

Little Miss Oddity



Amy E. Blanchard

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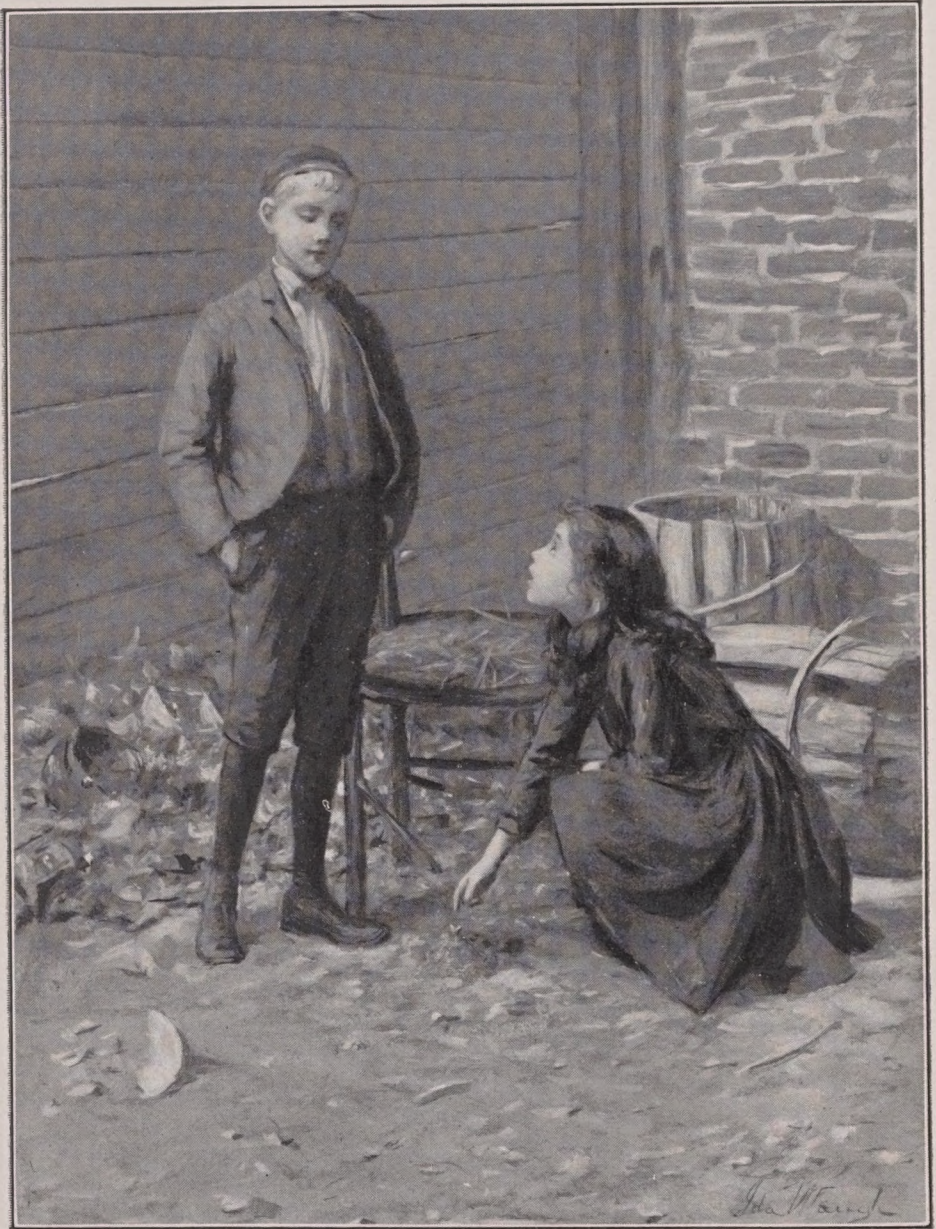
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LITTLE MISS ODDITY



"TAIN'T NOTHIN' BUT AN OLD WEED!"

Little Miss Oddity

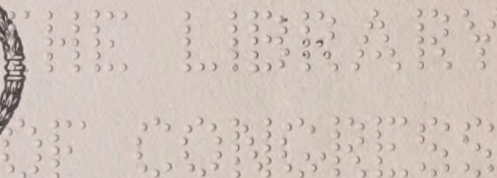
By

AMY E. BLANCHARD

Author of "A Dear Little Girl," "Mistress May," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY IDA WAUGH

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Contents

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. THE BACK YARD - - -	9
II. IN THE GARDEN - - -	29
III. WHERE IS JERRY? - - -	47
IV. A NEW ACQUAINTANCE - - -	67
V. THE VISIT - - -	85
VI. PLEASANT DREAMS - - -	105
VII. HOW CASSY TRIED TO MAKE A FIRE - - -	119
VIII. THE SUMMER LONG - - -	141
IX. NEWS - - -	157
X. PLANS - - -	175
XI. THE SURPRISE - - -	191
XII. UNCLE JOHN ARRIVES - - -	209



Illustrations

“ ’Tain’t nothin’ but an old weed ”	-	<i>Frontispiece</i>	✓
Every now and then Flora was carried over and shown the geranium	-	Page 53	✓
They played all sorts of games	-	“ 99	✓
Cassy’s eyes opened wider and wider	-	“ 133	✓
“ What do you think ! News ! News ! ”	-	“ 163	✓

THE BACK YARD

CHAPTER I

THE BACK YARD

It was a queer jumbled up place, that back yard of the house where Cassy and Jerry Law lived; old barrels tumbled to pieces in one corner, empty tomato cans rolled against cast-off shoes in another; here bits of broken crockery wedged themselves in between a lot of shingles, and there a pile of iron scraps crowded against a bottomless chair; on a clothes-line flapped several pairs of overalls and a stunted little tree bore upon its branches sundry stockings of various sizes and conditions.

It was a discouraging looking place, but Cassy, intently bending over a pile of dirt near the bottomless chair, did not heed anything but the fact that two tiny green shoots were poking themselves up from the unpromising soil. She was a thin-faced, bright-eyed child, not pretty,

but with an eager, wistful expression, and as her face lit up with a sudden smile she looked unusually intelligent.

“Jerry, come here,” she cried; “I’ve got a garden.”

“Sho!” returned Jerry, “I don’t believe it.”

“I have so; just you come and look at it.” Cassy tossed back the locks of brown hair that hung over her eyes and softly patted with her two small hands the dry earth around the springing blades of green. Jerry came nearer. “It’s truly growing,” Cassy went on. “I didn’t stick it in the ground myself to make believe; just see.”

Jerry bent his sandy-colored head nearer to the object of his sister’s admiration.

“’Tain’t nothin’ but a old weed,” he decided at last.

“How do you know?”

“I just believe it.”

“Well, you don’t know, and I think it is just as good to believe it will grow to be a beautiful flower.”

“I wouldn’t count on that,” Jerry said.

“Why not?”

“’Cause.”

“But just maybe,” Cassy insisted pleadingly. “Why couldn’t it? I don’t see why not.”

“’Cause,” repeated Jerry, “I never saw no flowers growing in this back yard.”

“But Mrs. Boyle has some right next door, and oh, Jerry, Mrs. Schaff across the street has some great big lovely red ones. Please let’s hope this will be a flower.”

“Well,” replied Jerry, doubtfully, “I’ll pretend, but if it isn’t, you mustn’t say: Now, Jerry, what made you let me believe in it?”

“I won’t; I truly won’t.”

“All the same,” said Jerry, “I don’t see how you can keep it from being trampled on.”

Cassy looked alarmed.

“You see it’s right out here where anybody can pull it up or do anything. Billy Miles would rather tear it to pieces than not if he thought you wanted to keep it.”

Cassy’s distress increased. “Couldn’t we hide it or something?”

“We might for a little while, but if it should grow and grow why then anybody could find it out.”

“Oh, dear,” sighed Cassy, “it’s like Moses when they had to put him in the bulrushes. Maybe it will be a little wee bit of a flower and after a while we could come and dig it up and set it in the window. I know what I’ll do; I’ll set that old chair over it and then maybe nobody will notice it.”

“There’s a piece of chicken wire off over there,” said Jerry, good-naturedly. “I’ll get that and sort of twist it around the chair, then it will make a fence for it. Sh! There’s Billy, and if he sees us he will play the mischief with any fun of ours.”

Cassy arose hastily to her feet and faced the back door from which Billy’s form was just issuing. There was no love lost between Billy and the Law children.

“What yer doin’?” questioned Billy, looking suspiciously at Cassy’s defiant attitude.

“Nothin’.”

“Humph! I don’t believe ye.”

Cassy spread out her hands.

“Well, see, am I doing anything? Did you think I was eating strawberries or swinging in a hammock?”

"You're too smart," returned Billy. He came over and peered around. "You've got somethin' in among those cans."

Cassy tossed up her chin.

"You're welcome to all you find in them."

Billy turned one over with his foot, looked among the scraps of iron and then said:

"You're just bluffin', but I'll find out." And he climbed the fence into the next yard.

As soon as his stout legs had disappeared Cassy whirled the old chair around till it stood over her treasured plant. Jerry disengaged the strip of chicken wire from its surroundings and contrived a sort of coop-like structure which did not attract the eye, yet kept the small green shoots safely hidden without excluding the light and air.

"Now let's go tell mother," said Cassy, and took to her heels, Jerry following.

Up the shabby dark stairway they ran, Cassy stepping lightly, Jerry, boy-like, with clattering tread. Mrs. Law glanced up from her sewing as they entered. "We've got a garden," said Cassy in a loud whisper.

“What do you mean?” inquired her mother, breaking off her thread with a snap.

“We have truly,” Cassy insisted. “It’s under an old chair in the back yard.”

“That’s a queer place for a garden,” responded her mother, rethreading her needle and taking swift stitches.

“Yes, but it happened itself, you know, and so we have to have it there. We’re so afraid Billy Miles will pull it up. Jerry thinks maybe it’s a weed, but we’re going to hope it’s a flower, a real flower. What would you like it to be, mother, a rose?”

“I’m afraid that would be setting my hopes too high. Let me see, perhaps it might be a morning-glory.”

“Are they pretty, morning-glories?”

“Yes, very.”

“What color?”

“All colors, but the common ones are generally purple or blue.”

“I’d like them to be blue. What do they look like?”

“They grow on a vine, and the flowers are little vase-like cups that open first thing in the

morning and close when the sun shines on them."

"But they open the next day?"

"No, not the same flower, but others do. They bloom very freely, although each one lasts only a little while."

"Do they smell sweet?"

"I never noticed that they did."

Cassy was not entirely satisfied with this description and sat very still thinking about it. After awhile she broke out with: "You don't think it could be any other kind of a flower?"

"Oh, I didn't say so. Of course it might be. We can tell very soon. I know the leaves of a morning-glory, and when I get time I will go down and look at your plant. Yes, I know morning-glories well enough. There used to be a great mass of them over the back fence where we used to live; all colors, blue and pink and lovely white ones striped. I used to think they were very beautiful." She sighed and worked faster. "Don't go out, Jerry," she said presently. "This work must go home this evening."

"May I go with Jerry?" asked Cassy.

Her mother hesitated and then replied, "Yes, but don't stay."

Spring was well on its way as open windows and doorsteps swarming with children showed, but in this narrow street there were no perfume-laden airs; it seemed instead that all the foul odors were made more evident by the warmer weather, and as the brother and sister made their way through the slovenly groups of loungers, there was little to make them realize the beauty of a world where green trees and sweetly smelling orchards made the heart glad.

They took their way along soberly enough, Jerry lugging the big bundle and his sister trotting along by his side. From the narrow street they turned into a broader one where shops of all kinds were arrayed along the way. Into one of these the children turned, delivered their bundle and hurried out. They never tarried long at the place, for they did not feel comfortable under the old Jew's sharp eyes, and did not enjoy being stared at by the two big boys who were always there, too.

"We did hurry," said Cassy when they reached the corner. "And see, Jerry, there are trees

with tiny green leaves on them behind that wall. I have always wanted so much to see what was behind that wall. Do you believe you could climb it?"

"Yes, 'course I could, but the cops wouldn't let me."

"I do want to know so much," repeated Cassy wistfully. "There is a gate, you know, but it's boards, and it's always shut tight. Can't we walk around that way now? It won't take us long and it's so much nicer than the other way."

"I don't know why," said Jerry. "Brick walls ain't so awful pretty."

"No, but the trees are getting green; little bits of baby leaves are coming out on them and we can see them above the wall. Let us go that way."

"All right," agreed Jerry.

They trotted along till the brick wall was reached and then Cassy exclaimed excitedly: "Oh, Jerry, I believe the gate is open; there is a man there with a wheelbarrow. Oh, do hurry."

She ran forward as fast as her legs would carry her and sure enough the gate was open and beyond it smiled such a garden as Cassy had never

before seen. Tulips, red and yellow, flaunted themselves in their little round beds, daffodils nodded sunnily from the borders, primroses and pansies, flowering bush and early shrub were all in bloom. Cassy drew a long breath of delight. Was ever anything ever so beautiful? Her eager little face was bent forward and her big eyes were taking in the whole scene when the gardener came out trundling his wheelbarrow.

"Take care, sis," he warned, "don't stand in the way."

"Oh!" Cassy exclaimed, scarcely noticing what he said. "Oh, isn't it beautiful?"

The gardener smiled.

"'Tain't so bad. You can step inside the gate out of the way, if you want to."

"And Jerry, too?" Cassy asked as her brother came up.

The gardener looked suspiciously at Jerry. He had reasons for not thinking well of small boys.

"He'd better stay outside," he said; but seeing Cassy's disappointed face he yielded. "If you'll keep right there by the gate I guess you'll do no

harm," he told Jerry, and the two children stepped inside.

Such a waft of sweet odors as met them, and such a glory of color. The gardener glanced at Cassy's rapt face as he trundled in his last load of sand, and he looked pleased.

"You like it pretty well, don't you?" he said. "If I had time I'd show you about, but I've got to get some plants potted before night, and I've got to shut the gate now," he added regretfully.

Cassy turned slowly, her eyes still lingering upon the borders.

"She's wanted to see the inside of this place more'n anything," Jerry confided to the gardener as Cassy's steps lagged, "but the gate ain't ever been open before."

"Then I'm glad it happened to be this time when you were by," said the gardener heartily. "Some day if you happen to see me when I've got time I'll take you all over the garden."

"Oh, thank you, sir, thank you. I'd love that. Have you any morning-glories?"

The man laughed.

"No, pesky things; they grow so fast that they'd get the best of me in no time; though,

now I think of it, there were some by the kitchen door last year. The cook planted them, and I guess they'll come up again this summer too plentiful for my use. Do you like 'em, sis?"

"I never saw any," Cassy told him. "But I want to."

She turned away as the gardener made ready to shut the gate, and all the way home she had scarcely a word to say. "It was like the garden of Eden," she said under her breath once.

"I think he might have given us some flowers," said Jerry.

"Maybe he couldn't," returned Cassy. "They aren't his. I think he was very good to let us go in. Oh, Jerry, how happy, how happy people must be who have a garden like that."

There was excuse enough for their having tarried when they reached home at dusk to find their simple little supper of mush and molasses ready for them. Cassy could talk of nothing but the garden, and all night long she dreamed of nodding flowers and green trees.

In the morning her first thought was of the two green shoots under the old chair in the back yard. Perhaps the plant needed water; she

would go down and see before any one was up. Carefully carrying a cupful of water she went down the rickety steps which led to the back yard.

The little green shoots had stretched further up out of the dry earth, to the child's delight. Lifting the chair with a cautious look around she poured the water upon the earth and watched it sink into the ground. She crouched there for some time as if she would discover the plant's manner of growing.

At last she arose with a sigh. Such a poor little garden compared to the one she had seen yesterday, but what possibilities did it not hold? This tiny plant might yet show gorgeous blooms of red and yellow, or send forth big bunches of pink. Her thoughts went rioting along when they were interrupted by a hoarse laugh, and looking up startled, she saw the grinning face of Billy Miles peering over the fence.

"I caught ye," he jeered. "I seen ye. What yer got buried there?"

"Nothing," returned Cassy stoutly.

"Yer another," retorted Billy, clambering over the fence. "What yer got in that cup?"

Cassy turned the cup upside down, but Billy was not satisfied. He came threateningly towards her, taking no heed of where he was stepping.

“Oh, take care,” cried Cassy, forgetting caution in her alarm lest his heavy tread should crush her precious plant.

Billy looked down.

“Ye tried to fool me,” he cried, seeing the moist circle out of which stretched the green shoots.

“I didn’t, either.”

Billy for answer gave a savage kick and snap went the little stalk. Cassy burst into tears, picked up her treasured plant and went flying up-stairs. She laid the tiny stalk before her mother, and hiding her face in her hands sobbed bitterly.

Jerry, still frowsy and unkempt, issued from his bit of a room.

“What’s the matter?” he asked, looking at Cassy in concern. For answer Mrs. Law held up the broken stalk, and Jerry looked his sympathy.

“Never mind, don’t cry so, dear,” Mrs. Law

said at last. "Very likely it wouldn't have lived anyhow."

"How did it happen?" whispered Jerry.

"Billy Miles," Cassy whispered back, choking down her sobs. "He saw me watering it and he got mad and kicked it to death. Oh, my poor little flower that was going to be a morning-glory. It was, wasn't it, mother?"

Mrs. Law examined the broken leaves.

"I think perhaps it was," she replied.

"Won't it live if I plant it in a box?" asked Cassy, this new hope causing her tears to cease.

"I'm afraid not."

"I'll get even with Billy Miles," muttered Jerry; then louder he said, "Cheer up, Cass; I'll get you a real, righty flower, see if I don't." He looked at his mother for encouragement.

"How will you do it?" asked Cassy, interested.

"Never you mind. I will, honest, I will. I'll tell mother. And drawing Mrs. Law to one side he confided to her his plan.

All day long Jerry was absent, and when Cassy asked where he was, her mother only smiled, though if the truth were known he was not

very far away, for he was keeping watch by the gate in the garden wall. If that gardener should but once appear Jerry knew well what he meant to do. He did not come home even to dinner, but munched a crust he had stuffed in his pocket, and kept his eye on the gate.

“He might just be coming out to dinner now,” the boy murmured to himself, “and I’d be sure to miss him if I left.” But no gardener appeared till late. The clock had struck six and the streets were full of workmen returning to their homes when the gate did open and out stepped the gardener, dinner bucket in hand. He had no sooner appeared than Jerry met him, outwardly as bold as a lion, but inwardly anxious.

“Mr. Gardener,” he began.

The man scowled down at him.

“What’s wrong?” he asked. “Out with it.”

“Nothing much,” returned Jerry, “at least, you see—you know me and my sister were here looking at your garden yesterday.”

“Yes, I remember now. Well?”

“And you know—” Jerry went on to tell his story of the broken plant, concluding with: “so

I thought some time, you know, you might have an extra plant, just a little bit of a one, that you wouldn't miss, and if you'd sell it cheap, I'd work it out, the pay, I mean. I could help to wheel that sand, you know."

The man's face broke into a smile.

"All right, sonny; it's a bargain. I must go home now, but you come around Monday, and sister shall get a plant."

"Shall I come to this gate?" asked Jerry eagerly. "When?"

"No, not here; round at the other side. We don't often open this gate, only to take in loads of dirt and such, and when I am late I go out this way. You go all the way around to the other side and you'll see an iron railing; there's another gate there; go in and knock at the back door and say you want to see John McClure. Come about twelve o'clock and bring sissy." He nodded and passed on, leaving Jerry in a state of extreme satisfaction, and ready to make for home with scurrying legs and a large appetite.



IN THE GARDEN

CHAPTER II

IN THE GARDEN

“WHERE have you been all day?” Cassy asked as Jerry came blundering in.

“You can’t guess,” he returned.

“Down by the wharf?”

Jerry shook his head. “Somewhere you like. I stayed outside ’most all day, but I got in at last; you know where.”

“Not the garden.”

“Yes, sir, the garden, and what’s more we’re going to see it on Monday. I had a talk with the gardener; his name is John McClure.”

“Really?” Cassy clapped her hands.

“Yes, really.” Jerry winked at his mother. That was not all there was to tell, but he meant to keep the rest a secret.

“I’m glad it’s Saturday night,” said Cassy after a silence, “for now I’ll have all the time I want for thinking about it, for I’ll have no lessons to study and to bother me. Besides, mother won’t

have to work to-morrow and she can tell us all about the house where we were born. How long has it been since we left it, mother?"

"Six years," Mrs. Law told her.

"I remember it a little," said Jerry. "I remember father, too."

"I wish I did," said Cassy sorrowfully. "Don't let's talk about that now. Tell us what you did to-day."

"I went to market and did my errands first, but there were not many baskets to take home this morning, and then I went and sat out on the curbstone by the wall and waited. Gee! but that's a big place; it takes up 'most a square, and it's awful pretty up there. I saw a shiny carriage stop at the door and a lady and a boy got out. I'd like to be that boy."

"Was he just your size?" asked Cassy, interested.

"No, lots bigger, but he looked friendly; he kind of smiled when he saw me there."

"Come, children, it's cleaning up time," said Mrs. Law. "We must get ready for Sunday; my last buttonhole is finished. I expect Jerry is as hungry as a bear."

"I am as hungry as two bears," Jerry assured her. "What are we going to have for supper? I don't care much what it is, so there is enough of it."

"Don't tell him what it is," said Cassy.

Jerry approached the little stove where something was simmering and sending out savory odors. He lifted the lid.

"Stew!" he cried.

"Yes, with dumplings in it. You shouldn't have taken off the lid, Jerry, it will spoil them."

"Never mind, it is all ready to dish up," Mrs. Law told him.

"My, but it smells good," said Jerry with much satisfaction. "Did you make plenty of dumplings, mother? They are jolly good with molasses on them."

"I hope I made enough," his mother told him. "Cassy and I did not take a hearty dinner, for you were not here, and so we decided to have a hot supper."

"We don't have such good things every day," Jerry remarked, drawing up his chair. "I wonder if we'll ever have lots and lots to eat; meat every day and dessert. My! it must be fine."

I'll bet that boy I saw to-day has all that."

"I don't believe he has dessert every day; I don't believe anybody has," Cassy asserted, eyeing her mother as she dished out a plentiful supply of stew upon Jerry's plate.

"Ho! I'll bet some people do. Don't you, mother?"

"Why, yes, of course."

"Did you use to?" Cassy asked.

"I believe we did."

"Were we as rich as that?" Cassy looked her surprise.

"We were not rich at all, but we were very comfortable and very content." Mrs. Law gave a little sigh.

"Just wait till I grow up, and we will be again," said Jerry, pausing with a big piece of dumpling on his fork.

"That's so long," sighed Cassy.

But to Jerry with a plentiful meal before him to-morrows were pleasant anticipations, and he replied: "Pshaw! no it isn't."

Cassy glanced up and caught her mother's tired look.

“Well, no it isn’t,” she agreed; “it won’t be any time, and I’ll be grown up, too, and mother won’t have a thing to do but——”

“‘Sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam,’” Mrs. Law put in.

“‘And feed upon strawberries, sugar and cream,’” Cassy finished the line. “I saw strawberries in one of the shops yesterday.”

“I’d rather have dumplings any day,” Jerry decided, having finished eating his stew, and being now ready to attack the dumplings and molasses. To tell the truth, the dumplings formed the principal part of the stew and the meat was very scarce, but the children rather rejoiced at that, and completed their meal with much satisfaction. Then there were many little duties to be done, and of all the rooms in the tenement it is safe to say that Mrs. Law’s was in decidedly the best order for Sunday.

Cassy could hardly wait till noon time Monday, and though she was usually a pretty good scholar, she made many mistakes that morning, and was only aroused to a sense of her inattention when it suddenly dawned upon her that she might be

kept in and that would be a calamity too dreadful to contemplate.

At last twelve o'clock came, and she found Jerry waiting outside the school door.

"Come along," he cried. "We don't want to lose any time." And catching her by the arm he hurried her along the street till they reached the long wall.

"Aren't you going to wait at the gate?" Cassy asked as Jerry, without pausing, went on.

"No, we are to go around to the other side. 'Way round where the horses go into the stable."

They found no difficulty in getting in, and, after walking the length of the garden path, they came upon their friend, the gardener, sitting on a wheelbarrow. He looked up as they came near.

"Well, here you are," he greeted them cordially. "Didn't forget the time. Sun's noon high and a few minutes past. Now then, my little lass, we'll go find your plant; I've got it safe and sound for you."

Cassy's eyes opened wide.

"My little plant?"

"Yes, didn't brother tell you?"

Cassy shook her head.

"You're a sly little lad," he said, pinching Jerry's ear. "I thought that was what you came for."

"I thought it was just to see the flowers," said Cassy.

"You can do that, too, but we'll pick out yours first. I slipped a lot of geraniums a while ago; they're easy cared for and are good bloomers; no trouble if you give them a sunny window and a little water. Now then." He stopped before a row of potted geraniums already showing their gay blooms of red and pink. "Take your pick," he said.

"Oh!" Cassy crouched down and looked lovingly from one to the other. How could she decide among so many? However, finally, after changing her mind frequently, she halted between a crimson and a lovely pink. Then she sought Jerry's advice, and he spoke for the red one, but Cassy thought her mother would like the pink one; it was such a lovely color, and finally that was selected; Cassy, hugging it to her, fairly kissed the little flower.

"How good you are," she said. "Oh, Mr.

McClure, what a lovely father you must be."

John McClure threw back his head and laughed.

"I'm no father at all," he said; "I'm a lone man with neither chick nor child."

"I think that is a great pity," said Cassy, gravely. "I have been thinking of you living in a pretty little house with morning-glories climbing over the porch."

"And all the place I've got is a room in a workman's boarding-house."

"I wish you did have a cottage."

"I've wished the same more than once, but it doesn't seem to come my way. Come now, we'll go see the rest of the flowers."

"I'm afraid we shall miss our dinner if we do that," Jerry put in.

"Oh, I'd rather miss my dinner than not see the flowers," Cassy told him.

"You would?" Mr. McClure looked pleased.

Just then they saw a boy coming down the path. He had a cheery bright face, and Cassy concluded he must be the one of whom Jerry had told her.

“Well, John,” the boy cried, “I see you have company.”

“Yes, Mr. Rock. This young lass here says she’d rather look at the flowers than eat her dinner. What do you think of that?”

“That she’s a girl after your own heart. But why can’t she do both?” The boy smiled down at Cassy as if expecting her to answer.

“Because we couldn’t get home and back to school in time and see the flowers too, and I do so want to see the flowers.” She looked wistfully at Jerry.

“And I suppose your brother would rather eat his dinner,” said Rock. “I think we can manage it. I’ll run in and get you a sandwich or something, so you won’t starve.” He was gone like a flash, his long legs covering the ground with great strides.

“That’s just like Mr. Rock,” said John McClure. “Come along, children, we’ll be looking at the flowers, and Mr. Rock will see that you don’t go hungry.”

“But——” Cassy looked confused. “I—mother—— Do you think mother would like it, Jerry?”

“What?” John interrupted. “I’ll venture to say she’ll not object to your taking a bit of a sandwich from Mr. Rock. Just make yourselves easy, and if you think there’ll be any trouble I’ll go and explain it to her myself. By the way, you won’t want to take your geranium to school, sis; you’d better leave it here and call for it on your way home. Come now; these are the tulips.” And he began to guide them around the garden showing them all manner of sweet or showy flowers.

They were not half way around when Rock appeared bearing a tray on which were two glasses of milk, a pile of sandwiches and two generous slices of pie. He set the tray down on a bench under a spreading tree.

“I say, John, it’s a jolly place to eat, out here, this fine day. I’ve a mind to bring something for myself. Don’t begin your lunch, children, till I come back.” And he was off again, returning in a few minutes with more sandwiches, some crackers and half a pie. “Now,” he said, “I call this great. Pitch in, youngsters. Come along, John, bring your dinner-bucket, and we’ll have a lively time.”

Cassy and Jerry were rather shy at first, but Rock soon made them feel at home, and they thought they had never tasted anything so good as those chicken sandwiches and that apple pie.

“There!” exclaimed Rock, as the last crumb disappeared, “I enjoyed that a great deal more than if I had eaten my lunch indoors. I went to the country for over Sunday and when I got back this morning it was too late for school; the train was an hour late. I found mother wasn’t going to be at home to lunch, so, if you hadn’t been here to keep me company, I’d have eaten a solitary meal indoors. By the way, what time do you go back to school?”

Jerry told him, and he pulled out his watch.

“Then you’ll have to scamper,” he cried.

“You’re coming back to get your geranium,” John charged Cassy, and she smiled up at him with such a sunny expression that John saw there was little danger of her forgetting.

“Those are nice little things,” said Rock as he watched the two children depart.

“That they are, Mr. Rock,” returned John.

"I wonder where they live," said Rock.

"In one of the tenements beyond the square, so they tell me."

"Pshaw! that's not a very nice place, and those children seem neat and well-behaved, and they speak well, too."

"They're fatherless," said John, "and it's likely their mother has a hard time to get along, and can afford to live nowhere else, but they're different from most of the gang down that way; I saw that the first day when they stood by the gate and looked in." And he told Rock of how he had first met the children.

"I'm going to learn more about them," Rock declared. "I'll be here when they come back after school. That little girl's face is a perfect sunbeam when she smiles, and the boy is a manly, honest little fellow."

True to his word Rock was there when the children returned.

"Where do you live?" he asked them.

"On Orchard Street," they told him.

"Have you always lived there?"

"No," said Cassy, "we used to live in a lovely little house near the city, and there were morn-

ing-glories growing over the porch." She looked at John.

"By the way," said that worthy, "I told you I'd see about the morning-glories. I believe I've some seed in the tool-house. You're welcome to 'em, and if you plant 'em they'll be likely to grow, and you can train 'em over your window. Have you a good yard?"

"No," Cassy said; "we have three rooms on the top floor, one big room and two little ones. Mother likes it up where we are because it is nearer the sky, and there is no one above us."

"Sensible woman," said John, nodding approvingly.

"And you've no yard? Well, you can plant the seeds in a box on the window-sill, unless you like to have a garden in the common yard."

"Oh, we can't. Billy Miles won't let us." And Cassy told the story of her treasured morning-glory, and of its destruction. Rock and John listened gravely. "And I was so sorry," said Cassy, "for I had always wanted to see a morning-glory, because mother tells how they grew over our porch where we used to live. We would be there now if papa had lived."

"How long since he died?" Rock asked, sympathetically.

"Six years. I wasn't three years old, and Jerry was about five. Papa got hurt on the railroad, you know, and he never got well."

"Yes," spoke up Jerry. "And mother said some people said she ought to have lots of money from the railroad, because it was their fault, but she tried and they put her off, and she couldn't afford to have a lawyer, so she just had to give up."

Rock listened attentively. "I wish she'd come and see papa, he's a railroad man, and maybe he could tell her what to do."

"Mother hasn't any time," said Cassy, shaking her head gravely. "She makes buttonholes all the time; she has to so as to get us something to eat and to pay the rent, but when we are big we shall not let her do it."

"Of course not," said John. "Well, youngsters, I've got to go to work. You must come around again some day and tell me how the morning-glories are coming on. There is your geranium, my little lass."

"And here's a bunch of violets for your

mother," said Rock. "Tell me your mother's name and just where you live. Some day I might want to call on you." He smiled at Cassy as he held out the sweet-smelling violets, and the children, as happy as lords, went off, Jerry carrying his own and Cassy's books and the little girl holding her geranium carefully with one hand, and in the other bearing the violets which she sniffed frequently as she went along.



WHERE IS JERRY?

CHAPTER III

WHERE IS JERRY?

CARRYING her plant in triumph, Cassy appeared before her mother.

“See, see,” she cried out, “just see! Isn’t it lovely? And look at these violets. Oh, mother, we’ve had the loveliest time, and Jerry has some morning-glory seeds in his pocket. You don’t know all we’ve been doing. Were you worried that we didn’t come home to dinner? Did you think we were kept in?”

“No, for I thought it probable that the charms of that garden would prove too much for you, yet I thought I should have two half-starved children to come home to supper.”

“But we’re not half-starved. We had—oh, mother, it’s just like a story. Tell her about it, Jerry, while I put my flower in the window, and give the violets a drink of water.” She set the flower-pot carefully on the sill, and then stood off to see the effect. Truly the gay pink blossom

did brighten up the bare room, while the scent of the violets filled the air. "I feel so rich," said Cassy. "I never had such a lovely day."

"And how about the lessons?" asked Mrs. Law.

Cassy looked a little crestfallen.

"The lessons weren't quite as good as they are sometimes. You see," she came close to her mother and fumbled uneasily with the hem of her apron. "You see, mother, I couldn't help thinking about the garden all the time, and I came near being kept in 'cause I didn't pay attention. Wouldn't that have been dreadful?"

"It would have been pretty bad, for it has never happened to you, and I would have been very sorry to have had you come home with such a report."

"But I remembered just in time, and I did pay attention the rest of the day. Are you tired, you poor mother, sitting here stitching, stitching all day long? If I could only have brought you a piece of that pie."

"Do you think that would have rested me? I am not so very tired, for this is only Monday, you know."

“Oh, Jerry,” Cassy turned to her brother, “we forgot to tell her what the nice boy said. Is he a boy or a young gentleman?”

“Oh, he’s just a boy,” said Jerry grandly, with the judgment of his superior years.

“His name is Rock, Rock Hardy, but his mother’s name is Dallas. That is the old Dallas place, you know, where the garden is, and Rock—Mr. Rock?” She looked inquiringly at Jerry who answered, “No, just Rock; he told me to call him that. His real name is Rockwell, but they call him Rock for short.”

“Well then, Rock said that he wished you would come to see his father. He is a railroad man and maybe he could get you that money.”

Mrs. Law shook her head.

“That was very kind, I am sure, but I could not think of troubling a stranger. No doubt the boy might think his father would be interested, but that was only his idea, and I couldn’t think of calling on Mr. Dallas upon such an invitation. I suppose the gentleman is Mr. Dallas, and Rock Hardy is his stepson.”

“Yes, he is, and I think Mr. Dallas must be very nice, for Rock is so fond of him.” Cassy

looked disappointed that her mother had not been willing to go right off to see Mr. Dallas. She had dreamed that great things would come of it, and now her hopes were blasted. But it did not take from the memory of the day's pleasure, and she went about the room, setting the table for supper, and attending to her little duties, singing softly.

There was not much in the room ; a few cheap chairs, one a large rocker, a table covered with a red cloth, a kitchen safe and a small cook-stove ; the windows were hung with cheap white curtains, but the floor was bare of carpet, though it had been stained. The house was an old one, and was let out in rooms to tenants who could afford only a small rent, consequently the neighborhood was now none of the best. There was an ill smell of cooking in the halls, and the sound of a constant banging of doors, and the shuffle of heavy feet on the bare stairs could always be heard.

The top floor Mrs. Law thought by far the most desirable, although it was the cheapest, and with her children near her, away from the confusion and noise below, she felt that it was as much of a home as she could hope for.



"EVERY NOW AND THEN FLORA WAS CARRIED OVER AND SHOWN THE GERANIUM"

It was hard to keep sturdy Jerry from mixing with the neighborhood boys, but though he had learned many of their rough ways and much of their speech, he was not without good principles, and was careful not to bring the language of the street into his home. His faults were not such as came from an evil heart, and his love for his mother and sister would cause any one to forgive him many mistakes.

Cassy was such a mother-child that she shrank from the children in the house, and when she was at home from school rarely played with them. She would rather stay with her mother. Her principal playmate was a battered doll, which she had owned since she was a baby. It was the last gift from her father, and she prized it above all her possessions.

The next afternoon she established herself in a corner with her doll, Flora, and carried on a long whispered conversation with her. Every now and then Flora was carried over and shown the geranium, and made to peer into the box which held the morning-glory seeds. At last the daylight waned and Mrs. Law moved nearer the window.

“It’s most bedtime, but I’ll tell you a story before you go to bed,” she heard Cassy say to her doll. “Listen, and it will give you something to think about while you are trying to go to sleep. Once there was a little girl ’bout as big as me, and she had a mother and a brother and she hadn’t any money at all, but they all wanted some, so her mother went to see a gentleman who knew where there was lots of railroad money, and he gave a whole lot of it to her mother ’cause her husband had been hurt in a railroad accident, and so the little girl had a whole window full of flowers and violets every day, and chicken sandwiches and apple pie, but she didn’t get a new doll, only a new silk dress for her old one—a blue silk dress just like the sky, and oh yes—they had a nice little house with morning-glories growing all over the porch, and the little girl’s mother didn’t have to make any more buttonholes or sew any more on the sewing-machine ; she sat on a velvet chair and ate the chicken sandwiches and apple pie all day.”

At this point Mrs. Law laughed. “Didn’t she get rather tired of that ?” she asked.

“ Oh, mother, were you listening ?”

"I couldn't very well help hearing."

"That's a new story," said Cassy, gravely undressing her doll. "I've never told it to Flora before. It's not quite a true story, but I wish it was, don't you ?"

"All but the occupation of the little girl's mother. I think she would get dreadfully tired of sitting on a velvet chair, and of eating sandwiches and pie *all* day."

Cassy laughed.

"I don't believe I'd get tired of them. Come, Flora, you must go to bed. I'll give you one more sniff of violets before you go." And after being allowed once more to bury her snub nose in the bunch of violets, Flora was put to bed, her crib being a wooden footstool turned upside down, and her covers being some old bits of cotton cloth.

"Go call Jerry and we'll have supper," said Mrs. Law.

Cassy placed the violets carefully in the middle of the table, and leaving her mother to dish up the oat-meal, she went in search of Jerry. Hearing voices in the back yard she first went there, but there was no sign of him, and she went

next to the front door, which generally stood wide open. She looked up and down the dingy street, but saw nothing of her brother. She ran down the steps looking to right and left. At the corner she saw Billy Miles with a group of boys.

“Who ye lookin’ fer?” asked Billy.

“I’m looking for Jerry,” Cassy told him.

“Have you seen anything of him?”

“I seen him ’bout an hour ago,” he returned, winking at the other boys, who broke out into a loud laugh.

Cassy looked at them sharply.

“You know where he is,” she said positively.

“I think you might tell me.”

“I don’t have to,” said Billy teasingly. “Go look for your precious brother if you want him. He’s so stuck up I guess you’ll find him on top of a telegraph pole.”

Another loud laugh followed this witty remark, and Cassy turned away feeling that Jerry was in some place of which the boys knew, and that they had been the means of keeping him there. She well knew that to go home and tell her mother or to get the policeman on the beat

to help her would be a sure means of bringing future trouble upon both herself and Jerry, so she determined to hunt for him herself.

She ran down the street calling, "Jerry, Jerry, where are you?" But after making a long search and finding no sign of her brother, she went back home discouraged.

"Jerry isn't anywhere," she announced to her mother. "What shall we do?"

"Perhaps he has gone on an errand for some one. He does that sometimes, you know. We will have supper and save his."

Jerry very often did turn an honest penny by running errands after school hours, and his absence could easily be accounted for on that score, but still Cassy was not satisfied. Somehow the recollection of Billy's teasing grin remained with her, and she ate her supper very soberly.

"Mother," she said after she had finished, "do you mind if I go around to the garden and see if Jerry is there? I don't feel very sure about his going on an errand."

Her mother smiled.

"Why, my dear, you are not worrying, are you? I think Jerry will be here soon."

"I know,—but—Billy Miles—I believe he knew where he was—and please, mother——"

"Well dear, if you will hurry right back, you may go. It will soon be dark, and I don't want my little girl to be out in the streets so late."

"I'll come right back," Cassy promised earnestly; "I will truly, mother."

"Very well, run along, though I cannot see why you think you will find Jerry there."

"Maybe Mr. McClure is working late; sometimes he does and Jerry may be helping him."

"Very well," her mother repeated, "run along as fast as you can."

Cassy caught up her hat and hurried off, not stopping to look at or to speak to any one, and was around the corner in a jiffy, reaching the old Dallas place in a very short time. First she stopped a moment before the gate in the wall, thinking she might hear voices, but all was silent.

"I can't hear even the daffodils ringing their bells," said the child to herself as she ran around to the other side of the house. Just as she was passing the front door some one called her.

"Miss Morning-Glory, oh, Miss Morning-

Glory!" Looking up she saw Rock Hardy standing on the steps. "Where are you going so fast, Cassy?" he asked. "Did you want to see John? He went home an hour ago."

"Oh, then, Jerry isn't here," Cassy exclaimed.

"No, I don't think so, in fact I know he isn't, for I have just come from the garden and no one was there."

Cassy's face took on a troubled look, and Rock came down the steps looking at her kindly.

"Is Jerry lost?" he asked, smiling. "It seems to me he is rather a big boy to get lost. I reckon he's man enough to know his way about town."

"It isn't that," said Cassy, "but I'm afraid those boys—Billy Miles, you know, and the rest—I'm afraid they've done something to him."

"What makes you think so?" Rock came nearer. Cassy gave her reasons and Rock listened attentively. "I'll tell you what we'll do," he said; "I'll go back with you and help you find him. We can stop and tell your mother so she will not mind your being out. I don't doubt but that the boys only wanted to tease you, and that he really has gone on an errand, but wherever he is we'll find him." He took Cassy's

hand in his and she felt great relief of mind. To have such a big boy as champion meant a great deal.

The two traveled along together, Rock looking around him interestedly as they came nearer Cassy's abode. He wondered why such a very nice little girl should be living in such a dirty street, and he wondered more as they mounted the steps and went from flight to flight.

"It's at the very top," Cassy told him, and finally her door was reached and they went in. "This is Rock," said Cassy to her mother, "and he's going to find Jerry." She spoke with confidence.

Rock, seeing the sweet-faced woman who spoke with such a gentle voice, did not wonder that Cassy seemed such a little lady. She looked like her mother and had just such a way of speaking.

"I suppose Jerry hasn't come yet," said Rock.

"No," Mrs. Law replied. "He has been gone a long time for him; he is usually home to supper. I hope nothing has happened; that he——" she looked at Cassy, "that he has not been run over or anything of that kind," she added, hesitatingly.

"Oh, I don't believe that," said Rock in an assured tone. "You know they say ill news flies swiftly, so we'll think he has gone off some distance and has been detained. Cassy and I will find him. We will inquire around, for some one has seen him go, no doubt."

"I am very much obliged indeed," Mrs. Law told him. "I shall feel quite satisfied to have Cassy go if you are with her." Therefore Rock and Cassy took their departure.

Rock's first move was to inquire of the big policeman at the corner if he had seen Jerry Law since four o'clock. The policeman looked up and down the street and then at Rock and Cassy.

"Jerry Law, is ut?" he asked. "A small-sized lad ut lives next dhoor to that little haythin Billy Miles? I've not seen um. Howld on; I did thin, airy in the afternoon. There was a crowd of bhoys out be Jimmy McGee's lumber yard, and I belave Jerry was with the lot."

"Thank you," said Rock. "You see he hasn't come home yet, and his sister is worried."

"He'll be afther shtayin' out later whin he's a bit owlder," said the policeman with a grin.

"He's not far off, I'm thinkin'. He'll be playin' somewhere, you'll find."

The children had started off again when the policeman called them back.

"The bhoys were chasin' a bit of a dog, I moind," he told them.

"Oh!" exclaimed Cassy, "then Jerry must have tried to get it from them. I know he wouldn't let any one hurt it if he could help it. Nothing makes him so mad as to see boys hurt poor little cats and dogs; he'll fight for them when he won't for anything else."

Towards the lumber yard they went, and there they stood calling "Jerry, Jerry Law!" They walked along slowly, stopping every little while to listen. At last when they had reached the end of the lumber yard they heard an answer to their call.

"Listen! Listen!" cried Cassy joyfully. "Some one answered."

"Call again," said Rock. And Cassy shrilly screamed "Jerry! Jerry!"

"Here I am," came the reply.

They looked around but could not seem to discover the spot from which the answer came.

“Where are you?” called Rock.

“In the cellar,” was the reply.

“There, there, in that empty house!” Cassy dragged Rock along towards the corner, and crouching down by a little window at the side of the house, she said, “Are you in there, Jerry?”

For answer a face and form appeared at the window, and there was Jerry sure enough.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE

CHAPTER IV

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE

“OH, Jerry, Jerry, how did you get in there?” cried Cassy. “Can you get out?”

“They fastened the door. I’ve banged and banged, but I couldn’t budge it. Gee! but I’m glad you came. The door is ’round at the other side.”

Rock was already on his way to it, and after climbing a fence he was able to get it unfastened and to set the prisoner free. Cassy waited impatiently at the gate, till Jerry with a mite of a puppy in his arms, came out. The boy was battered and dirty, and bore the marks of a hard fight.

“Oh, you poor dear,” Cassy exclaimed, “how long have you been in there? Oh, Jerry, you have been fighting.”

“Of course I have,” he said grimly; “I wasn’t going to let a parcel of great big lunks set upon

one poor little puppy without trying to take his part."

"Good for you!" cried Rock, putting his arm across the shoulders of the smaller boy. "Tell us all about it, Jerry."

"Billy Miles and the other fellows were stoning this poor little chap, and I went for 'em. They chased us into this cellar, and I managed to fasten the door on the inside, for I knew if they once got hold of the dog they would kill it to spite me; so then they fastened the door on the outside and left us there." Jerry told his story in a few words, stroking the mite of a dog meanwhile.

"How long ago was that?" asked Rock.

"Not long after I came home from school."

"You've had a long wait," Rock remarked. "I'm glad we found out where to look for you. Now we'll go along, and I'd like to see those boys bother you." He threw back his head and there was a resolute look in his eyes.

"They'd better not try it," said Jerry, looking up confidently into the bigger boy's face.

"Do let me carry the puppy," begged Cassy. But the puppy, now that it had escaped from its

safe retreat, felt itself to be in the land of the Philistines, and had confidence in no one but the sharer of its imprisonment; therefore Jerry carefully hid it under his jacket, and they traveled back to where Mrs. Law was anxiously watching for them. At Rock's suggestion they stopped to get some milk for the puppy, and then Rock left them safe at their own door.

"You will let us keep the puppy, won't you, mother?" the children begged.

"If it should get away, and anything should happen to it, you would grieve for it, and you know those spiteful boys would be only too glad to hurt it," she told them.

Cassy burst into tears; the evening's excitement and anxiety had been too much for her.

"How can they be so cruel!" she cried. "What harm could a poor little dog do? If they would only kill it outright it wouldn't be so bad, but to stone it and make it suffer for days is so dreadfully, dreadfully wicked." She crouched down on the floor where the little dog was hungrily lapping its milk, and her tears fell on the rough gray coat, as she tenderly stroked the little creature.

The picture she drew was too much for Mrs. Law's tender heart, and she said: "You may keep it for a few days anyhow, and in the meantime perhaps we will be able to find a better home for it."

Cassy smiled through her tears, but she sat looking very soberly at the small animal.

"I saw some wicked, wicked girls, one day, mother," she said presently; "girls, not boys,—and they were swinging a poor little kitten around by one paw, and then they would let it go up into the air and fall down on the ground as if it had no feeling, but some lady came along and made them stop, and she carried the kitten away with her. I was so glad she did, and I wanted, oh I did want to take those girls up to some high place and do the same thing to them as they were doing to the kitten; I wonder how they would like it." There was a vindictive expression on Cassy's face that her mother did not like to see.

"Why Cassy," she said gently, "you must not be so spiteful; that would be doing as wickedly as the girls did, and you would know better, whereas they probably did not think they were

hurting the kitten ; I doubt if any one had ever told them that it would hurt a cat to do that to it, though it would not hurt a doll."

"I can't help it," persisted Cassy ; "they were wicked and they ought to be punished, and I would like to be the one to do it." She now had the puppy in her lap, the comfort of which seemed to appeal to the little thing, for it snuggled down comfortably. "It is so cunning," Cassy murmured in a soft voice very unlike the one she had just used. "See, Jerry, it is going to sleep."

If anything, Jerry was the more interested of the two, for had he not snatched him from a dreadful fate? And the two children vied with each other in paying this new member of the family such attentions as they could.

With her flowers and the puppy Cassy was very happy for the next few days. The existence of that garden, too, which she might expect once in a while to visit, was another source of delight, and though she generally had kept more or less aloof from her school-fellows, she now did so more than ever. Very often they would pass her sitting in some corner at recess, and she

would hear them say: "There's Miss Oddity. I wonder what she's mooning about now."

"Snakes or spiders, or some old thing like that," she once heard the answer come, and she smiled to herself. They were never able to get over the fact that she was not afraid of mice, and that once she had spent the whole of her recess watching a colony of ants.

"What do you suppose Cassy Law has been doing?" one of the girls said to the teacher who had come out to watch the class as they returned to the school-room.

"What?" asked Miss Adams sharply, keen to discover some misdemeanor.

"She's been playing with ants; she won't play with us." And the girls around giggled.

"She is an oddity," Miss Adams had replied, and the girls, catching the name, thereafter applied it to Cassy, so that now she was always Miss Oddity. A girl who preferred to play with ants to romping with her schoolmates was something unusual, so they avoided her, and she, feeling that they had little in common, withdrew more and more. Although she longed for a real playmate, a girl after her own heart,

none came her way, and finally she invented one.

It was a great day when her imagination created Miss Morning-Glory. It was the day when her first morning-glory seed popped a tiny green head above the earth, and in her exuberance of joy over the fact, Cassy started to school with a great longing for some girl companion who could understand her love for green growing things and for helpless little creatures. Then came the thought, "I'll make believe a friend, and I'll call her Miss Morning-Glory," and forthwith she started up a conversation with this imaginary comrade, to whom she was talking animatedly when several of the schoolgirls passed her. They stopped, stared, and nudged each other.

"She's talking to herself," they whispered. "I believe she's crazy." But Cassy's lessons that day were those of a very intelligent little girl, and the others were puzzled.

After this Cassy was not lonely. What could not this new friend say and do? there were no limits to her possibilities. She was always ready when Cassy wanted her. She never quarreled, never objected to any play that Cassy might

suggest, and moreover loved and understood all about animals and growing plants.

On the day of the discovery of this new friend Cassy came home with such a happy face that her mother asked: "What has happened, daughter? You look greatly pleased."

Cassy went over to the window-sill and peered into the box of brown earth where several new blades of green were springing.

"They are coming! they are coming!" she cried.

Her mother smiled, and then she sighed. "How you do love such things, Cassy," she said. "I wish you could live in the country."

Cassy came over and put her arms around her mother's neck. "I don't mind so much now that I can go to the beautiful Dallas place, and now that I have Miss Morning-Glory. Oh, mother, it is so lovely to have her."

"Her? You mean them, don't you? I think there will be many Miss Morning-Glories in that box before very long."

Cassy shook her head.

"No, I mean her." She spoke a little shyly. "She is a new friend. I made her up like—"

like a story, you know, and she likes all the things I do. She is here now ; she walked home with me, and she plays with me at recess. She likes to watch the ants, and the flies, and the bees."

Her mother looked a little startled. She was not quite sure if this imaginary friend was a wise companion for her little girl, yet since she did exist in Cassy's world of fancy, there was nothing to do but let her stay there.

"I call her Miss Morning-Glory," Cassy went on. "She wears the same colored dresses the morning-glories do. To-day she has on a pink one."

"What does she look like?" inquired Mrs. Law, thinking it would be best not to discourage the confidence.

"She isn't a bit like me," Cassy replied. "She has lovely blue eyes and pink cheeks and golden hair all in curls, not tight curls, but the kind that angels have."

"What do you know about angels' curls?" her mother asked, laughing.

"Why, the pictures tell," Cassy returned, surprised at such a question. "You know the

Christmas card I have with the angel on it; that kind of curls I mean."

"And what is Miss Morning-Glory doing now?"

Cassy glanced quickly across the room. "She is over there holding the puppy. She says she wishes you would let us keep him and name him——" she paused a minute, "name him Ragged Robin."

Mrs. Law laughed again. "That's a funny name for a dog."

"Well, you know, they are shaggy like he is. Mr. McClure showed me a picture of them, and doggie is a kind of blue."

"So he is. I think he is what they call a Skye-terrier, but I wouldn't name him if I were you, for we have found a good home for him in the country."

"Oh!" The tears sprang to Cassy's eyes. "Jerry will be so sorry; he loves the dear little fellow."

"I know he does, and I wish we could keep him, but you know, dear, the little milk he drinks is more than we can afford, and as he gets bigger he will require more."

“Yes, I know,” said Cassy, faintly.

“Wouldn’t you rather he should go where he can have all he wants to eat and drink, and where he will have plenty of room to run about?”

Cassy gave a long sigh. “Who is going to take him, mother?”

“The milkman. You know he brings his milk direct from his farm, and he is a kind man who has children of his own, and I know they will be good to the little doggie. I think it would be better that he should go before you and Jerry become too fond of him, for you see he has only been with you such a short time that you will not miss him as you would if you waited longer.”

“I know,” Cassy repeated, but the tears still stood in her eyes.

She had hoped that the puppy might be allowed to stay altogether, although from the first her mother had declared that it could not. Jerry was scarcely less distressed than Cassy when he was told that the puppy must go. He did not say much, but he carried the little fellow off to his room and when they came out again

Jerry's eyes were very red, and if any one had taken the trouble to feel the top of the puppy's head he would have discovered a wet spot upon it, caused by the tears that Jerry had shed.

"If we only lived in the country," said the boy, "we might keep him, but if anything was going to happen to him on account of our keeping him I would rather have him go and be safe. He won't get any more tin cans tied to his tail, I'll bet."

Cassy nodded emphatically.

"Yes, I'm glad, too, for him, but I'm dreadful sorry for us."

"I declare," said Mrs. Law, "I have been so taken up with the thought of the puppy that I nearly forgot to tell you something very pleasant. Who do you think was here this morning?"

"I can't guess. The rag man? Did you sell the rags? Then we will have something good for supper," for the visit of the rag man always meant an extra treat, a very modest one, to be sure, but still one that the children looked forward to.

"No, it wasn't the rag man; it was some one

much nicer, and he brought an invitation for you."

"For me?" Cassy's eyes opened wide.

"Yes, an invitation to spend the day on Saturday."

"Oh, mother, tell me where. Hurry, hurry and tell me."

"At Mr. Dallas's."

"Oh! oh! a whole day in that lovely place! Was it Mr. McClure?"

"No, it was Rock Hardy. A little girl is to be there for a few days, and Mrs. Dallas thought it would be nice for some one to come and play with her."

"And they asked me. Oh, how perfectly fine. I hope she is nice and friendly and isn't stuck up."

"If she is like Rock Hardy I don't think you have anything to fear."

"No, indeed, and did you say I could go mother?"

"Yes."

"I wish Jerry could go, too."

"Jerry is going in the afternoon."

Cassy clapped her hands. "Good! I am so

glad. I wish he would come back so we could tell him," for after his farewell to the puppy, Jerry had not seen fit to remain within sight and hearing of him. "I don't feel so bad about losing the dear doggie now," Cassy went on to say. "I must tell Miss Morning-Glory about it!"

She had not told her brother about this new friend, for Jerry was of too practical a turn to appreciate the fancy, and Cassy had asked her mother not to tell him. "You understand, mother," she said, "'cause mothers always can understand better than boys, and I don't want Jerry to laugh at me. Do you know," she told her mother, "that it was Rock Hardy who made me think of that name; he called me by it."

"Did he? I suppose Miss Morning-Glory will not go with you on Saturday."

"I don't believe she will want to," returned Cassy, easily. "She wouldn't go without being invited," which adjusted the matter very satisfactorily.

"Did Rock say what was the name of the little girl?" Cassy asked.

“Her name is Eleanor Dallas,” Mrs. Law told her; “she is Mrs. Dallas’s niece.”

“I hope she is as nice as Rock,” said Cassy, a little uneasily.

THE VISIT

CHAPTER V

THE VISIT

“SHE is such a real little lady,” Rock had told his mother, when speaking of Cassy. “Indeed,” he added, “they are all of them much too good to be living in that dirty, noisy street. I wish there was some way to get them away from there, but I think Mrs. Law is very proud and it wouldn’t do to seem to patronize them. I wish you’d think about it, and see if you can’t get up some nice plan to put them where they belong.”

So Mrs. Dallas had put on her thinking cap, and when little Eleanor Dallas came to spend Easter at her uncle’s house, Mrs. Dallas said to Rock: “How would it do to ask your little friend Cassy Law, to come and play with Eleanor? If she is as well-behaved as you say, I should think we might ask her. You know what a good-hearted child Eleanor is and I am sure she will like to have a little girl to spend the day with her. You see her Cousin Florence is

still in Florida with her parents and Eleanor will not have any playmate but you."

"I think it would be a jolly plan," Rock agreed, "and do you mind if Jerry comes too? He's a nice little chap; you remember I told you about that affair with the little dog."

"I see no objection to his coming, but I think we'll have him come in the afternoon, but Cassy might spend the day and there will be a good chance to get acquainted with her." And that was how Cassy came to be asked.

The prospect of this visit did much towards comforting the children after the milkman had borne away the little dog, and they made it their chief subject of conversation. They hoped it would be a pleasant day, that the little girl would be just like Rock, that John McClure would not be too busy, and that they would be allowed to play in the garden.

"Shall I wear my best frock?" Cassy asked her mother one of the first things.

"Yes, you will have to; it is growing too small for you anyhow." Mrs. Law sighed. "You'd better bring it to me and let me see if there is anything to be done to it."

Cassy obeyed. Her plaid frock was the best she had; it was not of very good material, but it was simply made, and so did not look as badly as it would have done if it had been fussy and showy. It was rather short in the sleeves and waist as well as in the skirt, and after looking it over Mrs. Law said, "If I had time, I might be able to alter it, but I am afraid you will have to wear it as it is this time, for I have all I can do to get this work done by Saturday."

"I will help you all I can," said Cassy wistfully.

"I know you will, dear child, but you cannot sew for me, and there are things beyond your little strength which only I can do, and on Saturday morning Jerry must be at the market, for we can't afford to let that go. Hang up the dress again."

Cassy did as she was told, yet she did wish that she had a new frock for this unusual occasion. She wondered if the little girl she was going to see would be very finely dressed, and she found as the time approached that she rather dreaded the visit. But for the fact that she knew and liked Rock and John McClure, she would almost

have preferred to stay at home with Flora and Miss Morning-Glory; and when at last she did set out it was with many misgivings.

She was very conscious of the shortness of her sleeves, and the shabbiness of her shoes, though Jerry had blackened up these latter to the best of his ability, and they both agreed that the little cracks in the sides did not show so very much.

The little girl's heart was beating very fast as she approached the old Dallas place. Was she to go up the front steps and ring the bell, or was she to go around to the side gate and enter that way? She had not thought to ask, and not to do the proper thing would be dreadful.

Finally, after a thoughtful pause, she slowly ascended the steps. If she were going to see a little girl whose uncle's house this was, she must surely enter as did other visitors, her judgment very wisely told her. She was spared any further confusion, for the door had hardly been opened by the neat maid when Rock appeared, saying: "We've been watching for you. Eleanor hoped you'd come early. Come right in. Here she is, Eleanor." And then Rock led her into a

room furnished in rich warm colors, and with bookcases all around the walls.

From the depths of a big chair sprang a little girl who looked, as Cassy afterwards told her mother, exactly like Miss Morning-Glory; blue eyes, pink cheeks, and angel curls were all hers.

"I'm so glad to see you," said Eleanor sweetly. "Will you go up-stairs and take off your hat, or will you take it off here?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Cassy bashfully. Her hat seemed such a very, very insignificant thing beside all this grandeur, but she took it off and held it in her lap.

Eleanor gently took it from her.

"I will hang it up here in the hall," she said, "and you will know where it is when you want it."

This done the two little girls sat looking at each other, feeling rather embarrassed. Eleanor was older and taller than Cassy; moreover as hostess she felt it her duty to begin the talking, and she ventured the first remark.

"It is such a pleasant spring day. We were afraid that it might rain and that then you wouldn't come."

Cassy felt pleased, but did not know exactly what to say in reply.

“Are you the only girl?” Eleanor asked.

“Yes,” Cassy replied; “there are only Jerry and me.”

“I am the only one,” Eleanor told her. “Don’t you wish you had a sister? I often do.”

“Yes, so do I,” Cassy answered. She would like to have told Eleanor of the new friend of her fancy, Miss Morning-Glory, but she did not feel well enough acquainted yet, and for a little while the two children sat looking at each other wondering what to say next. Then Rock came in.

“How is the puppy?” he asked.

“Oh, didn’t you know? He has gone to live with the milkman,” Cassy told him. “Mother thought he would be so much better off there. He lives in the country, you know, and he said Ragged Robin was a real nice little fellow, and he’d be glad to have him, but we were awfully sorry to let him go.”

“Is that the little dog you were telling me about?” asked Eleanor, turning to Rock.

“Yes, you know, Jerry saved him from that

pack of boys," he made answer. "Why don't you take Cassy up-stairs to the sitting-room, Eleanor? It is lots more cheerful up there; or maybe she'd rather go into the garden, she's such a lover of flowers."

"We might go up-stairs and see Aunt Dora first," said Eleanor, "and go to the garden after a while. Don't you think so, Cassy?"

Cassy agreed, although in her secret heart she preferred the garden first, last, and always. Then up-stairs they went to a bright sunny room which Cassy thought the prettiest she had ever seen.

There was a big table, covered with magazines, in the middle of the floor; the window held flowering plants; a number of comfortable chairs and a wide, soft lounge looked as if they were meant for every-day use, while the room had just enough pretty trifles in it to make it look well. The pictures on the walls were a few water-colors, flower pieces and landscapes; while the walls themselves were a soft green with a border of trailing roses. Sitting by the window was a pretty woman, as charming as the room itself.

"Aunt Dora," said Eleanor, "this is Cassy Law."

Mrs. Dallas held out her hand.

"I am so glad you could come, Cassy," she said. "I know Eleanor and you will enjoy playing together. What do you say to having this room to play in this morning? You are going to have luncheon in the garden, or at least Rock has a little scheme that he and John are carrying out, and unless you would specially like to play there, I have my suspicions that they would rather you would keep out of the way this morning, and let them give you a surprise. You can have the whole afternoon there, you know."

"Oh, do let it be a surprise," exclaimed Eleanor. "I love surprises. Don't you, Cassy?"

"Sometimes," she replied. She felt rather shy as yet, and stood somewhat in awe of this pretty lady in her dainty morning gown.

"I am going to lend Cassy the dolls to play with," said Mrs. Dallas to Eleanor, "Rock's and mine, you know; and you will have your precious Rubina, so you will both be provided." She left the room for a moment and returned bringing a doll dressed in boy's clothes and an-

other in girl's clothes; the latter was quite an old-fashioned one.

"These are Marcus Delaplaine and Flora McFlimsey," said Mrs. Dallas. "They are both Rock's now, although Flora used to be mine when I was a little girl, so naturally she is much older than Marcus. Rock was always fonder of his own doll when he was a little fellow. He used to say he felt more at home with him. You know where the piece bag is, Eleanor, and if you want to make doll's clothes you can help yourselves. You don't have to call the doll Flora if you'd rather name her something else," she said, smiling down at Cassy, and holding the doll of her childish days affectionately.

"Oh, but I would like to," Cassy replied. "My doll is named Flora."

"Is she? then it will seem quite natural to you." She smiled again and nodding to the two girls, she left them together in the pleasant room. It was not long before they were playing like old friends. Indeed before the morning was over Cassy felt so at home with Eleanor that she told her all about Miss Morning-Glory, and had confessed her discomfort at

having to wear a frock she had so nearly outgrown.

Eleanor comforted her upon this last score.

"I am sure it is a real pretty plaid," she said, "and the warm weather is coming when you won't have to wear it." Nevertheless, Cassy knew that she had nothing else so good, and that it would be some time before she could lay this aside. Eleanor was quite taken with the idea of Cassy's imaginary friend, and suggested that she should make a third in their plays. "It is just as easy to make believe that she is here as to make believe that the dolls can talk," she declared. "What does she look like?"

"She looks just like you," Cassy told her a little timidly.

"Oh, then, I'll be Miss Morning-Glory," declared Eleanor. "Would you like that?"

Cassy's eyes showed her pleasure, as she nodded "Yes."

"Then you won't feel as if I were a stranger at all, and you can talk to me just as you do to her," Eleanor went on to say.

This did place Cassy upon easier terms with her new friend, and if Eleanor was sometimes

surprised by Cassy's odd remarks, she was none the less interested in the little girl, though she did not wonder that Cassy's schoolmates called her Miss Oddity. A little girl who felt entirely at home with spiders, who thought daddy-long-legs fascinating, and who would make such remarks as: "You remember the dear little inching-worm I had last summer, Miss Morning-Glory. I always feel so sorry to think I shall never see it again," was a queer person surely.

About one o'clock Rock appeared.

"What time will Jerry be here?" he asked Cassy.

"What time is it?"

"One o'clock."

"Oh, then he can't be long, for he is generally at home by half-past twelve, at the latest, on Saturdays."

"Are you all ready for us, Rock?" asked Eleanor. "I am just wild to see what you have been doing."

Rock smiled. "You will see very soon."

"Are we going to eat luncheon out of doors?"

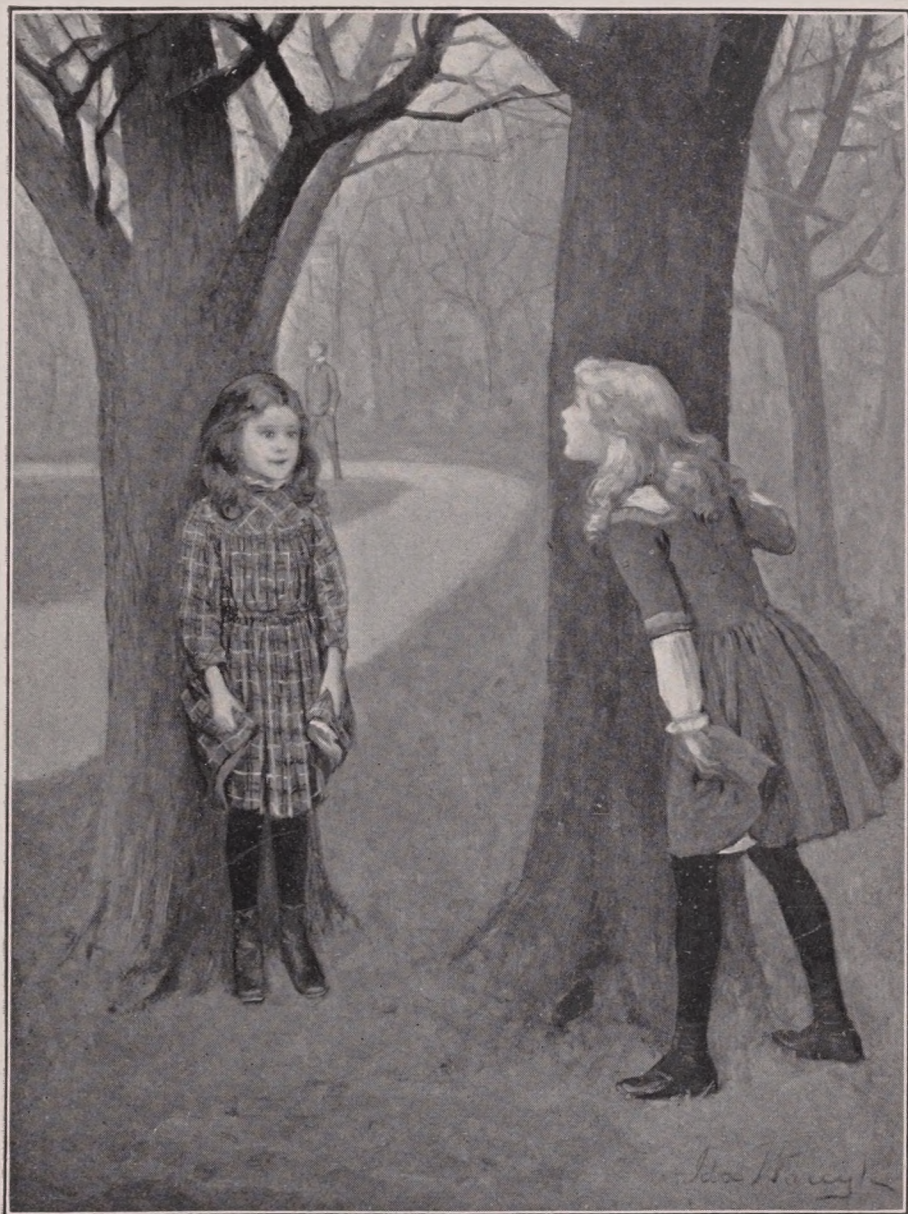
"Not exactly."

“Oh dear! I wish Jerry would come.” Eleanor could not curb her impatience.

“There he is now,” cried Rock. “Come, girls.” And the three rushed down-stairs and into the garden to meet Jerry, who was standing with John McClure waiting for them.

“You want to see what we have been doing, don’t you, Miss Eleanor?” said John, smiling at Eleanor’s eagerness. “Well, come along.” And he led the way down to the foot of the garden where stood a small brick building that was used in winter for the storage of flower-pots, bulbs and such like things.

As John opened the door the children exclaimed, “Oh, how fine!” for it was like a fairy bower. Along the shelves at each side were ranged flowering plants, and pots of trailing vines. On the floor reaching up to the shelves were boxes of blooming shrubs and palms; two canary birds, in their cages swung in the windows, were singing blithely. In the middle of the floor a table was spread; a centerpiece of ferns and pansies ornamented it, and at each one’s place was a little bunch of sweet violets tied with green and purple ribbons. A pretty



"THEY PLAYED ALL SORTS OF GAMES"

basket at each end of the table was tied with the same colors; one basket was filled with sticks of chocolate tied with the lilac and green, and the other held delicate green and purple candies.

“It is just lovely, Rock!” cried Eleanor. “Did you do it all yourself? I think it is lovely, and—oh, yes, I see, to-morrow will be Easter, and that is why you can use all the flowers and plants before they are sent to the church.”

The luncheon that was served, though not a very elaborate one, seemed so to Cassy and Jerry; they felt as if suddenly transported to an Arabian Night's entertainment, and they looked across the table at each other with smiling eyes.

When the luncheon was over they played all sorts of games, up and down the garden walks and in among the trees and shrubbery. The day would have been one full of content, without a cloud, but for a single accident.

The two girls were hiding in the tool-house, when Eleanor caught sight of a chrysalis swinging from above them.

“Oh,” she cried, “I do believe that is a fine chrysalis of some kind, a rare moth or butterfly.

I am going to get it, and see what it will turn out." She clambered upon some boards to reach the prize, Cassy deeply interested watching her, when suddenly her foot slipped and she knocked from a lower shelf a can of green paint which went down splash upon the floor, spattering Cassy from head to foot.

Cassy was overwhelmed, for poor as the dress was and half ashamed of it as she had been, nevertheless it was the best she had, and her eyes filled with tears. Eleanor, as distressed as her visitor, was at her side in an instant.

"Oh, what have I done? What have I done?" she cried. "Oh, dear, oh, dear! I am afraid it won't come out. Let us go to Aunt Dora; she will know what to do." She caught Cassy by the hand and sped with her into the house, calling "Aunt Dora, Aunt Dora, do come and help us! It was all my fault. I have ruined Cassy's dress."

Mrs. Dallas appeared at the door of the bathroom where Eleanor had gone with Cassy to try the effect of hot water.

"You didn't mean to," put in Cassy hastily.

"No, of course not. My foot slipped, Aunt

Dora. I was climbing up for a chrysalis that was in the tool-house, and I knocked the can from the shelf."

"Cassy had better take her frock off," said Mrs. Dallas, "and I will see what benzine will do. I am afraid it will not take it out altogether, and that it will leave a stain, but we will try it. Call Martha, Eleanor, and we will do our best with it."

Much abashed Cassy removed her frock and after some time the paint was taken out as far as possible, but it did leave a stain, and where the spots were rubbed the goods was roughened and unsightly. Cassy's stockings and shoes, too, were spattered, but the latter were easily cleaned, and Eleanor furnished her with a pair of clean stockings, so this much was readily settled. The frock was another matter, and poor Cassy had visions of staying at home from church, from Sunday-school, and upon all sorts of occasions that required something beside the faded, patched, every-day frock which she wore to school. She could hardly keep back her tears when Mrs. Dallas and Eleanor left her in the latter's room while they went off to air the unfortunate frock.

PLEASANT DREAMS

CHAPTER VI

PLEASANT DREAMS

AFTER a little while Eleanor returned, went to the closet in her room and hung two or three of her own frocks over her arm; then she went out again and presently Mrs. Dallas came in alone carrying a pretty blue serge suit over her arm.

“Cassy, dear,” she said, “will you try this on?”

Cassy shrank back a little, but Mrs. Dallas smiled and said, coaxingly: “Please, dear,” and Cassy slipped her arms into the sleeves. “It is a little large,” Mrs. Dallas decided, “but not so very much, and it will take no time to alter it; I will have Martha do it at once. Eleanor feels so badly about having spoiled your frock, and I know her mother would wish that she should in some way make good the loss. Please don’t mind taking this; it is one that Eleanor has almost outgrown, and it is only

a little long in the sleeves and skirt for you. I will have Martha alter it before you go home, for we would both feel so badly to have your best frock spoiled, and to-morrow being Sunday how could you get another at such short notice?"

She spoke as if Cassy's were much the better frock and the little girl was grateful, though she said earnestly: "It is much nicer than mine, Mrs. Dallas."

"It ought to be. When a person has spoiled your best frock she ought to supply you with a new one, quite new, and this is not, though it is not worn." So Cassy was furnished in this unexpected way with a frock which was neither too short in the sleeves nor the skirt, and which was far better than she ever dared hope for.

"I will send the other one home when it is thoroughly aired," Mrs. Dallas told her.

"You must remember that I am Miss Morning-Glory," Eleanor told her as they parted, "and I shall expect to see you every time I come to Uncle Heath's." So Cassy went off with her clouds lifted and with the memory of the very happiest day of her life.

“She is a queer little child,” Mrs. Dallas told her husband, “but she is a little lady and her mother must be one. I am very much interested in them.”

“So am I, Uncle Heath,” Eleanor said, “and I think it is a dreadful shame that Cassy’s father died of that accident, and that they have never had any money from the railroad people. Jerry says they ought to, and that his mother was advised to—to—what is it they do to railroads to get money?”

“You mean sue them?”

“Oh, yes, that’s it. I knew it was a girl’s name. They ought to have done that, but Mrs. Law hadn’t the money to get a lawyer, and railroads are hard to fight, Jerry says. I don’t see how anybody could fight a railroad, but that is what he said.”

“Humph!” said Mr. Dallas, thoughtfully, “we must look into this.”

Although Mrs. Law looked a little grave when Cassy told of how she came by this fine new frock, she agreed that it was perfectly right under the circumstances to accept it. She listened to the account of the day’s doings with

much interest, and was well pleased that they should have had such a good time.

"Eleanor looks just like Miss Morning-Glory," Cassy whispered, as her mother tucked her in bed.

"Rock Hardy is the splendidest boy I ever saw," Jerry confided to her, and his mother gave him a kiss assuring him that no boy could be dearer than hers no matter how splendid he was. Jerry had worked hard to earn his holiday, and he had proudly poured his earnings, sixty cents, into his mother's lap when he came home from market that Saturday morning. Both the children were very tired from the events of the day and they fell asleep so soon and slept so soundly that they did not hear a tap at the door and a voice inquiring for Mrs. Law, neither did they see Mr. and Mrs. Dallas enter, nor hear the long conversation that followed.

They would have been surprised to hear their mother tell all the details of their father's accident, for she did not like to talk of it, and they would have wondered to see Mr. Dallas from time to time, jot down something in a little

note-book. And Cassy did not know that it was not Miss Morning-Glory who kissed her as she dreamed, but that it was Mrs. Dallas who leaned over the bed to see the sleeping child still holding a violet in her moist hand, a little limp violet now, but still a sweet one. Nor did she know that Mrs. Dallas handed her mother two cunning baskets as she left the room, and that Mr. Dallas set down something in the corner of the room when he came in.

Yet she had pleasant dreams, and the first thing when she woke in the morning she remembered that it was Easter Day, and then she sat up in bed very wide awake. They would have eggs for breakfast, and they would have biscuits; she smelled them baking.

She popped up out of bed and looked towards the window where the sun came streaming in; then she gave a glad cry and her bare feet pattered across the floor, for, standing by the side of her treasured geranium and casting it quite in the shade, was a tall white lily, and on the other side a pot of pansies. Cassy clasped her hands and stood on tiptoe to reach the tall lily.

“Oh, angel lily, angel lily, where did you come from?” she cried.

“Why, daughter, don’t you know it is Easter Day?” said her mother, watching her delight with a pleased smile.

“Yes, but we never, never had a lily before. Did father send it?”

Her mother’s eyes grew moist.

“Perhaps he did,” she answered, softly. Then after a silence, “Mrs. Dallas brought it and the pansies last night, the lily for you and the pansies for Jerry.”

“Oh, mother, and what did they bring you?”

Her mother’s eyes smiled. “Good news, dear, and hope. Hurry now and get dressed. I hear Jerry stirring, and the biscuits are nearly done.”

Cassy made her toilet with great haste, her eyes wandering every minute to the tall, stately lily.

What a wonderful Easter morning for her. She remembered that Eleanor had said that John would send to the church the flowers which had decorated the room where they had lunched. She wished that she had asked if it was the same church to which she and her mother went, if so,

how pleasant it would be to see the flowers again.

“For,” thought Cassy, “I know those flowers; they are friends of mine, and I’d like to see them there all standing around the chancel. Dear angel lily, are you sorry you couldn’t go too?”

She nodded towards the white blossom and then went back to her room to put on the frock which was now a reminder of her pleasant yesterday. She viewed herself with much satisfaction in the little mirror over the bureau, and then she went out to where her mother was setting the breakfast on the table.

“Oh, mother, let us put the pansies on the table,” she said; “they are so sunny-looking and they are smiling all over their faces. The lilies are so solemn; they make me feel as I do in church, but the pansies are funny like brownies.” She lifted the pot of pansies and set it in the middle of the table, and then stood off to see the effect. “Jerry, Jerry,” she called, “hurry up; you don’t know what there is to see out here.”

This aroused Jerry’s curiosity and he made short work of being ready for Cassy to show him the plants.

“Just think,” she said, “Mr. and Mrs. Dallas were here last night, and we didn’t know it. Wasn’t it lovely of them to bring these to us? And, oh, Jerry, if they go to our church we’ll see our flowers there; the ones we had in the luncheon room yesterday.”

That did not appeal very strongly to Jerry, though he admired the pansies and thought the lily a “dandy.” He was more concerned at the prospect of breakfast and certainly was better pleased with something that Mrs. Law produced from the chest.

“Rock and Eleanor sent them to you,” she told the children as she handed each of them a little box.

Jerry had his open in a jiffy and gave a whistle of delight while Cassy fumbled nervously at the string which tied hers. But it was opened at last and disclosed a little nest holding three eggs, one of pink sugar, one of chocolate, and one “a real righty egg” dyed purple and with the name “Cassy” upon it. They had never had more than one egg apiece on Easter and this rich supply was something delightful.

“Oh, mother, mother, what makes them all so

lovely to us?" Cassy cried. "I feel like singing. I'd like to be a canary bird."

"Sho! I wouldn't," responded Jerry. "I'd rather be myself. I don't want to be shut up in a cage and live on bird-seed." He had just finished his sixth biscuit and it is not to be wondered at that he should consider bird-seed rather insufficient for his appetite. Hot biscuits were much more to his liking.

Cassy set off very proudly for Sunday-school, yet, curiously enough, the imaginative little soul felt a little regretful that her old carefully worn frock must stay at home, for Mrs. Dallas had brought it back with her the evening before. It seemed treating it with scorn, and before she went out she turned to the closet where it hung and touched it lovingly.

"You are a dear good frock," she whispered, "and I love you. I am proud of my new one, but I don't love it." And then she left a crack of the closet door open that her old plaid frock might be in view of the white lily on the window-sill. She did not tell her mother of her feelings on this subject. There were many things which little Miss Oddity said and did

which few persons would understand, and she was aware of it. Her world of fancy was a very different one from that in which most persons live.

She stood rapt and thoughtful before her lily till her brother should be ready. She was wondering if it would be right to allow Miss Morning-Glory to go to church with her, and then she decided that it would be better that she should remain at home to keep the lily company, for maybe the lily would be lonely in a strange place with no acquaintances but the pansies and the geranium. However, she thought Miss Morning-Glory might be permitted to walk to church with her, for she had on a new frock, too, this morning; it was of purple and green, and in her mind's eye Cassy saw plainly the many floating ends of satin ribbon which ornamented this invisible companion's Easter gown.

When she reached the Sunday-school and had taken her seat, she looked around to see if Rock and Eleanor were there, but they were not, though in church she caught sight of Eleanor's "angel curls" in a pew near the front, and then she saw Mrs. Dallas, and by peeping around the big pillar near them she could get a glimpse of

Rock, so she knew that the flowers that lifted their fair heads around the chancel were her flower friends. She thought she could distinguish them from the stranger ones, and she nodded gravely to them as she left the church.

In consequence of sitting on the other side of the church she had no opportunity of speaking to Eleanor unless she should wait outside, and this she asked to be allowed to do.

“I want to thank her,” she told her mother.

After a while she saw Eleanor coming along ahead of her aunt. She wore a pretty new frock and a hat trimmed with wild flowers. She caught sight of Cassy and smiled, and then went over to where she stood waiting.

“I didn’t know you came here to church,” she said. “Wasn’t the music lovely?”

“Yes, and the flowers were, too. I knew some of them,” Cassy added gravely. “I want to thank you for that dear nest of eggs. I never had so many before.”

“There weren’t very many,” Eleanor returned. “I am glad you liked them. We dyed the purple ones ourselves, Rock and I, and Rock put the names on them.”

“And the lily, the lovely lily,” said Cassy. “I never, never thought I should have one of my very own.” She wanted to thank Mrs. Dallas for it, but felt too shy to go up to her before all that crowd of people. “Please tell Mrs. Dallas I think it is so beautiful, and I think when she is an angel she will look like one of my lilies.”

Eleanor laughed.

“I will surely tell her,” she said. And when she repeated the message Mrs. Dallas smiled, and then her eyes grew very moist.

“And to think that a little sweet soul like that must live in such surroundings. But she shall not always, shall she, Heath?”

She laid her hand on her husband’s shoulder, and he made answer: “Not if I can do anything to prevent it.”

HOW CASSY TRIED TO MAKE A
FIRE

CHAPTER VII

HOW CASSY TRIED TO MAKE A FIRE

ONLY once more did Cassy see Eleanor before she returned home after her Easter holiday, and that was one afternoon, which added another red letter day to Cassy's calendar. Looking over the top of her geranium she saw standing before the door a shining carriage drawn by a pair of glossy bay horses, and presently she heard footsteps approaching the top floor, and then some one knocked. Cassy opened the door and there stood Eleanor.

"I have come to take you to drive," she said. "It is such a nice afternoon to go to the park. Can you go?"

"Oh!" Cassy's breath was almost taken by this announcement. "Come in," she said, "and I will ask mother."

Eleanor stepped into the room. It gave her a little shock to see how very plain it was, just as it

had given her a shock to see the street in which Cassy lived. She had not realized that this little new friend was so very poor, although Rock had told her so. But it was pleasanter up on this top floor than it was below, she reflected. Then she heard Cassy saying, "Here's mother," and she stepped over to where Mrs. Law sat sewing.

"Aunt Dora was not going to use the carriage this afternoon, and she thought it would be nice for Cassy and me to take a little drive; it is such a lovely day, and I am going home to-morrow. May she go?" She looked with sympathetic eyes at Mrs. Law stitching away for dear life, and thought how she would dislike to see her mother work so hard.

Mrs. Law stopped the machine for a moment and looked up with a smile at Cassy's eager face.

"It is very kind of Mrs. Dallas and you to want to give Cassy such a pleasure. I shall be glad to have her go, and I know she will enjoy it. Go get ready, dear."

"Couldn't you go, too?" Eleanor asked wistfully, looking at Mrs. Law's pale cheeks.

"I am afraid not," was the reply, "though I

thank you for thinking of it. I must finish this work this evening. Won't you sit down and wait? Cassy will not be long."

Eleanor sat down and watched Mrs. Law's swift movements.

"Could I see Flora?" she asked after a few moments' silence.

Mrs. Law smiled.

"Why certainly. I think she is in her crib over there in the corner."

Eleanor looked and saw no crib, but she caught sight of Flora's placid face peeping above the side of the overturned footstool which served as her bed, and she went over and lifted the doll out. She was not a beautiful creature, she reflected; not near so pretty as Rubina, but she appreciated Cassy's devotion to her, and she held her tenderly in her lap till Cassy returned.

"I would like to give her one of mine," she thought, "but it wouldn't be her own child, after all, and she cares just as much for her Flora as I do for my Rubina."

Cassy looked pleased to see Flora receive this attention from her visitor, and was more pleased still when Eleanor insisted upon putting the doll

up on the window-sill where, as she said, she could look out and see them drive off. At the door Eleanor turned:

“Good-bye, Mrs. Law,” she said. “I wish you could go, too,” and then she followed Cassy down-stairs, glad to get out of the ill-smelling house.

The fairy god-mother, the pumpkin coach, and all the other fairy delights seemed to have come to Cassy as she stepped into the carriage. The children of the neighborhood stared open-mouthed at the spectacle of Oddity Law going to drive in a fine carriage. For the moment she was a creature further removed from them than ever. No wonder she was queer, if she could have friends like the pretty little girl at her side.

Cassy was quite conscious of the excitement they were causing, for even the women who lived near by, stood, arms akimbo, to stare after them. Cassy felt a strong desire for a hat as pretty as Eleanor's; hers was only a plain little sailor hat, but it was inconspicuous, and was really much more suitable than a gayer one, but Cassy did not know that.

What a wonderful drive that was! Would Cassy ever forget it? The dogwood was in blossom, and wild flowers were beginning to spring up along the woodland roads. The child could not talk much, but she was very content to listen to Eleanor's lively chatter, and when the shining carriage drew up again before her door, Jerry was there to help her out, and his look of pride as he glanced around at the astounded Billy Miles was good to Cassy. And then Eleanor drove off and Cassy saw her no more, but she was not forgotten, and when the two again met it was not in that street, though of what was to come neither of them dreamed.

It was one Saturday morning two or three weeks later when the glory of the lilies had departed and the pansies were dwindling in size, and only the geranium held its own, showing new blossoms and new buds. Early summer was at hand; the streets were resounding with cries of "Red-ripe strawberries!" or "Rags, bones, old bottles!" and the hand organs were out in force.

Cassy had been busy all morning, for her mother had gone out upon an important errand, and Jerry was running his errands at the market.

From time to time the little girl addressed a remark to the invisible Miss Morning-Glory, or to Flora, who stared at her with round black eyes from her corner.

It being Saturday there was much to be done, and Cassy had been busy sweeping and dusting, and putting in order. Now she was a little tired and was resting in the big rocking-chair, swinging herself back and forth and chanting a little song to herself, which she made up as she went along:

“There once was a lily that died,
And it was a lady, a lady,
But it went to heaven one night
And now it's an angel, an angel.”

She sang the song very softly, looking over to where her pot of lilies stood. Now it showed only green leaves, but Cassy's thoughts were busy in thinking of the lilies which had been and wondering whether they were now alive in another world.

Suddenly the twelve o'clock whistles blew shrilly and the little girl jumped down from her chair.

“There, Flora,” she said, “it is twelve o'clock

and Jerry will be home soon, and there'll be no dinner for him unless I get it. I wonder if I can. Mother said she couldn't tell when she'd be back, so I'll have to do the best I can, for Jerry will be so hungry; he always is on Saturdays. I will see what there is in the safe." She opened the door and looked at the various contents of the safe.

There was a plate of cold corn-bread, little dish of beef stew, and a small, a very small plate of cheese. Cassy regarded these thoughtfully; they did not look very promising, and she shut the safe door.

"I'll try and make the fire, Flora," she remarked, "and then Miss Morning-Glory and I will get dinner. We are going to have—to have—chicken sandwiches, and green peas, and fried potatoes, and little long rolls, and strawberries and ice-cream and cake. Oh, yes, and first there will be soup in little cups." She had her luncheon at Mrs. Dallas's in mind.

Going to the stove she took off the lids and looked in. She had never made a fire, for Jerry or her mother always did that, and she was a little dubious about the matter. Mrs. Law had to

be very frugal in the matter of fuel so there was no coal to be put on, and Cassy thought she could easily manage the wood. So she stuffed in some paper and piled some sticks of wood on top of it, then shut it all up tight after lighting it. In a few minutes she looked at it, but it was dead out. She tried a second time, but with no better success. How in the world did her mother manage to do it so easily?

She stood looking at it, puzzled what to do next, then she remembered that some chips and light kindling must go in on top of the paper. She tried to get off some little slivers, and by so doing managed first to get a splinter in her forefinger and then to cut a gash in her thumb. She was ready to cry, and indeed the tears were standing in her eyes, for the time was going and Jerry would be at home very soon. She could not bear to confess to him that she could not make fire, for Jerry, like all boys, was ready to tease. So she took off the lids again to make a last effort.

Just then there was a knock at the door, and when it was opened there stood Rock Hardy.

“I came to tell you that your mother will not

be home till late," he told Cassy. He caught sight of her thumb tied up with a rag. "Why, what a woebegone little face," he said, "and your finger is bleeding. What have you been doing to yourself?"

"I've been trying to make a fire and it won't burn." Cassy's voice was full of tears. "And I can't get this splinter out, and I cut myself trying to make kindling."

"You poor little girl! you have had trouble of your own. Here, let me see. I'll get that splinter out, and tie up that thumb properly, and make the fire, too. Are you here all alone?"

"Yes, you know Jerry has his market errands to do, and I wanted to have dinner ready by the time he came."

"Poor little girl," Rock repeated. "First get me a fine needle and I'll see about that splinter. I will try not to hurt you."

Cassy was very brave and stood quite still while Rock probed for the splinter which had gone in quite deep, but at last he triumphantly produced it sticking on the end of the needle, and after tying up her cut thumb, he tipped back her chin and looked into her eyes in which the

tears were standing. She smiled and tried to wink away the drops.

“You were a real soldier,” Rock told her, “and I know it hurt like everything when I had to dig down after that splinter. Now for the fire. What’s wrong? Why, you haven’t opened any of the drafts. See, you must pull out this one, and open this thing in front; that will make a blaze. Now, there she goes. What are you going to cook?”

Cassy looked down a little abashed.

“I wasn’t going to cook anything. I was just going to warm up this stew and the corn-bread. You see mother didn’t expect to be gone so long and she didn’t know we wouldn’t have anything else for dinner.” She made her little excuses haltingly.

Rock was silent for a moment. It seemed like such a poor little dinner to the boy accustomed to a lavish table.

“I wish you would invite me to dinner,” at last he said very gravely.

Cassy cast a startled look at the remnant of stew. There would be enough corn-bread, but she knew Jerry’s appetite, and if Rock’s were

anything like it, some one would have to go hungry from the table. But she said shyly, "Won't you stay and take dinner with us? Jerry will be glad to have you."

"And how about Cassy?"

The child cast another glance at the little supply of food and Rock smiled.

"I can make jolly good chocolate," he said, "and I am going to have some. Do you mind if we make a sort of picnic of this and let every fellow bring his own basket? I think it would be a great lark to do that."

That seemed an easy way out of it, and Cassy, much relieved, nodded and smiled. It suited her exactly to call it a picnic.

"You see," Rock went on, "they're talking over your mother's affairs at our house, and father's lawyer is there, and so you see it is no fun for me, and they'll be glad to get me out of the way. So, if you will invite me to your picnic, I should like it of all things."

"Oh, I do invite you, and here are the rocks, and over there by the window can be the woods, there, where the flowers are."

Rock laughed.

“You have an imagination of your own,” he said. “All right. I am going to shut up some of these drafts so the fire won’t all burn out. I’ll be back directly.” He went flying out and Cassy heard him going down the stairs, two or three steps at a time. Then she turned to her work of setting the table.

“We are going to have a picnic, Flora,” she said. “Isn’t it fun? Won’t Jerry be surprised? I must go into the other room and tell Miss Morning-Glory that she can stay to dinner. I was afraid there wasn’t going to be enough for her and all of us, too.”

She bustled about and had everything in readiness by the time Rock returned. He carried a basket which he set down on the chest.

“Now then,” he said, “let’s see if we are all right. There’s the milk for the chocolate,” producing a bottle; “here are some sardines. What’s this? Oh, yes, the chocolate. Here’s a box of strawberries; they looked tempting; you can cap them while I make the chocolate. What is in this bag? I forget. Oh, yes, that’s sugar, and this is cake and biscuits and stuff. Nobody ever heard of a picnic without cake.



"CASSY'S EYES OPENED WIDER AND WIDER"

I borrowed the basket from the grocer at the corner."

Cassy's eyes opened wider and wider while all this abundance was displayed, but she made her protest.

"But you have brought so much; it is more than your share."

"I don't think so, but if I have, you will have to excuse me, for I am a new hand at marketing. Besides, you furnish the picnic grounds; all these rocks and that grove over there, and the fire and the dishes. I think when you come to look at it that I have furnished the least." Which statement satisfied Cassy, who went to work to cap the strawberries while Rock set the milk to boil for the chocolate.

They were in the midst of these performances when Jerry came in.

"Hallo!" he cried, as he saw this unusual state of affairs. "Where's mother?"

"She is at our house," replied Rock, "or at least she was. I left her there, and father was talking for all he was worth to the lawyer, so I reckon they will enter that suit, and I do hope you will win."

"Oh," exclaimed Cassy. "I forgot to ask you if you knew anything about it; we thought that was what mother was going for."

"Yes, I asked father, and he said it was too early to tell yet but there was a good prospect of your getting something. I say, old fellow," he gave Jerry a friendly slap on the back, "I have invited myself to a picnic lunch to celebrate the event. They are glad to have me out of the way on this occasion and Cassy was so good as to ask me to stay and dine with you." He gave Cassy an amused look as he spoke and she looked down, remembering how very unready she was to invite him.

"My, that's a jolly good feed," cried Jerry, his eyes roaming over the table. "I am as hungry as a bear."

"I'm glad of that," said Rock, "for I am too. I could eat every mouthful of that stew."

"I wish you would," said Jerry, frankly. "I'm tired of it; I'd a lot rather have the sardines."

"All right, it's a go," said Rock. "I hope you don't want any, Cassy. Wouldn't you rather have the sardines, too? then I can have all the stew."

Cassy confessed that she would rather, and Rock drew the dish of stew to his side of the table.

"Did you have a good day, Jerry?" Cassy asked.

"Not very; I only made thirty cents."

Rock looked at him. "To think of this little fellow helping to support his family," was his thought, and he gave Jerry an admiring glance.

"That's more than I ever earned in one day," he said, soberly.

"Oh, but you don't have to," Jerry replied. "I reckon I wouldn't either, if I were you."

"Never mind, old fellow," Rock went on, "you'll be twice the man for it. I tell you when a fellow shows what he is willing to do and that he isn't going to shirk, it goes a great way. John McClure told father about your insisting upon doing something to pay for that little measly geranium you got for Cassy, and ever since then father's been keen to see to this business of your mother's. John McClure is a fine man. Father says he is one of the most intelligent fellows he knows. He is a Scotchman by birth and is well educated, but he had some

trouble with his people at home and came to America to make his living any way that he could. He'd always been fond of gardening, so he applied for the place as gardener with us, and has been there ever since we've lived here. I believe he will come into some property some day, and we'll be sorry to part with him, I tell you."

"I just love him," said Cassy.

"I think he's a brick," said Jerry. "Haven't you always lived in that house?"

"No, indeed, only for a few years. It really belongs to old Mr. Dallas, but he and his wife are obliged to go south every year, and so when my mother and Mr. Heath Dallas were married, his father wanted them to take the place and keep it from running down. So that suited everybody, and we've been living there two years. Mother loves it and so do I, and I believe John McClure does, too."

"I should think he would," Cassy remarked fervently.

"Father would like to build a little house in the corner of the garden for John, but he says, no, he has no one to keep house for him and that

some day he will have a place of his own; I think he means to be a florist and have greenhouses and such things; he reads about gardens and plants, and all that sort of thing, all the time."

"I should think that would be the finest business," said Jerry. "I tell you flowers sell for a big price sometimes."

"I know they do, especially in midwinter. Anyhow everything John puts in the ground seems to grow, and I should think he'd make a success of that business, for he's what father calls a 'canny Scot,' though he's not a bit stingy. By the way, I heard my father ask if you had any relatives; I suppose you haven't, have you?"

"No," Jerry told him, "at least not very near ones. Father had no brothers or sisters, and mother's people lived in England. Her father and mother died when she was little, and she came over here with her aunt."

"Oh, I see," said Rock. He had wondered why Mrs. Law had been left with no one to give her a helping hand.

THE SUMMER LONG

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUMMER LONG

HAVING satisfied his appetite to the point of discomfort, Jerry pushed back his plate with a sigh, shaking his head when Cassy asked if he would have more strawberries.

"Then we'll save them and the rest of the things for mother," she said with a satisfied air. "Unless," she looked at Rock with sudden misgiving, "unless you meant to carry them home."

Rock laughed.

"Not I, if you please. I've no notion of doing any such thing. I am too lazy to move and the thought of having to burden myself with a basket is too much for me. I will help you to wipe the dishes, though, and Jerry can put them away."

"Do you really mean," said Jerry, slowly, having been in a brown study, "that the railroad people will pay mother some money?"

"I think so," Rock told him, "but one can't say positively. Father says it is a very good

case for damages, but it has been so long now that perhaps they will not want to pay the whole amount that is claimed, but he is pretty sure they will compromise, and he knows what he's talking about."

Cassy did not exactly understand all this, but she knew it meant good fortune for her mother; that hope of which she had spoken on Easter Day, and she wondered if it could mean as much as that they could have a cottage with morning-glories over the porch, and if they could move away and be rid of Billy Miles forever.

As if in answer to her thought Rock asked her: "Have you seen anything of our friend Billy Miles lately?"

"Our friend," Cassy repeated in scorn. "I'd like to see myself calling him my friend."

"Well, you'll get rid of him soon, I hope," Rock told her.

"Do you really think so?" Cassy exclaimed. "I hope we shall, and, oh, I'd like to get rid of a good many things."

"What, for instance?"

"Oh, most of the schoolgirls, and this horrid noisy street and Mrs. Boyle's parrot. I wish I

could go to another school and move into another street, and never see the parrot again.”

“Why, don’t you like the parrot? I think she is very funny.”

Cassy shook her head.

“She is a bad bird, and says things in such a wicked way like old Mrs. Finnegan, and they laugh just alike. Polly bites, too, and is so cross. Sometimes I sit on the fence and look at her and she looks at me and says: ‘You’re bad! You’re bad!’ and I say, ‘I am not as bad as you. You are bad!’ And then she laughs as if she liked to be bad. I believe she has a black heart,” Cassy concluded, soberly.

Rock laughed.

“The poor Polly! I don’t believe she is as wicked as you make out, but I’ve no doubt but by this time next year you will be far away from here.”

“Oh, let’s pretend we will,” cried Cassy, stopping in her work of clearing off the dishes. “You say what you think we’ll be doing, and I’ll say, and Jerry can.”

“That reminds me of a play we have sometimes, where one begins a story and one after

another goes on with it till it is very funny by the time it is finished. Here goes: Next year at this time you will be living in a pretty little country town."

"Where?" asked Cassy, fishing with a fork for the soap in her pan of hot water.

"Why, of course in the same town where Eleanor lives."

"How lovely! Go on."

"And you'll live in a nice little white cottage——"

"With morning-glories over the porch."

"Yes, and roses. I think I know just where it is."

"Oh, I wish I did!" Cassy dropped her mop and clasped her soapy hands.

"And you'll have a dog and a cat."

"And chickens," Jerry broke in.

"And a garden," Cassy added, eagerly.

"And pigeons, maybe," from Jerry.

"And we'll have picnics whenever we want them," Rock went on.

"We?"

"Yes; you're not going to leave me out. I go up there every summer, if you please."

“Oh, do you?”

“That’s fine,” said Jerry. “Oh, pshaw! I almost thought it was going to be really. Cass, where shall I put the milk?”

“On the window ledge, outside; it is cooler there than anywhere else.”

“Gee whiz!” exclaimed Rock, looking at his watch. “It’s after three and I promised George Reed that I’d be there by half-past. I must travel. Good-bye, Cassy. Good-bye, Jerry; I’ve had a bang up time.” He lost no time in getting away, gazed after admiringly by both the children, Jerry declaring that he was “hot stuff,” and Cassy saying: “I think he’s like a real Prince of Wales.”

It was late when their mother returned, tired out, and after Cassy had bustled around and had set before her the remains of the feast, she told them that so far all seemed very promising, but that such matters could not be settled at once. Yet Cassy saw that there was a brighter smile on her mother’s face and that she did not turn at once to that hateful pile of sewing.

Yet true it was that before midsummer they had all seen the last of the noisy street, and had

turned their backs upon Billy Miles, Mrs. Boyle and the wicked parrot, for about the first of July, just as Cassy and Jerry were mourning the fact that the Dallas family would soon be going away, and their house would be closed, there came a call from Mrs. Dallas herself which resulted in a most delightful arrangement.

“We are going to leave the city for the summer,” she said to Mrs. Law, “and although heretofore we have always shut up the house, yet this year Mr. Dallas will have to be here more or less, and it would be so much more comfortable for him if he could come to his own home when he is obliged to be in the city; so I have been thinking how very nice it would be if you would consent to take charge of the house during the summer months. I had thought of renting it, but we should feel so much better satisfied to have some one we know in it, and if you would kindly see that Mr. Dallas is made comfortable when he comes to town, I should feel that we would be quits in the matter of rent. John McClure has consented to sleep in the coachman’s quarters at the stable; we take our horses with us, you know, and I think John would be mightily

pleased if you would board him; it might help out with your table expenses if you could do that. The back rooms are really the most agreeable in summer, for they look out on the garden, and the porch at that side is very cool. We always find a breeze there, if there is any stirring. Do you think you could arrange to come?"

Mrs. Law glanced at Cassy, who was looking thin and pale.

"Oh, mother!" cried the child in an imploring tone.

"You would like it, wouldn't you, Cassy?" said Mrs. Dallas, smiling at her.

"Better than anything," said Cassy.

"I know it is a responsibility," Mrs. Dallas went on, "and that one always feels more or less uneasy if he or she is given charge of another's belongings, but you need use only the rooms at the back of the house, and I am sure everything will be in much better condition than if the house were left closed. Mr. Dallas will only sleep there when he is in town, so you will not have to think of meals for him, and, oh yes, whenever you think there is need of extra cleaning you are at liberty

to call upon Martha Collins; I think you may need her once in a while. She understands that, for she is paid half her wages while we are away, and it is an understood thing that she holds herself in readiness to do anything we exact of her. John will see to it that the pavements are kept clean; there is a boy who comes to do that. John says he wouldn't agree to having any other children in and out of his garden, so you and Jerry may consider yourselves complimented," she said, turning to Cassy.

The upshot of the whole matter was that Mrs. Law agreed to accept Mrs. Dallas's offer, and in a few days the Law family found a summer home at the old Dallas place, with John as their boarder. Cassy could scarcely believe her ears that first morning when she was awakened by the robins whistling in the cherry-trees, early, so early, before any one was up. She had a little room next her mother's; both rooms opened on a porch and overlooked the garden. Cassy slipped out of bed and tiptoed to the window. She could see the robins getting their share of the cherries before any one else should gather them, and then her eyes fell upon a wonderful sight just under her

window. Those were morning-glories surely, blue and pink and purple and pearly white, opening now as the light touched them.

“Oh!” whispered the child in ecstasy. “You darlings!” She reached out her hand and drew a bit of the vine towards her, gazing into the frail cups and touching with gentle finger the curling tendrils.

She was so happy that her eyes filled with tears, and she stood there whispering to herself till she heard her mother stir, and then she scampered back to bed again, but not to sleep; the robins were too lively, and when in the course of an hour she heard the click of a grass-mower in the garden, she jumped up and dressed herself, then groped her way down-stairs and let herself out the door into the morning sunshine.

“Hello!” cried John, looking up from his grass-cutting. “You are an early bird.”

“I’m not as early as the robins.”

“No, you’d have to get up betimes to get ahead of them, little robbers that they are.”

“Aren’t there enough cherries for them to have some?” Cassy asked anxiously.

John smiled.

"That depends upon how many you want for yourself. Do you like cherries?"

Cassy thought for a minute.

"I don't believe I ever tasted any. Mother didn't think they were good for us, and she never let us eat them."

"Well, I declare," said John. "But I don't blame her. I doubt if any you ever saw were fit to eat. There is a muckle of difference between cherries picked right off the tree and those you see on the fruit stand at your corner. As soon as I get through this lawn I'll get you some. By to-morrow they ought to be picked, anyhow."

Cassy looked up at the red and white waxy fruit. She thought it looked very pretty among the green leaves.

"What a good time the robins were having, to be sure. She thought it might be great fun to be a robin and go flying, flying among the trees. They did seem to be enjoying themselves so much that the little girl felt sorry that the cherries must be picked, and they be left without any, but she remembered that the cherries would not last very long anyhow, and that the robins would have their share first. Up and down the

lawn John went, while Cassy sat on the step and watched him and the robins, and gazed at the garden before her.

The best of the blossoming was over, but there were a number of flowers still to be seen ; marigolds, and larkspurs, and snap-dragons, phlox and mignonette and monthly roses, not to mention the geraniums. Every time John came to the end of his line he would stop to have a pleasant word, and although he declared that he wasn't getting along very fast, it was evident that he enjoyed Cassy's company.

After a while the grass was cut and lay in sweet smelling heaps upon the lawn.

"That will make quite a little pile of hay," said John, "and there's nothing smells sweeter. Come along now and we'll get those cherries."

Bringing a ladder he placed it against the tree and soon had climbed within reach of the fruit-laden branches. He tossed a cluster down to Cassy.

"Try 'em," he said.

Cassy immediately popped one into her mouth.

"Like that? Pretty good, isn't it?"

"It's delicious," Cassy returned.

“Think you’d like to come up here and pick some for yourself? Afraid to try the ladder? It’s pretty steady.”

“I’d love to do that.”

“Come along, then.” John settled himself into a crotch of the tree and watched her ascend. She came lightly and with perfect confidence. “That’s right,” he said. “You weren’t a bit scared, were you?”

“No, indeed.”

He put out his arm and drew her to a safe seat near him. “There now, help yourself,” he told her. “You can run a race with the robins if you like.”

Cassy laughed, and then for the first time in all her life she gathered fruit from its own tree. After awhile she saw that her mother had come down and that Jerry was looking for her. She gave a merry glance at John.

“Don’t tell him where we are; let him find us.”

“Cassy, Cassy,” called Jerry.

“Here I am,” came the answer.

Jerry looked mystified. He hunted the garden over, and finally spied the ladder leaning against the tree.

"Oho!" he cried peering up into the green; and just then a bunch of ripe cherries came pelting against his upturned face and a merry laugh sounded from above.

"Want to come up?" said John. Didn't he? Could any one imagine that he didn't? However, John warned him: "Better wait till we come down. There'll be most too many in this tree, I'm afraid."

Bearing his hat full of cherries he came down the ladder and Cassy followed. Then Jerry was given permission to go up. This was a treat he had not expected, to be allowed the freedom of a cherry tree full of ripe cherries. What bliss!

The boy gave a sigh of great content as he settled himself astride a huge bough.

"Don't eat too many," John warned, "and come down when I call you." Jerry promised; he valued John's good opinion, and moreover had respect for his authority, and he was not going to do anything to alter the present pleasant state of things.

Cassy had climbed down safely and stood below, her eyes fixed on Jerry.

"Isn't it splendid?" she called up to him.

"I should say so," came the answer, rather indistinctly by reason of a mouthful of cherries.

"Here, little one," said John, "suppose you take these in to your mother," and he poured the hatful of shining fruit into Cassy's outstretched apron. She ran lightly across the freshly cut grass to the kitchen where her mother was getting breakfast.

"Just see! Just see!" cried the child, "I've been up the tree, and the robins were there too, and John went up and Jerry is there now. I picked cherries, real cherries, from the tree myself." The delight in her face made her mother stop to kiss her.

"Breakfast is ready," she told her. "Call Jerry and Mr. McClure. And Jerry regretfully was obliged to come down. "You shall help me to pick them to-morrow," John told him, and this prospect was enough to satisfy him.

NEWS

CHAPTER IX

NEWS

ALTOGETHER that was a wonderful summer which the Laws spent at the old Dallas place. To be free to wander in that enchanting garden; to hear a cool breeze whispering in the leafy tops of the trees; and when it was stifling hot in the streets to be able to sit on a porch overlooking a green lawn; to help John to weed and to water the flowers; to learn from him all sorts of useful things concerning plants; to watch the morning-glories open and shut in the morning, and the moon-flowers at night; all this was like a beautiful dream, and Cassy wished the summer would never come to an end. She dreaded the probable removal back to Orchard Street, next door to the parrot and old Mrs. Finnegan and Billy Miles; she dreaded the girls who at school looked askance at her and called her Miss Oddity.

“We don’t want to go back, do we?” she

said to Flora. "We'd like to live here in this garden forever'n ever."

But one day Mr. Dallas came. He had been with them several times before, had stayed over night, and had given a pleasant word to each one, but this time he called Mrs. Law from the back porch and they both went up-stairs to the sitting-room. Then Cassy heard the voice of another man and after a while Mr. Dallas and this other person came down-stairs and went out together. Cassy listened a few minutes, and then she ran to find her mother. She found her standing by a table; she was gazing half-dazed at a piece of paper in her hand.

"What is it, mother?" Cassy asked, touching her gently.

She looked down at the child with a little wistful smile. "It is a check from the railroad people," she said.

"Oh! Oh! Are we rich now? Shall we have nice clothes and a pretty new home? Are we as rich as Mr. Dallas?"

"Far from it, dear. They are not willing to pay what we demanded and the lawyer at last thought it best that we should compromise, so it

is much less than I had hoped for at first, but it is so much better than nothing that I am very thankful."

"Shall we have to go back to Orchard Street?"

"No, I think not," her mother answered, slowly.

"And shall you have to sew hard all the time?"

"I cannot tell yet what I shall do. I must have time to think it all over. I am very glad to have this dear quiet place as a refuge until I decide how best to take my place in the world. But I am forgetting my duties already; I must go and see about dinner."

"Jerry lighted the gas stove, and I put the water to boil. Jerry got the potatoes ready, too, and I set the table, so that much is done."

"Good children."

"May I run and tell Jerry and John?"

"Yes, I don't object, but you must not stay. I need my little maid about dinner-time."

"I know. I won't stay." She started to leave the room, but paused with her hand on the knob.

“Mother, what does entail mean? To put a tail on something?”

“Yes, in a certain sense. But what do you know about entails?”

“John was telling me something; it’s his secret; he’ll have some money, too, some day, because it’s entailed. I can’t quite understand about it, but he is quite sure.”

“Well, run along, and I will explain to you some other time.”

Between John McClure and Cassy there existed the greatest possible friendship. Here was some one who understood the little girl; who could tell her stories of trees and flowers, of the insects that helped and those that hurt, of the birds and the beasts, and who could be a most fascinating companion when he wanted to be. The Scotchman was not a great talker except when he and Cassy were together; he was usually rather reticent with other persons and especially regarding his former life, giving only a hint of what it had been, but he told Cassy stories of his boyhood and the two spent much time together. Jerry was often with them and helped in various ways, but he was not always



"WHAT DO YOU THINK? NEWS! NEWS!"

contented to remain within the walls of the garden and very often would seek out his school-mates for a good game of some sort.

It being noon time Jerry was now at home, and Cassy found him with John in the garden. The summer was passing and John was getting ready for the fall; transplanting, cutting down, thinning out, to make room for chrysanthemums, asters, dahlias and cosmos. Behind the hedge which ran along one side the lawn Cassy could see John's broad back and she ran down the graveled path towards him.

"What do you think?" she cried. "What do you think? News! News!"

Jerry dropped the trowel he was holding and John straightened himself up.

"What is it?" asked the latter. "Has your family of spiders come forth from that fuzzy ball you have been watching so long, or has your pet mouse learned to dance?"

Cassy laughed.

"No, better than that. The railroad people have paid mother; but ——" she looked at Jerry, "we're not rich at all. Mother says it isn't so very much, yet it is very nice to have a little, isn't it?"

“Humph!” responded John. “It never rains but it pours; I’ve had news myself.” He drew a letter from his pocket and looked at the address on the envelope.

Cassy went up to him and stood on tiptoe to whisper: “Is it about the entail?”

John put his arm around her and gave her a hug.

“You sly little lass, do you remember that? Yes, it is about that and some other things. I’ve got to pack up and travel as soon as I can.”

“Oh!” Cassy looked very sorrowful. “Must you go soon? Before we leave here?”

“I think I shall have to go as soon as I can get off. I have yet to see Mr. Dallas and get a man settled in my place, and then I shall take the first steamer.”

“Shall you stay forever?” Cassy’s little hand crept into his big one.

“No, indeed; I shall come back as soon as I can get my affairs settled. I have become a good American.”

“Like my father,” said Cassy proudly. “Shall you come back here to Mr. Dallas?”

“No, I hope to have a place of my own. I

wish—but there's time enough to think of that."

"I must go in now," Cassy said. "I promised mother I wouldn't stay, for she wants me. So much is happening that it made me forget."

"It never rains but it pours," said John, "but it is queer that all this should come at once. What do you think about it, Master Jerry?"

"I think it is too bad that you have to go away, and I think it is too bad that those railroad people didn't give mother all that she ought to have. Aren't we going to have the cottage and the garden and all that, Cassy?"

She shook her head.

"I'm afraid not. Mother doesn't know yet. She's got to think about it." She spoke in a little old-fashioned way that made John smile.

Jerry looked disappointed.

"Oh, pshaw! I'm disgusted," he said. "I thought we'd have all we wanted. I say it's pretty hard not to get it after all this time we have had to do without."

"It's pretty hard not to get a lot of things," John remarked; "but maybe they'll come after a while. You're young yet, my lad." He turned

back to his work and Cassy returned to the house to find dinner ready.

"John's had some news, too," Cassy announced as they all sat down to the table.

"I hope it is good news," said Mrs. Law, smiling at John across the table.

"It's good and bad," returned John slowly. "I've had word that my grandfather has died, but I come in for the property he left."

Mrs. Law looked up a little surprised.

"How strange!" she exclaimed. "I have had such news, too; the letter was sent to my former address, and came just a minute ago."

"That is a coincidence," returned John.

"Is it Grandfather Kennedy who is dead?" Jerry asked. "Why, mother——"

John dropped his knife and covered his face with one hand.

Mrs. Law sat gazing at him.

"It can't be; it can't be!" she whispered, half rising from her chair.

"Will you tell me your maiden name?" said John, in a queer, strained voice.

"Kennedy was my maiden name," Mrs. Law answered.

“Where were you born?” John asked, in the same queer way.

“In Glasgow, but my parents both died when I was little more than a baby, and my mother’s sister, who lived in England, adopted me, and I generally was known by her name of Matthews. She came to America when I was about ten years old, and I married here.”

John leaned across the table and held out a shaking hand.

“Little Mysie! Little Mysie! Can it be my little sister, and that all this time I never knew it?”

“Yes, yes, but your name is McClure, not Kennedy.”

“It is Kennedy. I quarreled with my grandfather, who wanted me to marry a wealthy woman, and because I chose the dearest girl in the world who could win no favor from him because she was poor, he refused to see me again. I went to Australia, and there my wife died a year later. I could not go back to my old home. Grandfather had been too hard, too unyielding, and there were some reasons that he should not know where I was, and so I changed my name

when I came to America, for I did not know to what desperate straits I might come, though I meant to be an honest man, no matter how poor."

"John, dear John!" Mrs. Law was by his side. "My own brother! and we have been strangers all these years, and yet have been seeing each other every day for three months. What a strange discovery!"

Cassy left her seat and went around to John's side.

"Are you my really, truly uncle?"

"I am, my lass, as near as I can make out. It seems straight enough. Your mother there was Mysie Kennedy, and that was the name of my little sister that I'd not seen since she left for the States. She was brought up by my mother's sister, my aunt Agnes Matthews, and I was left with my grandfather, Alexander Kennedy. If those facts fit, you are my own little niece. I wrote to my aunt when I first came to the States, but the letter came back to me from the dead-letter office. I was not specially proud of my position in the world and so I did not do anything more to discover my relatives. I did not know my sister had married,

so how could I tell that Mrs. Jerrold Law was my sister?" He smiled at Cassy's mother.

Cassy looked at Jerry very steadily.

"I think if Jerry were to go away for years and years, I wouldn't forget how he looked and I would know him anywhere."

Mrs. Law shook her head.

"I don't believe you would. Do you think your uncle looks much like the picture of your mother's little brother Jock, which you have so often seen?"

"Oh, no." Cassy scanned her uncle's face wonderingly, and shook her head.

"And the little fat roly-poly girl whom I remember as my sister was very unlike the lady who is your mother," said John.

"I see," said Cassy. "I suppose you couldn't know each other, but I can't believe yet that I would ever forget Jerry or that I wouldn't know him a hundred years from now."

"I think you'd all better eat your dinners," said Jerry, nothing if not practical, his plate being the only one that was empty.

The others laughed, but there was not much dinner eaten that day by any one, for even Jerry

was so excited as to have less appetite than usual.

“To think, Jerry,” Cassy remarked later, “that we have a relation, a real relation, and I’d rather have him than any one else in the whole world. May we call you Uncle John?”

“*May* you? You’d better not call me anything else.”

“And are you going to be named Kennedy now?”

“Just for the present, I’ll keep the McClure, but when I come back to you it will be with my own name. Wouldn’t you like to go with me, Mysie?” he asked his sister.

“And leave my children?”

“Why not take them?”

Mrs. Law shook her head.

“No, I think that would not be wise at present. I think we’d better stay here and make a home for you to come back to.”

“Oh! Oh!” cried both the children. “And will you always live with us?”

“Indeed I will if you’ll not get tired of me.” He turned to his sister. “The entail ends with me, and I shall dispose of the property at once.

I am told there is a customer for it, the man who has been managing the place for grandfather all these years. I have no wish to live in a place where there are only unhappy memories."

"I am afraid you had rather a miserable time of it in your boyhood, you poor John," said Mrs. Law.

"It wasn't a particularly lively one. However, that is all past now. Grandfather no doubt thought he was doing right. In his severe way of looking at life and his strict ideas of what a young man should do; what he called my disobedience was a very terrible thing to him. He could not understand that I was a man grown and that I had a right to marry the girl I loved."

He gave a long sigh and rose from his chair. Jerry followed him out into the garden. There was much to learn, and Cassy, divided between her desire to go with her uncle and her wish to do her duty, by staying to help her mother, stared after the two as they went off.

She chattered like a magpie while they were washing the dishes, and she heard many things which had never been told her before. What a strange day it had been! She felt as if she were

living in a story-book, but she stayed by her mother till the last dish was put away, and then she was left alone while her mother went upstairs to write some important letters.

PLANS

CHAPTER X

PLANS

AFTER looking out upon the garden from where she stood upon the porch, Cassy decided that she would like to be by herself for a while and think over all that had been taking place. So she stole down the long path to a little corner sheltered by trees on one side and by tall bushes on the other.

Into this little hiding-place she crept and lay down with face upturned towards the leaves and branches overhead. There was an empty nest among the branches, and there were all sorts of creeping, crawling things at hand to amuse and interest her. A fuzzy caterpillar, with a funny face, looked over the side of a leaf at her; a nimble spider spun a web from twig to twig; a busy colony of ants near by ran back and forth as if the affairs of the nation had to be settled. John had told her many things about the ants, and he had been as interested as she in a family of spiders.

“And he is my uncle. Think of it,” she said, winking her eyes at the caterpillar. “I don’t suppose you care about your relations because you have to have such lots and lots of them, but I care. You couldn’t have as nice a one as my Uncle John if you tried. Uncle John, Uncle John; how nice that sounds. What will Rock say? And Eleanor, and oh dear, there’s so much I haven’t heard about yet. I wish they’d hurry up and tell me. I wish little girls could hear every blessed thing that grown people talk about. I wonder if my mouse is at home. I think I’ll go and see.”

She jumped up and ran to the tool-house. After opening the door softly she stood inside whistling and chirruping in a gentle way, and after some patient waiting she saw a little mouse come creeping out. Then she gently opened a small tin box and took some crumbs from it; these she held in her hand, crouching on the ground as she did so, and after a little while the mouse came nearer, and finally crept upon her hand, eating the crumbs confidently and stopping once in a while to look at her with round bright eyes. She heard the whir, whir of the lawn-

mower outside, and then the sound stopped and she lifted her head to listen, for she heard a voice say: "Where is Cassy? I can't find her anywhere."

The little mouse paused in its meal, and as a shadow darkened the door it leaped from Cassy's hand and went scudding across the floor, but not before it was seen by some one who was entering.

"Well, Miss Oddity," cried a voice. "I might know you'd be off hiding somewhere playing with a mouse or a spider or something."

Cassy was so happy that she did not resent this but replied, laughing: "Well, Miss Morning-Glory, you've scared my mouse away, you see."

"Yes, I am sorry I did. I wish I had crept up softly to see you feed it. How tame it is, but ough! I don't believe I'd like a mouse crawling on me." And Eleanor stepped in, looking very pretty in her white dress and broad-brimmed hat. "I came down with papa this morning," she said. "Mamma and I came, and Rock and Uncle Heath. Mamma and papa have gone

back, and I am going to stay all night, for I have to go to the dentist's in the morning."

"Are you going to stay here?"

"Yes, if your mother doesn't mind."

"Oh, I know she won't, and I shall be so glad. Will Rock stay, too?"

"Yes. He is down town now and will be here after a while."

"Have you heard the news?" asked Cassy.

"What? About the money? Yes, but isn't it too bad that it isn't more? Papa says that Uncle Heath did his best, but he was only one against many, and that it was the best that could be done."

"It is much better than nothing," said Cassy, repeating her mother's words. "But I didn't mean that news so much as the other about—but never mind now, let's wait till Rock comes, and then I can tell you both. It's the most of a s'prise you ever heard; it's just wonderful."

"You might tell me first. I won't tell Rock."

Cassy shook her head.

"No, I must wait." She could be very deter-

mined sometimes, and Eleanor soon saw that there was no use in insisting.

“You are not going back to Orchard Street, I hope,” said the latter.

“No, indeed, mother says we are not.”

“I know something, too,” said Eleanor. “Aunt Dora isn’t coming back to the city till November, so you can stay here till then if you want to.”

“That is more good news, but if—— Oh, dear, I wish Rock would come. I can hardly keep my secret.”

“I wish you’d just make out I’m Miss Morning-Glory, and then you’d be sure to tell me.”

“I don’t see so much of Miss Morning-Glory nowadays,” Cassy confessed. “I have so many things to do, and I think she’s in the country a great deal in the summer.” She spoke very seriously, and Eleanor laughed.

“You funny girl! You are as funny as Bubbles. I wish you could see Bubbles, our little colored girl, you know; and I wish—oh, dear, I was so in hopes you were going to have a cottage near us. Rock told me he had picked one out for you.”

“Tell me about it.”

“Well, it stands by itself just a little way out of our town. It is a country town, you know, with trees and gardens, and there are woods very near the cottage, and it has a big field next to it. There’s a little brook runs through the field and on into the woods.”

“Oh,” sighed Cassy, “how lovely! Is it a little, little cottage?”

“Not so very, very little; it has eight rooms, I think.”

“I’m afraid that’s much too big; but it’s nice to hear about it. Mother said—oh, dear, there I go again. Come, I want to show you such a dear little hiding-place I have under the bushes. I don’t believe you ever found it. Isn’t it too queer for anything that I should be living here all summer, when I always longed just to get behind these garden walls?”

“Yes, but we all think it is fine to have you.”

“I never, never expected to be so happy as I have been here.”

“And don’t you like John McClure?”

Cassy laughed, a pleased, half-embarrassed little laugh, and Eleanor looked at her, puzzled.

“What makes you laugh that way?”

“Because. Oh, just because ——”

“I hear Rock’s whistle.”

They ran up the walk down which Rock was coming. “Here we are,” cried Eleanor. “Hurry, Rock, Cassy has something to tell you.”

“I know,” he returned as he came near. “Father told me.”

“No, I don’t believe you do know it,” Eleanor declared. “It is not the railroad money; it is something else.”

“What is it?” Rock had come up to them.

Cassy clasped her hands tightly and looked from one to the other.

“John McClure is my truly uncle.”

“I don’t believe it,” cried Eleanor. “You are joking. How can he be?”

“He is truly, my own downy uncle.”

“He can’t be your father’s brother because his name is McClure,” said Rock.

“He isn’t my father’s brother; he is my mother’s.”

“You told me your name was Catherine Kennedy after your grandmother, and that your

mother's name was Kennedy before she was married," said Eleanor severely.

"He might be a stepbrother," suggested Rock.

"But he isn't; he is my mother's own brother, and his real name is Kennedy."

"Not McClure?" exclaimed Rock and Eleanor at once.

"No, he changed his name. Oh, it's a long story. Come over here in my corner and I'll tell you."

They followed her readily, being quite eager to hear more of this strange matter, and she told her story to two very interested listeners.

"Whew!" exclaimed Rock, when she had concluded. "It is like a story-book. Isn't it the queerest thing, Dimple? Father always said that there was a history connected with John McClure and that he was out of place in this position."

"But I haven't found out yet what entail means," said Cassy, soberly.

"I can tell you," Rock informed her. "It's not letting property go out of the family. It goes down from father to son, and it can't be sold by one person because it has to go to his son."

That's why John comes by your grandfather's property ; it would have gone to his father if he had lived, and then down to John."

"But he can sell it ; he is going to."

"Then the entail stops with him ; it is that way sometimes. I can't explain it exactly, but anyhow when a place is entailed it can't be sold or left by will to any one but the next in descent, and John is the next in descent so it comes to him. Entail means to cut off, to abridge ; I looked it up one day."

"I thought it meant to put a tail on," said Cassy.

Rock laughed.

"Never mind what it means ; you can study it up when you're older. I am mighty glad for John. I must go and tell him so. And I'm glad for you, Cassy. It is a good deal to happen in one day. Where is Jerry ? What does he think of it ?"

"He's glad, of course. I don't know just where he is. He came out here after dinner but I suppose he's with the boys. He does stay in a great deal more than he used to, but he gets tired of not having boys to play with. If he

knew you were here he'd be back quick enough."

"And don't you get tired of not having girls?" Rock asked.

"I do have," Cassy returned, in all seriousness. To her mind if Flora and Miss Morning-Glory were not girls she would like to know who were.

"I think I'll go hunt up Jerry after I have seen John," said Rock, as he walked off.

Left to themselves the two little girls talked till Mrs. Law called them. They found Martha on hand, Mr. Dallas having very thoughtfully sent for her.

"You will have too much of a houseful, Mrs. Law," he said, "and if we are all to be looked after you will need more than one pair of hands. Besides, you and your brother will have much to say to each other. I am sorry I must lose the best man we ever had, but I am glad for you all."

Such an exciting time never was. All this houseful of people, an old friend suddenly appearing as an unknown and unlooked for uncle, and besides this all that about the money that had been that day received. Any one of these things would be enough to excite any child, but

take them all together and it was too much for one of Cassy's imaginative temperament. Long after every one else in the house was fast asleep she lay with wide open eyes.

Finally she decided that she would get up and go out on the porch which led from the room. She put on her shoes and stockings and wrapping a blanket around her, for the September night was chill, she crept out on the porch. The moon was on the wane and was not shining very brightly. In the trees the insects were keeping up a noisy chirping. Cassy looked down into the shadowy depths of the garden. The large white moon-flowers shone out of the green around her and sent up a faint sweet odor.

"You ought to be called night-glories," Cassy whispered to them. "That is what I should call you."

Presently she saw down in the garden below her a man's figure, pacing up and down the long walk.

"It is Uncle John," she said, "and he can't sleep either. I wonder what he is thinking about, and if he is lonely down there." She thought she would like to go down to him, but

she was a little afraid to grope her way through the dark house, so she leaned over the railing of the porch and when he came near she called him softly.

He came and stood under where she was.

“What are you doing up this time of night, you little witch?” he asked.

“I couldn’t sleep and I thought I’d like to see how the world looked in the night-time; ’way in the night like this.”

“Would you like to come down here with me and see?”

“Yes, indeed I would.”

He went a little aside and brought a long ladder up which he climbed, and lifting her over the railing, he carried her down pick-a-back.

“There,” he said, when they had reached the ground, “we’ll take a turn around the garden. Are you wrapped up good and warm?”

“Almost too warm, in this blanket. Do I look like an Indian?”

“You might look like almost anything in this light, but I don’t think your costume will do to walk in.” He took her up in his arms, although she protested that she was too heavy. “If I

couldn't carry a mite like you I'd be a poor stick," he told her, and he bore her off under the trees, down this path, and up that, between hedge-rows and past flower borders, telling her of the moths, the katydids and of all the night creatures; of flowers that went to sleep and of those that were awake only after the sun went down:

After a while Cassy asked, "What were you thinking of, Uncle John, when you were walking, walking up and down?"

"Of many things; of my boyhood and of ——" he paused, "my little baby girl asleep forever out there in Australia."

"Oh!" Cassy held him closer. "I didn't know. Oh, Uncle John, I am so sorry and I love you very much."

He kissed her.

"Dear little lassie, that too, was what I was thinking of. It is a great thing to me, who thought himself alone in the world, to find suddenly that he has those who are his own flesh and blood, and who are his friends already."

"We will live together always, won't we?"

"I hope so."

"And when you come back, what will you do?"

“I will pick you all up and carry you off with me to a home of our own.”

“Oh! Oh!”

“I’ve been thinking of it and I believe I love a garden better than most things, and so I think I will be a florist. I have studied up the subject pretty well.”

“And you’ll have ——”

“Greenhouses and all sorts of flowers.”

“And will we live close to them?”

“I haven’t a doubt but that we will.”

Cassy dropped her head on his shoulder.

“I think that is the loveliest plan I ever heard of. I am so glad I didn’t go to sleep, for if I had I wouldn’t have come out here to have you tell me about it.”

“I think it is time you were going in. You will be too sleepy to get up to-morrow and Miss Eleanor is here, so you will not want to lie abed. I’ll take you back now and you must try to go to sleep so as to be up to breakfast to-morrow.”

Cassy promised, and he carried her back. For awhile she lay in bed listening to the sound of the insects, and then she fell asleep.

THE SURPRISE

CHAPTER XI

THE SURPRISE

A FEW days after this John McClure, as he was still called, set sail for Europe, and in his place came a quiet young man of whom the children saw little, as he did not take his meals with them. Since they were to stay at the Dallas place till November, Mrs. Law thought it was not worth while for the children to lose all that time from school, but though Jerry was perfectly willing to go back to his old classmates, Cassy begged that she might be sent to another school, and really was quite naughty and rebellious when her mother first spoke of her going back. But finally, seeing that the child actually suffered at the thought, her mother decided that she might be sent to another school not very much further away, and the little girl was highly pleased to think that she would be known as Catherine Law and not as Miss Oddity. Her old patched frock had before this been thrown aside, and she

was now able to appear as well-dressed as her schoolmates, who were in general of a better class than those who attended the school near Orchard Street, therefore Cassy felt that matters had bettered in every direction.

She missed her uncle very much, but as time went on they heard frequently from him, and he wrote that he hoped to be with them again in November. Before he went away he had had many long talks with his sister, and they had made many plans.

Just what these were Mrs. Law did not say, but Cassy knew some of the things that her uncle had decided upon, and her imagination saw long rows of greenhouses, and a garden in which all manner of flowers grew. She also knew that her mother was very bright and happy and that her uncle had said that his sister ought by rights to have a share in his good fortune, and that he should consider the half of it belonged to her. Cassy wondered where they would live, but when she asked her mother about it she only smiled and shook her head.

However, one day in the early part of November, Mrs. Law asked, "How would you children

like to take a little journey with me tomorrow?"

"We'd like it ever so much," they both exclaimed. "Where is it that we are going, mother?"

"Shall I tell you or will you have a little surprise?"

"What do you say, Jerry? Shall we have it a surprise?" Cassy asked.

Jerry thought it over.

"Is it much of a trip?" he inquired; "for if it is, I don't think I could keep wanting to know, very long, but if it's short I could stand it, and I think it would be fun not to know where we were going."

"I think so, too," agreed Cassy.

"It isn't much of a trip," Mrs. Law told them; "about an hour by train."

"I could stand that, I reckon," said Jerry. "Couldn't you, Cassy?"

"Yes, I think I could. Don't you wonder where it is, Jerry?"

"'Course I do."

"What are we going for? Can you tell us that much, mother?"

“Do you really want me to?”

Cassy looked at Jerry.

“You might tell us just a little bit, only enough to make it interesting,” Jerry decided.

“Well, we are going to look at a house. You know we can’t stay here forever.”

The children looked at each other with dancing eyes.

“I am wild to know more, but I’ll not ask,” said Cassy. “It is too exciting for anything. Have we got to move before Uncle John comes back?”

“No, I don’t think so, but we want to know where we are to go, and I have heard of this place, so I am to go and look at it and then write to your uncle about it.”

“Shall I wear my blue frock?” Cassy asked.

“Yes, and I am going to take you out this afternoon and get a new jacket for you.”

“Oh, good! good! And you’ll wear your new suit and Jerry will wear his. How nice we will all look. Oh, isn’t it fine to be able to get things when you need them? Even if we’re not rich we can have ever so much more than we

used to. Are we going to be gone all day tomorrow?"

"I can't tell just how long."

"Shall we take our lunch with us?"

"No, I don't think that will be necessary, for if we need anything we can get it after we get there."

"Then it isn't in the country," said Cassy, a little disappointed. "But think of our taking a real journey. 'Scuse me, mother, but I must go and talk to Miss Morning-Glory about it, or I'll ask too many questions."

"You'd better get ready to go out with me."

Thus charged Cassy ran off to dress and they soon started out on their shopping expedition. Then when a dark-blue jacket had been selected, Mrs. Law said she must get two or three other things, so Cassy skipped along very happily by her side. The experience of going shopping was a rare one, and to see her mother with any money to spend was such a pleasure that the child enjoyed her afternoon hugely.

They started about nine o'clock the next morning upon their little journey. After an hour's ride, which was by no means a dull one

to the children, they left the train and found themselves at a small station. Their feet had hardly touched the platform before they heard a voice call,

"There they are!" And who should appear but Rock and Eleanor. "Oh, you did come, didn't you? We've been down here half an hour," exclaimed Eleanor. "We were so afraid we'd miss you."

"Did you know we were coming? Is this where you live?" asked Cassy, eagerly.

"Yes will answer both those questions," Eleanor replied. "Come right along; we're going up in the stage; it passes the place where you have to get out. Weren't you surprised when your mother told you where you were coming?"

"She didn't tell us. We had the surprise when we got here."

"Oh, what fun! Then you don't know the rest, and I'll not tell you. This is the stage; climb in."

They all took their places and the stage rattled up the long street. Just where the houses were beginning to be quite far apart, at the turn of a

lane, Rock exclaimed: "Here we are! Tumble out, Jerry." He got out himself first and stood politely to see that Mrs. Law and the two girls were safely helped down, then they turned into the lane and Rock led the way, with Mrs. Law and Jerry, while the girls followed. Cassy looked around her with observant eyes.

"I never knew the country was so lovely at this time of year," she said. "It doesn't look bare and ugly at all, and Miss Morning-Glory said it would."

Eleanor laughed.

"You see Miss Morning-Glory didn't know what she was talking about. Do you see her often now?"

"Not very. If we come up here, I don't believe she will come at all."

Eleanor laughed again; this idea of Cassy's friend, that was only an imaginary being, always amused her very much.

"If she doesn't like the country all the year around I think she'd better not come," she said.

"It is lovely," repeated Cassy; "the trees are all purple 'way off there, and some of them are dark red near by, and the grass looks all sort of

golden, and the sky is so blue, and off that way it is smoky purple. I like it."

"Now that we're almost there I'm going to tell you that this is the place we talked about, don't you remember?" said Eleanor.

"Oh, is it? I am so glad. I wonder where the greenhouses will be."

"The greenhouses? What greenhouses?" Eleanor looked astonished.

"Oh, I forgot, you don't know."

Rock heard her, and speaking over his shoulder said: "The greenhouses will have to be built, Cassy. There is room enough for them, as you'll see. Look right ahead through those trees and you will see the cottage."

"Come," cried Eleanor, catching Cassy by the hand, "let's get there first." They ran ahead through the crisp brown leaves and stood panting on the porch, that porch of which they had talked, and to which still clung the morning-glory vines now withered and dry, but showing rustling seed pods.

Rock produced the key of the house and they all went in. Mrs. Law looked around critically. A hall ran through the middle of the house, and

on each side were two rooms. Above stairs there were four comfortable bedrooms and a small one over the hall; an unfinished garret gave plenty of storeroom.

Rock watched Mrs. Law's face. This place was his special discovery, and he was very anxious that it should be appreciated. He showed off the various good points with the air of one who has a personal interest. The view from the windows, the advantage of a porch both front and back, the dry cellar, the closets in each room; all these things were pointed out and Mrs. Law declared that, so far as she was concerned, the house would be all that one could wish when certain repairs had been made.

"The only point," she said, "is the land. If that suits John's purpose I am more than satisfied. I will describe it to him as nearly as possible, and I hope he will make up his mind to come, but I rather think he will want to see it himself first."

Rock looked a little disappointed.

"I did hope you could get settled right off."

"We couldn't do that anyhow," Mrs. Law told him, "for there are repairs to be made. I think

as long as the place has been standing idle for some time, and as you say, there are no applicants, that very likely we can get the refusal of it, and I know when John comes he will lose no time in looking at it."

This seemed the best that could be done and they started back towards the town.

"You are coming to our house to lunch, you know," said Eleanor. "It isn't very far to walk."

"Oh, my dear," expostulated Mrs. Law, "I couldn't think of such a thing."

"Oh, but you see," said Eleanor, with decision, "mamma expects you. She would have come down to the train herself, but she couldn't; she had a caller on very particular business, but she will be looking for us, and Bubbles is just wild to see Cassy, and I promised May Garland that I would bring Cassy over there to see the baby and the chickens and everything. Then Rock wants to show Jerry where he will go to school, and, oh my, if you don't stay what will we do?"

Mrs. Law had to smile at her look of distress, and Cassy looked up at her mother pleadingly.

She did so very much want to see all these people and the things of which she had heard Eleanor talk so much.

"There comes mamma now," cried Eleanor. "She has driven out to meet us with the pony. Now, Mrs. Law, you can get in and drive back with her, and we will walk."

Cassy had heard of this wonderful Shetland pony, Eleanor's dearest possession, and she drew a long breath of pleasure. She would dearly have liked to drive behind him herself, and as if reading her thought, Eleanor said: "We will go for a little drive this afternoon, you and Jerry and Rock and I. You will not have to go till the late train, I know."

Cassy bestowed a beaming smile upon her.

"I don't believe Miss Morning-Glory will want to come," she said with conviction.

By the time they had reached the gate, Mrs. Law and Eleanor's mother had gone in and it was evidently settled that the visitors were to remain till after lunch.

"And please say you will not go till the late train," Eleanor begged Mrs. Law. "We've got so much to do."

“And it will not keep till another time, I suppose,” returned Mrs. Law.

“Your Aunt Dora promised to come over this afternoon; she wants to see Mrs. Law, and I think we can persuade these friends to stay,” said Eleanor’s mother.

“You will stay, won’t you, mother?” begged both Cassy and Jerry. “Please,” added Rock and Eleanor. And Mrs. Dallas smiling, repeated, “Please.” So Mrs. Law declared herself more than persuaded, and that matter was settled.

“Which shall we do first, go over to May Garland’s or to drive?” Eleanor asked Cassy.

“I think you’d better take your drive first,” suggested her mother. “The days are so short and you’d best be near home when it gets dark.”

“All right, we will do that. You must come right back after lunch, Rock,” called Eleanor, as the boy was about to go.

Just then a smiling little colored girl appeared at the door. She rolled her eyes delightedly in Cassy’s direction as she announced, “Lunch ready, Mis’ Dallas.”

Cassy knew that this must be Bubbles, and she

smiled in return. Bubbles was so overcome with pleasure that she ducked her head and giggled as she disappeared.

"I think you've two of the nicest things in the world," said Cassy, as they went into the dining-room, "and they're both black; a Bubbles and a pony."

Eleanor laughed.

"I don't know what I should do without them. Bubbles says she is going to live with me when I grow up, but she's getting pretty big now, and I am so afraid she will get married first and will go off and leave me."

After lunch Eleanor showed her guest her little bedroom and her playhouse in the yard where she kept her dolls, her books and many of her treasures, and Cassy thought that in all her life she had never dreamed of such a favored child as Eleanor Dallas.

"Aren't you 'most happy enough to fly?" she asked.

"Why?" said Eleanor.

"I would be, if I had all these things and this lovely place to live in and a papa."

Eleanor put her arm around her.

“You have an Uncle John, and he will be just like a papa, I know.”

Cassy agreed that it was indeed something to be thankful for, and then Rock called them to say that Spice was getting impatient, and when were they coming.

So off they set, the little pony's short quick steps taking them along at a good rate. The sparkling November air made them all as lively as possible; Cassy alone was almost too happy for words, but the others chattered without stopping, and at last, on their return to town, they stopped at May Garland's gate and the drive was over. The girls went in and the two boys drove around to put Spice in the stable.

May Garland with her dog, her cats, her chickens, and last, but not least, her sweet baby sister, Rosalie, was a very desirable acquaintance, Cassy thought, and when Bubbles came flying in with the message that they must come back at once as it was nearly train time, Cassy thought she had never known so short an afternoon.

As May Garland lived in the next house to the Dallas's they had not far to go, and arrived to find Mrs. Law ready to start for the train.

“I hate to have you go,” said Eleanor at parting, “but I am going to think you are coming back again soon; and oh, I do hope you will go to our school, you nice, funny girl, and I am so very, very glad that everybody is happy and that everything is happening so beautifully for you.”

UNCLE JOHN ARRIVES

CHAPTER XII

UNCLE JOHN ARRIVES

THE next great thing to look for was the return of Uncle John. He was not one to waste his time, and he had been able to arrange his affairs more quickly than Mrs. Law had dared to hope, for he wrote that they might look for him the latter part of November, and Mrs. Law busied herself in making her preparations to leave the Dallas place.

There had been a sharp frost, which even the chrysanthemums had not withstood, so the garden looked bare and dreary. The arbor vitæ hedge alone kept its green, and as Cassy stood looking at the wisps of straw which covered the rose-bushes, she told herself that she really felt less sorry to leave than she had ever thought she could. The prospect of that other garden near to Eleanor and to May Garland, that cottage which overlooked a shining strip of river, and in sight of which were the purple hills, all this made

her feel that she was to gain more than she was to lose.

“Although I am going away, I shall always love you very, very much, you dear garden,” she whispered. “I will never forget you, and you must take good care of my mouse and my spiders, and some day I will come back and see you, roses, dear, when you come out of your funny little straw houses. In a few days we shall all be gone and I will be outside your brick wall, you dear garden.”

She walked slowly back to the house, though Jerry was calling: “Hurry, hurry, Cassy.” Then it suddenly occurred to her that maybe her Uncle John had come, and she ran very fast up the garden path towards the house. Sure enough, that was why Jerry had called, for before she had reached the porch steps she was caught up by a pair of strong arms and her own clasped her uncle’s neck.

“I am so glad, so glad to see you, you dear, dearest uncle,” she said.

“And I am glad to see my little lassie again. I was homesick for her many a time, my little Cassy.”

“And you’ll never, never go back there again.”

“Not unless I take you with me. When you’re a young lady, perhaps, we’ll all go over and have a look at things together.”

Cassy gave him a hug and he put her down.

There was much to talk about, so much to do and to see that for the next week they seemed in a whirl. First there was a mysterious package of presents which Uncle John had brought with him, and which was found to contain a piece of soft wool material, a true Scotch plaid, for a new frock for Cassy, and a new doll from London, which Cassy admired very much, but which she played with only on special occasions, for her beloved Flora was not to be cast aside for any newcomer. For Jerry there was a suit of Scotch tweed and a little silver watch, while for Mrs. Law there was a piece of silk for a new gown and some other things, mementoes of her childhood, a bit of heather, a pin in which was set a Scotch pebble, and a lot of photographs of her old home and the surrounding country. These last were a great source of pleasure to the children, especially to Cassy, who sat and

dreamed over them, imagining her mother a tiny child with her sturdy little brother by her side playing in that home over the sea.

The very next day after his arrival Uncle John went to look at the place upon which they had all set their hearts.

"I can scarcely wait till he comes back, can you, mother?" said Jerry.

"Don't you want dreadfully to go there?" asked Cassy.

"Not dreadfully. I should be content anywhere, I think, with my dear children and my brother; but for your sakes, my darlings, I'd like to go."

"Then I think we will," said Cassy, "for Uncle John loves me very much, and I told him I'd be dreadfully disappointed if he didn't like the place."

Her mother laughed.

"I think then he'll try very hard to like it."

"Isn't it funny when he went away he was John McClure, and when he came back he was John Kennedy; I like him best to be John Kennedy, because he has a part of my name," said Cassy.

She was right in supposing that her uncle would try to like the place, and it is quite true also, that Rock's eagerness and Cassy's desire in the matter had much to do with his decision. At all events when he did return that evening, he told them that he had not only bought the place, but that he had set the painters and carpenters to work, and that he wanted his sister and Cassy to go down town with him the next day to choose the papers for the walls, and that he hoped in a couple of weeks they could move in.

"I've a deal of work to get done before spring," he said, "and so I can't afford to lose any time, besides I have so set my heart on a little home for us all that I am as impatient as the children."

"I'm glad you are impatient," said Cassy with satisfaction.

The choosing of the wall papers was a most bewildering and fascinating work, and when Cassy saw a certain design of roses on a cream ground she begged to have that for her room.

"And what am I to have?" asked her uncle.

Cassy gravely considered chrysanthemums and buttercups and purple clematis.

"Which do you like best?" she asked.

"Yours," he returned.

The shopman unrolled another paper, and Cassy gave a little scream of delight.

"You can have the other," she cried, for here were morning-glories, delicately trailing up a creamy white paper; curling tendrils, heart shaped leaves, and all, looked so very natural.

"I'll agree," said her uncle. "I will take the roses," and so with buttercups for Jerry and chrysanthemums for Mrs. Law they were all satisfied.

Then came the buying of furniture, for Mrs. Law's poor little stock would go only a very little way towards being enough, and next there were carpets and curtains and many other things, and finally there came a day when Mrs. Law went up to the cottage with her brother to set up the furniture which had been unpacked and stood ready to be placed in the different rooms.

At last came the time when they were to leave the Dallas place to take possession of their new home. Martha had been on hand for several days getting Mrs. Dallas's rooms all in order,

uncovering the furniture and pictures and getting out the ornaments; the upholsterers had been at work putting up the curtains and putting down the carpets and rugs so that the house, when they left it, appeared very much as it did that day when Cassy had first seen it, and was less familiar to her than it had been in its summer aspect. Along the garden walks gusts of wind were sweeping the dry leaves and it looked wintry and cold out there.

“I’d rather see our purple hills and the river than brick walls; we have ever so much more view,” said Cassy, triumphantly.

“You are getting very top-lofty,” returned her mother. “I remember a little girl who, not a year ago, thought it would be paradise to get inside this place, and now she thinks it is rather contracted.”

“Oh, but I love it, too, though I like my own home better.” She sat with folded hands looking very thoughtful after this. Her mother watched her for a little while.

“A penny for your thoughts,” she said, gaily. She was often quite gay and smiling these days, different from that quiet, patient, gentle mother

who had always smiled so sadly and who had to work so hard for her children.

Cassy held out her hand.

“The penny, please,” she said. “I was thinking about Mrs. Boyle and the parrot and Billy Miles and all those people, and I was wondering whether I ought to go and say good-bye to them.”

“Do you want to?”

“Not exactly. I do for some reasons.”

“What reasons?” Her mother looked at her with a half smile.

“I believe you know, mother.” She hung her head. “I would like them to know we are going to have our own lovely little home, and I would like to show off before the girls a little.”

“That’s what I was afraid of. It is perfectly natural that you should feel so, but after all I think I wouldn’t do it. Jerry has let the boys know of all the pleasant things that have happened and I think we need not do any more.”

“I think after all I’m rather glad not to. I never, never want to see that back yard again; do you?”

“No, my dear, no.”

Cassy's Uncle John had already gone up to take possession of the new home and was there to welcome them when they arrived. He had bought a comfortable dayton and a pair of strong horses and was at the station to meet them. Cassy's heart beat so fast and she was so overcome when they came within sight of the house that she slipped down on the floor of the dayton and buried her face in her mother's lap. Mrs. Law laid her hand gently on the child's. She understood the excitable, intense nature.

John Kennedy, looking over his shoulder at the back seat, missed his little niece.

"Where's Cassy?" he asked.

She lifted her head and he saw her trembling lips and moist eyes.

"Not crying, Cassy?" he said.

"I'm not crying because I am sorry, Uncle John, but I'm so glad I can't help it."

As they stopped before the gate, after turning in from the long lane, there came a shout and a hallo, and around the corner of the house came Rock, Eleanor, May Garland and Bubbles, all capering about in delight and calling out a dozen things before the newcomers had left their

places. Jerry was the first to scramble down. He viewed the house now spick and span in its new coat of paint.

“My, doesn’t it look fine?” he cried. And he made a rush for the porch.

“May and I were coming down for you in the pony carriage, but we thought maybe you’d rather ride up in your uncle’s new dayton,” Eleanor said to Cassy, who hadn’t a word to say. She only looked from one to the other smiling. “We haven’t been all over the house yet,” Eleanor went on to say. “Your uncle said you would like to show it to us yourself. Isn’t it funny that we’ve got to learn to call him Mr. Kennedy?”

They all went in and Cassy led them from room to room. It was all neat and comfortable with no attempt at show, but very cheerful and homelike, “just as a cottage should be,” Mrs. Law had said.

When the house was fully viewed and they had peeped into all the closets and corners, Eleanor gave Rock a look and he said, “We’ve got something to show you out in the stable. Just wait a minute, you and Jerry, and then come out

there. You needn't wait but five minutes." Then the four visitors ran out, leaving Jerry and Cassy to wonder what was coming next.

They were so happy over all these delightful new things that as soon as the other children disappeared they hugged each other and danced up and down repeating in a singsong: "We've got a new home! We've got a new home!" for the want of something better to do and finding no other way to give vent to their feelings.

"It's five minutes," said Jerry, looking at his new watch. "Come on," and they ran out to the stable, but, before they reached it, out came Rock bearing a Skye-terrier puppy in his arms. It was as much as possible like Ragged Robin and about the size he was when Jerry rescued him.

"It's for you, old fellow," said Rock, and then, boylike, he turned away before Jerry could say a word of thanks.

After Rock came Eleanor carrying in her arms a dear little kitten with the bluest eyes and with soft gray fur. She gave it carefully into Cassy's arms.

"Miss Morning-Glory told me that she

thought you would like to have a kitty," she said, laughing.

Then came May Garland, a little shy, but with eyes full of laughter. She had a basket in her hand.

"You can't hold this, too," she said, "but you see it is a little hen." She opened the basket and Cassy laughed as the buff hen cocked her head to one side and made the remark: "Caw ; caw !"

Not to be outdone by the others, Bubbles, chuckling and trying to swallow her laugh, held a small box in her hand. There was a scrambling and a scurrying inside. Cassy wondered what it could be.

"Miss Dimple say you lak mouses," said Bubbles, "and I fetch yuh dis one."

Cassy put her kitten into Eleanor's arms.

"Hold it for me," she said, "and don't let it go." She took the box, but too late heeded Bubbles' warning. "Take keer!" for Miss Mouse giving a sudden spring lifted the lid of the box as Cassy was preparing to peep in, and leaping out scurried away out of sight as fast as she could go.

“Oh!” exclaimed Cassy dismayed and hardly aware of what had happened. But Bubbles threw up her hands and brought them together with a shout of delight. It was just the kind of sensation that she enjoyed.

“Ne’min’, Miss Cassy,” she said. “I reckons hit’s a good thing fo’ Miss Mouse she git away, fur de kitten mought git her.”

“Let’s make a house for the hen,” said Rock to Jerry who had followed up Rock and now had returned to see what all this fun was about.

“All right,” said Jerry, glad for some excuse to exercise his energies. “I’m going to keep the puppy right with me all the time. I tell you, he is a dandy. I am awfully glad to have him.”

“You’ll call him Ragged Robin, won’t you?”

“Yes, but I’ll call him Robin for short.”

The boys went into the stable to find something for the hen-coop, and the girls went to the house. They found a pleasant-looking, rosy-cheeked maid installed in the kitchen, and passing through they went on up to Cassy’s morning-glory room. But by the time the boys had settled the hen in her new home it was growing

late and the visitors took their leave with many friendly good-byes and neighborly invitations. Cassy watched them depart and then went to her mother.

Out of doors Jerry and his uncle were looking over the land on which would soon appear the rows of greenhouses. A shining line of silver showed through the trees, telling where the river was. Behind the purple hills the sun had set, and there was a gorgeous western sky. With her head on her mother's shoulder Cassy watched the clouds of amethyst and gold and red.

"The sun has walked through his garden," she said. "See all the bunches of flowers in the sky. Aren't you so happy it most hurts you, mother?"

"I am very thankful and content," she said.

"Monday morning Eleanor is going to call for me to take me to school; she is coming with her pony carriage. Isn't it good of Uncle John to want me to go to that school? I must go and tell him. Kiss me, mother, I am going to find Uncle John."

Her mother kissed her and presently saw her

stepping carefully over the clods of earth, her face aglow with the rosy light from the sky. She was singing in a shrill little voice: "Home sweet home." Jerry had forsaken his uncle and had gone to his beloved puppy, but Uncle John heard Cassy and held out his hand. She went to him and together they watched the daylight fade.

"But there's such a beautiful to-morrow coming," said Cassy, as they walked towards the cottage in the waning light.

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