair was snugly tucked inside, and not one curl allowed to escape from under the elastic.

"Thank you, darling Cousin Eleonora. You always think of everything!" said Elizabeth.

Alice was now all ready to go into the water. But what was the matter? She put both hands to her eyes, about to cry, and shrank back from the first wavelet that rippled over her feet.

"I'm *afraid!* Take me *out!*" screamed the doll.

Then Elizabeth took Alice, splashed though she was, in her arms, and said,

"Why, you shouldn't be frightened, dearie! See Bobby Shaftoe floating on his back out there. *He* doesn't cry."

"Course *he* floats! He's *rubber,*" said Jack.

"Don't say that to her, Jack," pleaded Elizabeth. And Jack, thinking how queer girls were, plumped in yet deeper after his toy schooner.

"If Susie Jane sees that you are afraid, it will make *her* so too," went on the little mamma.

"Put this shell to your ear. Isn't that a wonderful sound? More shells like that are under the water. It is whispering to us to come in and see its baby shells, and the pretty pebbles. I see them all shining underneath the waves! Wouldn't you like to be a little mermaid? Wouldn't you like to make friends with the Sea?"

So Alice stopped crying, and stepped bravely into the water, and soon found courage to duck her head under, as Susie Jane was doing. She splashed Susie Jane, and Susie Jane splashed back! And Bobby Shaftoe gave both dolls a ride on his back. Bobby Shaftoe was Charlotte's doll.

"I love swimming!" cried Alice at last.

“I thought you would, my dear,” said Elizabeth.

Later everybody, except Grandmamma, Mamma and Baby, went in bathing. Papa and Uncle Nathaniel were very jolly, and made the children have a glorious time. Guess how many of them fell sound asleep in the train going home, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter

CHAPTER VII

THE DOLL LEARNS TRUE POLITENESS

EVERY blessed one of them! Even Papa awakened only just in time to say "Preserve us! Ours is the next station!"

As soon as the Dales got home they ate some hot brewis which Hannah had ready for them, and then the children were glad to go to bed.

The next day was still hotter, and Cousin Eleonora, who always felt the heat very much, lay upon her bed with a headache. The sun streamed broadly through her south window, but she felt so ill that she put off the moment of rising to adjust the shade. "In just a *minute* I will get up and fix it," she said to herself, and closed her eyes. "If only that water pitcher were nearer!" she thought.

She lay thus for awhile with her eyes shut; and then Elizabeth came into the room with her doll in her arms. She stopped just inside the door, with her finger on her lips, looking toward Cousin Eleonora; and then, what do you think she did? First she stepped so softly that it was like a

kitten stepping over to the south window, and pulled the green shade slowly down until the sun was hidden, and cool shadows played over the floor.

You remember that at the naming Elizabeth said that she wanted her doll to grow up to be like Aunt Alice down in Yarmouthport, who was always careful about being kind? So now she considered what Alice could do. Presently she wound a soft handkerchief around and around the doll's hand and arm, and tied it firmly. Next she turned some cold water into the basin, and brought the basin with great care onto a chair beside the bed.

Cousin Eleonora didn't open her eyes. She thought "I don't know what the child is doing, but I won't send her out if she likes to be here. She was such a darling to shut out that blazing sunshine. Oh, how my head *does* ache!"

Just then she felt something deliciously cool and soft and wet drawn lightly across her forehead. *You* know what it was. Again it came, and again. Never had anything felt so good to Cousin Eleonora! She said not a word, and Elizabeth said not a word. Alice, too, was so well-bred that she knew it was not a time to speak.

But by and by Cousin Eleonora opened her

eyes, smiled brightly at Elizabeth, and said "I really believe it's going away!" And she sat up, and kissed Elizabeth and then Alice.

So now the doll had learned another way to help.

"Thank you *very* much," said Cousin Eleonora, "I can go now with that letter Aunt Ellen wants taken to the Dunstans'." "Let me take it," said Elizabeth.

"Do you really want to? The sun is fierce to-day."

"I'll take my parasol, and Alice can take hers," said Elizabeth.

"Well, you are a real comfort. You can stop at Fanny Howland's to play; but go first to the Dunstans', because Aunt Ellen says the letter is important. It is on the bureau,—yes, there, beside the pincushion."

So Elizabeth took the letter from the bureau, and she and the doll left the room. Alice slid down the bannisters,—slowly, it was such a hot day—and Elizabeth, as she walked down the stairs, read the address on the envelope: To the Secretary of the Saturday Club.

"I guess it's something about the girls at Miss Gussie's school, Alice," said Elizabeth, and the doll smiled her agreement.

Leaving this important letter at Miss Duns-

tan's house, Elizabeth stopped on her way home to see Fanny Howland, a little girl of about her own age, who had lately come to live in South Sherburne. The Howland house was a very grand one of gray stone. Fanny herself was on the piazza and saw Elizabeth coming.

"Hullo!" said she.

"Hullo!" said Elizabeth. "I came to play with—"

"I can't play," interrupted Fanny, "I'm learning Manners. I've got a new governess. She's gone into the library to get a book."

"Can I come in and rest a minute?" asked Elizabeth, pausing on the lowest step, and fanning her face with her hat.

"You'd better come in this afternoon," said Fanny. "I'm learning Manners." And she went inside, letting the screen-door shut with a loud bang. But when Elizabeth, hot and dusty, had got nearly to the end of the avenue, she heard Fanny calling after her.

"Come back!" shouted Fanny, "Mamma says it's so hot I can let the Manners go."

Elizabeth and Alice went back, and Fanny led them into her tent on the lawn. Here a white-capped maid presently brought them some iced lemonade. One glass happened to be a little fuller than the other, and Fanny noticed this.

“You don’t mind if I have the biggest one, do you?” asked she. “I’m so hot and tired learning those old Manners.”

“Oh, no,” said Elizabeth, “I’d rather. I never learned them,” she added.

“You’ll be sorry you didn’t when you’re grown up,” said Fanny, “It’s about Politeness. Do you know which fork to take first at dinner?”

“I only have one” said Elizabeth. “We’ve spoons with our pudding.”

“Why, at the *best* houses they always have three. Do you speak at table?”

“Mamma lets me.”

“You mustn’t! Not *ever*, unless somebody asks you a question.”

“But they usually *don’t*,” said Elizabeth.

“That doesn’t matter. Who sits next you?”

“Sophie on one side, and Cousin Eleonora on the other.”

“It *ought* to be first a girl and then a boy, and that way, all around,” said Fanny, shaking her head.

“Let’s not learn Manners till a cooler day,” said the little guest. “Let’s play dolls. Have you seen my new one?”

“No. I don’t believe she cost as much as mine did. Mine was five dollars!” And she showed her doll, Lillian Annabelle, a resplendent young

lady in crimson velvet trimmed with spangles and broad lace.

“I don’t know what mine cost,” said Elizabeth, who never could remember numbers, “but I think she is beautiful.”

“Well, I don’t care about dolls anyway,” said Fanny. “Stupid things! Let’s play croquet.”

Elizabeth put Alice down in a little chair, looking back at her rather wistfully, as she followed Fanny out to the croquet-ground, where they played several games.

She then went home, where she found Cousin Eleonora on the lawn. Cousin Eleonora looked delightfully cool in a lavender gown with tiny white violets sprinkled over it; and she was knitting a white silk tie for big brother Bob.

“Has your headache all gone?” asked Elizabeth.

“Yes, darling, thanks to a little girl I know. What’s the matter?” putting her knitting down on the grass, and drawing Elizabeth into her lap; for her little cousin looked unusually sober.

“Cousin Eleonora, I’m afraid I’ll never know enough about manners to bring up Alice in the best way.”

“We *all* have to try every day to be better. But it seems to me that Alice is growing to be

a very well-bred doll. How thoughtful she was to bathe my forehead!"

Elizabeth looked at Alice more happily.

"Who taught Aunt Alice to be polite?" she asked.

"Why, I think she was taught a great deal by her own kind heart," answered Cousin Eleonora, "Her mother died when she was a little baby. I really believe Aunt Alice could not be happy a moment if she felt someone near her was uncomfortable. She puts her own wishes last."

"Fanny doesn't put *her* own wishes last."

"Then she is not truly polite. But she can learn to be."

"Yes, she is taking lessons," said Elizabeth, looking sober again. "I like better to play with Teddy Hallowell."

"Teddy is rough, but he is quick to feel what people wish. I have been reading something a noted American said. Can you understand a few words of it? 'That is what we try for, hope for, and pray for; that we may think more, love more, and be more: that we may have life more abundantly, as He said. Nothing—nothing helps in this seeking as the sight of it,—the brook which is alive again, the saxifrage which is alive, the pussy willow, the crocus, the snow-drop, the violet, the blue-bird, the butterfly.' "

“I like the *sound* of it,” said Elizabeth, curling Alice’s hair around her forefinger.

“Remember just one line of it,” said Cousin Eleonora, “Or no, remember just two words, to ‘love more,’ that is, to love in an unselfish way. And now, honey, it’s cooler at last, so let’s take our pails and go out in the pasture and pick some huckleberries. If we get enough, I’ll make a roly-poly pudding for our dinner, and you shall make a little one exactly like it for Alice and Susie Jane.” Guess what it was that made Cousin Eleonora’s own manners so good, and I will tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOLL BEGINS SCHOOL

I THINK it was Love, don't you?

Well, the summer passed by, and September came; and Elizabeth's school opened. She began then to think of Alice's further education.

"I will start a little school in the playhouse," said she, "and when we come home from *our* school I can show *her* about doing sums and things."

Uncle Nathaniel had, on Jack's last birthday, given him a tool-box, and in a short time Jack had learned to use the tools very handily, and was now interested to help fit up the doll's school-room. The play-house itself big brother Bob had fashioned out of a packing-box. It had three rooms,—a parlor, a kitchen, and a bedroom. Elizabeth herself could stand upright in all these rooms. She decided to cut off part of the parlor with a screen she found in the attic, and to use the smaller part of it for a bedroom. The former bedroom she made into a schoolroom.

Jack contrived a simple desk for the teacher, and three benches for her doll-pupils. He also

tacked up some pictures on the walls, and fastened little wooden pegs for Alice's and Susie Jane's and the other dolls' hats and jackets. Sophie contributed some pencils which, from being long ones, had dwindled to a size suitable for dolls to use. Cousin Eleonora sewed some small sheets of paper together for books, and in these books Elizabeth copied words from her Speller and First Reader.

The packing-box—excuse me, I mean the school-house as it was called—was out near the barn. In some ways this was a draw-back. For instance, Alice's attention often wandered from the multiplication-table when Bessy (Clover's mother) put her horned head in at the window. The chickens were even bolder than Bessy. They thought nothing of walking into the school-room and hopping up onto the young teacher's desk.

But on the other hand it certainly was delightful to hear the different sounds—of horses, cow, dog and poultry from the barn-yard. And then often, when school was over, Elizabeth and Alice got a fine ride on Morning's back from the barn to the house. Morning was a gentle white horse. Jack liked best to ride Night, the black horse, who was a fast trotter.

Jack lost his interest in the dolls' school from

the moment he had driven the last nail and the school-house was fitted up; nor could he be induced to visit it on Friday afternoons when the dolls regularly spoke pieces. Alice was taught every one of the pieces Elizabeth learned at *her* school. One of her favorites was "Seven Times One" by Jean Ingelow. Ask Mamma to read it to you. Geist, the puppy, had a special invitation to come in and hear Alice speak that poem, and when the children clapped, after the last verse, he barked his very loudest, as if to say "Well done, Alice!"

Clover, the calf was the Assistant. She carried a bell tied about her neck, and when school was to begin she rang this bell, or if she forgot to do so at the proper time, Elizabeth or Charlotte rang it for her.

One afternoon Mamma, with Baby Hugh in her arms, came to visit the dolls' school. Elizabeth saw them coming, and was delighted. She sprang to the door to welcome her visitors.

"Good afternoon, Miss Dale," said Mamma, shaking hands with the teacher. "My son wished to inquire into your methods, so we are come for a little call."

The son yawned, and said "Ah goo!" "I'm glad to see you," said Elizabeth. "Won't you walk in?"

But then she looked a little embarrassed.

“My school-room happens to be a little low to-day” she said regretfully, “but I’ll put a chair in the doorway, and I’ll let Ba—I mean Mr. Dale—hold Bobby Shaftoe.”

“That will be much nicer than sitting indoors,” said Mamma. “I am sure my son agrees with me that all school rooms should be built so. I have brought a little gift for your pupils.”

So saying, Mamma handed Elizabeth a little package which, on being immediately opened, was found to contain seven slates. They were three inches long and two inches wide, and their wooden frames were neatly bound with red flannel to prevent noise. A little hole was bored in one corner, and from a red ribbon fastened through this hole in each slate hung a tiny slate-pencil.

“Thank you ever and ever so much, Mrs. Dale!” said the teacher, her face beaming with pleasure. “I guess Uncle Nathaniel made them. Did he?”

“Yes, he made them from an old slate of Eleonora’s,” said Mamma.

“I saw it up in the attic, and wished it wasn’t too big for my school,” said Elizabeth, “and Cousin Eleonora said the fairies would have to see what they could do about it. Children,”

turning to her row of rather drooping pupils, "Sit up straight, and see what this kind lady has brought you. Why, here's Uncle Nathaniel! You can't get in! You're *much* too tall. Sit by Mrs. Dale, Mr. Gordon, (that was Uncle Nathaniel's last name) and I'll put your hat and cane in the corner."

"Don't let my cane alarm your pupils," said Mr. Gordon, handing it to her with his cocked hat, "I only use it when *saw* is spelled w-a-s. I never *could* bear that."

Mr. Gordon wore a dark blue coat of the olden time, with brass buttons, a buff vest of faded satin, knee breeches, white stockings, and buckled shoes.

"Where on earth—" began Mamma.

"Hush, Madam," said Uncle Nathaniel, "We interrupt the young ladies' song."

The seven pupils sang together so well, that you might have supposed you heard but one voice. They sang

"Where has my little basket gone?
Said Charlie-boy one day.
I think some little boy or girl
Has taken it away."

"Nathaniel Gordon, are you *ever* going to grow up?" asked Aunt Ellen severely, as she passed by with some eggs from the barn.

“Never!” replied Uncle Nathaniel, cheerfully.

“We will now have *perfect* quiet for five minutes,” announced the teacher very decidedly.

Just then young Mr. Dale gave a piercing shriek, making everyone jump. A bee had stung him on his plump shoulder. So Mamma trying her best to soothe, carried him to the house.

“Come again!” shouted Elizabeth.

“Yes, thank you,” called Mamma.

“Delighted, I assure you,” said Uncle Nathaniel for Baby.

“Which class would you like best to hear, Mr. Gordon?” asked the teacher, when they had settled back in their places.

“The class in Analytical Geometry, if you please,” said he.

“We aren’t studying that, this term. To-day it’s Spelling or Arithmetic.”

“We’ll have a go at Arithmetic,” said Uncle Nathaniel. “How many is one and one and one and one and one and one?”

“Edith Grace Ermyntrude, *you* tell,” said Elizabeth. But Edith Grace Ermyntrude wouldn’t or couldn’t tell. Uncle Nathaniel reached for his cane.

“Oh, Uncle Nat—Oh, Mr. Gordon, you said it too *fast* for her,” said Elizabeth. So Mr. Gordon, obligingly laying down his cane, said it once

more very slowly and distinctly. Even then, alas! Edith Grace Ermytrude wouldn't speak up.

"Why, I'm *ashamed* of you!" said her teacher. "Not know *that?* and you half-past five, and going on six! Bobby Shaftoe, *you* may say." Bobby Shaftoe violently shook his rubber head. Elizabeth threw a glance of despair at the visitor, who said compassionately,

"Sad! sad! very sad!"

"I think Mr. Dale bit him, and that makes him feel a little bit—"

("Bitten, you mean.")

"A little bit stupid," said Elizabeth. "Bobby, you may lie down awhile on the bench. Susie Jane, tell the gentleman how many is one and one and one and one and one."

"And one," added Mr. Gordon, leaning forward eagerly, and gazing encouragingly into Susie Jane's blank face.

"Think, dear!" said Elizabeth, patting Susie Jane's bald head.

"Six!" came the triumphant answer.

"*Very* good. Go to the head!" said Elizabeth.

"Something's gone to *her* head," said Uncle Nathaniel. "Mark my words, that child studies too hard. Every hair gone! You never heard *me* giving right answers at *her* age. And in

Arithmetic, too! Take her out of school for a year, at least. It'll do wonders for her."

The young teacher opened her charming mouth, and rather heartlessly broke into laughter.

"Jamie Gordon," said she, "Tell the table of two."

Jamie Gordon rose stiffly, and said in haughty tones,

"Once 2 is 2
2 × 2 are 4
3 × 2 are 6"

and so on, up to 12 times 2. "*Wonderful!*" said the visitor.

"Please, Mr. Gordon, I'd rather you didn't praise them. Jamie Gordon's a little proud already."

"Of his bathing-suit? Tell him it's giving out at the arms," said Uncle Nathaniel.

"He's acted proud ever since Grandmama made him the Scotch cap," said Elizabeth. "Alice, say the sevens."

Alice, looking a perfect dear in her blue checked gingham and afternoon pinafore, arose cheerfully, and began promisingly,

"Once 7 is 7"

("Sure it is!" from Mr. Gordon.)

"2 × 7 are 14
 3 × 7 are 21
 4 × 7 are—are—28
 5 × 7—(a long stop) are 35.
 6 × 7—6 × 7—"

Elizabeth took from her belt a toy watch, and gave a start of surprise. "*Why!* it's past recess-time! Where *is* that calf? She's never on hand to ring her bell."

"I'll whistle, instead," said Uncle Nathaniel, blowing through his fingers. Out filed the pupils for recess. They played "button, button," and Mr. Gordon sat on the grass and played with them, and shooed off the chickens that came to interrupt. They played "'Round the green carpet here we stand"; and when they came to the line "Take your true love by the hand," Uncle Nathaniel took Susie Jane's rag hand in his, because she *was* so bald, and looked so *hopelessly* shabby that he feared she might not otherwise be chosen by anyone. They played "Puss in the corner," in which Jamie Gordon distinguished himself (but was not praised), and they played Alice's favorite, "London bridge."

Then school went on again, and Uncle Nathaniel, as he sat outside the door looking in, noticed many little acts of Alice that particularly pleased him. For one thing, she recited in a low

sweet voice. Then she was kind to the very little dolls, and helped them learn their lessons, and when in Spelling she went above Edith Grace Ermyntrode, she was modest about it. She kept her books in an orderly pile, and her slate washed clean. All these things showed Uncle Nathaniel that Elizabeth kept the right kind of a school. He wrote Aunt Alice, down in Yarmouthport, about it, and the letter made her very happy.

Guess how many 6×7 is, and I will look it up and tell you the answer in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX

THE DOLLS' LETTERS

I FIND it is forty-two.

“Have you ever written to Grandmother Gordon to thank her for the quilt she made for your doll?” asked Aunt Ellen of Elizabeth one Sunday.

Now Elizabeth had just settled herself, in the position she always chose for reading, lying flat on the rug, with her heels in the air, and her chin in her plump brown hands. On the floor in front of her was a book she was reading for the fourth time,—the “Seven Little Sisters.” It *was* hard to be interrupted.

“No. Please don't make me now,” she said, crossly.

“Maria Elizabeth, you shouldn't speak to me in that tone!” said Aunt Ellen, in a loud, very cross voice. “Ingratitude is the basest of faults. Leave your book at once! do you hear?”

Elizabeth got up, but looked decidedly sulky.

“Why can't I read now, and write after this chapter?” she asked.

“Don’t ask why. I *never* asked why when I was a little girl.” And Aunt Ellen went into the study to read the Life of Miss Patricia Saintly.

Elizabeth looked irresolute. With dragging step she fetched her little mahogany desk. A big tear splashed down upon it, and another.

Cousin Eleonora came in. She was dressed in fresh Sunday white, and wore a red rose in her belt. She stepped over to the piano, played a few bars, and then began to sing,—

“Give me a rose, a rare red rose,
To wear upon my breast”;

But then she heard a stifled sob, and, looking around, saw Elizabeth.

“What’s the matter with my precious?” she said, running to her.

“I must write to Grandmother, and Aunt Ellen is cross, and *I* am cross,” said Elizabeth, unsteadily.

“Aunt Ellen has so much to do, dear, with all her Clubs, that I think she gets tired,” said Cousin Eleonora. “At any rate *we* won’t be cross. How would it be if *Alice* should write the letter? Would you like that better? And would you like a sheet of my *very* best light blue note-paper? It has E. D. in silver letters at the top, and those are your initials as well as mine.”

Elizabeth rubbed her cheek softly against Cousin Eleanora's.

"I'm sorry I was cross," she said.

"Tell Aunt Ellen so, while I get the paper," answered Cousin Eleonora.

So Elizabeth went into the study, and told Aunt Ellen, who said "Very well. Remember another time. Go out now; I'm reading. You should *never* inter—go out now." And Cousin Eleonora, who was apt to run in going up and down stairs, was back again in a jiffy. The delicate blue paper, with its silver E. D. held in a silver circle, was even prettier than Elizabeth had imagined.

"And will you stay at the piano and sing, dear Cousin Eleonora?" she asked. "because it makes me feel more pleasanter."

"Yes, indeed I will." And she sat down at the piano, and finished the verse,

"Of all good things that Summer brings,
The red rose seemeth best."

Alice sat on the edge of the desk, and managed, with her little mother's help, to hold the pen. As Mamma had taught Elizabeth, so now Elizabeth taught her doll to first write in the upper right hand corner the name of the town, South Sherburne. (Sherburne means "clear water.") Under the town Alice wrote the date, Septem-

ber 17, 18—. Somewhat lower, but now to the left of the page, she wrote “Deer Grate—Gran-muther.” The next line Cousin Eleonora told her should start under the letter n, and Elizabeth wrote,—

My Mamma is reading the Seven Litle Sisters. But thay dont live in one place like Aunt Charlot and Aunt Sophie and Mamma do. Thay are in diferunt cuntries. I am reading the part about the brown baby now. Cousn Elenora got the book from the librerry. It has piktures of all the seven litle sisters. It tells about all thare cuntries. I wish I was an Eskymow.

With love from Alice.

P. S. Thank you very much for the cwilt. I like it on my crib, A. D.

Elizabeth began to think she liked letter-writing. She decided it would be fun to have a post-office out-of-doors, and then Charlotte’s dolls and hers could write letters to one another. She left Cousin Eleonora singing “Loch Lomond,” and ran to find Charlotte and tell her about the plan. Charlotte, too, thought it would be fun.

“Only I can’t spell but only four words,” said she.

“What are they?” asked Elizabeth, anxiously.

“Cat and Bat and Rat and Sat.”

“P’r’aps if I helped, a letter *could* be made of those,” said Elizabeth, a bit doubtfully. And

this was Charlotte's first attempt, printed in large letters, with Elizabeth's help.

Dear Susie Jane,

I sat and saw the cat til a rat came, and then I tuk a bat and hit the cat so then it did not hert that rat, Frum Bobby Shaftow.

"I'll write your next letter," said big brother Bob, who had been watching the children, "but first, where is your post-office to be?"

"I don't know," said Elizabeth, "Out in the field, I guess."

"Oh, it's too hot there," said big brother Bob, "I'll tell you a bully place. Look at this hole in the old oak!"

Sure enough, there was a deep hollow, all nicely rounded out. Next month the squirrels might claim it for their winter's store of nuts, but now it could very well be a post-office. And when it came Charlotte's turn again, big brother Bob wrote for her.

My beloved Alice,

Yesterday Uncle Bob went to Boston, and bought something for my mother, and it is up on her bed in a brown paper parcel.

Yours with deep esteem,

ROSIE.

Rosie was one of Charlotte's dolls.

Sophie was the post-mistress, and after this letter had been placed in the hole, Alice walked up and said,

“Is there any mail for me to-day?”

“What is the number of your box?” asked Sophie.

“8724,” said Alice.

“I’ll see then,” said Sophie. “Yes, miss, there’s a letter for you, and it’s marked special delivery,—that means ‘awfully important.’”

With Sophie’s help the letter was read.

“The important part is for you, Charlotte,” said Sophie. “Go and see what Bob has put on your bed!”

The two little girls raced into the house and upstairs, and there, as the letter had said, on Charlotte’s bed was a brown paper parcel. She very quickly opened it, and found a charming little box of doll’s notepaper. The paper was in three colors,—pink, blue, and yellow, and on every sheet was a little picture of some animal,—a kitten on one, a woolly lamb on another, and so on.

“Oh, goody, goody!” cried Charlotte, “and you shall have a sheet of every color, and a ambe-lope,” she said to Elizabeth.

The rest of the afternoon was spent most happily by the little sisters. Besides the letters

that passed between the dolls, they wrote letters to all the members of the family; and Jack, as postman, delivered them, and brought back the answer. Of these return letters Alice received her full share. Uncle Nathaniel said he had talked with her too lately to write himself, but that he would, instead, send a letter from the Nursery Fire-place. This is it:

My dear Alice,

If any doll is in trouble I would gladly *defender*, but your tears especially I *wood* ever *brush* away. No *tongue* can tell the *flame* that *burns* within me. One would *hodly* suppose that a child of your size could *kindle* such *burning* love, but I am a *warm*-hearted creature,—in fact no-one *hearth* such love for you as I. Yes, I *long* to see you once more. When I do, I may *shove* little *popcorn* into your hands. Remember to hang your stocking by me next Christmas. Whatever the weather, then we shall surely meet, for no *snow-driftwood* keep us apart.

Yours with *grate hearthiness*, as the Irishman said,
Uncle Nathaniel.

Guess what my last chapter is to be about, and I will tell you the answer on the next page.

CHAPTER X

THE DOLLS' CHRISTMAS

“**I**T'S almost Christmas!” cried Uncle Nathaniel, “and so I *have* to jump downstairs four steps at a time!”

He said this because Aunt Ellen was looking shocked. Behind him, jumping two steps at a time, came Elizabeth and Alice, Sophie, Jack, and little Charlotte.

Mamma appeared at the dining-room door.

“I'm so sorry, Nathaniel, about your breakfast!” she began. “The kitchen stove won't work, and Fiske hasn't come up. I'm afraid you'll have to make out with bread and milk.”

“What do *I* care? *Christmas is coming!*”

And he seized the children's hands, and danced around the dining-room table.

“Bread and milk is quite suitable for him,” said Papa, laughing.

“And yet,” said Uncle Nathaniel, taking his place at the table next Charlotte, “it grieves me to think that stove acts so. Here I've kept it warm all winter!”

“*You!*” said Mamma.

“And now it refuses to work!” went on Uncle Nathaniel. “Dressed always in the latest style! I met it with a stove-pipe on this morning. ‘Going out?’ said I. It turned ashy pale. ‘You’re *always* putting a damper on me!’ I heard it say—‘Well, sir, just you remember *one* thing’ said I, ‘no smoking allowed in *this* house!’ ”

“I don’t *like* just only bread for breakfast!” whined Charlotte. “Not *like* it!” said Uncle Nathaniel opening his eyes very wide, “Why, I don’t believe any one told you about it’s being *Baker’s* bread, you know. Can I have as much as a whole slice?” turning to Mamma.

“*Is it Baker’s bread?*” asked Charlotte, doubtfully.

“Yes, honey,” said Cousin Eleonora. Charlotte smiled, and began to crumble her bread into her bowl of milk, while Mrs. Dale, who had sat down to breakfast with a look of worry, began to feel at ease.

“See how it’s snowing!” said Uncle Nathaniel.

“I don’t see one leastest bit,” said Charlotte, twisting around in her high chair to look out at the bright blue sky.

“Oh, not out *there!*” and down came the last third of Uncle Nathaniel’s slice of bread in a

shower of snowy flakes into his bowl; for he had insisted upon having a bowl of milk with the children.

“My crust is hard and cold,” said Jack.

“Hurrah! Just the thing for icicles,” said Uncle Nathaniel; and he took Jack’s crust, and cut it in five long strips, turning it, as if by magic, into a delicious treat.

Cousin Eleonora thought of the cheerless table at the Howland’s grand house, whenever there came a hitch in the kitchen machinery. She looked at Jack’s now joyous face and Charlotte’s contented one, and at Elizabeth keeping a motherly eye on her pink-cheeked daughter. She looked at Mrs. Dale’s smooth brow, and then at Uncle Nathaniel, so eager and boyish. Cousin Eleonora thought a bachelor uncle was a pretty good thing to have in a house. Hannah thought so too as, from the kitchen, she heard them all shouting with laughter.

Yes, it was the day before Christmas! And Sophie, Elizabeth and Charlotte were soon busy tying up parcels. Alice had taken the last stitch in every one of her gifts, and now sat with folded hands. For her Mamma she had made a book-mark of scarlet ribbon, with a silver star sewed on each end. For her eldest sister, Edith Grace Ermyntrode, she had made a fan. The fan was

first outlined upon card-board and cut out, and then gilt paper smoothly pasted over it. (Sophie made the paste, of flour and water.) An edge of blue laced paper was pasted on the fan. For her darling sister, Susie Jane, Alice had printed a tiny story-book, telling all she could remember about the "Seven Little Sisters." She wrote Susie Jane's name on it, with ink, *and never a blot!* The cover was of Gordon plaid silk stitched upon card-board. Alice could hardly sleep a wink for thinking of how glad Susie Jane would be when she should use the book. For Jamie Gordon she had bought a watch at the Doll Shop. The watch was so large, or rather Jamie Gordon was so particularly small, that it bade fair to cover a large share of his favorite costume, the bathing-suit. The hands of the watch wouldn't move, but then, they pointed always to one o'clock, a charming hour since it was dinner-time.

There was a present from Alice to Cousin Eleonora, too,—a handkerchief, hemmed with large stitches to be sure; and yet I *have* seen larger, and Mamma said she was sure *she* had.

Now don't you think that was a very nice collection of gifts for a little doll to make?

At bed-time not only the children's stockings but all the family's (except Aunt Ellen's, who

said "Catch *me!*") were hung up by the nursery fire-place. Uncle Nathaniel was over six feet tall, and his feet of a size to match, yet he thought it necessary, before he hung up his gray sock, to stretch it by squeezing into it one of his riding-boots. Next to this large sock hung Baby Hugh's wee white one; and all the dolls' stockings came promptly into line.

I haven't room to tell you what went into all of them, but Alice's and Susie Jane's held each, among other things, a pair of doll's knitting-needles, with balls of knitting-silk, Alice's pink, and Susie Jane's green. There was also in each a little *bit* of a doll, so small you wouldn't believe it could have on the usual underclothes, but there, under the blue silk frock, they were,—*buttoned*, if you please!

Jack put a generous bag of peanut candy in Uncle Nathaniel's sock. "He doesn't eat candy much," he thought, "but I guess he'll do *something* with it."

"Try to go to sleep, dearie," whispered Elizabeth to Alice, as she finally left her in her crib, staring with wide blue eyes. "You want to be good and rested for to-morrow!"

It seems every year as if Christmas morning would never, never come, doesn't it? And then,—it is here! And this one was *such* a Christmas

morning! The round-faced sun was so eager to see the insides of children's stockings that he looked daringly in every window. The ice-clad trees flashed "Merry Christmas!" one to another; and on all sides of the house, as one looked off over the fields, lay snow—snow—snow!

And as the sun looked in at the Dale's nursery, he saw all the family (except Aunt Ellen, who had warned them, "Now don't wake *me* at any unearthly hour!") hopping about the fireplace. Yes, *hopping*; even Grandpapa was hopping, as he tooted a most beautiful bran-new horn. Uncle Nathaniel was riding a hobby-horse, and big brother Bob beating a drum.

Susie Jane and Alice kissed each other in rapture as they found their cunning knitting-needles and the little bits of dolls.

Where was Baby Hugh? Oh, *he* was up half-way to the ceiling, tossed by Papa, and crowing loudly, while Jack sent his scarlet-and-white ball even higher. But, alas! as the ball came down, it hit Charlotte's blue stocking, which she had not quite emptied, and sent her new jointed doll flying into the fire, kicking frantically as it went. Big brother Bob sprang to the rescue, but the flames were too quick for him. Poor little Charlotte, her new daughter gone even before she had seen her wooden face, burst into tears.

Elizabeth dropped Alice, and ran to the little sister.

“Charlotte!” she cried, “Charlotte! see! You shall have the little *bit* of a doll. Isn’t it cunning? Isn’t it cunninger than yours? See its blue silk dress, Charlotte!”

And Charlotte looked, and thought she could be happy again.

Papa and Mamma exchanged glances and smiled.

Cousin Eleonora had hung evergreen wreaths in all the downstairs windows. They were tied with cheerful red ribbons. The breakfast-table was garlanded with holly, and had at Papa’s end a bunch of mistletoe (because he was partly English), and at Mamma’s end a bunch of heather (because she was partly Scotch).

Elizabeth and Charlotte instantly spied in one corner a doll’s table, spread with a white cloth, and upon it a doll’s teaset, of such a pretty design, all sprinkled with rose-buds, that both little girls jumped up and down, and clapped and clapped their hands! Bobby Shaftoe, clad in a becoming new sailor-suit, stepped gracefully to the head of the table, and Edith Grace Ermytrude, in festive white silk, rustled to her place opposite. The other dolls (Alice’s frock was cherry, and Susie Jane’s blue) were soon seated along

the sides, and bibs (bordered with holly) were found at their places.

All the family wished Hannah a Merry Christmas, as she came in, looking very proud of the dish of muffins she set upon the table. The muffins were shaped like bells, and Uncle Nathaniel made believe cry when he found his bell wouldn't ring.

"You needn't make your beds this morning, darlings," said Mamma, as everyone got up from the breakfast table. "We're all going on a sleighride to Dover; we're going to get Aunt Alice and your cousin Polly, and bring them home for the night."

Then what rejoicing! For you remember I told you Aunt Alice was a perfect love. And as for Polly, the P in her name might just as well have been a J, though what the grown-ups said was that she was her Uncle Nathaniel over again to a T.

Jingle, jingle, jingle! Round came the green and scarlet sleigh,—*such* a big one!—drawn by Mettie and Jog. The horses tossed their heads, and stamped upon the snow. You could see their breath in the frosty air.

Alice sat on the front seat in Elizabeth's lap, a little gray fur hood drawn closely around her rosy cheeks, and her long gray coat buttoned

every button, to keep out the cold. Everyone piled in, and away they went down the road,—jingle, jingle, jingle!

But perhaps the happiest part of the day was toward its close, when they had the Tree. Merry as everyone had been throughout the day, they were then even merrier. Mr. Tom Gray and the Hallowells were invited over to share the fun. Mamma and Cousin Eleonora trimmed the Tree, all but the candles. Mr. Tom put those on, and they stood as straight as soldiers.

“I’m so happy I don’t know what to do!” said Elizabeth. And, as a vent to her feelings, she concluded to kiss Aunt Alice.

It was exactly as if all the seasons had joined to form the Tree. There were the white blossoms of Spring bursting out everywhere, call them popcorn if you will. If you wanted June Roses you had only to look at Cousin Eleonora in her pink merino, and at the glowing faces of the children grouped about her knees. Surely those were Autumn fruits hanging amid the branches! And the Fir-tree, self-forgetful, content to be almost hidden, stood yet for the Winter joy of Christmas.

Alice had a little tree of her own, brought by Aunt Alice. You may be sure she shared it with all the other dolls. One of her own presents was

a mite of a doll much like the one given to comfort Charlotte in the morning. Its frock was of pink merino, just like Cousin Eleonora's gown, and I think this kind cousin made it. Another present was a sled big enough to hold two dolls. Big brother Bob made it. It was painted scarlet, and had "Alice" in white letters on the side. Jack immediately gave Alice and Susie Jane a ride around the tree, that they might see its splendors from all sides.

The presents of the grown-ups didn't look very interesting,—just stupid aprons, paper-cutters, dry books, etc. Yet the grown-ups looked pleased. Especially did Aunt Alice look happy when, at night-fall, big brother Bob put into her hands a bunch of white roses, and she found tucked among them this verse of Stevenson's:—

“Chief of our aunts,—not only I,
But all your dozen of nurselings cry—
What did the other children do?
And what were childhood, wanting you?”

If there *only* were another chapter, I could ask you to guess who slept in a little cot beside Aunt Alice's bed that night, and snuggled in with her the first thing in the morning, to hear about Christmas in the olden time. Then, by merely turning over the page I could tell you that it was

Elizabeth. But you see there *isn't* any next chapter. This is all.

Dear little girl, have you liked to hear about Elizabeth and Alice? Put your hand in mine for goodbye. May I send my love to your doll? I wish you both a very

Merry Christmas!

THE END

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