

THE BLUE BUTTERFLY

s to South America

BY RUTH H. HUTCHINSON

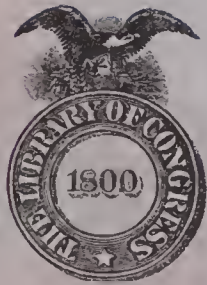
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THE BLUE BUTTERFLY

Goes to South America

By ^{Mrs.} RUTH H.
HUTCHINSON

Pictures By
KURT WIESE



ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY
CHICAGO 1940 ILLINOIS

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HOW TO SAY THE SPANISH WORDS

GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

Argentina (<i>Ar-hān-tē'nä</i>)	Pan de Azucar (<i>Pän de A-thōō-kär</i>)
Brazil (<i>Brä-thēl'</i>)	Rio de Janeiro (<i>Rē-ō de Hä-nä'ē-rō</i>)
Buenos Aires (<i>Bwā-nōs A'ē-rās</i>)	Santos (<i>Sän-tōs</i>)
Corcovado (<i>Kōr-kō-vä'dō</i>)	Sao Paulo (<i>Sä-ō Pä'ōō-lō</i>)
Montevideo (<i>Mon-tā-vē-dā'ō</i>)	Uruguay (<i>Oō-rōō-gwä'ē</i>)

STREETS AND BUILDINGS

Avenida de Mayo (<i>A-vā-nē'dä de Mä-yō</i>)	Casa Rosada (<i>Kä-sä Rō-sä'dä</i>)
Calle Florida (<i>Kä-llyā Flō-rē'dä</i>)	Congreso (<i>Kōn-grā-sō</i>)

PROPER NAMES

Blanca (<i>Blän-kä</i>)	Juancito (<i>Hwän-thē-tō</i>)
Caballito (<i>Kä-bä-llyē-tō</i>)	Maria (<i>Mä-rē'ä</i>)
Chin-Chin (<i>Chēn-Chēn</i>)	Mercedes (<i>Mär-thä'däs</i>)
Elenita (<i>A-lā-nē'tä</i>)	Pedro (<i>Pä'drō</i>)
Estrellita (<i>As-trā-llyē'tä</i>)	

RANCH NAMES

Lago Chico (<i>Lä-gō Chē'kō</i>)	Lago de los Patos (<i>Lä-gō de los Pä'tōs</i>)
Lago Grande (<i>Lä-gō Grän'dä</i>)	Tres Lagos (<i>Träs Lä-gōs</i>)

SALUTATIONS

Buenos Dias (<i>Bwā-nōs Dē'äs</i>)	Buenas Tardes (<i>Bwā-näs Tär-däs</i>)
Buenas Noches (<i>Bwā-näs Nō'chās</i>)	Feliz Navidad (<i>Fä-lēth Nä-vē-däd</i>)

COMMON WORDS

afuera (<i>ä-fwä'rä</i>)	garbanzos (<i>gär-bän-thōs</i>)
asado (<i>ä-sä-do</i>)	gaucho (<i>gä'ōō-chō</i>)
braserero (<i>brä-sä-rō</i>)	gracias (<i>grä'thē-äs</i>)
caballo del diablo (<i>kä-bä'llyō del dē-ä'blō</i>)	granada (<i>grä-nä-dä</i>)
cabello de angel (<i>kä-bä-llyō de än-häl</i>)	mate (<i>mä-tä</i>)
cafe con leche (<i>kä-fä' cōn lä'chä</i>)	mosquitero (<i>mōs-kē-tä'rō</i>)
campo (<i>käm-pō</i>)	perro (<i>pär-rō</i>)
cerro (<i>thä'rō</i>)	persianas (<i>pär-sē-ä'näs</i>)
conventillo (<i>kōn-vän-tē-llyō</i>)	puchero (<i>pōō-chä-rō</i>)
correos (<i>kōr-rä'ōs</i>)	nena (<i>nä-nä</i>)
dia de fiesta (<i>dē-ä de fē-äs-tä</i>)	nene (<i>nä-nä</i>)
dulce de membrillo (<i>dōōl-thä de mām-brē-llyō</i>)	señor (<i>sä-nyōr'</i>)
estancia (<i>äs-tän-thē-ä</i>)	señora (<i>sä-nyō'r-ä</i>)
ferrocarril (<i>fär-rō-kär-rēl</i>)	señorita (<i>sä-nyō-rē-tä</i>)
	siesta (<i>sē-äs'tä</i>)
	sombreros (<i>sōm-brä'-rōs</i>)
	tambo (<i>täm'bō</i>)

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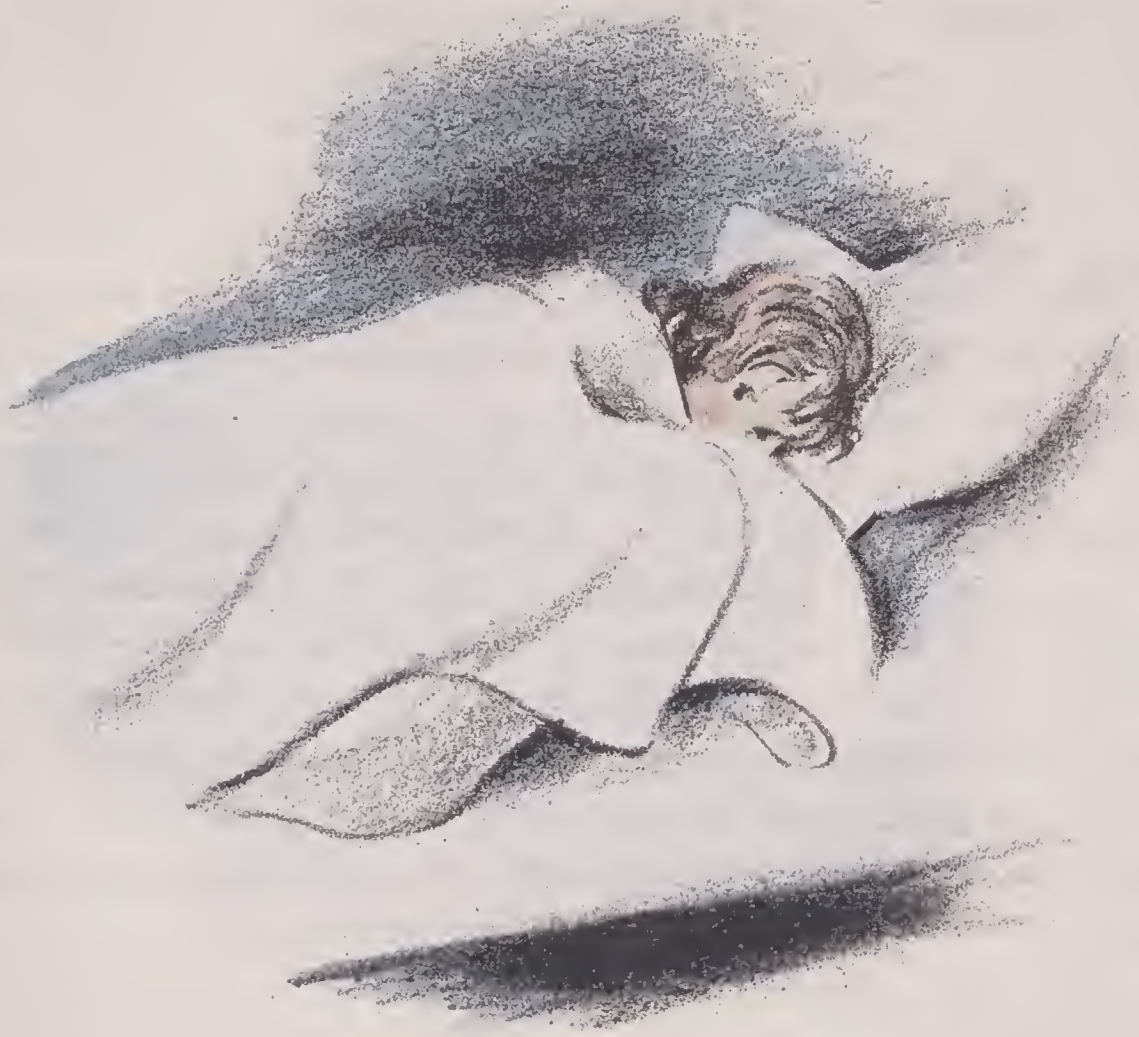


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Along the Rio de la Plata



EARLY MORNING

PATTY wriggled and stretched sleepily. She always liked this early morning world.

Her half-open eyes saw the gray light of dawn creeping into the big dormitory where she slept in one of a row of narrow white beds.

Her feet and legs were warm and cozy so that one part of her wanted to stay where it was—in the little warm space down there under the covers.

Her arms and shoulders had tossed the blankets aside during the night as always, so that the other part of her wished it were time to get up. Then Miss Penny would come in and close the windows.

With half of her mind she wanted to think about Petey, asleep across the hall in the boys' dormitory. She wondered if his cold were better or worse, and if he would be as cross this morning as he was last night when she had tried to help him scrub his grimy hands.

The other half wanted to forget all about Petey, his grimy hands, and to watch the blue butterfly come alive there on the wall as the morning light brightened the room.

The blue butterfly hung in a little frame over one of the chests of drawers that stood against the wall opposite Patty's bed.

Each little girl was allowed to hang some cherished picture or card over there on the wall across from her bed.

Florence, whose bed was next to Patty's, had a picture of a ship on which her big brother was serving in the Navy. Over the picture of the ship hung a tiny flag of real silk which Florence's brother had given to her when he paid a short visit to the Home.

Before this visit, Florence had boasted about her big brother and all the strange places from which he had sent her postcards. But Patty had always been able to out-talk her with tales of her Uncle Nick who lived in South America—not visited or traveled there, but actually lived in that strange, far away place. After her brother's visit, Florence always said, "I don't believe you have any Uncle Nick! He never came to see you, did he?"

So Patty could only swallow hard and point to the blue butterfly which Uncle Nick had sent her from South America.

Patty turned her eyes, wide open now, toward the blue butterfly.

The room was quite light now. There it hung, the brightest, loveliest spot in all that bare room!

Sometimes, if Patty half closed her eyes and looked through her lashes, the blue butterfly seemed to shimmer and tremble as if it were about to move its gauzy wings.

Just so, she thought, if she looked through half-closed eyes long enough and kept still enough, perhaps when the blue butterfly began to shimmer and tremble, it might really flutter its wings as if about to fly. Surely that would mean something very wonderful and unusual was about to happen.

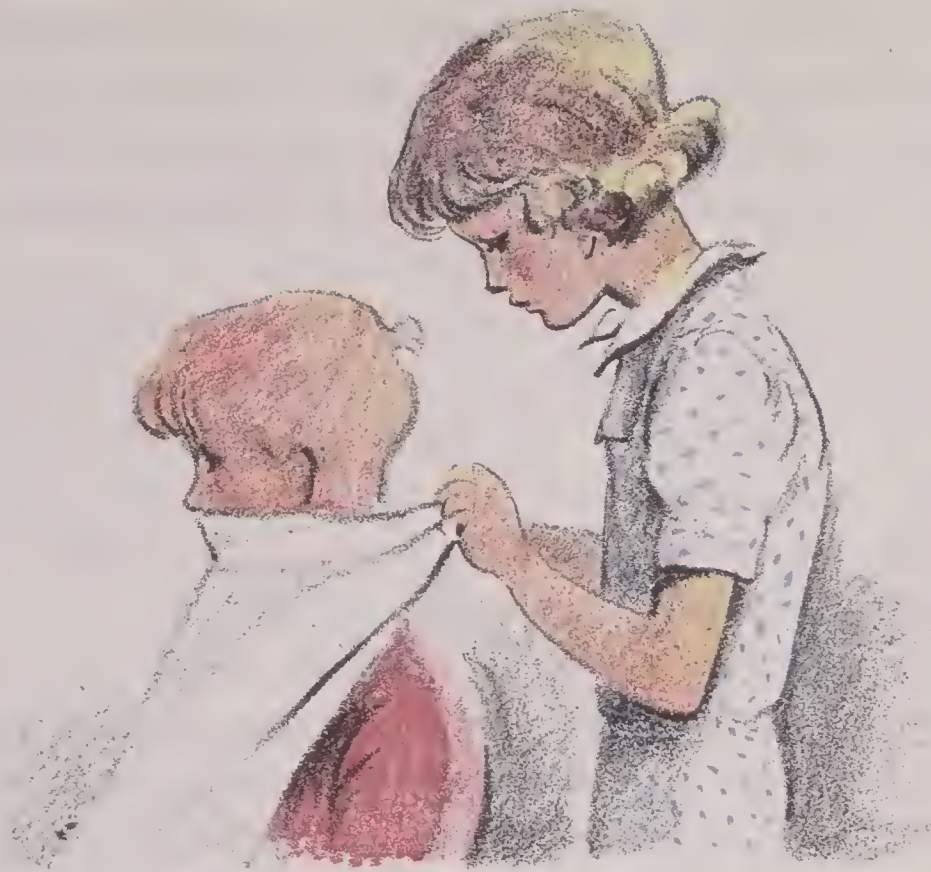
So she lowered her lids a little more, and, shutting out all other thoughts, gazed steadily at the bright spot on the wall which was the blue butterfly. It shimmered and glistened, now large, now small; now near, now far; until Patty all of a sudden sat bolt upright and rubbed her eyes. Surely it had lifted one delicate wing a wee little bit in a flying motion?

Just then the door to the hall slammed loudly, and all the girls began to stir and stretch as Miss Penny came in from the hall. When she had opened the door a strong draft from the open windows had seized it and slammed it shut behind her. In a freshly starched uniform that rustled as she walked, she said, "Good morning, girls," quite in her usual voice, and went about closing the windows.

Patty was the first to jump out of bed, ready to meet what this unusual day might bring. For her, the blue butterfly had lifted one wing, and almost waved it at her.

Of course, it might have been the door slamming that had made everything in the room jump, but Patty would not think of that just now.





A SURPRISE

Patty forgot all about the blue butterfly in the hurry of getting herself and Petey washed and dressed.

When they reached the dining room, most of the children were already in their places. Patty knotted the corner of Petey's napkin, and tried to tuck it in quickly, pinching his fat neck as she did so. He yelled loudly, just as Miss Penny started to say grace. Patty bowed her head very low so the other children would not see how red her face was.

Certainly nothing unusual had happened yet! Petey had been just as cross and just as hard to get dressed as usual. The oatmeal was just as sticky and just as hard to swallow as usual. Miss Penny, sitting in her usual place at the head of the table, looked just as usual.

But it was still very early, and there was the whole long day ahead of her when anything at all might happen. The door at the far end of the dining room opened, and Patty knew at once that this day was going to be different.

The Matron never came into the dining room at breakfast time unless for something unusual. Sometimes it was something pleasant that brought her there at that hour. But more often it was something not so pleasant—some new rules to be read out, or the naming of certain children to report to the Office after breakfast.

Some of the children looked up half-surprised and half-scared. But most of them became very much interested in their food, even though it was just oatmeal, slightly warm and with too little sugar on it.

Patty's heart beat very fast. She held her head up and looked straight at the Matron. She was very proud when her full name was read out before all the children, who knew her as just plain Patty. There it was—Patricia Eleanor Merriman. The Matron never called the children by their nicknames such as Patty or Peggy, and she did not change her rule this time.



“When you have finished your breakfast, Patricia, come to the Office. I wish to speak to you. Bring Peter with you also.”

Petey hardly knew that the Matron was speaking about him. He was so used to being called Petey that Peter sounded as if it might be the name of some other boy.

Patty stood up quickly and said, “Yes, Matron,” in a voice that didn’t sound a bit like her own. It trembled a little, and it sounded high and far away as if she were speaking from somewhere upstairs.

Finishing a little before the others, she looked down the long table. Meeting Miss Penny’s kind eyes, she took her chance to say, “Please, Miss Penny, may I be excused? And Petey, too?”

She wanted to get out of the dining room before the other children were excused. She had to wait while Petey finished the last few bites of his oatmeal.

Soon the children were all up from the table and pushing toward the door. Patty had already reached it, leading Petey by the hand toward the Office.

Patty was glad the Matron answered her knock at once with a cheerful, “Come in!” She couldn’t hold on to Petey much longer. So she opened the door quickly and pushed him in ahead of her, and shut the door as soon as they were both inside.

The Matron, seated at the big desk, looked up at the waiting children and smiled kindly. Then she finished reading a letter she had in her hand before she said anything at all.

Patty stood still and tried to wait patiently, and pretended not to see the scowl on Petey’s face. It must have been a very long letter, because it seemed a very long time before the Matron laid it down and turned to the children.

“Patricia,” she said, “I have a letter here from your uncle in South America. It’s rather a long letter, so I shall not read it all to you just now, but here is what it means for you and Peter. He wants you both to go to South America and live with him, and

he wants me to arrange to have you go as soon as possible. That's all I can tell you now, as I have to go away for the day. We will talk more about it tomorrow."

Patty knew that she and Petey should leave the Office as some other children were coming in. But she didn't seem able to move until the Matron spoke to her again and said, "That's all for now, Patricia. You and Peter may go."

In a shaky little voice that didn't sound at all like her own, Patty said, "Yes, Matron," took Petey firmly by the hand, and hurried toward the door. She was afraid she was going to cry.

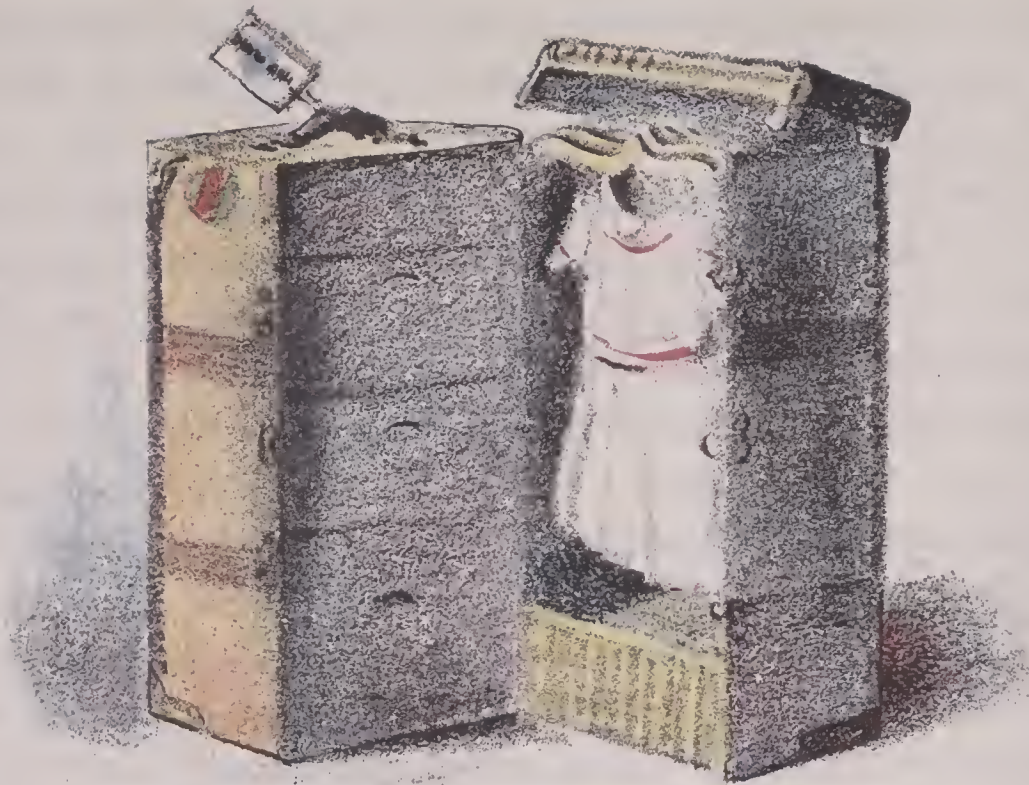
When the blue butterfly had seemed to move his wing early that morning, she had felt that something nice would happen that day, but she had never dreamed of this—a home in South America which Patty had always thought of as some far away fairyland. She would be with Uncle Nick, who must love her and Petey very much, even though they had never seen him.

She supposed that an uncle couldn't be like a father or a mother, but he was next best, and it would be nice to really belong to somebody again.

Patty lay awake that night, long after Miss Penny had turned out the lights and opened the windows.

Next day, when Patty went to the Office, a large handsome woman was sitting with the Matron. Patty didn't know the woman's name. She knew her only as a member of the Board.

"Patty," said the Matron, "come and shake hands with Mrs. Harris. She has two little girls and a little boy of her own. They have traveled on ships with their mother, so she knows all about the clothes that you and Petey will need to make the trip to South America. She has promised to help us get what you will need. Get yourself and Peter very clean and dressed in your Sunday School clothes right after lunch, and we will go down town and do some shopping."



PREPARATIONS

After that first day of shopping, things happened so fast that Patty could hardly keep track of them any more.

There were many trips to town in Mrs. Harris' car. Patty had been very frightened the first time she rode in it, because all she could think of was that a car had killed her mother and father. There were more visits to the Office, but all happy ones. There were long talks there with the Matron and Mrs. Harris, and with Miss Penny, who was to take the children to New York and see them safely aboard ship.

Patty was very glad that Miss Penny was to go with them to New York. The Matron had always been very kind, but she was still the Matron; the children in the Home never forgot it, and were just the least little bit afraid of her. Miss Penny was the one that Patty, as well as all the other girls, really loved, and even had fun with sometimes.

There had been more letters from Uncle Nick, bringing money and telling the name of the ship they were to sail on; also the captain's name, Captain McAllister.

One night the Matron had told everybody at the supper table about the children's trip. The other children were very much interested and asked questions all at once.

The afternoon before the children were to leave the Matron had called Patty into her own room, where the new clothes and trunk had been kept since coming from the store. She and Mrs. Harris explained to Patty where everything was in the trunk. They had been packing the trunk for days, a little at a time. Patty had been allowed to help fold all the things that went into the drawers. She was allowed to hang the dresses on the hangers so they would not be too wrinkled, and even put the shoes in the box for shoes—she and Petey each had four new pairs.

That night Patty was the last little girl to crawl into her bed in the dormitory. She had counted the days and waited impatiently for this last night to come. Now that it was here, she felt bewildered and lost. It had been great fun planning to leave the



Home and go to a strange new place to live, but it had been her only home for a long time, and suddenly the Home and the Matron and the other girls—and even her narrow white bed—seemed very dear indeed.

Her last thought of all was of the blue butterfly. It was still hanging there on the wall. Patty had not packed it in the trunk, but would put it into her suitcase in the morning so that she wouldn't have to sleep even one night without it.

A moonbeam shone brightly through the window just then, and shimmered softly over the blue butterfly. But Patty didn't see it except in her dreams, where the blue butterfly actually left its frame and fluttered toward her in the silver light.

The next morning Patty was halfway into her new coat with the lovely soft fur collar, when she gave a little gasp. She dashed away down the hall toward the dormitory, calling out as she went, "Just a minute, Miss Penny. I'll be right back!"

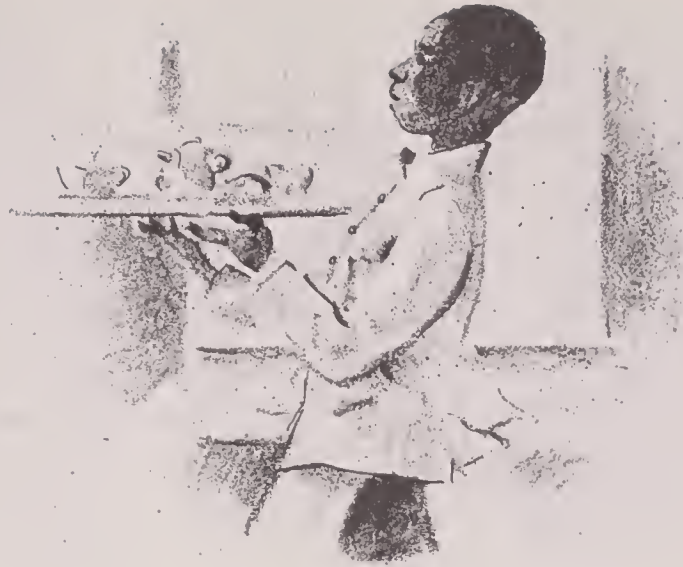
In all the excitement, Patty had forgotten that the blue butterfly was still on the wall in the dormitory. She couldn't go without it! Rushing into the empty dormitory, she stood on tip-toe and pulled it down.

Then she ran back to Miss Penny and asked if it was too late to put it into her suitcase. But Miss Penny had closed all the suitcases while they were at breakfast; and they had already been carried out to Mrs. Harris' car in which Patty and Petey and Miss Penny and the Matron were to ride to the station.

"Then I'll carry it in my hand," said Patty.

"You might drop it and break the glass, Patty. Give it to me. My pocketbook is large enough to hold it, and it will be safe there until we get on the train."

Patty sighed with relief when the blue butterfly was safely tucked away in Miss Penny's pocketbook. Just suppose she had started off to South America, and left the blue butterfly on the wall of the dormitory!



A TRAIN RIDE

The train and everything about it was new and exciting to Patty and Petey, who had never been on a train before. So Miss Penny was kept busy answering questions. Patty, who was a little nervous at first, just as she was nervous about riding in cars, soon felt comfortable and at ease as the train rolled smoothly along.

The morning passed quickly. Then there was the new and exciting experience of lunch in the dining car. After lunch Miss Penny suggested a nap.

Patty didn't intend to go to sleep. It was all right for Petey to go to sleep—he was smaller than she. But she was going to stay awake. She would curl up in her seat, just lie still a few minutes, and watch Miss Penny knit.

Patty lay quietly, and tried to think backward to the Home, then forward to South America, and Uncle Nick. But she couldn't seem to think of either very clearly.

She couldn't feel anything but the smooth motion of the train. She couldn't hear anything but the singsong of the wheels on the rails; and she couldn't seem to see anything but Miss Penny's white fingers, moving the shining needles and the bright-colored wool.

Perhaps, if she lay on her side, she could think better. So she turned over, fixed her long legs as comfortably as she could in the short seat, and then didn't think any more at all, for she was as sound asleep as Petey.

After the nap there was a second trip to the dining car. Patty and Petey didn't feel as strange and shy as they had at noon.

Soon after dinner came the rush of getting off the train. Patty and Petey stayed very close to Miss Penny. They had never seen so many people or so many lights, or heard so much noise and confusion as they found all around them in the big Chicago station.

Later, when Patty was in her soft bed in a tall hotel, with the warm blankets over her, Miss Penny came in and opened the windows, turned out the lights, and closed the door just as she had done every night at the Home.

Patty almost felt that if she raised up her head and looked, there would be a whole row of white beds beside her. She began to wonder if anyone was sleeping in her bed at the Home tonight; and for a moment she almost wished she were back in it herself, even if this bed was much softer.

Thinking of the dormitory and of her bed made her think of the blue butterfly. She threw back the blankets and jumped out of bed. Running across the room on the thick carpet, her bare feet didn't feel a bit cold as they used to in the dormitory when she got out on the cold bare floor. She knocked softly on the door that Miss Penny had closed between the two rooms.

Miss Penny opened it quickly. "What is it, Patty? I thought you were settled in bed. You mustn't run about this way. You might disturb Petey."

"Oh, Miss Penny! The blue butterfly! It's in your pocket-book. I've never slept without it on the wall since the day it came from South America. Please, may I have it?"

Miss Penny understood how Patty felt about the blue butter-



The train was new and exciting

fly. So she told her to hurry back to bed and promised to bring it to her.

“Here it is, Patty,” said Miss Penny, coming through the door. “But where are you going to put it?”

Patty sat up in bed and carefully took the picture from Miss Penny. Then she pulled out the little prop on the back, and set it on the night table near her bed so that it faced her.

There was a small night light on the table which Miss Penny had turned on. It shed its soft light over the blue butterfly and made its wings almost shimmer as they had when the moon shone on it through the dormitory window.

“Please, may I keep the light on a little while, Miss Penny?” Patty asked.

Miss Penny smiled and said, “Well, just a few minutes, Patty,” and went into her own room.

With all the rest of the room dark, the blue butterfly was beautiful under the little light. Patty felt very happy, seeing it there.

Patty half closed her eyes for a moment to see if the blue butterfly seemed to move its wings a little just as it had done in the dormitory. Yes, it was just the same in the soft lamplight as it had been in the early morning light, when she had looked at it through her half-open lashes. Her eyes felt very heavy and almost went clear shut—then Miss Penny, coming softly into the room after her bath, found Patty sound asleep, with her face still turned toward the blue butterfly under the little night light.

Before Patty knew it, morning had come once more, and they were all on the other train now taking them to New York. This train was just like the first one, and the day passed very much like the day before. Miss Penny had told them they would sleep on the train tonight—really undress and go to bed—not just take a nap with their clothes on, as they had done yesterday.

Immediately Patty was very anxious to see how the Negro

porter would make a bed out of the two seats in her section; and another bed up above—as Miss Penny had tried to explain to her—only they were not called beds, but berths.

When they came back from the dining car after dinner, it was quite dark, which meant that bedtime would soon be here. Patty didn't usually want to go to bed when Petey did, because she was much older than he. But tonight she was quite willing, and was glad to hear Miss Penny say, "Well, children, you must go to bed soon. The train will be in New York early in the morning, so we shall not be able to sleep late, as we did this morning at the hotel. You take Petey to the dressing room, Patty, and begin to get ready. I'll call the porter, and have him make up the berths."

"Oh, Miss Penny, please let us watch him fix the beds—I mean berths. Then we'll go and get ready right away."

The two children sat across the aisle and watched every move the porter made. He brought sheets and pillow slips from the cupboards at the end of the coach. Then, with a queer looking key, he reached up and unlocked the shiny, sloping part that was over the seats. It swung down just as a door opens.

Then he worked so fast, they just couldn't keep track of everything he did. The first thing they knew their seats weren't there any more, but there was a nice bed with the covers neatly turned down, and another up above. Both could be shut in with a pair of long green curtains.

The porter turned around and grinned at them, as they sat staring at him. Then he showed them how they could pull the green curtains across, and be out of sight when they got into bed.

Patty and Petey hurried off to the dressing room, feeling as if the porter had played some kind of trick on them. Why, it was almost like magic—seats one minute, and the next—beds with warm covers and white sheets and soft pillows and curtains all around.



NEW YORK CITY

Patty had thought the station in Chicago was big. But the Grand Central Station seemed many times larger. It was so big and the ceiling was so high that people's voices echoed in it.

On the way to the pier, Miss Penny explained that they were to travel in the special care of the captain, and there would be a stewardess to help them with their clothes and baths and everything they needed. Uncle Nick would also be waiting for them when the ship reached Buenos Aires, pronounced Bwā-nōs I-ras.

Patty and Petey were very anxious now to see the big ship. The taxi seemed to go very slowly through the streets. At last it drove right into what looked like a great big shed which was really the pier shed. Other taxis were driving in, and there were lots of people. There was hurry and noise and excitement everywhere.



The ship was big and high

Through the opposite side of the pier shed which was open, Patty saw what looked like a long building. As they walked toward the open side, Miss Penny pointed and said, "There's the ship, children!"

"Oh, Miss Penny," Patty gasped, staring with big eyes, "I didn't dream it was so big! How can it ever start moving?"

Petey just looked and said, "Gee!" in a scared little voice.

The ship was big and high, and all along its side were little round windows that looked like rows of staring eyes. These are called portholes.

Miss Penny walked with the children to the foot of a gangplank, or platform, leading up to the upper deck of the ship. An officer stood there in a blue suit which was something like the one the conductor on the train had worn. But his cap had some gold ornaments on the front instead of a badge with letters.

Miss Penny spoke to this man a minute. Then she told Patty to go on ahead of her up the gangplank, and she would follow with Petey.

Patty held on to the railing and felt as if she was climbing up the side of a house. Once she thought she would peek over the railing. She looked over but looked right away again, with her heart beating as fast as it had the first time she had traveled in the fast hotel elevator. For she had looked far, far down, and had seen a great deal of water under her.

Another officer was standing at the top of the gangplank, and Patty was glad to see him reach out his hand to help her up the last stretch.

She found herself standing in what looked like a long narrow porch with a guard.

Almost at once Miss Penny and Petey came up behind her. They all went through a door and up to a little office window where Miss Penny talked to the ship's purser. She showed him some papers, and pointed to Patty and Petey.

The man called to a woman dressed all in white, just like the nurse who took care of sick children at the Home.

"Mrs. Ryan, come here, please," he called.

Mrs. Ryan walked toward them, smiling as she came. As she drew nearer, Patty could see that she was much older than Miss Penny—about as old as the Matron. But her face was very kind.

"Mrs. Ryan," the man was saying, "these are the children who are traveling to Buenos Aires to meet their uncle."

"Your name, please," he said to Miss Penny. When she had told him he said, "Miss Penny, this is Mrs. Ryan." Then Miss Penny said, "Mrs. Ryan, this is Patricia Eleanor Merriman, and this is Peter, her brother. But they are mostly called Patty and Petey. Shake hands with Mrs. Ryan, children!"

Mrs. Ryan kept right on smiling and shook hands, first with Patty and then with Petey. "Sure, an' it's pleased to meet you both I am," she said.

"Mrs. Ryan," said the purser, "show Miss Penny to the children's cabin. She won't have much time to stay aboard, as we are sailing promptly at eleven."

"Yes, sir," replied Mrs. Ryan. "We'll all go there now."

Miss Penny looked at everything in the cabin as if she were very much interested. She even felt the beds to see if they were soft and comfortable. "What a nice cabin it is, children! I'm sure you'll be very comfortable here, and Mrs. Ryan will take good care of you. You must be very good, especially you, Petey; and not make her any unnecessary bother. Here are the keys to their trunk, Mrs. Ryan," Miss Penny was saying, and handing the keys to Mrs. Ryan.

Outside in the passage a voice called out loudly, "All ashore, that are going ashore!"

That must mean Miss Penny. She was going ashore and would leave Patty and Petey here with this strange woman in the white uniform.

All of a sudden Patty began to sob, as she rushed at Miss Penny, and threw her arms around her tight.

“Please, Miss Penny! Don’t go and leave Petey and me all alone on this boat! I want to go back with you!”

Petey was crying now, too, and pulling at Patty’s hand.

“Hush, dear!” Miss Penny said, as she held Patty close. “Think of Petey! You know a big sister must be brave. There, I must go now!”

She kissed Patty’s cheek and patted Petey’s head; and was gone through the door without looking back.

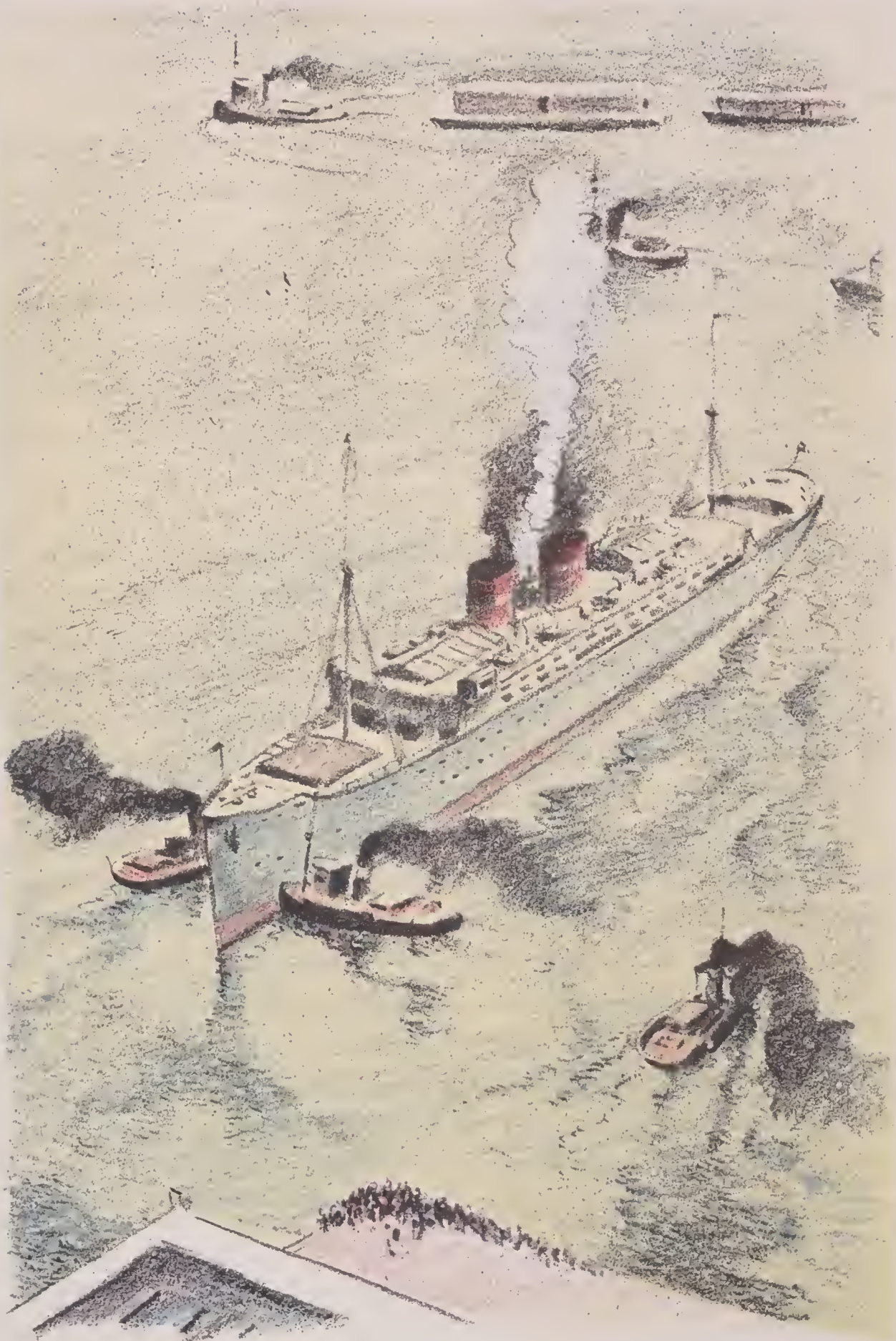
Patty turned to quiet Petey, who was whimpering and tugging at her hand.

Seeing her drying Petey’s eyes, and trying to choke back her own tears, Mrs. Ryan said, “Sure, an’ it’s a fine brave girl you are then! Come now. Away up on deck and we’ll wave good-bye to your Miss Penny. With a smile, now, mind you! She won’t want to be carryin’ the memory of your tears with her, the poor dear.”

Mrs. Ryan had a very kind voice and kind hands, as well as a kind face. As she talked, she was wiping the tear stains from both their faces and straightening their hats.

Mrs. Ryan took a hand of each of them in her big ones, and led them up a flight of stairs and out onto the deck. Then she lifted Petey up so that he could see over the deck rail—Patty was just tall enough. She looked down, down to the strip of dark, dirty water, far below. But she looked up again when she felt the ship trembling. At the same time there was a deep, hoarse blast on the whistle.

Looking over the railing, she saw that the gangplanks leading up to the ship had been taken away. Over in front of the pier shed a lot of people were standing, waving and shouting to the passengers standing along the rail near her. Among them all Patty soon found Miss Penny. She was smiling and waving



The S.S. AMERICAN STAR

too. Patty felt very glad and important that someone down there was waving just at her and Petey. So she smiled and waved back, and pointed Miss Penny out to Petey so he could wave too.

The people all kept on waving and waving, but they seemed to be getting very small. Looking down again at the strip of water, she saw that it was getting wider and wider. Then she realized that the ship was moving out into the Hudson River; and that Miss Penny was getting smaller and smaller and farther and farther away, until she could no longer tell for sure who of all those people on the pier was Miss Penny. Patty kept her eyes steadily on the black spot that she thought was Miss Penny, until she could no longer see her. Just then Mrs. Ryan touched her gently on the shoulder, and said, "Sure, an' it's cold you'll be getting out here. Come down to the cabin then, and get warm."

They went back down to the cabin with kind Mrs. Ryan. She took off their coats and hats, and hung them up in the little closet.

Petey didn't have a word to say. But he stuck very close to Patty who moved about the little cabin, interested in everything there was in it, and wondering which bed would be hers and which Petey's. As she looked more closely at the beds, she saw there was something lying on the pillow of one of them. She picked it up, and turned it over, and there was her beautiful blue butterfly. No, she thought, Miss Penny had not forgotten to take it out of her pocketbook.

All trace of tears was gone from Patty's face as she showed the blue butterfly to Mrs. Ryan, and told her all about it.

Even Petey was halfway smiling now. He didn't care anything about his sister's old flutterby, as he called it. But if Patty was happy again, everything must be all right.



ON THE ATLANTIC

One morning about two weeks later, Patty awoke very early and lay looking contentedly around the little cabin. She could hear the gentle slap-slap of the blue water against the sides of the ship. She could feel the soft warm breeze that poured through the open portholes and made the little chintz curtains swish back and forth, as if they were keeping time to the slap-slap of the blue water. The breeze brought a salty smell into the cabin, and made her want to breathe very deeply.

That first night on board ship, Patty had felt a little afraid of the sound of the water just outside her porthole, and she hadn't been able to go to sleep for quite a while.

Besides, it had been hard to feel safe and comfortable in a bed that sometimes seemed to tip up and down or roll part way over, and then was level again. This motion had been much harder to get used to than the steady motion of her bed on the train.

But she was happy and gay again, and the blue waves topped with the white foam, looked happy and gay, too. Now she liked to lie still and listen to them and feel the gentle rocking motion of her bed.

Petey was still asleep over in his bed, so Patty knew it must be very early.

Patty was glad she had wakened up so early this morning. Now she could lie still and play her old game of looking dreamily through half-closed eyes at the blue butterfly. Mrs. Ryan had tacked up the picture across the room from her bed, just as it used to be in the dormitory.

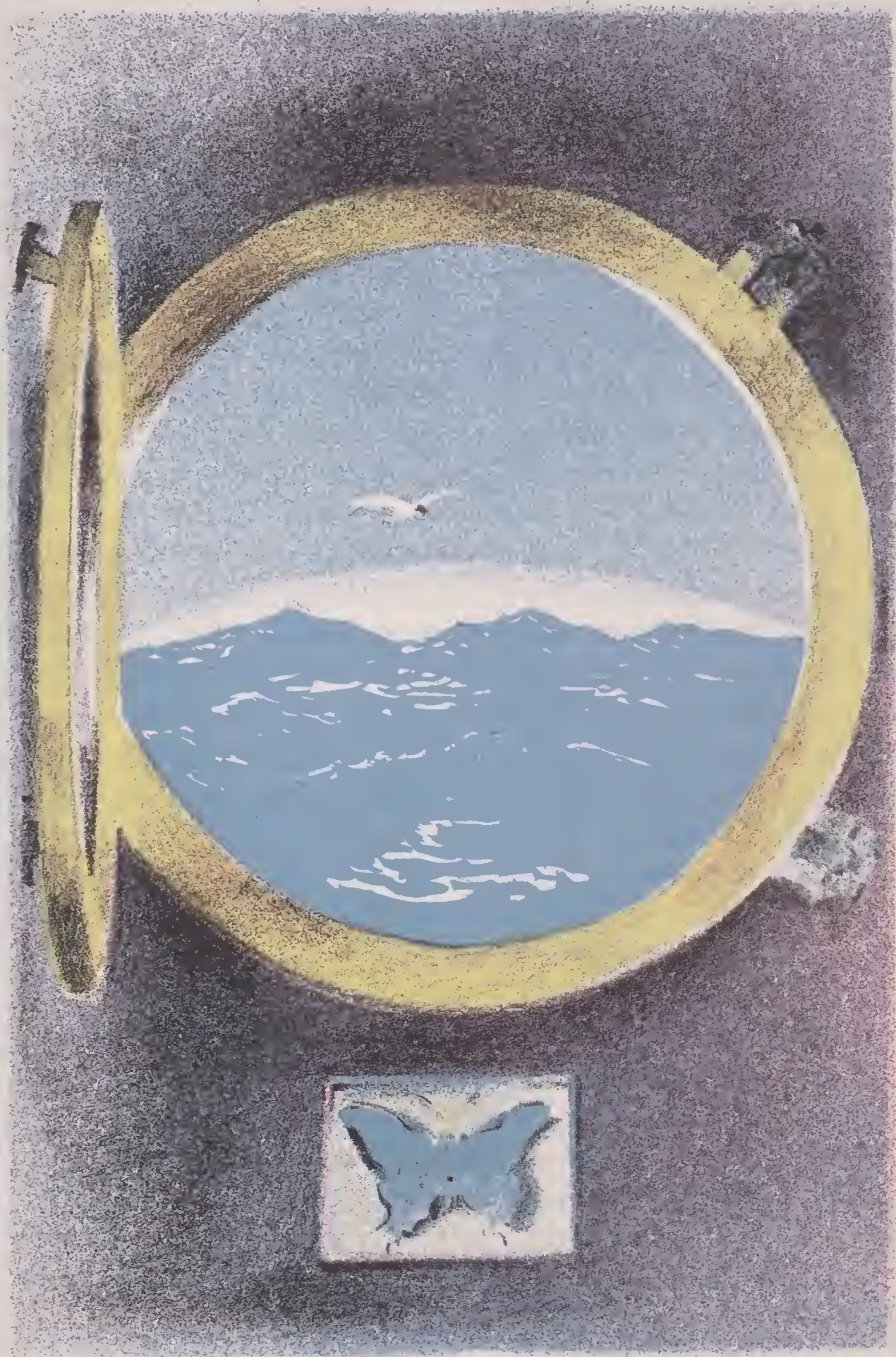
There were lots of things she wanted to think about, too. During the day it was hard for her to think and remember things clearly, there were so many interesting things to do and see; and Petey demanded so much attention.

First of all Captain Mac had told her that his ship, the *American Star*, would reach the port of Rio de Janeiro some time that very day; and the kind couple named Ferguson, who had no children of their own, had promised to take her and Petey ashore to see the strange city. Rio de Janeiro, which means River of January, was a pretty name. But it was not nearly as pretty as Buenos Aires—the City of Good Airs—where Uncle Nick would be waiting for her and Petey.

Then too, Patty wanted to think back over the two weeks she had spent on the *American Star*. She didn't call it the big boat any more, for Captain Mac had told her that she must be polite about a ship, and call a ship by her right name. Captain Mac always spoke of any ship as if it were a woman.

If Patty were to remember all the nice things she had learned and seen and done since that day when she had waved good-bye to Miss Penny in New York, she must stop looking dreamily at the blue butterfly, and think fast. Mrs. Ryan would be coming soon, bringing big glasses of orange juice for her and Petey, as she did every morning.

Patty remembered how frightened she had been the first time she met Captain Mac. He had been very busy all that first day after they left New York. He must have been busy the next day



The blue Atlantic Ocean

too, because Patty didn't see him until that night at dinner time, except just one little glimpse the second morning. She and Petey had been walking along the deck with Mrs. Ryan, who had pointed him out, standing far away at the other end of the long deck. Patty had seen only his broad back and long legs, and a little bit of grey hair below his cap.

And then that night, Mrs. Ryan had told Patty to put on her pretty new pink dress and had dressed Petey up in his Sunday suit with the long trousers.

"For it's eating dinner with the Captain himself, you'll be this night, dearies." Mrs. Ryan had spoken as if eating dinner with the captain was a very great honor, which indeed it was as Patty found out later.

Mrs. Ryan had led the two children into the big dining room. It was full of people seated at various tables, laughing and talking. But Patty's heart was beating very fast as she and Petey followed Mrs. Ryan straight up to a table in the middle of the room where a stern-looking man sat alone. Mrs. Ryan introduced them. "Captain McAllister, this is Patricia Eleanor Meriman, and her brother Peter. But they are usually called Patty and Petey."

The captain had stood up, and smiled as he held out his hand. Patty took his hand at once. She decided he didn't look nearly so stern when he smiled, and she didn't really feel afraid of him at all.

Then he shook hands with Petey too, and asked his steward to pull out chairs for them, one on each side of him. Mrs. Ryan left them then.

"Sit down, children," the captain had said, "if I am to call you Patty and the little boy Petey, then you must call me Captain Mac."

So Captain Mac it had been ever since. Patty was very glad, because the name McAllister was rather hard to remember.

So Patty and Petey ate dinner with Captain Mac every night, and several times they had been invited to have tea with him up in his own quarters on the bridge, where no one could go without a special invitation.

Patty had soon felt very comfortable at the table with Captain Mac. So she asked him lots and lots of questions. He always explained things to her very carefully, and never laughed at her at all.

So now she knew many things that she hadn't known the day she came aboard the *American Star*.

"Let's see now. How many new words I can remember?" Patty said quietly to herself, so as not to wake Petey. "The funny stairway leading up to the ship is a gangplank. The place where people go to get on the ship is a pier. The part that looked like a porch at first is a deck. The little round windows are portholes. Those little boats that puffed and chugged and whistled and blew out black smoke trying to pull the *American Star* out into the ocean, are tugboats. The men who stood at the bottom and top of the gangplank when we got on, are officers. The clerk that Miss Penny talked to behind the little window, is the purser. Mrs. Ryan is a stewardess. And the men who wait on the tables are not waiters, but stewards. That platform raised above the top deck rail is called the bridge."

Patty sighed a big sigh of satisfaction at remembering so much. She raised herself up and looked at Petey. But he was still asleep, and Mrs. Ryan hadn't come yet with the orange juice, so she could think some more.

Let's see, she thought, what has been the most fun?

There was the day that it was warm enough to run about on deck without a coat or even a sweater, and with bare toes sticking through open sandals.

There was the day the sailors had put up the big canvas tank that was the swimming pool, and had filled it up through a big

hose with clear blue water right from the ocean itself. The next day Captain Mac had taken them into the ship's store, and bought them bright new bathing suits.

One day the ship had crossed the equator. The night before at the dinner table Captain McAllister had told them about old King Neptune and how he would come aboard and celebrate the crossing of the equator.

"Will he come right up out of the water, Captain Mac?" Petey asked, his eyes big with wonder.

"Well, Peter, I'm sure that when you see him you'll agree he doesn't look a bit like anybody you've seen on my ship. So what do you think?" said Captain McAllister, with just the tiniest wink at Patty.

Patty didn't know just what the little wink meant. But she knew Captain McAllister well enough by that time to realize there was some kind of joke somewhere. She wanted to ask Captain McAllister all kinds of questions about old King Neptune. But because of the little wink, she decided she would not ask questions in front of Petey. For all she knew, maybe this King Neptune was another person something like Santa Claus.

The next day at lunch time everybody seemed excited, as if waiting for something. The steward had showed the children that morning a notice on the bulletin board down by the purser's office. It announced that the ship would cross the equator at 2 P.M., and that King Neptune would come aboard promptly at that hour.

Mrs. Ryan insisted that Patty and Petey go to their cabin for a nap after lunch that day as usual. It was very hard to go into the cabin and lie down that afternoon. But Patty and Petey obediently took off their sandals and stretched out on their berths, even though neither one could possibly sleep. Patty had closed her eyes so that Petey would think she was asleep. Inside she was almost holding her breath, listening for something to happen.



Suddenly King Neptune himself appeared

She didn't have very long to wait. All of a sudden there was a loud bugle blast, much louder than what the little Negro bugle boy usually blew to announce meals. Then there was a great clapping and shouting and running of feet along the decks.

Patty and Petey jumped up and started to put on their sandals. Before they could get them all buckled, there was a loud knocking on the door of their cabin. They recognized Mrs. Ferguson's friendly voice calling, "Patty and Petey! Come up on deck quickly! King Neptune has come aboard!"

On the promenade deck there were so many people that Petey couldn't see a thing. Mr. Ferguson swung him up on his shoulder so that he could see over the heads of the people, while Mrs. Ferguson helped Patty climb up on a deck chair so she could see too.

A regular parade was marching down the deck, led by the little Negro bugle boy blowing as hard as he could. His cheeks were swelled out like large black apples, and his big, shiny eyes rolled from side to side, as if saying to the people, "Do you all see me? I am the bugle boy! I am leading the parade!"

Suddenly King Neptune himself appeared! He wore a long, red robe draped over his shoulders and tied around his waist was a sash. He wore a high, gold-colored crown. He had very long hair and a long white beard that hung away down over his chest. In his hand he carried a long-handled fork, as tall as he was, himself.

After him came several attendants, dressed much like King Neptune. But of course none of them carried a fork or wore a crown. Some of them were dressed like women. They wore their hair, that looked like ravelled out rope, in long braids, tied with bows and hanging over their shoulders. They were so very tall and awkward that Patty wondered if they weren't really men dressed up in women's clothes.

As the procession passed by, everybody clapped and laughed.

But Petey wasn't sure he liked any part of this strange performance, nor this queer-looking old King Neptune who was supposed to come up out of the ocean.

Then all the passengers followed King Neptune down to the end of the promenade deck, where they could look down on the lower deck and the swimming tank. When Patty and Petey and the Fergusons arrived, there sat King Neptune upon a big wooden throne, with his attendants gathered about him.

A solemn-looking judge was sitting at a desk at one side. He wore large dark glasses, a funny hat jammed down over his ears, and a very high, stiff collar that almost came up to meet the hat. When Patty had looked very closely at the judge a time or two, she thought she recognized him as one of the passengers.

One at a time, the judge called the names of the passengers who were crossing the Equator for the first time. The men and boys were ordered to appear before King Neptune either in bathing suits or very old clothes.

When each man went down to be presented to King Neptune, he was ordered to be shaved by a barber with a huge wooden razor and a bucket of flour paste for soap suds. After the paste had been plastered freely over his face and neck, and the barber had scraped part of it off with the big wooden razor, the man was tumbled into the nearby swimming tank, amid shouts of laughter from the other passengers looking on.

This was all great fun to watch! But Patty began wondering what they would do to the women and children, including herself, and Petey who was the only little boy among them all.

When the judge called a woman's name Patty was rather relieved to see her merely go up to the throne and shake hands with King Neptune.

At last the moment came when the judge called out in a loud voice, "Patricia Eleanor Merriman; Peter Merriman!"

Patty had to pull Petey along by the hand as he was still half

afraid of old King Neptune and all that was going on around his throne. When the children stood in front of the throne and looked up into King Neptune's face with its bushy white eyebrows and long white whiskers, even Patty wasn't so sure for a minute that this was all fun. Petey still hung back and stood half hidden behind Patty, refusing to look up.

Then King Neptune shook hands with Patty and Petey, and called out to the people up on the promenade deck, "Let's give a big hand to the smallest of King Neptune's subjects today!" Everybody clapped and clapped, louder than they had for anyone else except King Neptune himself.

Patty felt very pleased and proud as she and Petey went back to the promenade deck, each carrying a large paper. The paper was in the form of a diploma. Patty had seen a paper just like hers and Petey's handed to each passenger who shook hands with King Neptune. On the diploma she read in big letters, "*This is to certify that Patricia Eleanor Merriman has this day crossed the equator and is now declared a loyal subject of His Majesty, King Neptune.*" The diploma was adorned by a big gold seal and signed by King Neptune himself.

Just then Mrs. Ryan came in, carrying two tall glasses of orange juice filled with tinkling ice.

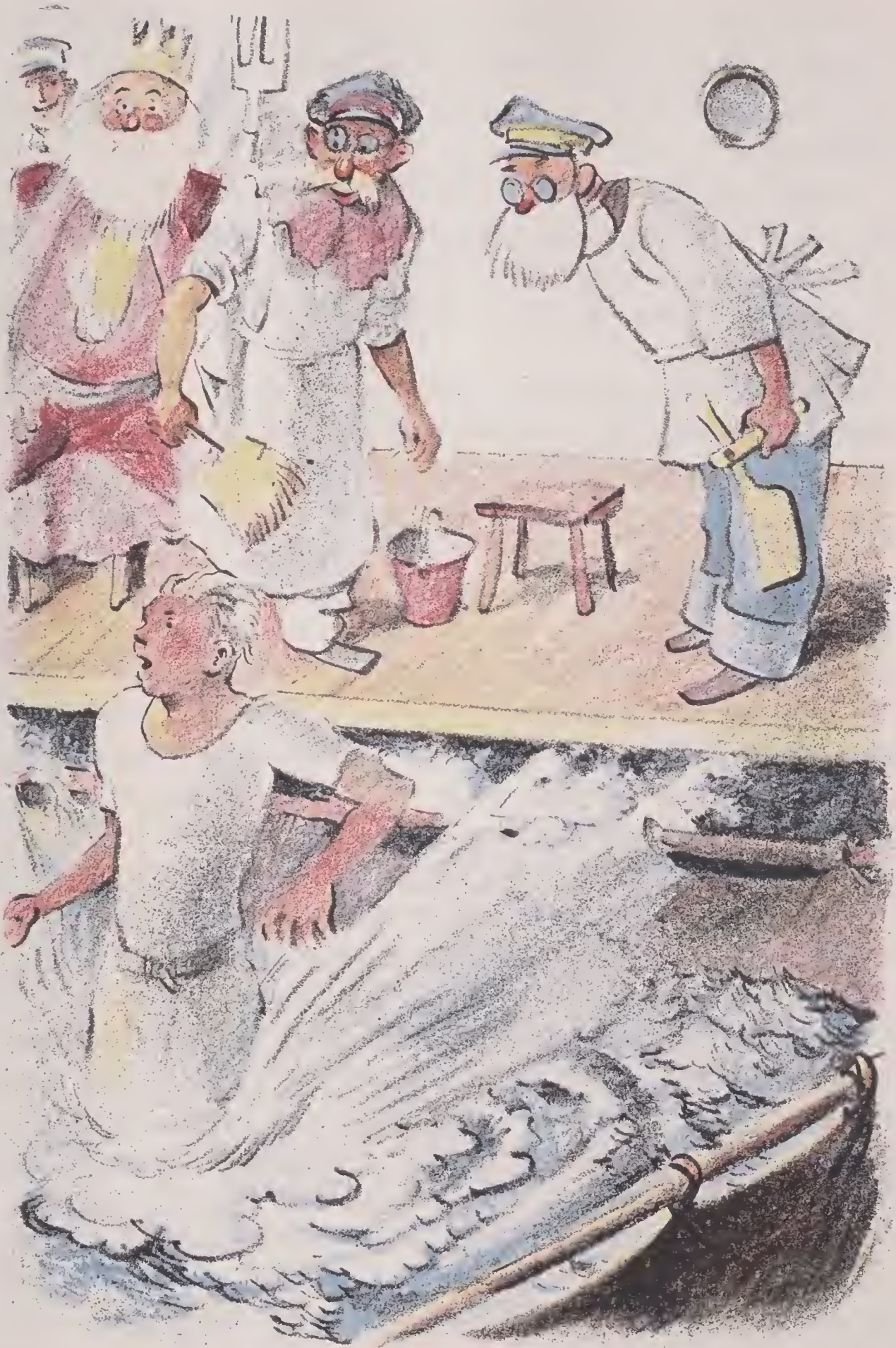
"Sure an' the top of the mornin' to you, darlin's!" she said.

"It's hurry you must with your dressin' now," she said, and she began to lay out clean clothes from the drawers of their trunk while they drank the cold orange juice.

"You'll be after seein' the top of the Sugar Loaf soon now!"

"What do you mean, Mrs. Ryan?" asked Patty. "The top of the Sugar Loaf? Why, that sounds just like a fairy story. I read one once about a peppermint candy tree."

"'Tis no fairy tale at all! It's the Captain himself will be tellin' you so. He sent word you're to go up on the bridge as soon as you're dressed, so he can be the first to show it to you."



The man was tumbled into the swimming tank

Petey stopped staring wide-eyed over his glass, and drank his orange juice down in great gulps. He didn't want to miss anything that sounded as exciting as a sugar loaf that he could see from the ship.

When the children reached the bridge and found the Captain, they were surprised to see land quite close on either side of the ship. The land on one side stood high up out of the water, like a mountain. They couldn't even see the top of it, because it was hidden by mist.

"That is the Sugar Loaf," said Captain Mac. "Soon the sun will drive the mists away and then you can see to the very top."

"Why is it called the Sugar Loaf, Captain Mac?" asked Patty. "It doesn't look a bit like sugar."

"The Brazilians called it the '*Pau de Azucar*' or Sugar Loaf, because it is almost square on top, and its sides go straight up, just like a cube of sugar."

All at once Patty grabbed Petey's shoulder and said, "Oh, Petey, look! Away up there, see the little black spot that's sliding right up through the air from the top of that other mountain to the top of the Sugar Loaf. Do you see it, Petey? What can it be?"

Petey couldn't see the little black spot at all at first, because the sun shining in his eyes blinded him. But at last when Patty stood behind him and took his head between her hands and turned it in just the right direction, he saw it too.

The children were so interested in watching the little black spot sliding slowly up to the top of the Sugar Loaf, that they didn't realize how close in to shore the *American Star* now was. When they looked down once more, there lay the city of Rio de Janeiro. All they seemed to see at first was splashes of bright color. First, the bright blue water had changed to pale green near the beach which was of cream-colored sand. Then came white houses with bright-colored roofs. These were surrounded

by the deep green of waving palm trees. Finally back of all this green was the still deeper green of thick trees and shrubs sloping right up the sides of the mountains.

There were so many things to look at all at once that the children forgot about the little black spot sliding up to the top of the Sugar Loaf. When Patty did remember to look that way again, the little black spot couldn't be seen.

"Oh, Petey," she said, "do you suppose it got to the top, or did it fall down on the way?"

The ship was right up against the dock now, and many men were coming on board as fast as they could. It seemed to Patty that they chattered like the monkeys she had once heard at a circus. She couldn't understand a word they said.

Just then Mrs. Ryan came to get them. Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson were waiting to take them ashore.

They all went to the top of the lower mountain behind the Sugar Loaf. There they got into a little car that was hung onto a big thick wire. Mr. Ferguson called this wire a cable.

Then the little car slid right up the big cable over the tops of the trees, right up to the very top of the Sugar Loaf.

When they got out of the little car on top of the Sugar Loaf, Mr. Ferguson pointed out to them the *American Star* below in the harbor. It was so far away that it looked like a toy boat. But Patty enjoyed most of all discovering that the little black spot was really a cable car.

Back again in the city they went to a little shop where they saw all kinds of beautiful pictures made from the wings of blue butterflies, just like the one Patty owned. When Patty told Mrs. Ferguson about her blue butterfly which her Uncle Nick had sent her, Mrs. Ferguson said, "Probably your Uncle Nick was here in Rio de Janeiro some time, and bought your blue butterfly in this very shop."

Patty couldn't understand what language the people walking



around her were speaking. Then Mr. Ferguson told her that she was hearing the Portuguese language. He also told her that she would hear still another language when she got to Buenos Aires, because there the people spoke Spanish.

They ate dinner at a little restaurant before going back to the *American Star*. Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson had quite a time deciding what they would order to eat. The menu was three times as long as the ones Patty had seen in the dining cars of the trains and on shipboard. It was all printed in Portuguese words.

Finally, a smiling waiter who knew a few words of English helped them out. He brought them a big dish of a delicious mixture of chicken and rice with bits of red and green peppers scattered through it. They were all so hungry and it tasted so good that they didn't care what it might be called.

Patty and Petey were very tired when they got back to their ship. They lay back in deck chairs with Mrs. Ryan between them. They watched the lights of Rio de Janeiro fade away as the ship sailed out of the harbor into the dark sea. When all the other lights had faded away, they could still see one way up high as if



Sugar Loaf

it were on top of a mountain. This light had the shape of a cross, and Patty asked Mrs. Ryan what this last light was.

“It is called the *Redeeming Christ*,” said Mrs. Ryan softly. “It looks like a cross far away like this, but it is really a very large figure of Jesus with His arms outstretched, as if to bless the city below, and the ships in the harbor.”

Two days more, and the ship docked at Santos. Here Patty and Petey were invited to go ashore with Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and their little girl. Santos was very hot, and there was a strong smell in the air, mostly of coffee. Mr. Brown explained that this was because Santos was one of the world’s biggest coffee ports.

There were lots of brown and black people in the city. Patty wondered at their color. Mr. Brown told her that there were a great many Negroes and part Negroes here.

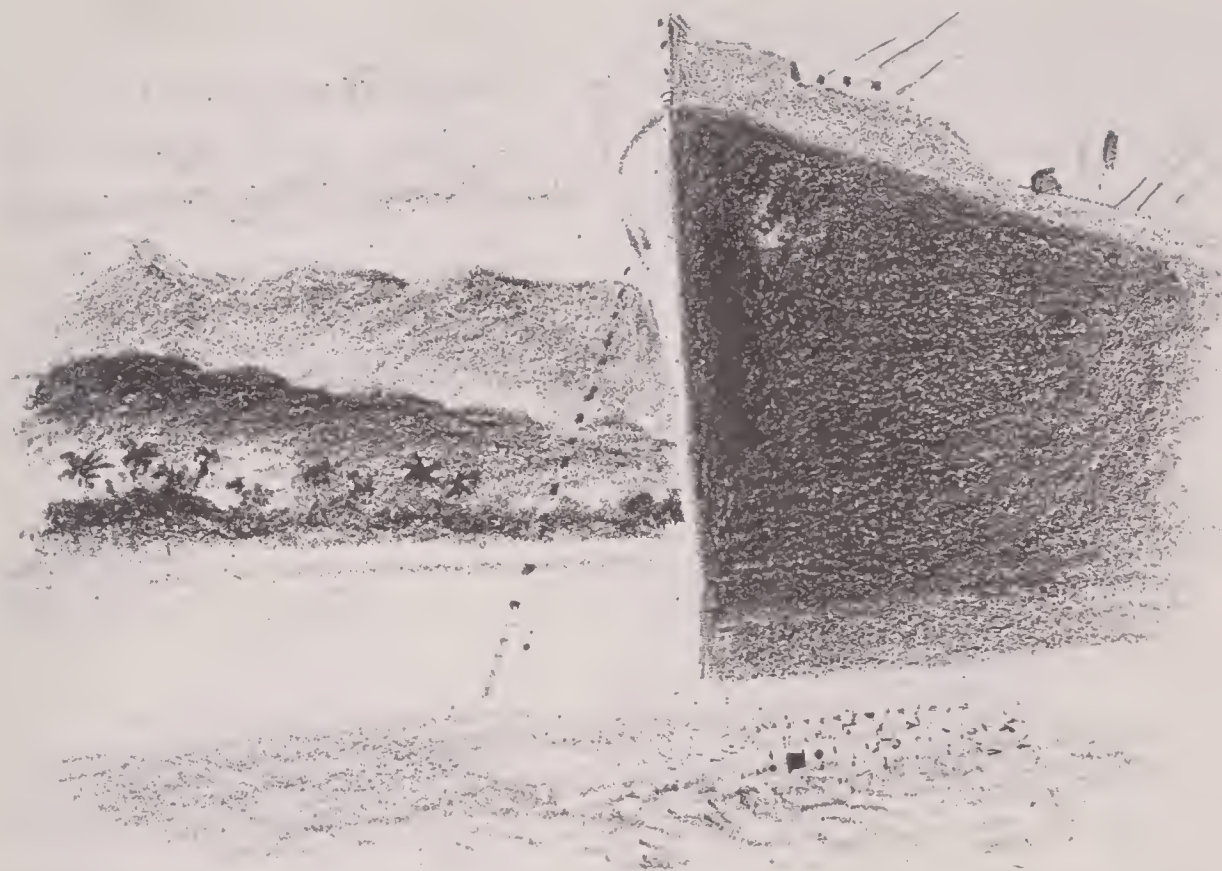
The visitors didn’t stay long in the city of Santos, because it was so hot. Mr. Brown hired a car to drive them up to the city of Sao Paulo, back in the mountains from Santos and where the air would be cooler.

The road up to Sao Paulo was a fine cement road. The car climbed steadily up and around the sharp curves. The road had been built right through tropical woods. Trees, high ferns, and bright-colored wild flowers grew right down to the road. Birds as bright as the flowers flitted through the dark green of the trees.

Here and there little waterfalls running out of the cool ferns splashed down over clean-looking stones at the side of the road. As they drew near one of these waterfalls, Patty cried, “Oh! look at those beautiful blue birds fluttering over the waterfall.”

“Why, those aren’t birds, Patty,” said Mrs. Brown. “Birds don’t flutter like that. Let’s drive slowly so we can see what they are. Did you ever see such a beautiful blue?”

“Why! they are just the blue of my butterfly. They are real butterflies, just like mine in the frame. Oh! the beautiful things!”



ON TO BUENOS AIRES

Patty and Petey and the Browns got back from their trip to Sao Paulo some time before the *American Star* was ready to sail. The ship was delayed a couple of hours because of the great amount of coffee that was waiting to be shipped to Uruguay and the Argentine.

Patty and Petey found much to watch on the busy ship and dock, as the work of loading was finished in a hurry.

There were great storehouses on the dock, where hundreds and hundreds of big bags of coffee had been piled up waiting for the *American Star* to come into port. These bags of coffee were piled onto a big slide leading from the store house to the ship. They slid down very fast, and dropped directly into the hold of the ship.

The first time Patty had seen the *American Star* unloading and loading was at Rio de Janeiro. Captain Mac had told her then that the deep part of the ship, away down under the water, was called the hold. That's an easy name to remember, because it does hold so much, Patty had thought. She had learned too, that goods carried in the hold were called the cargo.

For a while Patty tried to count the bags as they came sliding down. Each bag had the two corners tied into little flaps that looked like ears. Patty told Petey she thought that they looked like fat pigs sliding along on their stomachs, and pushing each other into the hold.

When the last fat coffee bag had slid into the hold, the chattering men who had been helping load them, all pattered down the gangplank in their cloth shoes with soles made of rope. The men wore no socks, and some of them had turned the heel part of the cloth shoes under their feet so their bare brown heels showed. These men who helped load and unload the ship were called stevedores.

When the last stevedore had gone down onto the dock, the gangplanks were pulled up and the *American Star* let out her hoarse whistle that sounded more like a bellow than a whistle. The hatches had been closed—Patty had remembered ever since Rio de Janeiro that the hatches were the lids over the hold which are taken off only when the ship is loading or unloading. All the loading machinery was quiet now. The ship looked tidy again, like a house after housecleaning is finished. She finally moved away from the dock and headed for the open sea.

Many of the passengers had left the boat at Rio de Janeiro, and some at Santos, so the group that was left looked like very few scattered about the big dining room that night.

Patty and Petey ate dinner with Captain Mac as usual. It was quiet and rather lonely in the big dining room without the sound of so many voices and the clatter of silverware and many dishes.



Stevedores loading the AMERICAN STAR

Captain Mac was rather quiet, too. Patty wondered if he missed all the nice people who had left the ship at Rio de Janeiro, or whether he was just tired after seeing about loading the cargo of coffee at Santos.

“Well, Patty, you and Petey will soon be at the end of your long voyage. Are you glad?” Captain Mac asked.

Patty hardly knew what to say. They had become very used to their life on the *American Star*, and very fond of Captain Mac and Mrs. Ryan. Yet Patty knew they couldn't just stay on the ship forever. So she didn't say yes or no, but started telling Captain Mac about the blue butterflies on the way to Sao Paulo.

As he listened, nodding and smiling as if he understood why seeing the blue butterflies meant so much to Patty, she found herself telling him all about her own blue butterfly that Uncle Nick had sent her, and about that morning when it had seemed to lift its wing, back in the dormitory at the Home.

The next day was the only unpleasant one they spent on the whole voyage. A storm came up in the night. Patty awoke to feel something more than a gentle rocking of her bed. Her head would be down and her feet way up; and then the other way round. Then her bed would seem to roll over. When she clutched the little railing at the side, thinking she was about to fall out, the bed would roll back again. She felt as if she were riding a teeter-totter, and a ferris wheel all at the same time.

Instead of the usual gentle breeze coming in at the open portholes, the wind was howling, and the ship groaned, as if she hurt all over. Someone, probably Mrs. Ryan, had closed the portholes in the night, and Patty was rather frightened to see great waves smash up against them now and again. She was rather frightened, too, by all the noise and bluster, and she wished Mrs. Ryan would come quickly with the orange juice this morning.

Petey seemed to be asleep still, though his body rolled back and forth as the ship rolled.

Patty couldn't lie still any longer; so she decided to get up and dress very quietly so as not to disturb Petey. When she started to walk across the cabin, she was surprised to find herself running downhill toward the side where the portholes were. She didn't seem able to stop herself. So she was glad the big sofa was there, under the portholes, for her to take hold of.

Mrs. Ryan came in just as she fell in a little heap on the sofa. She must have looked very funny, because Mrs. Ryan laughed and said, "Sure, an' it's not much of a sailor you are then, falling there in a heap the first time the ship rolls a bit." Patty could laugh now, too, with Mrs. Ryan in the cabin. Mrs. Ryan didn't seem to mind the storm a bit!

When Petey was dressed too, Mrs. Ryan walked with them to the dining room. It was queer walking in the passage, too. One minute they were walking uphill, and the next they were walking downhill again.

When Patty asked Mrs. Ryan why there were so few people in the dining room that morning, she said, "Sure, an' nobody wants breakfast at all, at all, this morning!"

Patty was surprised to hear that most of the grown-ups felt sick because the storm was tossing the ship about so much. The grown-ups were seasick and Mrs. Ryan said that many passengers felt seasick for a few days when a ship first starts out into the ocean, even when there is no storm.

All that day Patty and Petey were not allowed to go out on deck, because it was all wet with spray, and sometimes a big wave washed right over it. They had to stay in the cabin or in the big lounge, which was something like the parlor at the Home, only much larger and much nicer.

When they went in to dinner that night, they were glad to see Captain Mac. He had stayed up on the bridge all day, and they hadn't seen him once. He patted their heads as they sat down beside him, and called them brave sailors. This made them both

very proud, and Patty hoped Mrs. Ryan would never tell Captain Mac about finding her all in a heap on the sofa that morning.

The storm wore itself out by evening, though Patty and Petey were thankful for the little railings at the sides of their beds when they first went to bed.

All during the next day, the sun was shining brightly, the ship was much quieter, and Patty would hardly have known that there had been a storm.

When it was almost dark, they docked at Montevideo. That was a lovely long name, and Captain Mac told the children it meant, "I see the mountain." Patty wondered what mountain, and Captain Mac pointed to a high hill with a round top which he said was called El Cerro. Patty didn't think it was much of a mountain, after seeing the Sugar Loaf and Corcovado where the statue of Jesus was.

The next morning when Patty awakened, she found that the ship was moving again. She and Petey were out on deck very early after breakfast, for today they were to see Buenos Aires and Uncle Nick. Patty was very much surprised to see that the water was no longer blue, nor grey, nor green, nor any color she had seen in the ocean; but a yellowish-brown, and very dirty-looking.

When she had a chance to ask Captain Mac why the color of the water had changed, he told them that they were no longer on the ocean, but were steaming up the Rio de la Plata, or River of Silver.

"The river seems to be as big as the ocean, Captain Mac. You can't see any land anywhere," Patty said.

"No, not yet," answered Captain Mac, "because when it meets the ocean this is one of the widest rivers in the world. It will grow somewhat narrower as we go farther up, but, even at Buenos Aires, it is about fifty-five miles wide, and still looks like the ocean, except for the color of the water."



A storm came up in the night

Patty was rather quiet that day, thinking of leaving Captain Mac and Mrs. Ryan, who had been so good to her and Petey. She had felt even sadder than this at leaving Miss Penny. But everything had worked out all right, and Captain Mac and Mrs. Ryan had done their best to take Miss Penny's place. If they, who were strangers at first, could be so kind to her and Petey, she felt sure that Uncle Nick, who really belonged to her, would be even kinder, so she wasn't going to think about it or feel sad.

She was very busy for a while helping Mrs. Ryan get all her and Petey's clothes back into the trunk and the two suitcases.

When the packing was finally done and she and Petey were freshly dressed and clean, Mrs. Ryan looked them over, giving Petey's rough curls a last brush, and said, "Sure, an' it's as pretty as two flowers you are, for that Uncle Nick of yours. Out on deck with you now, as it's nearer and nearer the big city we're gettin'."

All the other passengers were waiting at the railing, watching the buildings of Buenos Aires grow bigger and bigger, as the ship drew nearer and nearer.

The time seemed very long just standing there, waiting to see Uncle Nick. Patty felt a little shy as she wondered what he would look like, and how she would know him.

The *American Star* drew slowly in, closer and closer. Patty thought she had never seen so many ships together, as there were all around in the harbor.

There were a lot of people standing down there on the dock, just as there had been in New York when they had waved good-bye to Miss Penny.

These people were all waving, too, and they and the people at the railing of the ship began to call back and forth to each other.

Some of them spoke English, but most of them called out in a language that Patty didn't understand. Then she remem-

bered that the people spoke Portuguese in Rio de Janeiro, and that Mr. Ferguson had told her she would hear Spanish in Buenos Aires.

The gangplank was going down now, and the people down on the dock were crowding thickly around it, all wanting to come on board. Patty didn't have a chance to try to pick out Uncle Nick among them.

By this time she was so excited she could hardly stand still. "Oh, Mrs. Ryan, what shall we do? Go down there and find Uncle Nick? Or will he come up here and find us? How will we know which one he is?" Patty kept asking, as she saw people already running up the gangplank.

"Sure now. Don't fret like that, dearie—"

But Patty wasn't listening, nor even looking at Mrs. Ryan any more. She was staring down the long deck to where a very tall man was walking quickly toward them. Patty swallowed hard a time or two, and never took her eyes off the tall man. Somehow, she knew without being told that this was Uncle Nick.

Sure enough! The tall man came right toward them. He too must have known that here were Patty and Petey, even though he had never seen them, for he was smiling and hurrying to get to them.

He was so tall that he had to stoop down to shake hands with Patty, and even farther to shake hands with Petey.

His hand was big and brown and strong, and he gave Patty's hand a hard squeeze. His eyes were deep blue, and as he laughed they wrinkled up at the corners.

Meantime Petey had backed away a little behind Mrs. Ryan's white skirt, and he stood staring out at this big tall stranger. He wasn't sure whether he liked this man or not, until Uncle Nick reached around Mrs. Ryan and pinched his ear very gently.

"Well, Skipper, there is a dog and a pony at home waiting for you. Let's go! What do you say?"

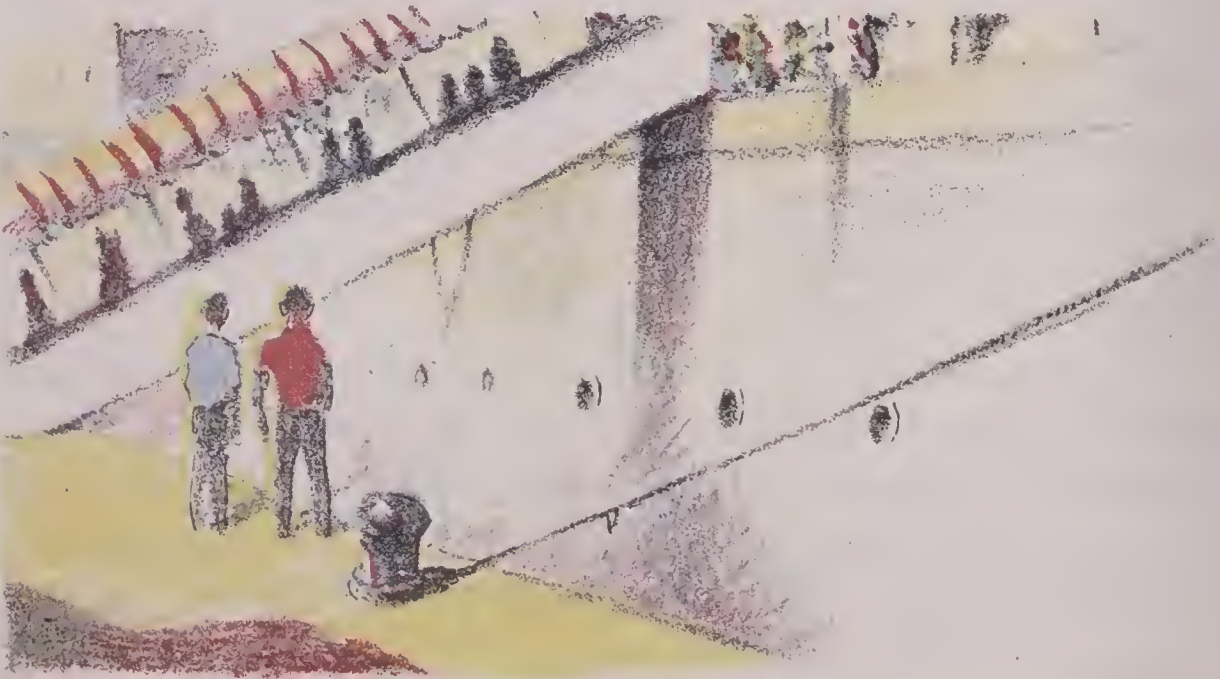
Petey didn't say anything, but he came right out from behind Mrs. Ryan's skirts, and his shining eyes and wide smile told Uncle Nick he was no longer a stranger to the boy.

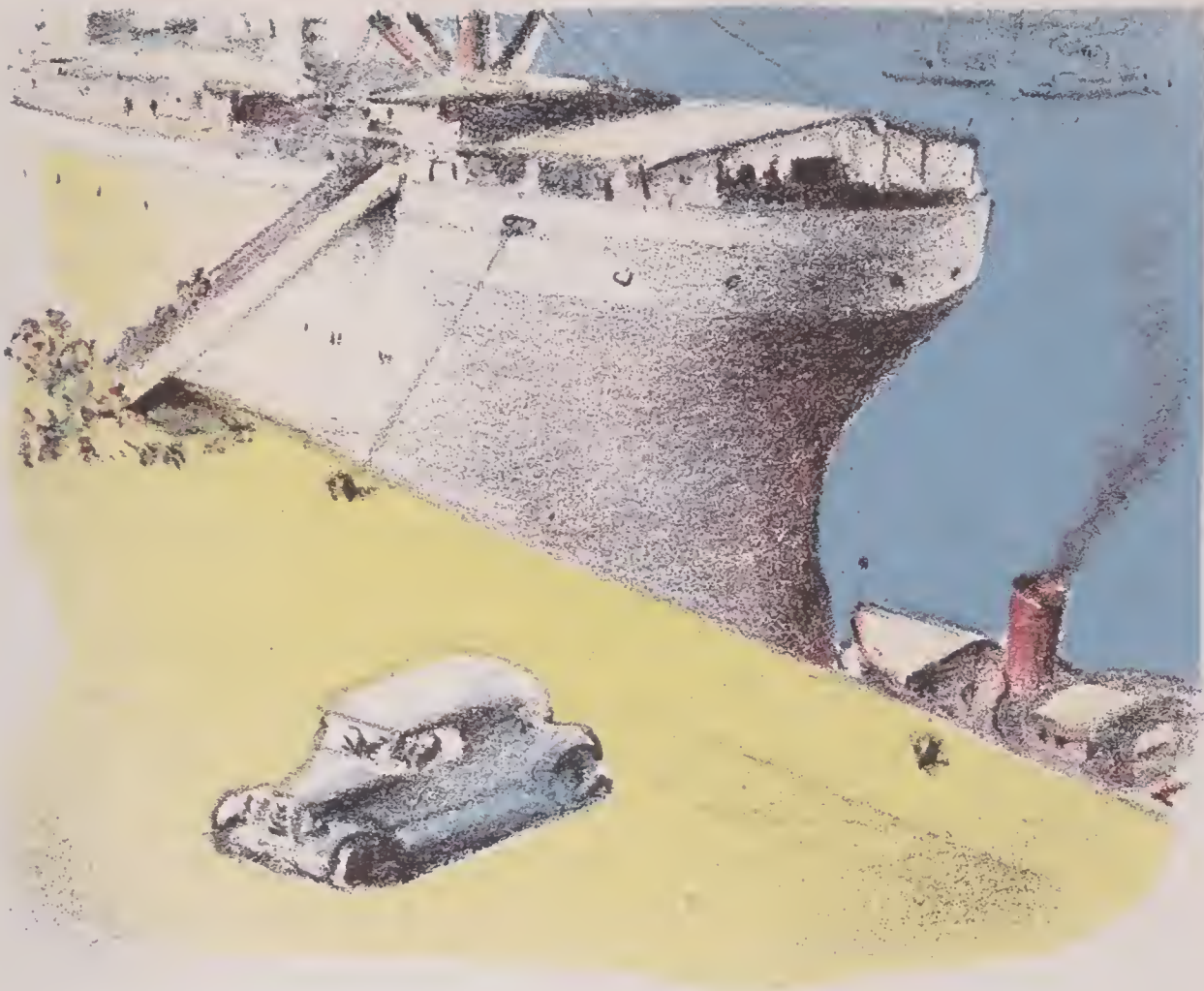
The first thing that Patty knew, they had said good-bye to Captain Mac and Mrs. Ryan. This was a little hard to do. But Uncle Nick made it easier by promising that he would bring them to visit the *American Star* when it came back on another voyage.

And now they were driving through the streets of Buenos Aires. Some of the streets were narrow and there seemed to be even more cars than in Chicago and New York. They were all going very fast, too.

But it was very cozy for all three of them to sit tucked closely together in the front seat, and be driving happily along.

Patty's fingers gently touched the little package she held in her lap. Inside was the blue butterfly which had almost been left on the wall of the cabin in the excitement of getting acquainted with Uncle Nick. But Mrs. Ryan had remembered, and had wrapped it up and put it into Patty's hand at the last minute, just as they were starting down the gangplank.





UNCLE NICK

Uncle Nick's car soon carried them away from the crowd and confusion near the docks, and now they were moving more swiftly along a wide street.

At one side of the wide street were beautiful plazas, green with palm trees and bright with flowers. Here and there between the palms, or rising from the center of some bright bed of flowers, Patty caught glimpses of white statues glistening in the sunlight.

At the other side of the street were strange-looking little shops that opened onto the street and had no doors or windows. Before these little shops were hanging men's clothes and women's bright shawls; pots, pans, and baskets; strings of bologna and

bunches of bananas; birds in cages, festoons of red peppers and white onions, and many other objects that Patty couldn't quite see.

Certainly the plaza side was prettier, and somehow it seemed friendlier when she saw the funnel and masts of a big steamer rising above the feathery fronds of the palm trees. But those little shops with the strange objects and bright colors before them and dark-looking interiors were very interesting to the little North American girl. So Patty turned first to one side and then the other, and for once both she and Petey were too busy just looking to ask questions.

There were a great many cars in the street, all going so fast and sometimes coming so close to each other that Patty—when she had time to notice at all—caught her breath and wondered how they were going to pass by this time.

But Uncle Nick always came through, and kept up his even pace. At the same time he managed to talk to Patty and Petey, and call their attention to interesting things they were passing. Patty was just about to ask Uncle Nick about the little open shops when the car swept around a curve along with all the other hurrying cars and Uncle Nick said, "Look. La Casa Rosada, or the Argentine White House!"

Patty clutched Petey's coat collar and tried to pull him a little higher up so he could see out better. Why, the White House was where the President lived! She was a little puzzled, though, because this President's house was not white at all, but a soft, dull pink. Well, white or pink, a little boy from the United States must not miss his first chance to see where the President of another country lived.

She was glad that Uncle Nick had drawn up to the curb across the street so that they could have a good look. As they looked at the big building, with its many windows and balconies, Uncle Nick explained that the words *casa rosada* really meant

pink house; and that this building was just as much respected and looked up to among the Argentine people as the White House is among the people of the United States.

So Patty and Petey learned their first Spanish words, *casa rosada*—pink house. They learned also one of the simpler rules of Spanish grammar—that the descriptive word follows the name of anything. House White, or House Pink would certainly sound silly in English, but Casa Rosada, as Uncle Nick said it in Spanish, sounded perfectly all right.

They also had their first introduction to the Argentine flag as it waved proudly on the high pole over the main entrance to the Casa Rosada.

“It’s not as pretty as our flag!” said Petey very promptly and loudly after one look. “Why, it’s just plain blue and white, and ours has three colors and a lot of pretty stars in the corner!”

Patty looked quickly at Uncle Nick. She wasn’t quite sure that this was a very polite way for Petey to talk about the Argentine flag. After all, Uncle Nick had lived in Argentina a very long time, and maybe he now thought this strange-looking flag, with the two light blue and white stripes, was prettier than the American Stars and Stripes.

But Uncle Nick patted Petey on the head and didn’t look the least bit offended as he said, “You’re right, Pete, at that. We belong to the United States, and no other flag will ever seem so beautiful as our own. But you’ll learn to love this one second best, just as I do.”

“Some *dia de fiesta* we’ll come and see the Argentine school children salute their flag and hear them sing their national anthem down there in the plaza in front of the Casa Rosada. It will be a sight you’ll never forget, and then you’ll understand better that the Argentines love their flag and country just as we do ours.”

Petey’s quick ears had caught the strange words Uncle Nick



had used, and he could hardly wait until Uncle Nick had finished speaking so that he could ask, "What's——what's that thing you said?"

Uncle Nick laughed at his eager little face and said, "Well, I mustn't expect you two to understand these Spanish words I am so used to saying, but you'll soon learn. *Dia de fiesta*, Pete, that means a day of feast or celebration, or as we call it in English, a holiday, like the Fourth of July or Christmas."

The boy wasn't much impressed by the Casa Rosada, even if it was the Argentine President's house; and one glance at the flag was enough. But what made his eyes grow big with wonder were the tall soldiers who walked slowly back and forth before the doorway.

Uncle Nick had started the car, and they were turning the corner into a wide avenue directly in front of the Casa Rosada. As they started down this avenue, Patty and Petey took a good look back at the Casa Rosada with the beautiful blue and white flag flying over it, and the brightly uniformed soldiers pacing solemnly back and forth at the foot of the broad white marble steps leading up to the doorway.



Brightly uniformed soldiers

Uncle Nick was saying, "This is Avenida de Mayo, or, as they would call it in the States, May Avenue. You will soon be able to see El Congreso, or Congress building at the other end of the avenue. So, youngsters, you are riding down one of the famous streets of the world, with the two most important buildings in this great city of Buenos Aires facing it at either end—La Casa Rosada, which we have behind us now, and El Congreso, which you will soon see facing us, one the official residence of the President and the other the place where Argentine laws are made."

They did not drive as far down as the Congreso now, however, but pulled up at the entrance to a tall building. Patty read the word HOTEL over the door, and said, "Why, Uncle Nick, not all the words here are Spanish!"

Uncle Nick was pleased that Patty noticed everything so quickly, and he explained to her that she would find some words looking just the same as in English, but sounding a little different when pronounced the Spanish way. For instance, the word hotel sounds like o-tel in Spanish, because the h is always silent in Spanish.

A very friendly man came running out to their car and opened the door and said "Good Afternoon" in very good English. The children were surprised and pleased, as they were not expecting to understand anyone except Uncle Nick.

Later, when they were in their rooms upstairs in the hotel, Uncle Nick explained that the hotel doorman, who had spoken to them, not only spoke English and Spanish, but also French, Italian, German, Portuguese, and probably a little Russian, too. He told them that every big hotel in Buenos Aires had such a doorman so he could greet guests of any nationality and help them to get what they wanted in the hotel.

"You see," said Uncle Nick, "every day there are big ships like the *American Star*, and some much larger even, arriving at

Buenos Aires from many different lands. These ships bring all kinds of people who speak all kinds of languages; and they are always glad to find someone at the hotel door who can greet them in their own language.”

Instead of windows in the room there were long double doors that opened onto a small balcony overlooking the busy street and a small plaza across from the hotel. Uncle Nick opened the long doors and told the children they might stand on the balcony and look down into the street and across into the little plaza. This would give them something interesting to do until he returned from putting away the car.

Patty took Petey by the hand and together they stepped out onto the little balcony and just stood still, holding hands and looking all about them. To stand on a high balcony overlooking a strange busy street in a strange big city was quite an adventure for them.

First, they were rather surprised to find how high up they were. The little balcony seemed to shove them out into space, and they looked up first at the blue, blue sky and were rather pleased that it at least looked familiar—quite like the blue of the sky over the Home on a summer afternoon.

Then they looked down at the streams of traffic flowing by in the street below, and across the street at the little plaza. There were tall palm trees with their long fronds moving lazily in the gentle breeze. As the fronds swayed this way and that, they cast lacy shadows on the gravelled paths that ran between bright flower beds.

Each flower bed was a perfect picture in itself—one round, one like a diamond, one like a star, and one long one with a sunken pool of water shimmering in its center. Some of the beds were one solid flaming color. Others had the varied greens of tropical foliage and the vivid colors of flowers woven into delicate patterns.

There were children playing along the gravelled paths, and grown-ups sitting on the shaded benches here and there. Patty wondered if Uncle Nick would let her and Petey play in the plaza.

Soon Petey was restless, for he had stood still about as long as he could.

But Patty wasn't ready to leave the balcony yet. There were strange noises floating up to her quick ears that she would like to try to find out about. There were strange smells, too—some of them lovely perfumes from the flowers in the little plaza, some of them not so pleasant, but all new, that made her sensitive little nose sniff a little like a curious young puppy's.

She was just turning to go in and get him the drink, when voices called her attention to the next little balcony.

A lovely dark-haired woman was standing there, holding the most adorable baby in her arms! The baby was fat and roly-poly, and had bright black eyes and curly black hair like his mother's. Patty couldn't help lingering a minute to look at him.

When the woman saw Patty looking at the baby, she smiled a very friendly smile and said something very polite to Patty and Petey. Patty couldn't understand the strange soft words, but she knew by the woman's smile and tone of voice that she was speaking to her and Petey as if they were friends.

Now, Patty was a friendly little soul. Besides, she had been taught to speak politely to people when she was spoken to. But now she could only smile and stand there, a very red-faced, embarrassed little girl. How could she answer when she didn't understand what had been said to her, and hardly knew a single word of Spanish to say?

As she turned back into the room in silence, Patty was sure she wanted to learn Spanish right away.

When Uncle Nick came back she told him of her experience with the woman on the next balcony.



Patty wasn't ready to leave the little balcony yet

Uncle Nick laughed at her and pinched her cheek and said, "We'll soon fix that up!" So Uncle Nick took time to teach Patty and Petey how to say *buenos dias*—good morning; and *buenas tardes*—good afternoon; and *buenas noches*—good evening or good night; also *Señora* for Mrs. or Madam and *Señor* for Mr., and *Señorita* for Miss.

He also explained some interesting things about the use of these greetings. One strange thing was that she and Petey must remember to say *buenas tardes*, or good afternoon up to dinner time. After dinner they must say *buenas noches*, or good evening. As the Argentines dine very late—eight o'clock or even later—that meant she had to keep on saying good afternoon until it was dark, and sometimes until quite late.

Patty had found it a little hard to get used to dinner at night while on board ship, since the evening meal had always been called supper at the Home. She thought now it would be still harder to get used to waiting until eight o'clock for something to eat and to remember to keep on saying *buenas tardes* when it was really night.

Buenas noches was interesting, too, because it meant two different things—good evening when she was just greeting someone she met or went to see after dinner, goodnight when she was going to bed or not expecting to see someone any more that night.

After this first Spanish lesson, Uncle Nick looked at his watch and said, "Well, it's going to be quite a while to wait until eight o'clock for something to eat, if you are as hungry as I am after that Spanish lesson. So let's go out for tea."

"Tea!" Patty and Petey said together, very much surprised. "We don't drink tea!" Petey added, "Miss Penny says tea and coffee aren't good for children."

But Uncle Nick took them to a very pretty tearoom where there was music. There were flowers on the tables too, and ever

so many people all sitting at the little tables drinking tea and nibbling sandwiches and little sweet cakes and pastries. Uncle Nick filled their cups with milk, and then put in just a little bit of tea from his own teapot.

They had very thin toasted sandwiches with melted cheese inside, and tiny little biscuits that Uncle Nick called scones, and strawberry jam. Patty tried to find time between bites to ask Uncle Nick why he called the little biscuits scones, but there didn't seem to be time, and it didn't really matter, anyway, they were so good!

Uncle Nick made an odd hissing sound between his teeth and motioned for the waiter standing nearby to come to their table. The waiter brought a large silver tray loaded with the fanciest, daintiest little cakes Patty and Petey had ever seen. He was holding out the tray toward the children.

The cakes looked so good that Patty couldn't really decide. So she said, "You choose, please, Uncle Nick!" Right away the waiter very daintily lifted the cakes Uncle Nick indicated, with large silver tongs. He laid them on the children's plates.

As they walked back to the hotel after tea, Patty and Petey agreed with Uncle Nick that afternoon tea was a very nice custom, especially in a country where no one had dinner until eight.

Uncle Nick explained that the many English people who live in Argentina had brought their custom of afternoon tea with them, as they also had their scones. So Patty found out, after all, why Uncle Nick called the little biscuits scones.

"Did they bring the pretty little cakes, too?" asked Petey.

"Well, Pete," said Uncle Nick, "I think the French probably brought the little cakes and pastries. There are many French people in the Argentine, too, and they are very expert with fancy cakes and pastries."

"There seem to be lots of different kinds of people living here, aren't there, Uncle Nick?" asked Patty.

“Oh, yes,” answered Uncle Nick. “There are people of nearly all nationalities in Argentina. There are many Germans, Italians, Irish, and Scotch, as well as English and French, and other nationalities too, whose names you would not remember so easily as these we have just mentioned.”

That evening they met the pretty woman Patty had seen on the balcony, in the hall. Uncle Nick happened to know her. He introduced the children to her, and so gave them their first chance to speak Spanish.

No one could have been prouder than Patty, as she shook hands with her pretty neighbor and said after a moment's hesitation, “*Buenas tardes, Señora!*”

Even Petey, overcome with shyness, yet always determined to do whatever Patty did, stumbled through the strange new words.

And so a new life and a new language began for Patty and Petey.





GETTING ACQUAINTED

That night before going to bed, the children had a long talk with Uncle Nick and as he said, really had a chance to get acquainted. Uncle Nick lived in the country, or in the camp as he kept calling it until Patty asked him to explain.

“Oh, camp,” said Uncle Nick. “Well, you see, the Spanish word for the country as distinguished from the city is *el campo*. English speaking people living in the Argentine have just adopted the word and shortened it for their own convenience. So you hear them all talking about the camp when they mean the country.”

Many times during their long talk, Patty had to stop Uncle Nick and ask about strange words he used. She had never thought before how interesting words were! She felt that she was playing a game, listening and listening and not knowing what minute a new word would pop out of Uncle Nick's mouth.

Some of them were great fun to say—such as *ferrocarril*, meaning railway. Uncle Nick tried to tell Patty and Petey how to roll their double r's, Spanish fashion, but they weren't able to imitate him at all, until he asked if they knew how to trill. Then both children understood, and started to practice.

The *estancia*, or ranch, where Uncle Nick lived had a beautiful name—Tres Lagos, Three Lakes.

Patty, who had hardly been outside the small grounds about the Home before starting for South America, opened her eyes very wide as she tried to imagine a place large enough to have three lakes.

But she couldn't help interrupting Uncle Nick, even though she knew it wasn't very polite, to ask, "Uncle Nick, are there really three lakes?"

Uncle Nick, seeing that Patty's interest was centered on the lakes, stopped what he was talking about to tell her all about the three lakes that were really there.

"One is called Lago Chico because it is the smallest. One is called Lago Grande because it is the largest, and the third one has a special name. It is called Lago de los Patos because, as it is away by itself in a very quiet place, the wild ducks choose this lake for a resting place when they are making long flights in the spring or fall."

Petey hadn't paid much attention to what Uncle Nick was saying. He was very tired, and the new words sounded very strange. But he found that he was very interested when he heard Uncle Nick use the word cowboy. He was truly excited at the thought of living where there would be real cowboys, but

he wouldn't try to say the strange Spanish word *gaucho*, meaning cowboy. He only grinned and shook his head when Patty coaxed him to try. But after he was in bed and Patty had gone back to talk some more with Uncle Nick, he tried to remember the strange word and felt very cross when he couldn't seem to say it as Uncle Nick did.

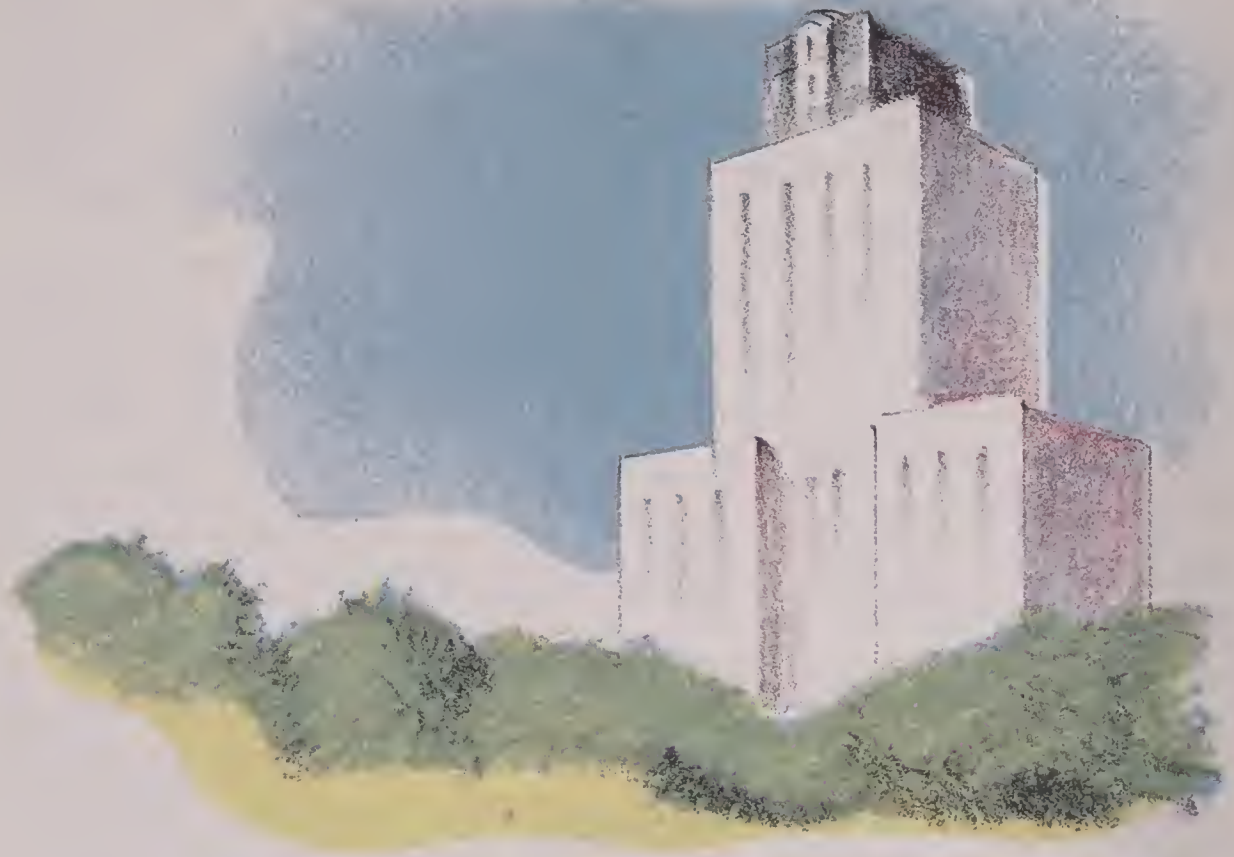
Uncle Nick talked on and on to Patty, telling her of life at Tres Lagos and of Mercedes, the fat, good-natured cook; of Maria, the jolly little maid who would look after Patty and Petey; of Pedro, who took care of the horses and who would teach Patty and Petey to ride; of Blanca, the white bulldog and her two fat puppies who were waiting to be named by Patty and Petey.

He told her especially of Chin-Chin, the green parrot who lived in a cage hung in the *patio* or courtyard just outside the kitchen door, and who called out loudly, "Be a good boy, now!" every time he heard the whir of an egg beater or the sizzle of frying meat. Uncle Nick explained that Chin-Chin understood that these words had something to do with food, because the English family who raised him always said "Be a good boy, now!" when they gave him something which he liked very much to eat, such as squash seed or the inside of a green pepper. He knew also that the cook often tossed him a tidbit from the kitchen when she was cooking.

Uncle Nick looked at his watch, and then got up and ruffled Patty's hair gently as he said, "Well, I guess we both ought to get to bed if we are to see something of Buenos Aires tomorrow before we go home to Tres Lagos."

Ever since coming from the ship, Patty's blue butterfly had lain on the bed wrapped up just as Mrs. Ryan had given it to her as she came down the gangplank.

When Patty first got into her strange bed beside Petey's and Uncle Nick had opened the long doors to the little balcony, the



sounds coming up from the city street below made her feel like a very little girl in a very big, strange world. It was comforting though, to see the bright line of light beneath the door of Uncle Nick's room; and to see the soft shimmer of the blue butterfly in the mixture of moonlight and street light that came through the long doors.

Now it was morning, and all the sounds from the city seemed louder than ever before as Patty sat up to answer Uncle Nick, calling at the door.

"Wake up, sleepyheads! The sun is up long ago, and the whole city of Buenos Aires is waiting just for the three of us."

By the time Patty and Petey were dressed, they were feeling very hungry and Patty wondered about breakfast. She didn't have long to wonder, because, when they opened the door into Uncle Nick's room, there was a large tray sitting on the table. Uncle Nick sat beside it, reading a newspaper.



Now it was morning

He put the paper down and pulled two chairs up to the table for Patty and Petey. Patty thought this a queer kind of breakfast. She saw only large cups, a plate of hard-looking rolls, and another plate with several little pats of rather pale butter on it; a coffee pot and a large pitcher of what looked like hot milk. Where were the fruit and cereal and eggs people in the United States usually had for breakfast? Why were they going to eat in the bedroom?

Seeing the puzzled look on Patty's face and the downright cross one on Petey's, Uncle Nick said, "Well, youngsters, you might as well get used to it first as last. We Argentines don't eat breakfast as you are accustomed to it. We have *café con leche*, or coffee with milk, and that's all until later in the day. I suppose you will be wanting fruit. Well, nip into this hot milk and bread and butter, and we'll buy some tangerines or oranges when we go out."

As Uncle Nick talked, he poured hot milk from the big pitcher into two of the cups, and set them before Patty and Petey. He cracked open one of the hard-looking rolls, spread it with the pale looking butter, and handed it to Petey, at the same time inviting Patty to help herself.

Petey, being really hungry, had picked up the crusty roll and set his sharp teeth into it, biting through the outer crust and the butter down into the white, moist heart of the roll. He began to chew and to watch Uncle Nick's movements with the coffee pot.

Looking over the edge of his cup, he swallowed a big gulp of the hot milk after the first bite of roll. Both tasted so much better than he had expected, that he went right on eating and drinking.

Patty had tried it too, and found it very satisfying. The inside of the roll was so soft and fresh! The pale butter tasted a little queer at first, and she didn't know why until Uncle Nick asked her how she liked the unsalted butter. She had to admit

that she didn't like it so very well. But she felt better about it when Uncle Nick told her he hadn't liked it either at first, but he was sure Patty would learn to like it very much, just as he had. At any rate, he told her, she must try to like it as all butter here in the Argentine would be unsalted.





MORNING IN BUENOS AIRES

This strange breakfast was the beginning of a very strange day for Patty and Petey, as they set out with Uncle Nick to take a walk and see Buenos Aires.

As the three walked along through the crowded streets to a big market, Patty noticed and asked about many things. The first thing she asked about was why some of the streets were so narrow. Uncle Nick explained that some of the streets along which they were walking were very old. The streets were narrow at first, because the people of the city had no idea that some day Buenos Aires would grow to be one of the largest cities in the world.

Patty wanted to stop at every corner to look with delight at the flower stands which held rows and rows of brilliantly colored fragrant flowers. Patty had only once seen anything like it—once she had gone into a florist's shop with Miss Penny. She gasped with delight when Uncle Nick bought a bunch of violets and put them into her hands.



A little green parrot that looked like Chin-Chin

In the market itself there were rows and rows of all kinds of vegetables and fruit. They were almost as pretty as the flowers, they were so carefully arranged and showed so many vivid colors.

There were whole pigs and young cattle, and long strings of sausages hanging in the meat stalls. There were cages and cages of live chickens that Uncle Nick told her would all be sold before night.

All at once Patty discovered a huge mass of flowers. Great jars and baskets full rested on a shelf so low that Patty and Petey could just walk slowly along and whiff in big breaths of the different perfumes.

“Let’s go and see the birds now,” said Uncle Nick, taking Petey by the hand and starting down the long aisle at the side of the big market building.

Soon they were drawing near to the corner where an old man was selling caged birds. Such a singing and trilling and whistling and chattering and screeching the children had never heard. It was almost useless to try to talk. Uncle Nick had to stoop far down and get close to their ears as he pointed out a little green parrot that he said looked just like Chin-Chin.

In one group were dozens of canaries all shades of yellow. Some had green markings, and each seemed to be trying to out-sing the other. Big brilliant-colored macaws sat chained to rods. Occasionally they opened their sharp curved beaks and let out such screeches that Patty and Petey both covered their ears. Little blue and soft gray love birds sat in pairs very close together and very quiet, as if too shy or frightened to move.

There seemed to be almost as many different kinds of birds as there were flowers, and their colors were quite as brilliant and varied. In her own mind Patty decided she liked the flowers the best. The noise of the birds was just a little too much, except, of course, for the pretty love birds which were gentle and quiet.

The children and Uncle Nick walked several blocks when

they left the market, and crossed a lovely plaza, very like the one across from their hotel, but larger. Facing one end of this plaza there was a tall handsome hotel bright with striped awnings and luxurious flower boxes.

Uncle Nick pointed to it and said, "There is the Hotel Plaza, one of the finest and most luxurious in Buenos Aires. All the famous people who visit Buenos Aires stay there. Princes and ambassadors, famous singers and dancers from many lands have passed through its doors."

Leaving the plaza and the fine hotel and the business streets, they walked on down a street where there were many private homes. Some of the houses were large and very grand looking, and others were quite small and plain. They all looked strange to Patty and Petey.

She noticed that the doors opened right off the sidewalk, and the windows all had little balconies overlooking the street. "Don't any of these people have yards, Uncle Nick?" asked Patty. "I think I like the houses in the United States better, where there is a yard, and maybe a tree and some grass and flowers between the house and the street. There doesn't seem to be any place for children to play here. Don't they get tired of being shut up in houses like that all the time?"

"Look through this door, Patty," said Uncle Nick, stopping in front of an open door.

Ahead of her Patty saw a long narrow passageway. Then she understood why it wasn't so necessary for the front door to be closed. At the other end of the passage she saw double doors. These were closed, but had glass panels so that Patty could see beyond still farther. What she saw was the *patio*, which takes the place of a yard in many Argentine houses. It is really a room in the center of the house or running along one side. It has no covering, but lies open to the sky.

This *patio* had lots of pretty green plants growing in pots

and there were comfortable-looking wicker chairs with bright cushions here and there. "What does the family do when it rains?" Patty asked, as they walked on.

Uncle Nick explained that some *patios* have movable glass skylights over them. These can be drawn across by turning a crank in the wall whenever it rains or the sun gets too hot. If it is too hot an awning can be stretched across on wires right under the skylight. This shuts out the sun, making the *patio* cool and semi-dark.

"You see, Patty, many houses have no yards, but they do have *patios*. The *patio* is usually the living center for an Argentine family. Being able to shut out the hot sun and easily wash down the cool, tiled floor, the family finds it the coolest place in summer. It is especially pleasant on a summer night to slide back the skylight and leave the *patio* open to the moon and stars and cool breezes. Then in winter, the sun flooding through the skylight makes the *patio* the warmest, most comfortable place in the house during the day. The houses are generally not heated all over as they are in the United States. The Argentine people feel the winter here is not cold enough to make heating necessary, so many houses do not have any provision for heat at all, not even a chimney."

"Won't we have any fire in the winter, Uncle Nick?" asked Petey. "Doesn't it really get cold? Won't there ever be any snow to play in?"

"You needn't worry, Pete. We are going to keep warm in the winter. It gets pretty cold and damp, but doesn't snow or freeze. The newer homes and buildings now have heating arrangements, as the Argentines are learning that it is pleasant to be comfortably warm in winter at least part of the time. Some of them, however, still have an old-fashioned idea that artificial heat is bad for the health."

While Uncle Nick had been explaining all about Argentine



What she saw was the patio

houses, he and the children had walked on quite a distance. They were now passing a building separated from the sidewalk by a wall with a rough wooden door standing open. Patty clutched Uncle Nick's sleeve and pointed through the door.

"Look, Uncle Nick. In there! Isn't that a cow's tail switching around? What kind of house is that? Why, there are people in there, too! Do cows and people live together?"

"Well, almost, in some cases," laughed Uncle Nick. "This is a *tambo*, Patty. These people own a cow or two and make their living by selling the fresh milk to people living nearby. The cows have their stalls at one side of that open courtyard, and at the other side or at the back are the rooms for the family. People who have little children and want to be sure of getting fresh milk bring their own milk cans and have the *tambo* owner milk right into them. It used to be quite a common sight to see a man go from house to house driving a cow and milking right in front of the door for each customer. However, there are now big companies that buy up and pasteurize the milk and deliver it in bottles, just as you have seen it delivered in the United States. So the cow, driven from door to door is seldom seen any more, and there are fewer and fewer *tambos*. The *tambo* is an odd and interesting feature of the old Buenos Aires that is fast disappearing. But I'm sure the babies are healthier and happier with pasteurized milk from sterilized bottles."

Petey, who had trotted along quite patiently, not knowing half the time what Uncle Nick and Patty were talking about, was growing very tired. His fat little legs ached. He really hadn't enjoyed much of anything except the flowers and the birds in the market. He was very tired of being pushed and jostled by the crowds of people in the narrow streets.

"I'm hungry and my legs ache!" he declared loudly.

"I'm sure you are hungry, Pete!" said Uncle Nick. "We've walked much farther than I realized." He held out his hand and

signalled one of the many taxicabs moving slowly along the street. It took them back to the hotel in very short order.

Patty was much too tired to talk as they rode back in the taxi, though there were all sorts of questions in her mind about things they had seen during their morning. For a little girl, she had seen a good deal of a very big city, and she felt she needed time to think it over. Besides, it was very comfortable just to lean back on the soft cushions as the taxi rolled along.





AFTERNOON

When they went into the hotel dining room for their noon-day meal, Uncle Nick said, "We'll be real Argentines today and have *puchero*, which is the regular midday fare in most Argentine families."

First the waiter brought them soup. This soup was made of the broth in which the meat and vegetables for the *puchero* had been cooked. It had in it what looked like spaghetti, but much finer than any Patty had ever seen—as fine as thread. Uncle Nick explained that it really was a kind of spaghetti, but because of its thread-like fineness it had a very special name—*cabello de angel*, angel's hair. This seemed a very funny name for anything found in soup. Petey looked at it rather doubtfully, and all Patty could think of was the fluffy angel's hair they used to decorate the Christmas tree with at the Home.



First the waiter brought them soup

The children watched with interest while Uncle Nick sprinkled a pale, finely grated cheese into his soup. Uncle Nick offered to put some in their soup too, but they both said, "No, thank you." They were not sure they would like it.

After the soup came the *puchero*. A whole platter of boiled chicken and vegetables was placed before Uncle Nick. Patty thought she had never seen so many vegetables together. There were white potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, onions, chunks of yellow squash with the hard green peeling left on to hold it together, small kernels of corn, long whole string beans, wedges of cabbage, and a few odd-looking, hard yellow beans called *garbanzos*. To give the dish color and flavor, two or three deep red, highly seasoned Spanish sausages were added.

Uncle Nick served the children each a nice slice of the tender white meat and made a border all around the meat with tiny portions of the different vegetables. He didn't offer them any of the sausages, because he knew that North American boys and girls probably wouldn't care much for the flavor of garlic.

While they were eating the *puchero*, Uncle Nick explained how it is made with different kinds of meat, according to the taste of the family, or according to the money they had to spend for meat. But always it is made in the same way—meat and a variety of vegetables boiled together.

After the hearty *puchero* they felt almost too full for dessert. But Uncle Nick said they must top off this Argentine meal with a real Argentine dessert. So the waiter brought a tray with several different kinds of cheese in small slices. Between the slices of cheese were little slices of a very thick sweet jam paste. It was so thick it could be sliced with a knife, and eaten with a fork.

Patty and Petey didn't care much for the cheese which was rather sharp. But they thought that the *dulce de membrillo*, quince sweet, was delicious—almost like candy, and with a fresh, fruity flavor.

When they had finished eating, Uncle Nick thought they ought to go up to their room and rest. He explained how it is customary in the tropics for everyone who can, to take a *siesta*—a sleep or rest—after the noon meal.

“We’re not tired now, Uncle Nick! Please, let’s not go up to the room! There are so many things to see!” begged Patty.

“Well, I’ll tell you! Let’s go across the street to the plaza and sit in the shade a while. We can rest there,” said Uncle Nick.

“Oh, goody!” said Patty. She had been thinking about the little plaza off and on all morning, and had intended to ask Uncle Nick if they might go over some time.

Petey and Uncle Nick sat together on a bench; and Patty trotted here and there between the flower beds and saw close up all the lovely colors and shapes she had seen yesterday from the little balcony of the hotel.

Patty had satisfied her curiosity about many things in the little plaza, and soon was content to sit quietly by Uncle Nick and watch the cars flashing by in the street at either side of the plaza and the people walking through the plaza on the gravelled paths.

All the busy city noises seemed rather hushed and far away. Patty wondered if Uncle Nick would mind if she laid her head against his other shoulder. But just then some children came into the plaza near them. They drew a diagram in the pebbles of the path with a stick, and began to play some sort of game.

Patty was wide awake at once. She listened to their high-pitched, excited voices, and watched their quick, light movements, trying to make out what sort of game they were playing.

As she watched them, a feeling of loneliness came over Patty. She wished she could join them in their play and understand what they were saying.

“Uncle Nick,” she said, quite suddenly, “are there any children at *Tres Lagos*?”

“Sure thing, Patty,” Uncle Nick answered. “There are Ele-



nita, the cook's little girl, and Juancito, the foreman's little boy; and then over at the next *estancia* are two little Scotch girls, Heather and Sheila McTavish. You and Petey will be chattering Spanish and playing games with Elenita and Juancito in no time. And you will go to school here in the city with the McTavish girls when the time comes. Just think what fun you'll have together, then!" finished Uncle Nick, laying his hand gently on Patty's curls. Uncle Nick was a grown-up, to be sure. But he understood something of the loneliness Patty and Petey were going to feel at times, until they became accustomed to their new home and made some friends among children.

"When will we go to school, Uncle Nick? Right away? And where?"



A Gaucho at work

“Well, not right away, Patty. You see, the school year is almost over here now. You remember it was fall when you left the States, but you find it spring here. Just as the seasons are reversed, so the school months are different. School begins in March here and ends in November. So the summer vacation covers the three hottest months, just as it does in the States. But here the three hottest months are December, January, and February, instead of June, July, and August. As it is now the first week in November, school will be over for this year in just a few weeks. So you will have a long vacation, and a chance to get acquainted with your new home and to learn a little Spanish. Then you’ll be ready to start to school in March.”

“Why, Uncle Nick, will it be hot on Christmas Day? That comes in December.”

“Yes, Patty, it will be hot, and you’ll probably celebrate Christmas and New Year by going swimming. Won’t that be fun?”

Then he got up and suggested that they get the car and go for a long ride. Patty took Uncle Nick’s hand and trotted along beside him with her mind very busy about many things. She felt eager to meet the new friends and schoolmates. But she was bewildered over a country where school began in March and where she could go swimming on Christmas Day.

At the big zoo Uncle Nick and the children laughed delightedly at the antics of the monkeys who kept begging for peanuts and more peanuts, and seemed to understand English just as well as Spanish. In another part of the zoo two kangaroos were fighting. From the pocket of one of them a baby popped out its head now and again to see how its mother was getting along. But it always managed to pop it back in time to keep out of reach of the other kangaroo’s blows.

There was a short visit to the children’s playground, where Patty and Petey longed to break away from Uncle Nick’s hands

and ride on the swing, merry-go-round, or teeter-totter. But they felt too afraid that someone might speak to them, and that they would not understand or be able to answer.

They walked through the rose garden that seemed like fairyland, with its masses of roses of every color. There were white pergolas with red roses clambering over them. There were stately white swans floating on the surface of a little lake, and reaching their long graceful necks up to the edge of the pergola in the hope of being tossed something to eat. Three peacocks walked across the grass, and Patty and Petey stared wide-eyed while the largest one spread his long tail feathers into a gorgeous fan, and strutted up and down before them.

By this time the children had driven so far and walked so much and seen so many things, that both of them were suddenly quite tired and hungry.

Patty remembered about the tea the afternoon before, and secretly hoped Uncle Nick would want tea this afternoon. She and Petey were both well pleased when Uncle Nick drew up in front of a little open-air restaurant.

It was not so elaborate a tea as they had had yesterday in the city tea shop. But there was plenty of good bread and butter and jam, and big cups of hot milk with just a little bit of tea that Uncle Nick called pink tea. This really was more fun than yesterday's tea party, for they were sitting out in the open, eating bread and jam and watching all the cars pass by.

Patty and Petey were quite willing to go to bed very early that night. Uncle Nick insisted they must, since they had taken no rest in the afternoon, and must be up bright and early the next morning to start the long drive home to Tres Lagos.

Early the next morning they said good-bye to the hotel doorman, whom they would never forget because of all the different languages he could speak.

As they had made such an early start, the streets were not very

crowded. Uncle Nick's car flew along swiftly, out through some of the suburbs they had passed yesterday; then through smaller towns farther apart. Everywhere they saw the Argentine children going to school or grouped about the doorways of school buildings. They looked fresh and clean in their white cover-alls. These were pleated aprons for the girls, for the boys, straight white coats.

When Patty asked Uncle Nick why all the children were dressed alike, he explained that uniform dress is required in all the Argentine schools.

They slowed up a few minutes in one little town to hear a group of children singing the Argentine national anthem. The children were drawn up in rows in the tiny plaza. Each little girl wore a big pale blue bow in her hair, and each little boy had a pale blue bow for a necktie. With their white cover-alls and their blue bows, they honored the colors of their flag.

And how they sang! Without accompaniment or direction, their young voices carried along the glorious strains of their country's anthem.

"Uncle Nick," she asked suddenly, "do all the little girls have blue bows?"

When at last they were really out in the country, or *el campo*, as they must learn to call it, Patty thought she had never seen so much space anywhere except on the ocean. There were few houses, and the land was so level, and they could see so far that the telephone posts seemed to grow shorter and shorter and disappear altogether on the horizon.

When they had ridden a long time through this vast silent space, Petey fell asleep against Patty's shoulder. Patty's eyes ached a little from watching the telephone posts that seemed to march ahead of them and disappear over the far horizon. She was finding it hard too, to keep track of all the things Uncle Nick was telling her about the life at Tres Lagos.



There were few houses and the land was so level

By this time it was nearly noon, and the day had grown quite hot. This noonday heat and the steady hum of the motor added to Patty's drowsiness. She looked longingly at Uncle Nick's shoulder. If she were to lean against him just a little, then maybe Petey wouldn't feel so heavy against her. But she mustn't be a baby!

All Patty's good resolutions to keep awake could not keep her head from falling forward with a jerk that attracted Uncle Nick's attention. He pulled out to the side of the road and stopped. Then he gave each of the children a drink of cool water from his thermos jug; and after the drink a large piece of chocolate to eat. He suggested, too, that they get out of the car and stretch their legs for a few minutes.

While they were munching their chocolate and moving about in the hot sun, Patty noticed that what had seemed to be a black speck on the horizon for a long time was coming nearer and nearer. Then she could see two men on horseback.

When the men came up beside the car, they stopped and exchanged greetings with Uncle Nick.

Petey stopped chewing a big bite of chocolate and blinked his eyes and stared. He suddenly remembered the picture of the *gaucho* that Uncle Nick had sent him, and here were two real live ones. Petey was to see many a *gaucho* during his life at Tres Lagos. But these first two he would never forget.

Patty, too, was watching them with great interest. They seemed very polite as they showed white teeth in friendly grins at the children. But Patty drew back a little and didn't feel quite so sure about their politeness when one of them pulled a long, ugly-looking knife from his belt and examined the edge of it carefully, as if testing its sharpness.

Patty, too, remembered this first meeting with *gauchos* long after she had grown accustomed to seeing them use just such wicked-looking knives to hack off a piece of juicy *asado*, or meat

roasted over an open fire. The *gauchos* would put one end of the meat in their mouths, and hold the other end with their hands, flashing down with the wicked knife between mouth and fingers to sever the meat cleanly with one stroke. Patty never got over being afraid they would slash too close to mouth or hand some day.

As they got back into the car, the *gauchos* rode off, waving their wide-brimmed *sombreros*, and calling "*Adios! Adios!*"

Petey stood on his knees in the middle between Patty and Uncle Nick and watched the *gauchos* through the back window of the car, until he could see nothing but a cloud of dust.

Both children were wide awake now, and watched the road ahead eagerly, as Uncle Nick had told them they would soon be at Tres Lagos. "And what a *puchero* will be waiting for us there," went on Uncle Nick. "There's no one in the whole of the Argentine who can cook a better *puchero* than Mercedes."

At mention of Mercedes, Patty remembered that she was the cook. She began to recall each of the other people Uncle Nick had told her about, including Blanca and Chin-Chin.

Petey had been in bed that first night at the hotel when Uncle Nick had told her about the people at Tres Lagos. So he was looking puzzled now by all the strange names. Patty began explaining to him each name, one at a time, with occasional corrections or additions from Uncle Nick.

Before they had quite finished—so that Petey never did know who Chin-Chin was until he was introduced in person in the back *patio*—Uncle Nick was pointing and saying, "Look, youngsters! See that green-looking spot away up there back from the road quite a way? That's Tres Lagos. That's our home."

Patty and Petey stopped talking at once and watched the green spot grow larger and larger.

"Uncle Nick," she said, and her voice sounded strange and high, "may I have my blue butterfly again?"

Uncle Nick, who sensed the doubt and wistfulness in her voice, took the little package quickly from the compartment where he had put it to keep it safe, and laid it in her hands. As she held it closely, he laid his big brown hand over her small ones and said, "You and Petey are going to be very happy at Tres Lagos."





TRES LAGOS

It was early morning at the ranch, some weeks later. Patty lay half awake in her bed. She had been dreaming of the dormitory and the Home, and in these half-awake moments thought she was back there again.

The sounds that greeted her ears were strange sounds though, such as she never remembered hearing at the Home. Far away she heard the bawling of hungry calves and the barking of excited dogs. Nearer at hand a girl's high, clear voice was singing a song which sounded familiar except that the words were strange, like none she had ever heard before coming to South America.

She seemed to want to ask the girl in the next bed if she heard the singing voice too, and whether she could understand the strange soft words.



But Patty still liked to play the halfway game. Half of her wanted to wake up and ask questions, while the other half of her wanted to lie still and continue dreaming. She was so comfortable and filled with such content that it didn't really matter where she was, nor what all the strange sounds were.

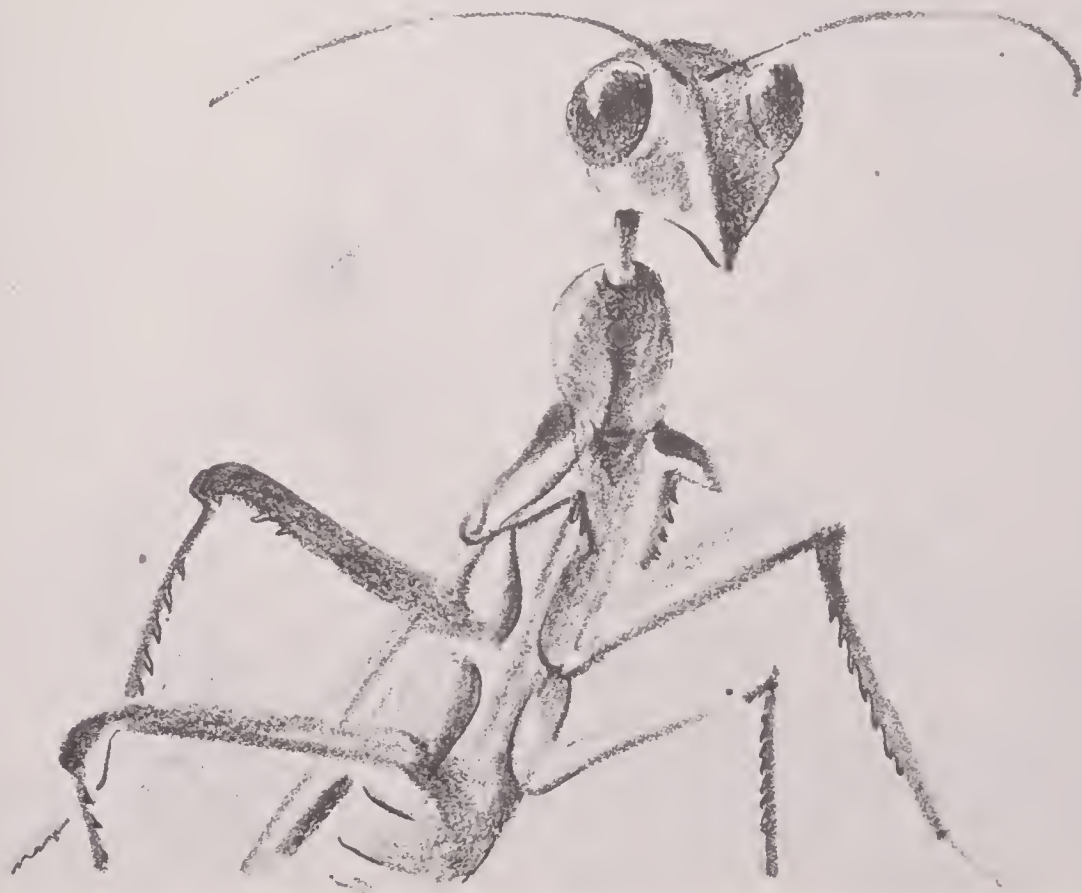
She thought dreamily to herself, since when were there calves and dogs at the Home? And what girl would sing so loudly so early in the morning; or would be allowed to, for that matter?

A nearer sound of splashing water made her open her eyes very wide. Then she stared up sleepily into what seemed a white cloud over and around her, and there right over her head on the white cloud sat a terrible-looking green creature. Patty sat bolt upright in bed, and was about to scream out loud. Suddenly she laughed instead, for she knew exactly where she was now. She was in her own bed in her own room at home, for it had not taken her long to think of Tres Lagos as home.

The white cloud over and around her was the *mosquitero*, a huge white net that dropped umbrella fashion, from a bracket on the wall. It fell over the head of the bed and hung in folds to the floor, enclosing the bed completely. There were no screens on the doors or windows at Tres Lagos, so every bed had this net to protect the sleeper from mosquitoes.

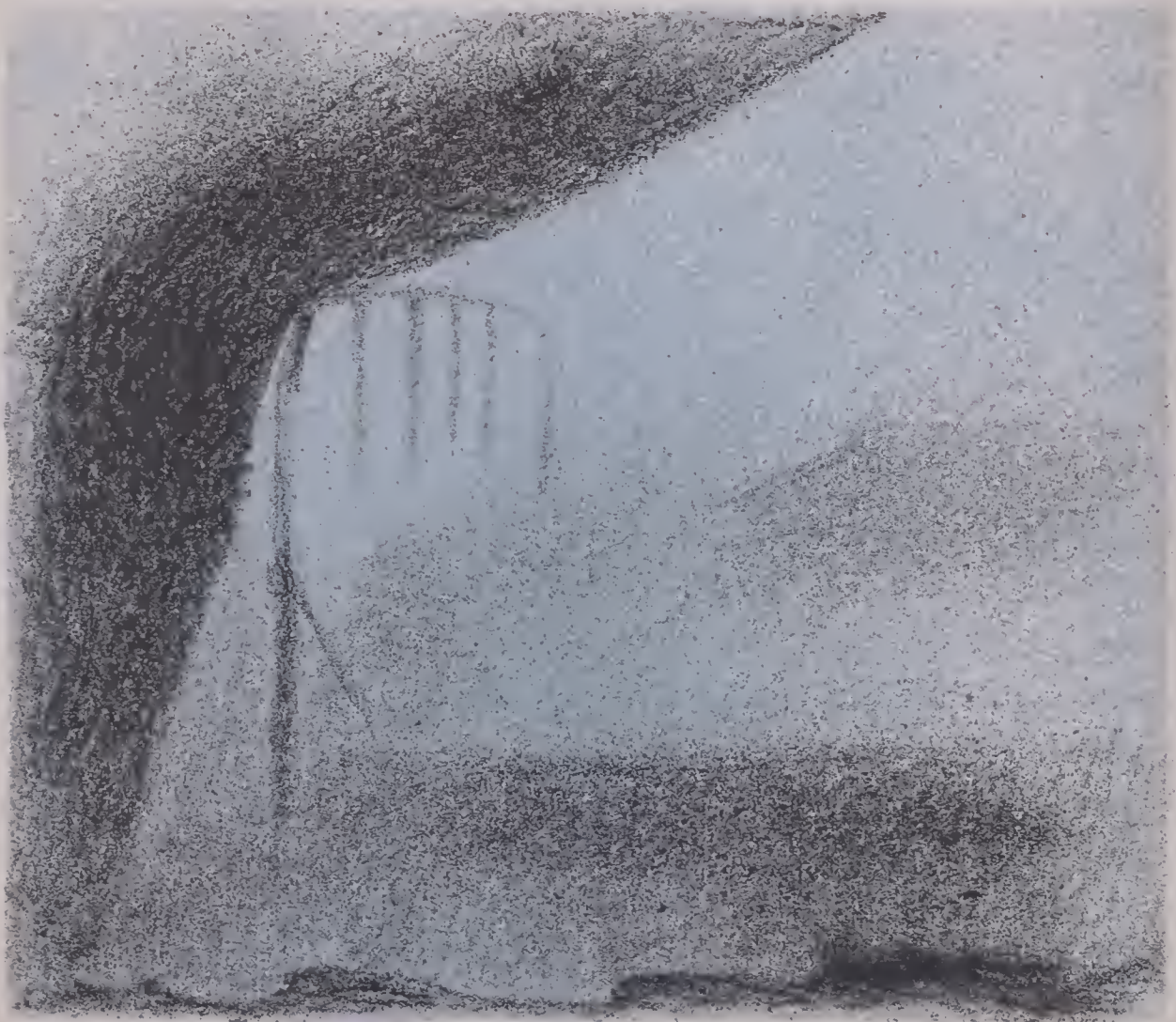
She was not afraid of the green creature, now that she saw him clearly. He was just a harmless *caballo del diablo* or devil's horse. He was a big long insect, grass-green in color and having a thin thread-like neck that looked as if it might let his head fall off any minute. He had long legs like thin sticks that moved about this way and that, and doubled themselves up into all kinds of queer shapes.

She remembered the first time she had seen a *caballo del diablo* on her net when she woke one morning soon after coming to Tres Lagos. Then she had screamed aloud, so that Mercedes and



Maria and Uncle Nick had all come running to see what was the matter. Maria and Mercedes had laughed at her. Uncle Nick hadn't laughed at all. He had explained to her what the green creature was, and how he was not only harmless, but really a friend to the household, as he ate many other more bothersome insects.

Patty half raised herself up in bed and wriggled her finger at the ugly green fellow. She wanted to prove to herself that she wasn't afraid of him any more, and to see him rise up on his hind legs and wave his front ones about as if striking at her finger. He looked for all the world like a plunging horse striking out with his front legs. Indeed, his strange actions had given the ugly creature his name—devil's horse.





Patty wriggled her finger at the ugly green fellow

She lay back in bed to enjoy the lazy comfort of being cozy and quiet for a little longer. She recognized all the sounds now. The calves were away down in the feed lot. The dogs were barking at something which had disturbed them or else just for the fun of hearing themselves bark, as they often did. Listening to the joyous yaps of the dogs, Patty recognized their different barks as one recognizes the voices of friends. The girl singing was Maria, going about her early morning work in the back *patio*. Patty knew the song well enough to sing the soft Spanish words softly to herself. The noise of splashing water was made by Juancito, washing down the big front *patio* as he did every morning.

All these familiar sounds were now a part of Patty's life. She stretched lazily and happily and felt that it was good to feel herself a part of the life at Tres Lagos.

She glanced over at Petey's bed and was glad to see that he was perfectly quiet. That meant he was still sound asleep, for Petey was never really quiet except when asleep. He didn't like to lie and dream, half awake and half asleep as Patty did. The minute he woke, he started right into action, and never stopped until he fell asleep again. So Patty knew her time of dreaming and thinking would be over with Petey's first move.

The blue butterfly now had a permanent place on the little night table beside her bed. As Patty turned sideways to look at it she wondered if the blue butterfly was happy to feel as settled and at home as she was. Usually it was the first thing she saw upon waking in the morning. But this morning the *caballo del diablo* had claimed her first attention. He was still up there on the net. Patty really wasn't afraid of him any more! But he was so ugly she didn't enjoy looking at him, and she was very glad he couldn't come through the net. Well, she wouldn't look at him any more! Why should she waste time looking at a big, ugly, green bug when she had her lovely blue butterfly to look at?

In the midst of feeling so settled and comfortable, Patty remembered something that made her stir restlessly and sigh a little.

“Guess we’re going to have to move again,” she whispered, partly to herself and partly to the blue butterfly; “and get used to a strange place all over again,” she added, with a little feeling of unhappiness and regret.

For next week Patty was to go to the city to boarding school together with the McTavish girls. She wasn’t altogether happy about leaving Uncle Nick and Petey and Tres Lagos and Blanca and Chin-Chin and the horses, and everything she had learned to love at the ranch. Yet she thought with pride of the new blue serge uniform that hung ready in her wardrobe. Mrs. McTavish had had her dressmaker make it exactly like Heather’s and Sheila’s. Every pleat was creased and basted down to stay until the first day she actually put on the uniform at school.

It would be nice to go to school again, if only she could speak Spanish well enough to make friends with the other girls. Uncle Nick encouraged her and told her she was doing very well with her Spanish. But she still felt a little tongue-tied and awkward beside Heather and Sheila who had lived all their lives in the Argentine, and so had spoken Spanish since babyhood.

It was too bad Tres Lagos wasn’t close enough to the city so that she could go to school all day and come home at night to Uncle Nick and Petey and Maria and Blanca and Chin-Chin and her own bed.

But she knew that was impossible. Uncle Nick had made her understand how important it was for her to go to a good school where she would advance in English as well as Spanish. And he had reminded her of what fun it would be to come home to Tres Lagos for vacations.

She knew she would miss Petey more than he would miss her. But she had no misgivings or worries about leaving him at Tres Lagos. Uncle Nick would be here. And Maria was so devoted



to Petey that she knew he would have every care and attention.

Well, she would have two friends to start with—Heather and Sheila. And of course she would take her blue butterfly with her. If she got lonely, she would think back to Uncle Nick and the good times she had at Tres Lagos. There was so much that was new and pleasant and interesting to remember!

She would never forget learning to ride—how frightened she was at first, even though Uncle Nick took her up behind him on his horse, so she could put her arms around him and hold tight. Then, how proud she was when finally Pedro helped her into her own saddle, and she rode beside Uncle Nick, trying to hold the reins just as he held them. Her horse's name was Estrellita, Little Star, because of a little white star-shaped spot on her forehead.



Her horse's name was Estrellita

Petey had soon followed her and Uncle Nick everywhere on his fat pony, which was called simply Caballito, Little Horse.

She would always remember, too, the strange, hot Christmas Day. She and Petey went to bed Christmas Eve, feeling that the whole world was upside down. Petey cried a little as he crawled under his *mosquitero*. He complained that Santa Claus could never find them in this strange, hot country. Patty tried to comfort him and talk to him about the fun they would have next day when Uncle Nick had promised to take them on a picnic with the McTavish family.

But, even as she had talked to Petey, there was a big lump in Patty's own throat.

The next morning Uncle Nick had wakened them bright and early, calling out from the *patio*, "Merry Christmas, youngsters! Come and see what I found in the *patio*. Guess old Santa didn't mind the heat after all. He must have flown down just to pay us a visit."

They tried to scramble out of bed so fast that Petey got all tangled up in his *mosquitero* and had to be untangled before he could get out.

In the *patio* a little *granada*, or pomegranate tree, grew up through a square of earth in the tiled floor. That Christmas morning the tree blazed and twinkled, a thing of beauty, adorned not only by its own red fruit and bright green leaves, but also by tinsel and bright glass balls. It was topped by a lovely golden star that was lit up by the first rays of sun peeping over the top of the house.

Patty and Petey just stood and looked!

Mercedes and Maria and Elenita and Pedro and Juancito all came beaming from the back *patio*, saying, "*Feliz Navidad! Feliz Navidad!* Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas!"

Blanca barked excitedly and wagged her tail and snapped at the puppies. Chin-Chin, away in the back *patio* could hear the

excitement, and hopped up and down, off and on the perch in his cage, and screamed over and over, "Be a good boy, now!"

There were gifts for everyone—even down to a green pepper, wrapped in silver paper for Chin-Chin, the parrot.

The McTavish girls and Patty and Petey had spent a long day under the trees beside Lago Grande, playing in and out of the water. They ate a hearty lunch of *asado*, proudly prepared by Pedro, who knew just how to build the fire and turn the meat on sticks until it was brown on all sides and the juice ran out. There was plenty of crusty bread, as well as fresh tomatoes and cheese and fruit. They even had Santa Claus and Christmas tree cookies from a big box which Mercedes gave them when they left the house.

When Patty saw the Christmas cookies she understood about the many afternoons when Mercedes had worked in the hot kitchen, instead of sipping *mate* in the cool patio. She wouldn't let the children come in to see what was making all the unusual and delicious smells that floated out into the back *patio*. She just mopped her fat face with her apron and said good-naturedly, "*Afuera!* Outside!" every time the children peeked into the kitchen.

When Patty and Petey had crawled into bed that Christmas night, tired and sunburned and happy, Patty was sure it was the strangest and happiest Christmas day she had ever spent!

What pains Uncle Nick had taken to give them a Merry Christmas! And dear old Mercedes, how she had labored in the heat to give them real Christmas cookies, shaping them carefully with the Santa Claus and Christmas tree molds, borrowed from Mrs. McTavish.

There were so many other things to remember. For instance, there was the first time she had seen Heather and Sheila. Their Scotch burr sounded almost as strange to her at first as Spanish. But the three girls soon became great friends, and in a very short



time were playing happily together, all chattering Spanish as if it were their own native language.

Patty didn't know now how she had learned so much Spanish in so short a time. Of course, Uncle Nick had given them some lessons in the evenings, but mostly she had learned it from hearing it spoken all around her.

There were the long summer evenings when they sat in the open *patio* with Uncle Nick, looking up at the stars and asking him questions and questions until Patty wondered why he never grew tired or impatient. Usually they sat very close, one on each side of him—partly so the smoke from his pipe would keep the mosquitoes away, but mostly because they liked to sit as close as possible.



They sat in the open patio with Uncle Nick

Sometimes Uncle Nick told them stories. Sometimes he gave them a lesson in Spanish. Sometimes they just sat still and watched the stars, which seemed bigger and brighter than any Patty had ever seen before. Sometimes as they sat watching the stars, the sad strains of Pedro's accordion came floating over the *patio* wall from where he sat in the moonlight in front of his little shack, down by the stables.

When Patty had asked Uncle Nick why Pedro's music sounded so sad, he told her that most native Argentine music has a sad strain in it, though much of it was strangely sweet and lovely.

Patty brought herself back to the early morning now, and thought, "Well, as I'm not going to have many more days at Tres Lagos, I must get up early and enjoy every minute of them."

She sat up and was going to push the *mosquitero* aside and crawl out, when she remembered the *caballo del diablo*. Yes, there he still sat, as if waiting for her to come out from under the net. She wasn't afraid of him—of course not. But she believed she would wait until Maria came with her orange juice.

Maria would bring a stick from the *patio* and poke it under the funny thin legs until the creature took hold and clung so tightly that Maria could carry him outdoors and let him fly away.

Just then Maria came and opened the *persianas*, shutters closing the doorway leading to the *patio*. She opened them just far enough to stick her head in.

Seeing that Patty was awake and Petey beginning to stir, she opened the *persianas* wide to the fresh morning air in the *patio*, and so called out, "*Buenos dias, Nena! Buenos dias, Nene!*"

Patty and Petey were by this time quite used to being called Nena and Nene, and were hardly ever called anything else by anyone about the *estancia*, except Uncle Nick. Maria and Mercedes had called them by those names from the very first day they arrived at Tres Lagos. So Patty very soon had asked Uncle Nick



Sad strains of Pedro's accordion

why everyone at Tres Lagos called her *Nena* instead of Patty, and Petey *Nene* instead of by his real name. Uncle Nick had explained that these were pet names, used affectionately and meant little girl and little boy.

Maria brought two large glasses of orange juice which she set on the night table, while she went into the *patio* in search of a twig to carry the *caballo del diablo* out with. Patty had only to point at him, and Maria knew what was expected of her. He had been perched on either Patty's or Petey's *mosquitero* so many times in the morning that taking him out had come to be a part of the morning program, like having a bath or brushing one's teeth.

With the *caballo del diablo* banished for the day, Maria pulled the *mosquiteros* from the beds and tied them up at the heads, out of the way.

Patty and Petey sat up in bed and sipped the cool orange juice slowly, as they laughed and chatted with Maria. Patty loved drinking the big glasses of orange juice, squeezed from oranges right off the tree. Even now as she sipped her juice, she could look out and see the top of the orange tree over the *patio* wall. There were hundreds of oranges on the tree, so many that Uncle Nick and Pedro had to prop up the branches so they would not break under the weight of the fruit.

When they had finished the orange juice, the children dressed quickly, with Maria's help, and went out into the freshly washed *patio*. There a small table was spread with a clean cloth. Maria brought big cups of hot milk barely colored with coffee, and crusty rolls and pats of sweet, pale butter. Patty had learned to like the South American butter just as Uncle Nick had told her she would, that first morning in the hotel. Uncle Nick had had his *café con leche* very early and was out at work in the field.

As the children ate, Maria stood nearby, sucking on her *mate* tube. This was a process the children never tired of watching.



Maria brought two large glasses of orange juice



They had even tried it themselves, but didn't really like it. *Mate* is a sort of tea, made from the dried leaves of a herb. The Argentine people are very fond of *mate*, which they make like tea. A few of the dried leaves are placed in the *mate* gourd and boiling water poured over them.

The *mate* gourd is a real gourd, with the inside scooped out, and dried and polished on the outside. Through the open end a metal tube is thrust. The tube has fine holes in the lower bulging end to hold back the leaves, while the liquid is sucked up through the tube.

At first this seemed a very strange custom to the children, but now it was part of the early morning program to see Mercedes and Maria carrying their *mate* gourds about with them. They liked, too, to sit quietly in the *patio* in the late afternoon when their work was finished, filling and refilling the gourds with boiling water and sucking the refreshing *mate* slowly through the tube.

Sometimes in the afternoon, if Uncle Nick was not too busy or too far away from the house, he liked to come in and have *mate*, too. He preferred to drink his from a cup, like tea. Sometimes the children drank *mate*, too, with Uncle Nick. When they put milk and plenty of sugar in it, it didn't taste bad. But still they had not yet learned to like it.



Uncle Nick laughed at them and said they wouldn't be real Argentines until they learned to like *mate*. He was sure they would some day, just as they had learned to like the pale, unsalted butter, the *café con leche*, and the noonday *puchero*.

Petey gulped his *café con leche* down quickly this morning and was off to play with Blanca and her puppies, and then to the stables to see what Juancito was doing.

But Patty sat long at the little table in the *patio*, munching her crusty roll spread generously with the delicious sweet butter, and sipping from her big cup. All the while she was thinking and daydreaming about a great many things.

Everything at Tres Lagos seemed so much a part of her life now that when she thought back to the Home, her life there seemed like a dream. But when she tried to think forward to school and a new life away from Tres Lagos, that seemed even more unreal.

Here and now were the only real things; the fresh morning breeze stirring the corners of the tablecloth and shaking perfume from the clusters of wisteria that hung over the *patio* wall; the little *granada* tree, that had helped make them such a Merry Christmas; Blanca stretched full length in the sun, seemingly unaware of the two fat puppies that played and scrambled over and around her; the shrill call of Chin-Chin from the back *patio*; the

clatter of pots and pans from the kitchen, where Mercedes bustled busily about; the thin high voice of little Elenita, singing a Spanish lullaby to her doll.

Back of all these sights and sounds, once so new and strange, now so dear and familiar, was the reassuring thought of Uncle Nick—so strong, so kind, so sure, that he seemed to fill the place of Mother and Daddy and Uncle, too.

The blue butterfly Uncle Nick had sent her so long ago had been like a promise of happiness to Patty, as it hung day after day, a splash of lovely color, on the bare dormitory wall.

Patty would never forget that morning when the blue butterfly had seemed to lift its delicate wing as if to mark that day as the beginning of Patty's long-promised happiness.









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