The LARKY FURNACE

HILDEGARD BROOKS . . . . .

Illustrated by

PETER NEWELL

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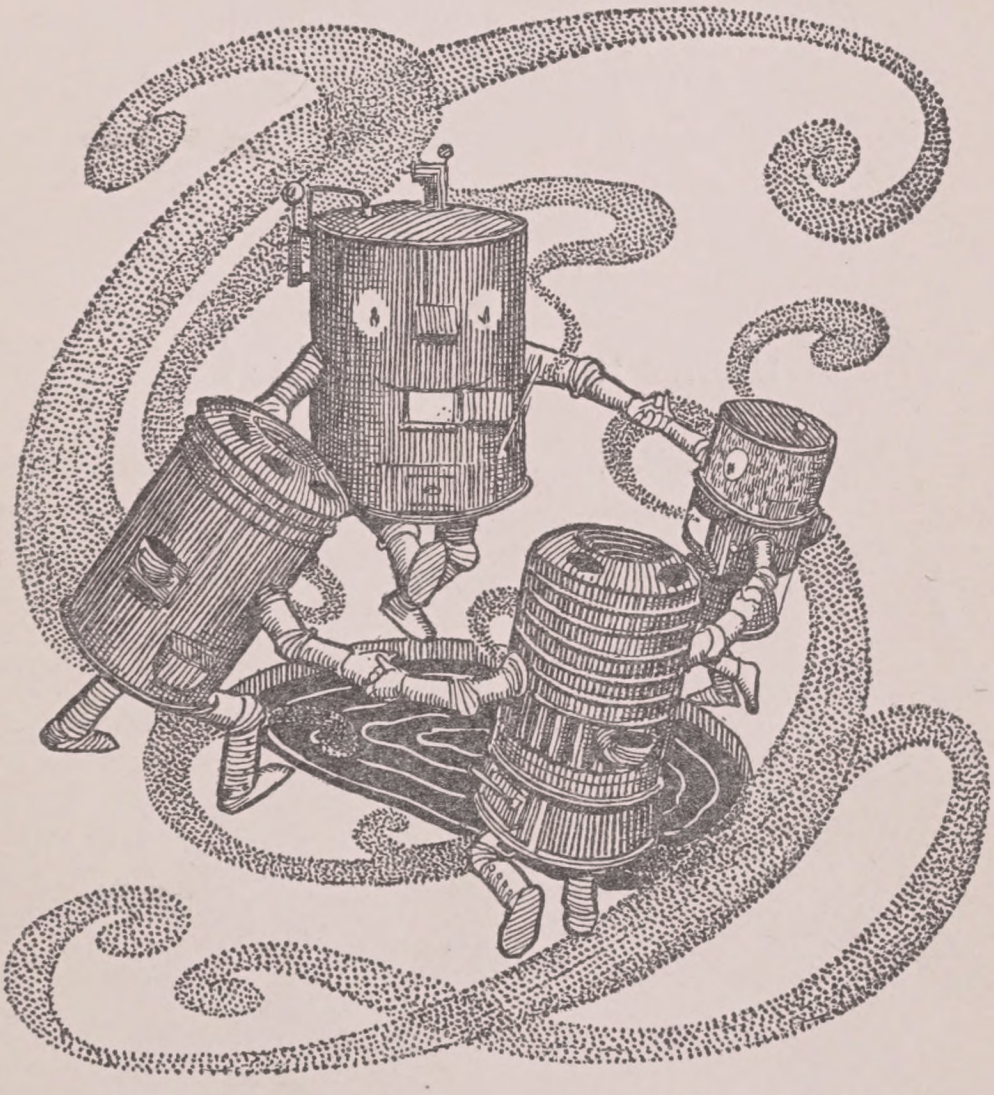
THE LARKY FURNACE

AND OTHER ADVENTURES OF SUE BETTY

By HILDEGARD BROOKS

Author of "Daughters of Desperation"

WITH COVER AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY PETER NEWELL



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DEDICATIONS

THE LARKY FURNACE

TO THE CHILDREN OF LITTLE-BROOK

PIRATES

TO THE CHILDREN OF FOUR WINDS FARM

THE WHITE NIGHT

TO THE CHILDREN OF FAIRHOLT

WORK WITHOUT WAGES

TO THE CHILDREN OF OAK GROVE

THE FISH PICTURE

TO THE CHILDREN OF NUMBER TWENTY

ONE OF PLUTARCH'S LIVES

TO THE CHILDREN OF HEGLER HOUSE

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE LARRY FURNACE

THE LARKY FURNACE

THE LARKY FURNACE

BESIDE the shaded lamp her parents sat reading. The hands of the clock pointed to bedtime. Sue-Betty hovered on the threshold, candle in hand, waiting for the stroke of the hour; for though good-nights had been said, she claimed every jot and tittle of her right to stay up till eight o'clock.

In came Maggy with a troubled look on her face and reported in a tone of distress:

"Please, sir, the furnace have gone out."

"Then leave the area door unlocked, Maggy, so that it can get in again to-night," said Sue-Betty's father quietly.

As he spoke, the clock gave its little preliminary cough, then loudly and clearly began to strike; and obedient to the rule, Sue-Betty trotted away upstairs, though she

longed to stay and ask questions. The strange event in the basement had made the whole house seem a little uncanny. If the furnace had come alive and gone out for the evening, what might one not expect from the dark, carven clothespress in the upper hall? She slipped past it with a fluttering heart and hastened to reach her own bright room.

Here she was strongly fortified against what she called "all kinds of scariness." There was the peach-red rug on the floor with its two little linear camels woven into one end of it. Betty called them her darling camules and took care never to step on them and always to pat them good-night. There were her pictures on the walls, each a bright window out of loneliness into storyland. These things were company; but she had safeguards more than these. There was a real horse-shoe over the door and a rabbit's foot in her Box of Secret Treasures and a Four-leaf Clover in the heel of her little

bedroom slipper. What wonder that Sue-Betty felt safe when she had closed herself in with these? For all she cared now, the whole house might come alive and everything in it march past that charmed chamber door.

But if she was no longer frightened, she was still excited, and instead of going about her orderly preparations for the night she plumped down beside her register and opened it softly.

A cool breath of air came up against her face, and she heard not a click or a jar or a rumble to indicate that the furnace was in its usual place.

"He must be really gone," said Sue-Betty shaking her head. "It's the queerest thing I ever heard of."

And the more she thought about the great cellar-creature, the less she liked the idea of his going and coming when he pleased. The area door was to be left open for him. What time was the iron monster supposed to be

in? Sue-Betty had heard her mother say that Maggy should not stay out after ten o'clock, because it was *not safe* to leave the kitchen door unlocked when the family went to bed. That was a rule of the house; and to-night this rule was to be broken; to-night the area door was to be left unbolted? Then what—as Sue-Betty demanded of herself—what was to prevent the burgle-bears from entering with their dark-lanterns and black masks? Sue-Betty was seriously afraid of burgle-bears.

As she considered the matter anxiously, the voices of her father and mother came up through the register-pipe.

"I don't like our furnace," said Sue-Betty's mother, "it needs so much looking after. There ought to be someone always down there to see what it is doing. I think we ought to get a new one. This one acts so funny. I sometimes think it is dangerous."

"My dear, they all act funny; they all need looking after," said Sue-Betty's father

in the tone he uses when he is trying both to answer and go on reading. "Ours went out because it wasn't fed high enough,—it doesn't matter this warm night."

Then they were quiet again downstairs.

Sue-Betty rose to her feet and drew a long breath. It was no longer the open door that troubled her—it was the character of the furnace himself. Funny, was he? And needed looking after? Then why, oh *why* was he ever permitted to go out alone? She could not understand her father's and mother's indifference. Both had agreed the furnace was not to be trusted, yet neither of them seemed to think of anything to be done about it.

"And *I* can't, of course. I'm just a little girl," said Sue-Betty sadly. She undressed and went to bed.

The moon shone into the room like very quiet daylight—white on the counterpane and pale blue on the wall. Sue-Betty lay with wide-open eyes, thinking of the furnace

and getting more and more anxious over his absence. She tried to put her mind on other things—on sheep walking slowly and bumping each other, in a long line,—on waves, breaking one after another on the hard, white beach,—on pigeons flying past blue sky by hundreds and hundreds; but the harder she tried to fall asleep, the larger grew her wakefulness, until it seemed to fill up the whole inside of her head.

At last she heard her father and mother go to bed and she knew it must be very late indeed: still there came no sound from the register to announce that the furnace had returned. Could he have come home and stolen into his place quietly? Could such a heavy, lumbering sheet-iron thing move quietly at all? Sue-Betty thought not. She thought it far more likely that the funny furnace was up to some mischief, far away from home.

After awhile the moon made its way around to where it could look Sue-Betty in

the face through the window-pane; and the moon's expression was as troubled as Maggy's had been that evening. "Don't you think it's pretty late for your furnace to be out?" it seemed to ask.

Sue-Betty jumped up and took from under her pillow her Waterbury watch, her huge treasure and great joy, and pattered with it to the window to read the time by the light of the anxious moon.

Half-past ten!

"I think I really must go down and see whether, by any chance, he *has* come in," said Sue-Betty with a sudden courage that surprised herself.

Very hastily she dressed herself, put her watch and a lucky-stone she had once found on the beach in her pocket, slipped out, and tiptoed downstairs through the dark house.

The small bracket lamp was burning in the basement hall and showed Sue-Betty the door of the furnace-room ajar. "I wonder how I dare!" she said to herself as she stole

up and peeped in. Sure enough, the place where the great furnace usually stood was empty. The thing was really gone. A beam of moonlight fell across the space through the small high window and gleamed in the corner on the heap of shining coal.

"Now I'll just see whether he is coming," murmured Sue-Betty, and she went to the area door. It was left unbolted, according to her father's directions. Sue-Betty opened it softly and slipped out into the area.

This was full of moonlight from end to end, and the whole length of it on the stone floor lay the ashes and cinders the furnace had scattered as he went out.

"Untidy old thing!" exclaimed Sue-Betty and she followed the trail out upon the lawn. Here, when she saw it led down towards the stables, she was truly alarmed.

"Has he gone to sleep in the hay, like a tramp? He'll surely set it afire!"—and she ran away after him as fast as she could.

Her anxiety on this point was soon at rest,

however. Just before he had reached the stables, the furnace had turned and gone out of the back gate into the highroad.

"So long as I have started and the track is so plain," said Sue-Betty, "I'll just go after him and tell him what time it is."

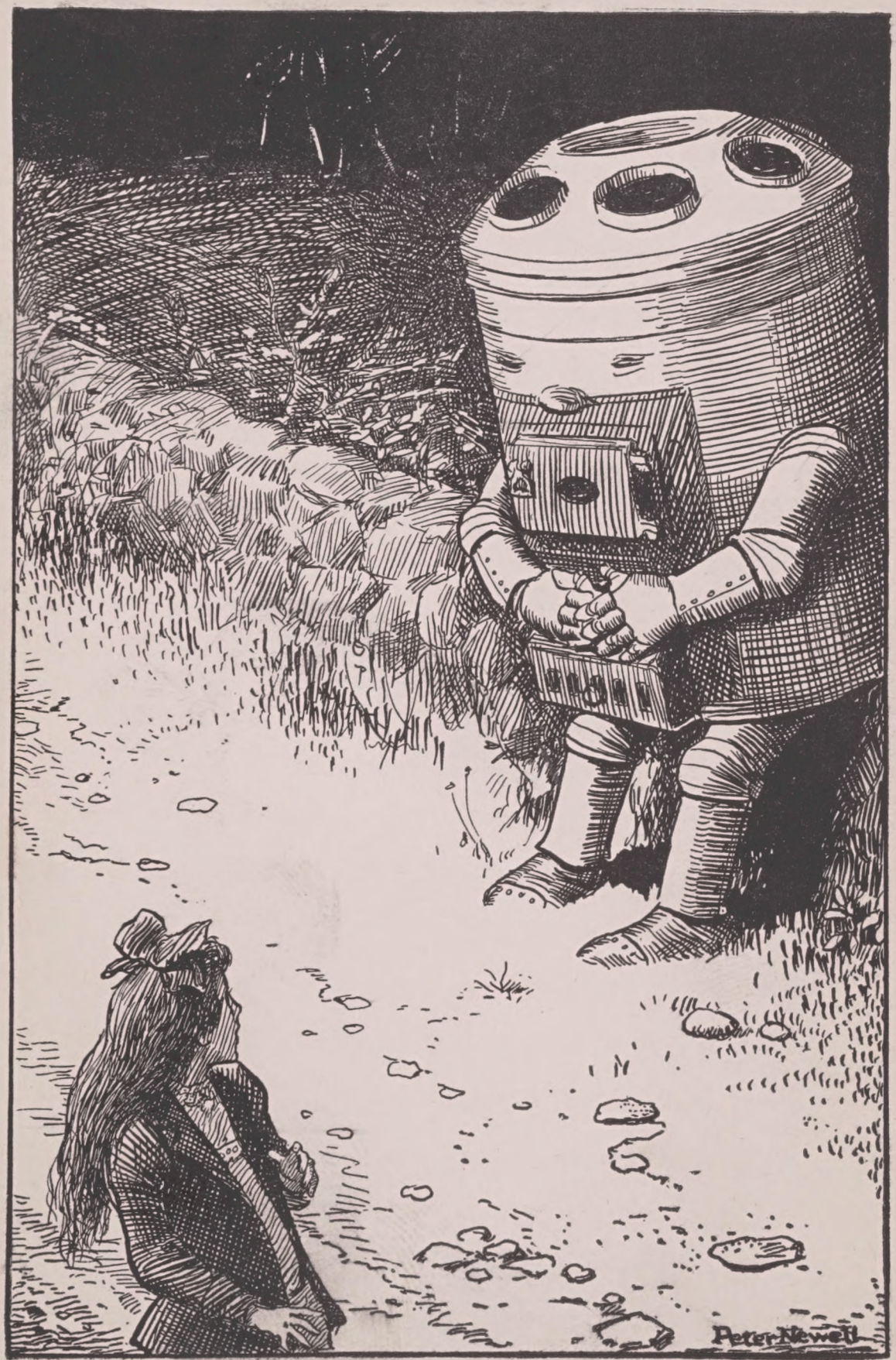
It was really a remarkably warm night. The air was as sweet on the cheeks as in summer evenings. Had it not been for the sumach standing scarlet by the moonlit roadside, one would not have believed it was late October. For all that she was on an errand so important as to bring an erring furnace home, Sue-Betty skipped and ran along right gaily. Down the hard, white road she went, where the slim, black cedars threw still blacker shadows straight across it. They looked like so many crevasses that ought to be jumped. Just for play, Sue-Betty jumped them, every one. She found herself so light on her feet that she seemed hardly to come down again; it was more like skimming along than like actual jumping.

One gets over the ground very fast in this way. Presently Sue-Betty found herself miles from home, crossing the railroad track where the road runs towards Snake Hill. Still the trail could be plainly followed where the furnace had passed along.

And then she came suddenly upon him.

He was resting by the roadside, half-sitting on the stone wall. Although she had been looking out for him every minute, when Sue-Betty's eyes actually fell upon the big fellow in his huge, galvanized iron jacket and cap, looking so coldly grey in the moonlight, with his monstrous, pipey arms crossed composedly before him,—when she came upon him thus at the turn of the road, she was so startled that she jumped backwards into the air like a frightened kitten.

Fortunately she came down so lightly as to make no noise on the hard road and the furnace never even glanced towards her. His head was bent forward as if he were half asleep.



AND THEN SHE CAME SUDDENLY UPON HIM

Sue-Betty was awhile uncertain what to do. To tell a thing as large as that—"Come! Go home! It's late," was rather more than she could nerve herself to do. Then she remembered that actions speak louder than words, and she drew her Waterbury watch, meaning to march up close and hold its face in the moonlight, so that the furnace would have to read the time.

Just then, away down the road, arose such a clanking sound as reminded Sue-Betty of ghosts and chains. She stood still and listened.

The sound drew nearer and nearer and Sue-Betty, turning about, saw a big, dark thing coming along behind her—actually, another furnace!

She jumped sideways into a sumach thicket, cowered low and hardly wanted to breathe. Up came this second furnace, clanked past Sue-Betty without turning his head her way, and then Sue-Betty's furnace called out in greeting:—

"Is that you, Clang-Dickens?"

"It's me, Boiler-Bulge!" returned the newcomer.

Sue-Betty was glad to find out the name of her own furnace—though she did *not* think Boiler-Bulge a pretty name. Their voices were big and rough, and grated like scraping iron.

"I've been waiting for you over an hour," grumbled Boiler-Bulge, Sue-Betty's furnace. "The night will be half gone before we meet the other boys."

"Couldn't get out a minute sooner, Bulge," returned Clang-Dickens. "The old man was monkeying with my draughts as late as eight o'clock. Rake my cinders! but I was mad!"

If Sue-Betty was worried about her furnace before, how do you suppose she felt now that she found him in the company of this Clang-Dickens,—ungrammatical, disrespectful, even profane?

"Well, come along, I guess the boys will

wait for us," said Sue-Betty's furnace, and they started off together.

Instead of taking the road, they clambered over the stone wall where Boiler-Bulge had been waiting: a great clashing sound they made on the stones, and knocked down the wall besides. Sue-Betty found quite a breach when she slipped out of her nook to follow them.

(For how could she let her own furnace go off with this horrid one, not knowing what they were up to? If furnaces all were funny and all needed looking after, this meeting of the two with "other boys" must mean some sort of mischief.)

"I'm about starved," said Boiler-Bulge, as they trudged along across the moonlit field. His words floated back to Sue-Betty and mortified her greatly. "They've been keeping me disgracefully low at our house. It's that sort of thing that makes a fellow want to go off on a tear."

"Just what my father told my mother," murmured Sue-Betty.

"About three coals a day and draughts shut down fit to smother," Boiler-Bulge continued his complaint. "That's been the rule this last week. I mean to smash that thermometer that hangs in the shade before I turn in to-night. When it goes up, my rations go down. After hibernating all summer, a fellow wakes up with something of an appetite, eh?"

"You bet your bottom ashpan!" returned the vulgar Clang-Dickens. "Rake my cinders, if I couldn't take a good-sized boulder like a biscuit! I've had just your experience this week—only worse, because my folks never *do* give me anything more substantial than wood. I don't live high on anthracite like you."

"Wood is good enough, too, if you can get enough of it," returned Boiler-Bulge. "How many cords did Bang-Rattler say there are up yonder?"

"Bang-Rattler. Another furnace!" said Sue-Betty anxiously to herself.

"Oh, there are stacks and stacks,—enough for a good-sized picnic," returned Clang-Dickens. "Tell you what, Bulgy, we are going to make a regular, old-fashioned stoke of it to-night."

"I wish you wouldn't call me Bulgy," said Sue-Betty's furnace with a touch of dignity. "It sounds low. And I don't like the term 'stoke' as you use it. If you mean feast or banquet, say feast or banquet. Don't talk, my dear Clang, like a furnace who has never heard any good English through his registers."

"Oh well! We haven't all got a patent, spiral, hot-water attachment down our inwards to elevate and spiritualise us," returned Clang-Dickens with a rusty laugh.

They were both a little cross after that, like hungry men, and lumbered along without more conversation. Sue-Betty followed close. Was it possible that her Boiler-

Bulge, who seemed a *little* more refined than his companion, could bring himself to steal cordwood on the hillside?

Now the way led up a lane. The furnaces had thrown down the bars to pass into it and did not take the trouble to put them up again. Sue-Betty knew this might make trouble for the farmer and put them up again herself. She was all the more indignant with Clang-Dickens and Boiler-Bulge.

When they had gone up the lane to where began the lower wooded slopes of Snake Hill, they left it again and once more climbed a stone wall. Then what a crashing and snapping there was when the two of them walked through the dry and twiggy underbrush of the woods. The dead leaves rustled on the ground, the branches crackled as in a fire.

Presently Clang-Dickens gave a whistle, surprisingly like that from a locomotive. Indeed Sue-Betty thought for the moment that some engine from the railroad below

had come up into the woods to join this iron company.

Having whistled twice, Clang-Dickens stopped and listened for an answer. Boiler-Bulge paused too, and Sue-Betty behind them, so that all the woods were still.

"We've come too far to the right," remarked Boiler-Bulge. "They ought to hear us, by this time."

"Unless they've loaded up and gone on to the quarry," said Clang-Dickens. "It would be just about mean enough of them."

"I am sure the furnaces whom I have the honour to call my friends would do no such thing," returned Boiler-Bulge very severely. "I tell you, we have come too far to the right. We are now about as far up as the quarry."

"Teach your airshaft! I know better," snarled Clang-Dickens. "Haven't I been to these wood-piles before? They are right around here somewhere. I remember those white birches growing in a clump over

there. The wood is within a hundred yards, you can bet your bottom ashpan."

So they nosed about and threshed about and blundered about in the thicket; and Sue-Betty stood off and watched them.

Suddenly Clang-Dickens gave a roar of rage.

"Rake my cinders, if those rusty rapscallions haven't gone and cleaned up the whole pile between them and then lit out! Look here, Bulge! Here's where the cordwood was! Here are the stakes that held it."

He had hardly finished and Boiler-Bulge had hardly lurched over there to see, when a big, three-trumpeted laugh blared out, a laugh so loud and boisterous that Sue-Betty had to hold her ears. It seemed to come from behind a great pile of boulders close by; and presently, from that hiding place, three more furnaces rose to their feet and rolled forward, clanking against each other and holding each other up in their uproarious merriment.

Boiler-Bulge and Clang-Dickens stood still, facing them. Sue-Betty was sure there would now begin a fearful battle.

When the three had stopped laughing and had begun to cough, Boiler-Bulge spoke. Sue-Betty was gratified that he spoke quietly.

"Do you think you boys have acted on the square about this?" he asked, and his deep voice trembled with feeling as though someone were shaking him down.

This set the hilarious trio off again. Now Clang-Dickens broke loose excitedly.

"You rusty rips—you broken-down, cracked-plated, unhinged, old iron gas-generators——"

"Mr. Dickens!" they all three thundered out in a stern and dignified chorus; and they all stood up straight and separate, instead of lolling on each other's shoulders. Now that Betty could distinguish them, one appeared huge—much larger than any of the others; one was like Boiler-Bulge, only

he had shiny parts that glistened in the moonlight; and one was small and white and had a slender waist like a cadet,—he looked as if he had come from the railroad station.

"Mr. Dickens, you will apologise for your language," said this slender furnace with great airs; "first to my friend, Mr. Pounder-Gratings" (pointing out the huge furnace), "who is with us upon my invitation and to whom I promised a courteous reception; and then to Mr. Nick-Nickel" (pointing out the shiny furnace) "and to myself."

"Oh, bosh!" called out the huge furnace in a jovial way. (His voice was thunderous.) "Don't apologise to me. I'm no stranger to old Clang-Dickens, though I *am* new in this crowd. We used to see each other in the factory."

"Well, *Pounder-Gratings!* is this really you?" cried the angry Clang-Dickens, his tone quite changed to friendliness. "This

is a rattling good surprise. Where have you put up in this region?"

"I'm running the Orphan Asylum over yonder on the mountains," returned the huge one, pointing away across the lowlands to where the dark range showed black against the moonlit sky. "This is my first night out. They have to keep those infants surprisingly warm, and if it weren't that there are two of us, I shouldn't get off at all. My dear Bang-Rattler, I haven't met this gentleman yet."

Now Bang-Rattler (the slender one from the station) introduced Sue-Betty's furnace in form; but Boiler-Bulge did not respond at once to the other's cordiality.

"I should be more pleased to meet you, Mr. Pounder-Gratings, if you had not stowed away *my* share of the cordwood," he said with the frankness of a deeply injured person.

At this the three again burst out laughing. "Why weren't you on time?" cried Nick-Nickel between his guffaws.

Clang-Dickens was just growing angry again and began with "Rake my——" when the huge Pounder once more made peace by explaining to the injured ones that there were several untouched cords of wood higher up, near the quarry. This quite mollified the two, and all started off together, Pounder-Gratings roaring a song to the tune of "Old Dan Tucker."

"The farmer chops the forest trees,
He ought to axe them 'if you please';
He saws them up, he makes his pile.
I saw the pile; it made me smile."

At this all the furnaces laughed boisterously; but Sue-Betty, who now knew that they were stealing wood, was shocked and grieved beyond expression. How was she to draw her furnace away from among these wicked ones? She could only follow and trust for a chance to speak to him aside.

The other woodpile reached, Sue-Betty saw with tears of shame in her eyes how her

naughty furnace fell thievishly upon it, with open doors, and crammed himself greedily full. Clang-Dickens was not behind him in this, and the other furnaces helped both. In three minutes the whole pile had disappeared; and on went the wretches, crashing pell-mell up the hillside on their way to the quarry.

Still Sue-Betty followed; and while they entered the semi-circular space between the cliff walls of limestone, she clambered hastily around the margin of the quarry and came out on the brink above them. There, by throwing herself on the ground face forward, she could peer down on them from the shadow of some sheltering bushes and see and hear as from a gallery in a theatre.

Really, the quarry was a weird and scary-looking place in the cold, blue moonlight. The limestone was much weathered here and there, and presented rounded, life-like heads and knobby animal shapes. There were cracks like grins, and holes like open

mouths, all very curious and unsettling to look upon. But if the grey walls of the quarry were distressing in the dim light, the bottom was really fearful. There was a great black pool, five-sided and angular. Around it squatted the huge iron monsters, all reflected in the dark water so that there seemed to be ever so many more. By the time Sue-Betty had reached her point of observation, they were already passing a lighted brand from one to the other, as men in smoking might do with a lighted match. Each furnace in turn carefully lit the fuel within him; and now arose a great crackling and smoking, and the smell of burning wood.

"This is cosy!" cried Nick-Nickel; and he began to sing "We Won't Go Home Till Morning" and sang it very much out of tune. When they all joined in for the chorus, it was like a boiler factory and forty fog-horns accompanying a brass band. Meanwhile they began to get hot, and to

throw off sparks, and to get a dull-red colour about the doors.

It was an awful sight to Sue-Betty to see her furnace engaged in this carouse. She longed to spring up upon the brink of the cliff and to make a speech to them all then and there. She could surely, she thought, have said something to shame them and send them home. But the largest megaphone on earth would not have made Sue-Betty's voice big enough to penetrate that awful din.

They sang on and on, and grew hotter and hotter, till at last they were fire-red all over. The glow fell on the walls of the quarry and now the shapes near the weathered margin seemed to move in a shadowy, flickering dance. Hot air began to fan Sue-Betty's cheek as from a giant register. It was getting unendurable.

And now there was no tune or rhythm to what they sang, each furnace was off on a drunken roar of his own. They rose, all

red-hot as they were, and joined hands about the pool and pranced around it with a fearful clashing and clanking. Then it seemed to be part of the game to separate and for each furnace to go off on a special whirl or jig in his own corner of the quarry, while all together they kept up the noise unceasingly.

Suddenly came the penetrating locomotive whistle of Clang-Dickens piercing the uproar and all stopped short. A startling quiet fell. Sue-Betty felt that this was her chance for a speech, urging them to moderation; but she was by this time so frightened that her teeth chattered together in spite of the hot air from below; besides, Clang-Dickens took the floor almost instantly.

"Boys!" he cried, and his tone was full of badness, "Let's set the woods on fire."

This wicked proposition was hailed with a hoarse "Hurrah" from all the others, and they clapped their furnace doors in loud applause so that the quarry flashed with

light and the moonlight was eclipsed. In that fierce red glow, where it fell on the limestone walls, one could see the fringing rocks twisted into weird expressions of delight and malice.

Sue-Betty caught sight of this uncanny sculpturing, quite lost heart, and up and ran away.

Down she scurried through the bush, like a chased rabbit, as far and as fast as she could go. Then she came to a fence and the road beyond it, and she stopped to breathe.

Here the moonlight fell pleasantly in the open and all was quiet. Pointed cedars marched up and down the road on either side; and away to the right she saw the white-armed signal post that marked a railroad crossing. Presently Sue-Betty had regained her breath and collected her thoughts and now she was very sorry she had run away.

"It was very scary, but I could have stood it, with the Lucky-stone in my pocket," she

said to herself, " and if I had staid, I *might* have prevented their setting the woods on fire." Sue-Betty knew that the autumn fires on the hills and mountains do a great deal of harm to the timber and she felt a load of responsibility.—" I might at least have tried. I think I must go back."

But even while she spoke, she heard the sound of their clanking tread and saw the fiery furnaces coming along down the very road she was on. Alas! she found she had no courage to confront them, and she crouched and hid behind the bole of a cedar.

On they came, quiet now, almost stealthy in their tread, precisely as if bent on more mischief. When they passed Sue-Betty, Indian-file, Clang-Dickens leading, Pounder-Gratings bringing up the rear, all lurched eagerly forward, they reminded her of so many bandits going to commit a robbery.

" Oh *what* are they up to now? " poor Sue-Betty questioned, as she crept out and peered after them. They marched on down

as far as the railroad crossing. There they paused, stuck their big heads together and seemed to deliberate. Then Sue-Betty watched them file away to the left, down the railroad cut. She ran after them, stopped, listened, ran on again; and so came down to the tracks.

The rails led away in four shiny streaks towards the moon. A little way beyond her, the bank was steep and sandy, and under it, in the shadow of a hollow, she saw the red glow of the furnaces. Why were they lurking there so close to the track?

She herself was in the full blaze of moonlight now, and they might easily have seen her and rushed out upon her, had they been so minded. She was not thinking of her own safety. Away down the track she heard a coming train, and there was a lump in her throat. Those red-hot furnaces meant evil —and there were people on that train. How could she warn the engineer, how could she make a signal?

There was a sort of lameness in her bones. She could only stand and shake, and stare down the track helplessly, to where the glaring eye of the onrushing locomotive grew momentarily larger.

Now the train drew near, now there was a stir in the hollow. In another moment it all happened before the horrified Sue-Betty's very eyes. The locomotive came roaring up the cut, and the whole five furnaces, red-hot, clashing, yelling murderously, sprang suddenly into the track, and flung their doors open, so that the light flashed into the locomotive's very eye. It stopped, of course, like a frightened horse, and reared straight up into the air, its wheels spinning, its driving-rod kicking spasmodically. The cars behind jarred and bumped against each other. Then the locomotive shied sideways off the track, and jerked several of the cars off with it. Over they all went into the ditch, with great wreckage and the surf-like thunder of falling coals

with which the cars, it appeared, were loaded.

That was all. The furnaces were gone. The locomotive lay kicking in the ditch, the half-emptied, piled-up cars lay still. A very angry engineer and two scared brakemen stood about the prostrate locomotive talking loudly. They were interrupted by the quavering high voice of a little girl.

"Please, sir, is anybody killed?"

They all turned and faced Sue-Betty, who was trembling to the very end of her pigtail.

"Well, who on airth be you?" demanded the engineer.

"Is anybody hurt?" insisted Sue-Betty nervously.

"No, Sissy, we ain't hurt; but I guess our old engine's pretty well bust up."

"Oh dear, oh dear! I am so sorry," wailed Sue-Betty. "Can't anything be done?"

"Why yes, there's a heap to be done. We've got to rig up signals on the track and

we've got to wire the news of the smash-up——"

"I mean for the poor, hurt locomotive," cried Sue-Betty. "What kind of a doctor do you call in?"

"Look here, Jake," said the engineer in lowered tone to one of the brakemen, "I guess this little girl lives nearby and has wandered off in her sleep like. You just pick her up and carry her home to her Maw."

Sue-Betty jumped for fright and made off hurriedly. The men were too absorbed with the wreck to care to run after her. Now her chief idea was to find the furnaces again. Creatures so malignant as to scare a locomotive off the track might do any wicked thing that night. She regained the road, crossed the track and hurried on, looking to every side. Once she looked back, and beheld the dark, wooded side of Snake Hill studded with a brilliant round spot of fire.

"They've done it. They've started it, and

it will spread and the mountain will be burned bare," cried Sue-Betty indignantly.

She stopped often to listen, knowing that the noisy furnaces would surely betray their whereabouts. Sure enough, the clanking sound soon led her away from the road, towards a little dell, where she found the monsters crouched together in the bush. They were shouldering each other, and chuckling and clucking in heavy, hysterical glee over the success of their practical joke. She crept as close to them as she could for the heat. Five fiery furnaces are not to be approached too nearly.

"It'll take them half this night to clear the track, though," cried Nick-Nickel, through a partial pause in the noise of their merriment. "And we can't get a mouthful of coal until those men get away."

"My bricks! I never thought of that," cried Clang-Dickens. "Perhaps they'll set guards over the wreck, and we won't get the coal at all."

"Couldn't we scare away the guards?" asked Pounder-Gratings, throwing up his pipe-clad arms and clapping his doors, illustrative of all frightfulness.

"We might—and then again we might-n't," said Clang-Dickens. "Those railroad men ain't so very scary."

Pounder-Gratings sat still a moment as if brooding over something. Then he raised his head and let forth the following awful speech:

"I'd rather have a juicy brakeman than a ton of coal!"

The words fell on the assembled furnaces like a dead weight. Not one of them spoke or moved. Sue-Betty shuddered in the bush. Then Boiler-Bulge arose in mighty self-righteousness and reviled Pounder-Gratings for his horrid thought. He drew a fine distinction between the harmless, youthful mischief of the kind in which the company usually engaged, and the murderous thought which Pounder-Gratings, the

newcomer, had introduced. Boiler-Bulge spoke with eloquence; and he wound up, with a magnificent gesture, *"I am a vegetarian!"*

At this Clang-Dickens burst into a mocking laugh.

"Coal is a mineral!" he cried. "You're no vegetarian."

"Coal is vegetable," returned Boiler-Bulge hotly. "Peat, soft coal, anthracite—where do you draw the line?"

"*I* draw the line at human flesh," said Nick-Nickel firmly. "I've never tasted it, and I'm sure it isn't good."

"And I know it is good," thundered Pounder-Gratings. "I've tasted it. I had a lick at a kitchen-maid's hand once; I've never forgotten it. She was trying to heat some water in me one night, when the kitchen fire had gone out. What a taste I got! I've been crazy for it ever since."

By this time Sue-Betty was terrified beyond expression. She had never imagined

they were man-eating furnaces. Pounder's confession had plainly made a strong effect upon the others. Neither Boiler-Bulge nor Nick-Nickel made any further objection. All sat mumchance, while the fires within them glowed hotter and hotter, and the scorching air rolled away from them in tremulous waves.

Suddenly Bang-Rattler burst into a song, —a dreadful song, in praise of Moloch, the King of all Furnaces. It told how, in heathen days, infants were flung into his fiery mouth to feed him. The actual words were too awful and too jumbled to write down just as he sang them, but their meaning was clear to Sue-Betty, and alas! to the furnaces that heard them. One and all they began to rock in rhythm and moan and rumble in response, when Bang-Rattler paused; so that they worked themselves up to such a pitch of excitement, that it seemed they would presently be ready for anything.

Then Clang-Dickens jumped to his feet

and yelled to them all to listen. They were quiet instantly, and Clang's voice fell to a husky whisper.

"Don't let's fool with the tough old brakeman. Let's get Pounder to *lead us up to his orphan asylum!*"

At these words they all let forth a howl of delight, and Pounder-Gratings roared above the tumult for them to follow him. Boiler-Bulge, as Sue-Betty observed with breaking heart, had forgotten his high principles and his vegetarianism, and rattled away after the others, who were already out of the dell. She was up and after them without loss of time, her hair on end with horror.

"I must get there first! I must pass them," she cried to herself as she sped along. She knew the road, knew it made a great bend and that (as the furnaces followed the bend) she could cut them off by taking a hasty way across the fields.

That feather-lightness was still upon her.

She seemed to drift and fly across the moon-lit fields, and reached the tree-shadowed road again a good quarter of a mile ahead of the furnaces. Now she felt more easy, for it seemed certain that she could beat the furnaces by long enough to warn the grown-ups who were in charge of the orphans.

As the road wound and rose and fell across the country toward the mountains, she could look back, from time to time, and get sight of the fiery band of furnaces, visible far through the night. When she paused long enough to listen she caught their dreadful song of Moloch with which they were keeping themselves in the spirit of voracious murder. Still further back she saw Snake Hill, on whose flank the spot of fire had begun to open out into a great semi-circle, like a monstrous shiny snake.

Now the road began to go up. The orphan asylum was high on the mountain-side. As roads do, this one took the easiest way up to the heights, ascending along the deep-

cut glen of a stream. It was a side-hill road, rocks had been blasted away here and there to give it room, a guard-rail bounded it on the falling-off side, towards the bed of the stream. For the most part this way led along at some height above the water, and ever and again one could get long looks down the glen into the open country. Sue-Betty paused a moment at such a point to notice that, far across the low-lands, Snake Hill lay in full view, like a picture framed by the sloping sides of the glen; and that its side was branded by an enlarging figure drawn in curves and loops of fire.

"It looks something as if it were trying to write a D," observed Sue-Betty with interest; and then she remembered the importance of her errand and hurried on again.

It was easier to skim along up that mountain road with scarcely any effort than to think of what she would do when she reached the orphan asylum. The faster Sue-

Betty went, the harder she found it to plan. Simply to tell the orphan asylum grown-ups that the furnaces were coming to devour the children, without bringing them any plan for defence, did not satisfy Sue-Betty.

"They'll all lose their heads and won't know what to do," she said to herself. "They'll lock their area door, but the five furnaces can batter it down. They'll want to run away with all the orphans; but how can fifty babies be got out of bed and washed and dressed in time to run away?"

She paused once more to listen to the furnace song, far down the glen, so as to judge how much time she had gained upon them; and once more her eyes fell on the burning forest on Snake Hill.

"Why it *is* a D," she exclaimed in astonishment, and so it was—a great, capital D, done in fire, as plain and clear as in any copy-book. Sue-Betty felt that this must be a message to her, and, as she ran on, she puzzled over what it might mean.

"D? D? What does D stand for?" she asked herself. "It stands for *do,* and I must do something. Why doesn't it write me what to do?"

Murmuring over to herself all the things beginning with D that might be done,—as delay, discourage, divert, draw away, drag away, etc.—she ran down a falling stretch of the road, to where it crossed the bed of the brook by a low bridge.

"Now D also stands for drench—and for drown," said Sue-Betty meditatively, stopping on the bridge.

All about her rose tall dark trees; but the moon was high and looked down into the open water-staircase of pools and falls made by the brook; and the moonlight showed that the water was very low. Just a small stream gurgled down among the great tumbled rocks of the bed, and only enough water trickled over the falls to wet the rocks, and make them glisten.

"Nobody could get drowned here," said

Sue-Betty. "Oh, I remember! All the water is held back up there in the reservoir."

And then she bethought herself that D stands for *dam;* and she saw a way to save the orphans as plainly as one sees a path in which one is walking. She jumped over the railing of the bridge, down among the rocks, and forthwith took her way up stream as fast as she could skip from boulder to boulder, as fast as she could scramble up along the margin of the water-falls. Now she was in the friendly moonlight, now in the cold, black shadow of rocky ledges and low-hanging firs; where she could not see, she felt her way; and whether it was her Lucky-stone, or her own particular light-footedness, she never once stumbled or slipped.

At last she came into the open, and up against a great wall of masonry,—the dam of the reservoir. Over its weir there fell a thin and shiny curtain of water; but Sue-Betty knew there were thousands and thou-

sands of tons more behind that great wall. She made for the sluice-gates on the right.

And when she had clambered up to the level of the dam, sure enough, there was a broad, quiet, brimming lake of water, rippling coolly in the night wind.

"Here's enough to quench their appetites for orphans," said Sue-Betty resolutely. She put her hands on the long lever of the gates and stood very still to listen.

Far below in the hollows of the glen she heard the hoarse chorus of the furnaces, still roaring out their song. She waited till it sounded directly below her,—and then—then—she swung her whole weight upon the lever-arm.

Slowly—slowly—with tremendous dignity, the lever-arm came bowing down. At her feet arose a deafening rush of waters. With the roar of a thousand waves, they welled out of their placid lake and went down the glen in a solid glittering wall, crashing into white spray on the fringing

rocks, and flooding the darkness of the woods.

A minute later arose a howling above the tumult of the waters like fire-bells and railroad danger-signals and fog-horns and every other imaginable whoop of distress. At the same moment a great, white cloud of steam rose up out of the dark glen, and hung above it in the moonlight, like a veil.

"I caught them! I caught them!" cried Sue-Betty jubilantly. She left her gates and flew away down along the brawling waters to see the effect of her work. When she came down near to where the bridge had been, the steam was so thick she was in a fog; but she could hear the five furnaces roaring, sputtering, clashing, plunging, bellowing to each other for help.

Presently Boiler-Bulge plunged past her, visible for a moment through the mist—and oh, how black and cold and dripping wet he was! Not a spark of his fire remained, not a vestige of his spirit for wild

adventure. He neither saw nor heard Sue-Betty, though she called to him, but hurriedly limped past her and into the road, scuttling away homeward. As he did not wait for his companions, Sue-Betty could not either; but she judged from Boiler-Bulge's condition that all were wet and sobered and she hastened on to see her own furnace safely home. Indeed, it was some trouble to keep him in view. Though he limped, though he groaned, though the water trickled from him still, and his doors clapped desolately, like the shutters of an uncared-for house, still he hurried on as if his life depended on his getting home. His companions followed, at no great distance behind Sue-Betty, and she caught a few words of what they were mournfully singing:

"Oh, Mother, I am tired now!
Come, put me in my little bed!"

And then again, a little later,

"Oh, Brother dear, kiss me good-night——"

But if they were calling upon Boiler-Bulge, it was in vain. He did not even wait for them at his own back-gate to kiss them good-night; but went plunging, stamping forward across the lawn towards the house.

From this behaviour towards his evil companions, and from the sounds he made, like sobs of repentance, Sue-Betty concluded with deep satisfaction that Boiler-Bulge had been on his last lark.

Such a fumbling as he made at the latch when he reached the area door, such a time he had, adjusting his pipes to the registers, when he was finally back in his own room! Sue-Betty did not wait for him to get settled, but made fast the area door and hurried up-stairs. By the time she was ready for bed again herself, the noises from the cellar had subsided, except for the penitent's occasional sighs.

The moon still looked in at the window, serene and smiling now; and once more

Sue-Betty consulted her watch in the bright light.

It was still half-past ten.

Sue-Betty couldn't understand it at first, for the watch was ticking briskly. Then she decided that it must have been asleep in her pocket through the whole adventure, and just that minute waked up and started on again; so with an easy mind, she crept back into bed.

PIRATES

PIRATES

IT was in Clinton-on-the-Sound, where the summer cottages have walls so thin you can hear all that is said in the next room. Sue-Betty was drawing in one room, and her mother was talking in the other. She was telling Mrs. Wright about Ned and Caroline, who had just been married and gone to New York.

"You know," said Sue-Betty's mother, "they have undertaken light housekeeping."

The little girl was so astonished when she heard this that she dropped her pencil. It rolled off on the floor, and she did not think to pick it up, but sat wondering. Ned and Caroline *were keeping a lighthouse,* and she had never been told about it? It hardly seemed possible. Lighthouse keep-

ing was to Sue-Betty the most fascinating and useful business there was in the world. She had thought again and again how well she would do it when she was grown—if the Government would only trust her with a lighthouse.

But Ned and Caroline seemed the unlikliest people in the world for such a job. Caroline was Sue-Betty's grown-up sister, and Ned, now a brother-in-law, was an old friend; so Sue-Betty knew them both, and knew their special faults. They were the most careless, absent-minded pair imaginable.

They never heard or saw anything but each other; and as for keeping a lamp going, they could not even be trusted with one they were reading by themselves.

"They'll soon get tired of *that,*" Mrs. Wright was saying. "It won't suit either one of them at all;" and Sue-Betty heartily agreed with her.

It troubled her after she went to bed that

night. There was a whistling east wind, and it was very dark. Sue-Betty thought of the harbour of New York, which she had never seen, and of the many, many ships that went in and out there. They would all be depending on the lighthouse on such a night as this. Were Ned and Caroline perhaps reading aloud to each other, and had they forgotten to trim the wicks?

Sue-Betty slept a little, but kept waking up again. The wind was very loud. At last she jumped up and looked out of the window.

By the bright starlight she saw the three sailboats that were always anchored off the beach; and to her surprise and dismay, she saw there was something wrong with the *See-Saw,* Ned's boat he had left behind him at Clinton.

This would never do; Sue-Betty slipped on her bathing-suit and stole down-stairs and out. When Ned was gone, Sue-Betty was the only one in the family who really

knew and cared about sailboats, and she felt responsible.

There was quite a surf and the wind blew keen. The little girl was too troubled to mind it. She stood close to the white and black water, and wondered what she could do; for now she saw plainly that someone had left the jib unfurled. It was flopping and flopping about, and the boom was swinging loose. A creaking sound, like a real live complaint, came across the water; for no sailboat likes to be left like that.

"I'll come out and put you up, you poor old thing," cried Sue-Betty energetically, and she laid hold of a rowboat on the beach and hauled it to the water. It surprised her to find herself so unusually strong. Everything she touched felt light, and, in spite of the cold wind, she was in a glow.

By good luck, the oars and rowlocks were in the boat. Sue-Betty knew how to handle them. With long, strong strokes she

rowed. The wind could not blow her out of her course, she kept out of the trough of the waves. How she wished there was somebody on the beach to watch her and see how well she did it! No grown-ups would believe how well she could row.

It seemed less dark when she was out on the water. Sue-Betty saw her way to the buoy, fastened her boat, boarded the *See-Saw,* and started to attend to her rigging. But while she worked at the sails a wonderful idea came to her. The wind was from the east—why not sail westward to New York? Why not take Ned and Caroline their sailboat, and, at the same time, satisfy herself that the lights of their lighthouse were kept burning?

Sue-Betty had never been to New York; but she knew people had sailed there from Clinton: she had never managed the *See-Saw* all alone; but she had been Ned's first mate all summer, and felt perfectly secure with sheet and tiller. Perhaps she might

have thought about getting her mother's permission,—but it was a curious night to Sue-Betty. As fast as an idea came into her head, she had to begin acting on it,—she felt so lively and so capable. The only thing she could think about now was the fact that there was a lighthouse in the family. Somebody *had* to take care of it.

So she set sail for New York.

The wind was fine, and the stars were bright; Sue-Betty was so happy she could have shouted. But she steadily and quietly held the tiller and never tied the sheet, and kept her eyes on the sail, which hollowed beautifully before her, white in the white faint light from the sparkling sky. She knew that the good sailor is cautious, not daring. When she saw Ned, he would surely ask her how she had sailed. She meant this night's trip should prove, once for all, that she had learned to manage a boat.

When you go before the wind the air

seems about calm. Unless you look at the water slipping past you'll never guess how fast you're going. Sue-Betty was experienced. She saw lighted villages along the Sound appear and pass and fall behind, and she exulted in her speed.

"New York is at the end of the Sound," she said to herself. "I'll know it by its being much bigger than these villages; and the lighthouse of course, will be somewhere out in front. I'll have no trouble finding *that.*"

So she sailed on.

If anybody thinks Sue-Betty was a very naughty girl to go off alone that night without permission, let him read about her adventure with the furnace. That time she had to be out, nearly all night, and did *a very useful thing.* But saving orphans is no more important than saving ships, and she was worrying now about the lamps in the lighthouse. And if anybody thinks it rather strange her arm did not begin to

ache holding the sheet and the tiller so long, let him remember how she handled the great levers of the floodgates that night. It makes one strong to care very much about doing a thing—quite strong enough to do it, often.

As for that sail down the Sound, it can not be described. If one has been sailing, one knows about it; one simply must have the experience to understand it. One is told when one gets into a boat to obey orders and not to be frightened. That is all that one can be told. The joy of sailing, and the excitement of sailing, and the real live feeling of sailing, one has to get for oneself.

Sue-Betty loved it; and she was almost sorry when she saw straight in front of her more lights than there could be in a village, and knew she was nearing New York.

As she came skimming nearer and nearer on the wings of the wind, she became aware of a low flat island between herself and the

shining city. On that island stood a tall, black tower, perfectly dark—and she knew this was the lighthouse, and that her worst fears were realised—Ned and Caroline were not attending to the lamps.

"Oh, isn't it lucky I came," cried Sue-Betty. She beached the *See-Saw* on the strand at the foot of the lighthouse, and carried her anchor up into a pile of rocks. Then she eagerly ran to the little door.

It was open and was banging back against the wall with every gust of the wind. In one corner of this lowest room stood a lighted lantern, burning very low.

"Caroline! Ned!" cried Sue-Betty up the winding stair. There was no answer out of the blackness above her. Sue-Betty took up the lantern and climbed the stairs.

It was exactly like the lighthouse at Stony Point—except that it stood on a low island instead of on a high rocky point. The stairs were like it, the rooms were like it, one over the other, until she came to Ned

and Caroline's sitting-room. That was very much like a cosy ship's cabin, had a big stove with a fire in it, cupboards all around the walls between the small curtained windows, a few easy chairs, Caroline's work-box on the table, Ned's pipes and things on a shelf, and Caroline's own little desk that had been sent after her from home, just a day or two before. On it was a photograph of Ned and of Sue-Betty herself, on the deck of the *See-Saw,* furling the sail.

But Ned and Caroline were not there. Sue-Betty peeked into an adjoining little dressing-room,—not there either.

"They must have gone to the theatre," said Sue-Betty with a sigh.

She lit the student-lamp on Caroline's desk, then took the matches and went climbing on up the winding stair to attend to the lighthouse lamps.

She found them in sad condition. She had to bring up a can of sperm oil from 'way below and fill the lamps. She had to trim

the wicks, she had to fetch chamois and clean cloths and rub the glasses and the brasses; but at last she had lit the lamps. Sue-Betty crept out upon the little circular balcony, to see through the glass her lamp burning so bright; but the wind blew hard and she soon crept in again. Deeply satisfied with what she had done, she went down stairs.

She would stay, anyhow, until Ned and Caroline came home. The warm and lighted room with eight corners was a very delightful place. Sue-Betty sat in Ned's Morris chair, her bare legs curled up under her, and dreamed dreams of the day when she would have a lighthouse of her own. Hers should be on a wild, rocky reef, out of sight of land and other lights. The waves should lash and swish at its foot; she would have to get from her front door right into a rocking rowboat. She would tame the gulls and feed them. And sometimes she would drag in half-drowned sailors, and

warm them by her fire, and revive them. Then they would sit and smoke, and tell her exciting, creepy stories about other countries and sea-serpents in blue, tropical waters; and about how they had been chased by pirate vessels that sailed under black flags.

There was a heavy, scrunchy step on the winding stair. Sue-Betty sat up alertly. Then up through the hole came a man, all dripping wet. Water ran from his big felt hat and the feather on it was draggled wet, water ran out of his clothes and off his boots; and when he stood in the middle of the room, it ran into pools on the floor.

He was not only very wet, he was evidently very, very much provoked. He stood and glared at Sue-Betty with fierce black eyes, and made such an indignant snout of his mouth that his black moustache stuck up bristling, in a most unbecoming way. But his fierce expression was not the only alarming thing about him. He was darkly

He Stood and Glared at Sue Betty with Fierce Black Eyes

tanned, and was dressed in an extraordinary fashion. Fancy! he had big gold rings in his brown ears, and wore a red sash, in which were stuck pistols and knives, only partly concealed under a short, round, richly embroidered velvet jacket. His boots had broad flaps that turned down. If he had not been so very wet, Sue-Betty would certainly have been frightened; but it seemed as if so much water must quench the fury of any man. So when he asked in a sharp way: "Where is the lighthouse keeper?" Sue-Betty drew herself up and answered bravely:

"I am the lighthouse keeper for to-night. What do you wish?"

"Will you please to look me over?" he cried indignantly.

"I have," said Sue-Betty. "You seem to have been in the water."

"In the water!" he roared furiously. "I've been to the bottom of the bay, and swallowed half of it, and all on account of

the way you run this lighthouse, you shrimp!"

It was Sue-Betty's turn to be indignant now.

"You needn't call names," she cried. "It's not polite."

"And I say it's a poor light that shines one night and not the next," yelled her visitor, tramping around, beside himself with rage. And then he poured out a stream of Spanish. Sue-Betty was sure they were swear words, for she had once heard a parrot, whom no one respected, talk just like that.

"My ship is stuck on the bar, at the end of this island, I tell you,—all because of your crazy lighthouse," he continued, in English. "And the pole I was shoving her off with, broke, I tell you, and I went flat into the water. What do you think of that?"

He snatched his hat from his head and shook the water of it against the stove so

that it hissed and went into steam. And now Sue-Betty saw that his head was wrapped in a red turban—picturesque, but not at all like a gentleman.

"She'll stick there till the tide lifts her," he roared, prancing around while the water oozed from his boots. "We shall lose a whole night's work. Is this what you call running a lighthouse for the benefit of the public? I shall make you walk the plank —that is—Ah— I shall have you called up before the Board of Trustees."

"If you have any complaint," said Sue-Betty with dignity, "you are welcome to make it. Only you must make it properly, and I will register it."

She went to her sister's desk, and looked at the backs of some big, businesslike-looking books. Sure enough, there was one labelled "Complaints." She opened it, and was relieved to find it all blank. Nothing had been entered yet. Ned and Caroline had luckily escaped so far. The pages were

divided into columns with headings: the first read—"Name;" the second—"Business or Profession;" the third was headed —"Remarks and Observations."

The stranger seemed a little subdued when Sue-Betty opened the big book. He took a chair and put his feet on the stove and sat there, steaming all over and looking at her expectantly.

"What is your name?" asked Sue-Betty, pen in hand.

He jumped as if the stove had burned his shoe. He stood half up and looked at Sue-Betty in perfect surprise.

"What—do—you—want—of my name?" he asked slowly.

"To send to the Government, with your complaint, of course," returned Sue-Betty.

"Oh!" said the stranger, and he pouted out his lips and bristled his moustache, not angrily this time, but very thoughtfully. Now he sat down and put up his legs, be-

gan to steam again, and seemed lost in brooding thought.

"What is your name?" said Sue-Betty again.

"Willie Lamb," he replied, with a curious, side-long look. Sue-Betty thought it a very inappropriate name, but she wrote it into the book with a neat hand.

"What is your business or profession?" she asked.

"I am a Sunday-school Superintendent in Yonkers," he returned in a soft voice. Sue-Betty looked at him with surprise. He was regarding her out of the corners of his eyes, and he had a peculiar, crafty smile on his face. Very reluctantly she wrote him down a Sunday-school Superintendent. For Remarks and Observations she asked him no question, but wrote down her own. This is her entry, just as she wrote it:

"Apeered late in the night, soking wet, with cumplaints agenst this lighthouse. Seems a suspishus caraktur."

"And now," she said, using the blotter and closing the book, "I am ready to hear your complaint."

Certainly his manner was very much changed since she had asked his name. He spoke in a quiet tone.

"My complaint is that your lighthouse is not at all reliable. It's been dark for a whole week. To-night it's lighted. This morning I've been taking the Sunday-school teachers of Yonkers for a little cruise on my pretty yacht, the *Pinkey-Bluebell*" (when he gave this as the name of his vessel, his smile was very, *very* peculiar), "and the wind, coming home, drove us out of our course. When I saw this lighthouse *lighted,* I took it for quite another lighthouse, of course—one down the harbour, which hasn't any sandbar near it. This lighthouse, as I say, has been dark a whole week. The first thing we knew the *Black* —I mean the *Pinkey-Bluebell* was stuck on the bar."

He had finished, and Sue-Betty spoke.

"Your complaint doesn't count. If you had run on the bar last week, when it was dark, you might have got damages; but it's perfectly absurd to complain of a light-house because it is properly lighted."

"Absurd, is it?" cried Willie Lamb, losing his temper again. "And *I* say it is absurd to have a light one week and none the next."

"You don't understand about flash-lights, I see," said Sue-Betty. (It was not fair, she knew, but how could she shield Ned and Caroline fairly?) "A great many light-houses don't have a steady light. There's a revolving cylinder, that works by clock-work, and it covers the light part of the time."

He snorted.

"I've been sailing up and down this coast for years and years and years," he cried, "and I've sailed by more flash-lights than you ever heard of in all your little life; but

I never saw one that was dark for a whole week, and light for a whole week."

"Well," said Sue-Betty, "if you don't like it, you can speak to the Government."

She knew when she said it that all was over—that Ned and Caroline would lose their job. But when her flash-light excuse failed, she really could not think of another.

"Have you a long distance telephone," asked Willie Lamb, getting up energetically.

"No, you'll have to go to the drug-store in New York," said Sue-Betty.

"How can I go in these clothes?" he cried. "Everybody'll know I'm a pi——I mean—that I've had a ducking."

"I might lend you some dry clothes," said Sue-Betty, "that belong to my brother-in-law. I think he would want to do something for you, because you got wet on account of the lights."

He looked pleased at the proposal, and Sue-Betty took him into the tiny dressing-

room and laid out a suit of Ned's clothes for him. She waited in the sitting-room but a little while before he came out, transformed. The gentlemanly clothes made him look far more as if his name *might* be William Lamb; though he had hardly the face of a Sunday-school Superintendent.

"I'll just hang these things up by the stove to dry, if you don't mind," he said, as he brought his own things out on his arm. Sue-Betty helped him spread them on the chair.

"They'll shrink like sixty," muttered Willie Lamb. "Just turn them now and then, will you?" he asked Sue-Betty.

Then he stamped away downstairs, only shouting back from below:

"I'll be back about sunrise!"

"Mercy me! I can't stay here till then!" cried Sue-Betty, suddenly thinking of her mother in Clinton. She hurried down the winding staircase to catch him and explain

to him that she could not spend the rest of the night drying his clothes.

It seemed a long way down the stairs; and when she stepped into the open door of the lighthouse tower and looked out, there was no Willie Lamb to be seen. Worse than that, there was no *See-Saw* to be seen, either.

"He's taken my boat, without asking," cried Sue-Betty indignantly. "*Now I know he is a pirate!*"

She went slowly upstairs and sat down disconsolately to think over her predicament. The night was wearing away, and she was far from home. Morning would not find her in her little bed, and her mother would be frightened.

The pirate's clothes steamed and steamed, and grew drier and drier; and certainly, as he had said, they shrank like sixty. From time to time Sue-Betty turned them. At last she held up the shrunken coat and looked at it.

"It would about fit me!" she declared and put it on; it did nearly fit her; and whether or not there was some of a pirate's dare-deviltry inhabiting his clothes, the minute she had his coat on, a splendid, wild idea came into her head.

"He took my boat," she murmured. "Why shouldn't I take *his* boat—the *Pinkey-Bluebell?*"

Even while she thought of it, she acted with that peculiar haste and energy that came to her when she was out at night. In a very few minutes she was dressed in the pirate's clothes. The dry, hard boots rattled on her feet, the big hat came down far over her face—everything was a *little* loose; but she felt the disguise was perfect.

She hurried downstairs and out, and made her way over rocks and sandy stretches to the far end of the lighthouse island. Sure enough, at the end of a long spit of sand, uncovered by the receding tide, lay the black hulk of a sailing vessel, fast on the

sand. Under its prow was a small fire of driftwood, around which were crouching several men;—pirates, every one of them, as Sue-Betty saw, when she drew near, by their wild costume and their dark, fierce faces. Moreover, the firelight shone on the name of the vessel, painted clearly on the bow—not *Pinkey-Bluebell,* oh, no! The pirate ship was not really the *Pinkey-Bluebell* any more than the captain was really Willie Lamb. In bold big letters was painted there:

"The Black Hag."

Striding hugely, Sue-Betty approached the men. They looked up, and cheered her hoarsely:

"Hurrah! Hurrah for Captain Boabdil Calatrava Desayez! He's all dry again!" they shouted.

With a commanding gesture she pointed to the ship.

"All aboard, boys!" cried one big, black fellow, evidently the first mate. "The Cap-

tain's going to make another try to shove her off."

"That's right! The tide's come up since we last tried it," shouted another.

Someone on deck threw down a rope ladder. The pirates stood back to let Sue-Betty go up first. She climbed nimbly up, stepped on deck and walked boldly up through a row of pirates to the bow, and climbed up on a coil of rope. When the men were all on board, the first mate joined her.

"You give the order," Sue-Betty said to him, in the hoarsest whisper she could make. "I've caught cold from my ducking."

"What ho, my men!" shouted the mate, evidently greatly pleased to be in command. "Our noble Captain Calatrava has temporarily lost his voice from a cold. You are to obey *me*."

And then he proceeded to give orders, and the crew went to work to make renewed efforts at getting the ship afloat.

Sue-Betty sat up straight and dignified, as if watching the proceedings. In reality she was nerving herself to her adventure; for now that she really found herself the captain of a pirate ship (a thing that for years and years she had secretly hoped to be) she was a *little* nervous. The men seemed cheerfully obedient; but whenever a light flashed on one of their fierce faces, Sue-Betty felt a thrill to her boots. It was like having tigers lick your hands to have these fellows obeying you.

She was startled from her musing by a great shouting—the ship was afloat. Now she whispered to her mate to head the *Black Hag* up the Sound, and began to pace back and forth across the bow.

The stars were out, and the wind was changing. They tacked along with a brisk south wind, and Sue-Betty felt she was making good headway home.

Her plan was this—to sail as far as Clinton, and there to pretend she wanted to go

ashore to bury some treasure (just as Captain Kidd had buried treasure on that same coast, on Round Island, as is well known). Once on shore, she meant to slip away from the boat's crew, throw off her disguise, and run home in her little bathing suit, quite unsuspected by all.

The first mate approached her and saluted.

"Captain Calatrava, the prisoners in the hold are all calling together that they want to speak to you. Shall I tell them that if they aren't quiet, they'll all be smothered?"

Sue-Betty was terribly startled, but she commanded herself.

"No, I'll tell them myself," she whispered hoarsely. "You go ahead and——" She had almost said—"and show me the way," but checked herself in time. The mate led the way below, deep down into the hold. There, in the miserable light of one swinging lantern, Sue-Betty saw to her horror six prisoners in chains, lying on the dirty

bottom of the hold. They seemed very nice people, two ladies and three gentlemen and one little boy in a sailor suit. And they were all groaning.

"Here, you," cried the mate in a horrid, rude voice, "here's our noble captain Boabdil Calatrava Desayez, come to tell you, if he hadn't lost his voice temporarily, that if you don't stop complaining, you shan't have the pleasure of walking the plank to-morrow, but all be smothered to-night."

"Go up and attend to your watch," Sue-Betty whispered. "You'll be missed on deck."

The mate withdrew, rather reluctantly. He seemed to love to bully the prisoners. Sue-Betty took down the lantern and a bunch of keys that hung under it; and going rapidly from one to the other of the prisoners, she knelt and unlocked their chains, bidding them keep perfectly silent, and she would free them all.

They were all terribly excited, but they

obeyed Sue-Betty, remained quiet, and gathered about her eagerly to hear how they were to escape.

"Try if you can open that port-hole," said Sue-Betty in a whisper to one of the gentlemen. He tried, and did.

"Now I'll go up and throw down to you six life-preservers," said Sue-Betty. "You'll put them on, and all get out into the water and swim away."

The ladies were frightened at the idea of it, but their husbands could swim and reassured them.

"On the next tack we'll go near shore and then you get out," whispered Sue-Betty, and she left them.

She found the life-preservers in the forecastle under the pirates' berths. Some of the men lay snoring in their bunks. No one saw what the Captain was doing.

She threw them down the hatchway, and then went forward again and stood in the bow. On the next tack, when they were

nearer shore, she began to watch. She saw nothing till the *Black Hag* came about, and then she observed six black spots on the water off the stern, and she knew the captives were free.

"Where are we now?" she whispered to the mate, after a while.

"Nearly off the mouth of the river, at Clinton. We ought to make it in five tacks more. I suppose we'll go up the river a ways?"

"Yes, I want to land on the flats," whispered Sue-Betty.

"There's a funny little cat-boat, that seems to be pursuing us," observed the mate, casually. "She's been cutting across our tack ever since we left New York, and just now she's gaining. Queer idea, ain't it? Of course, whoever's in her hasn't any idea we're pirates. There she is again. See her off there, right abeam of us?"

Far over the starlit water Sue-Betty saw the black hull and white sail of the *See-*

Saw. She was terribly startled, for, of course she knew the real Boabdil Calatrava Desayez was in pursuit of her.

"She's a clipping little craft, a regular racer, too," said the mate with admiration. "She's gaining on us steady. How'd it be to run her down and capture her? Handy little thing to have in tow."

Sue-Betty energetically forbade it; declared she must get to Clinton and could waste no time. Inwardly she trembled with fright. If the pirate captain ever got near enough to make himself known to his crew, what would become of her?

She stood in dreadful anxiety, leaning over the rail, hoping and hoping that the *Black Hag* could outsail the *See-Saw*—a thing she never *could* have hoped under any other circumstances in the world.

Alas, it was true, what Ned had said so often—the *See-Saw* could outsail anything on the Sound. And Boabdil Calatrava evidently knew how to sail her. On the next

tack, he crossed the *Black Hag's* bows—and with a megaphone voice he called to his pirate crew in Spanish.

Instantly there was an uproar on deck. All eyes were turned to the bow where Sue-Betty stood, and menacing arms were raised against her; but the mate commanded them to wait until Boabdil came on board; and though the wild cries against Sue-Betty still continued, and though the worst of the pirates stood not ten feet away, brandishing cutlasses and making fearful faces, no one ventured to disobey the mate. Meanwhile the *See-Saw* came alongside, and in another minute Boabdil Calatrava Desayez stood on his own deck again. He was greeted with cheers by his men, though he still wore Ned's clothes; and they begged his permission to cut Sue-Betty into little pieces with their cutlasses.

"No, she shall walk the plank," he cried in a thundering voice.

When Sue-Betty heard that, she was

filled with hope, for the wind was rapidly carrying the vessel towards the Clinton shore. While the pirates hastily brought forth a long plank and stuck it out over the water, she as hastily threw off the captain's clothes and stood in her little bathing-suit on the bow.

"Now come on," thundered the pirate captain, and all his crew yelled: "Come on and walk the plank!"

Sue-Betty felt just as if she were going to do a circus thing. Without a particle of fear she came hopping down the deck, skipped up between the two long rows of pirates, and, light as a feather, ran out to the end of the long plank over the black water. Then she gave a little jump to set the plank swinging, then a big one into the air, turned a clear somersault, and shot down into the cool water of the Sound. It was a thing she had never done before in her life, but often *thought* she could do—and that night it was easy. And now she

swam away under water, like a little frog. When she came up, she was close in shore. She could see the *Black Hag* against the sky, but the pirates could not see her, she was so little, and it was so dark.

"They think I'm drowned, of course," she giggled, as she waded up upon the beach.

A few minutes later she was dry and warm in her bed. Her mother found her fast asleep there at getting-up time. Sue-Betty felt, when she waked, as if she had only been asleep a minute; yet it must have been rather early in the night when she came in, for her bathing suit was quite dry.

THE WHITE NIGHT

THE WHITE NIGHT

SUE-BETTY was in town—and when you are in town, even a snowstorm is not very much fun. She had been upstairs in the library bay window, and she had been downstairs in the servant's sitting-room, flattening and cooling her nose against the window-glass; but there was nothing much to see. Same old square, where the trees were growing white, same old iron railing, every rod with a night-cap that kept growing taller and taller as evening fell!—Sue-Betty wished herself at home.

But something exciting nearly always happens. Grown-ups are strange people, and what they say and do (if one will only watch them) is almost sure to have something new in it. While Sue-Betty was rubbing her nose, which had grown a little

cooler than she wanted it, she overheard her Aunt Marian consulting with the cook.

It seemed there was going to be a ladies' luncheon party the next day, in honour of Sue-Betty's mother, and the cook was telling all the things she was going to make—things that sounded as if they might be very hard to make, but would certainly taste delicious. Naturally, Sue-Betty listened. Presently the cook said:

"And please Ma'm, Pisani's have sent word, and they say they can't let us have any *mousse* in time to-morrow. Shall I send for something else?"

"Nothing will take the place of the *mousse,*" said Sue-Betty's aunt decidedly. "If Pisani can't send it, we must get it somewhere else. Let James go out at once, and try to find some."

Sue-Betty was in a flutter. She hung about the back hall after that, eagerly waiting for James. Presently he came up from the basement with his overcoat on. James

was the coachman, a big, grey-haired man. He was a fine driver; but he was not at all proud, except when he was driving, and he and the little girl were friends. When she stood before him now, with eager, upturned face, he stopped and asked: "Well?"

"James, are you going moose hunting?" gasped Sue-Betty, clasping her hands together.

James grinned.

"That's exactly what I am," he said. "Who told you?"

"Oh, take me along," cried Sue-Betty. "I've always heard about it—I've always hoped to go some day."

Then James opened his wide mouth and laughed aloud.

"You?" he said. "My, you couldn't handle no gun. Besides, I'm going through snow deeper'n your head. You'd be lost." And he opened the door that led out into the side street.

"But I could wear snowshoes," pro-

tested Sue-Betty, clinging to his arm. "There are some in Uncle's room upstairs hanging on the wall. Please, *please,* James, take me along."

"No, no," said James, still highly amused. "Them moose is awful dangerous animals. They rises on their hind legs like this; and they puts their front hoofs together like that; and they comes down onto you, so"—James made the appropriate motions —" and there you are, nailed down to the ground under ten foot of snow, and you don't get found till spring. No, no, moose hunting ain't for little girls;" and still chuckling, he went out and closed the door.

Sue-Betty did not dine with the grown people, but had her tea alone, and was put early to bed, earlier than at home; so she had plenty of time to think over this subject of moose hunting. She felt, sadly, that she had just missed a very unusual opportunity. Ned, her brother-in-law, had told her about the sport—about the vast forests,

filled with snow, and the little cabin camps beneath tall trees where the hunters rested and slept. In Ned's party there had always been several hunters.

James had gone alone.

If you know anything about Sue-Betty, you will know that she is a little girl famous for getting worried. She was now lying awake, thinking up things that might happen to James, because he had gone alone. Sue-Betty could not believe the moose were so dangerous as he had painted them; but the trackless forest (for a man without snowshoes) was another matter.

She tossed about, and tossed about, for a long time. After awhile a plan came to her, and she lay still to think it over carefully.

Sue-Betty's aunt and uncle and mother were gone out that night. The maids were in the back of the house, the front part was all lighted and very still. No one saw Sue-Betty come downstairs, dressed all in

furs, with the snowshoes from her uncle's room under her arm, and, in the belt of her coat, two weapons she had taken from the wall in the same place. One was a small dagger, with a pretty carved ivory handle, the other a long-barrelled pistol, with a rather antiquated lock. No one saw her slip out of the front door and into the street.

Sue-Betty was going after James.

It had stopped snowing. The square lay white and still under the bright arc lamps, the street was empty of passers-by. With exultant heart, Sue-Betty put her snowshoes down, placed her feet carefully under the deerskin thongs, and essayed her first steps.

It went beautifully. She did not trip or fall. Slowly and cautiously, at first, she trailed across the street; but when she mounted the drifts that covered the square, and found the new foot-gear so manageable, she pressed forward more boldly; and now she was skimming along as gaily as you

please, bound for the park and the open country beyond.

She had never a doubt as to which direction James had taken. A few days before, on a sleighride, he had pointed out the forests to the east of town, where, he said, grew all the Christmas trees—that was the likeliest place for moose of any near the town, thought the little girl.

If some watching policeman, or any person looking from a window upon the park, happened to see Sue-Betty as she passed, there was no good calling to her, nor running after her, for by this time she was skimming along like the wind. For some reason, though the air was icy, she felt strong and warm and lively, as never in her life; and so safe above the deep snow, and so mightily armed against the moose, that she was ready to sing.

It was quick work to reach the open country; and oh, how it had snowed! In town there had been no such drifts as here filled

roads and covered fences. After she had left the last electric lights, Sue-Betty easily found her way by the soft gleam of the millions and millions of stars. She directed her course by the pole star (where the Great Bear pointed it), as travellers should, keeping it over her left shoulder and facing steadily eastward.

Soon she came to the forest, of course; and among the first tree-stems she halted, to give James a signal. There was a certain way of whistling on one's fingers, that boys had, which Sue-Betty had always envied. Somehow, this was her successful night. She slipped off her right mitten, put her two fingers in her mouth, and blew such a whoop of a whistle as nearly frightened herself.

Then she listened.

Far, far away in the depths of the white, dim forest, there was a curious noise—a snorting noise—something like the excited whinny of a horse, mixed with the growling

of a bear, with a dash in it of the howling of a wolf.

"Mercy me!" said Sue-Betty. "That *can't* be James. It must be a moose."

She took out her long-barrelled pistol and flourished it.

"If he should come now, and rise up on his hind legs to nail me down, wouldn't I nail him!" she declared boldly.

Sure, now that she had heard the moose, that she was on the right track, and eager to find James, she shot away among the trees.

The forest was very white. Long hemlock branches came swaying down, laden heavily with snow and making windows for the starlight. The waving snow floor glittered and gleamed. All was quiet as sleep, except the swift little figure of Sue-Betty that shot away among the tree stems like a fleeting dream. If a cone dropped in all that solitude, it fell noiselessly into feathery snow; if there was a live owl in one of those great trees, it kept frozenly, sullenly still.

And so, though she moved swiftly, Sue-Betty could listen; and from time to time, through that great hush of snow, she heard the wild cry of the moose.

Suddenly a long, yellow ray of light fell across her way. Turning aside, Sue-Betty recognised a small, snow-covered cabin, under a mighty tree.

She hastened up to it—the light came through the chinks—and pushed open the door.

There sat James by the fire, just as she had expected. He was smoking his short pipe and looked very sleepy. His gun was on the floor beside him—and no sign whatever of any moose meat. He started a good deal when Sue-Betty burst in upon him; but when he saw who it was, he was ready with his usual grin of pleasure.

"So you're sitting here, James?" said Sue-Betty.

"Yes, I'm sittin' here. Where else should I be sittin'?" said James. "There ain't so

much accommodation around these here woods."

"But the moose is at the door," cried Sue-Betty with a dramatic gesture. At this James appeared thoroughly alarmed. "I mean it's up there," she corrected herself, "pretty near. I've been hearing it."

"Oh, *I've* been hearing of it, and seeing of it, too, when it comes to that," said James.

"Well, why didn't you hunt it?" demanded Sue-Betty. "Isn't that what you came out for?"

"It's what I came out for," admitted James. "And when you came in, I was just thinking about getting ready to start out to begin to hunt it—just when you came in. I've no objection," he added emphatically, "to your going along."

"Oh, James, thank you, thank you," cried the little girl delightedly, and she clasped the handle of her pistol.

"What sort of a shooting iron is that?" asked James dubiously.

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"It's a good kind, the kind Arabs use," Sue-Betty explained as she proudly showed it. "I chose it out of all Uncle James's collection."

"You did?" said James; but he wouldn't admire the weapon. "It *looks* dangerous enough," he grumbled. "The only question is whether them critters is at all sensitive to appearances."

"Look at my snowshoes," said Sue-Betty triumphantly. "I can walk on them perfectly."

"That won't help you," said James. "The question is whether you can run on them. Walking won't do you any good if the moose sees us."

"I believe I can walk faster than you can run," ventured Sue-Betty.

"You haven't seen any running, child, till you've seen *me* run when the moose sees us," returned James patronisingly.

Sue-Betty looked at him with profound admiration.

"You'll chase him up hill and down dale, for miles and miles, and hours and hours, won't you?" she said with a happy sigh. "That's what I've always heard one has to do."

"Yes, that's what one hears," returned James. He seemed very gloomy and absent-minded.

"What are we waiting for?" asked Sue-Betty after a pause.

James sighed for all reply. Then he went to the hearth and knocked the ashes from his pipe and took up his gun. Sue-Betty would have liked to see him move with more cheerful alacrity; but she reflected that James must have hunted moose so long that the sport had lost the relish of novelty.

Conversation was difficult as they walked, for James went deep into the snow at every step, grumbling and growling all the while.

"The horse-power it takes to get through this here would run a freight train a thousand miles," said he.

"Was it *one* moose you saw, James, or was it a whole herd?" Sue-Betty asked.

"'Twas one," said James, "but a thunderin' big one."

"It'll be easy to hit," said Sue-Betty.

"Yes, if you care to get within range," said James darkly.

"You think they're so dangerous?" asked the little girl.

"Dangerous!" echoed James. "Are cyclones and menagerie tigers and railroad accidents and automobiles dangerous?"

"Are their hides so *very* thick? Won't bullets go through?" asked Sue-Betty a little anxiously.

"Well," said James, "if you can get close enough, and hit the critter in the right spot, bullets *ought* to penetrate; but if they don't it won't matter—you won't live to regret it."

As they talked, that strange wild cry grew louder and then ceased altogether. At the same time the woods began to grow lighter,

and presently Sue-Betty glimpsed the great full moon rising between the trees. She thought it a happy advantage in the hunt; but James, plodding laboriously through the snow, refused to take a cheerful view of anything. He thought the cover of darkness more desirable than the brightening moonlight. They were still arguing about this when they came suddenly upon the moose itself.

To speak more exactly, they came upon the creature's huge hind legs; for its head and fore parts were buried deep in the snow. Sue-Betty stopped and gasped. She had not expected it would be so large.

"This is a good first view to get of it, very," observed James. "When I first saw it, it was chawing off a tree—and I saw too much of it at once. Now it's peacefully pasturing off the moss under the snow, that's what it's doing of now."

"James," whispered Sue-Betty, noting the black, scrawny, lank hind legs of the

creature, " do you suppose it really is so *very* good to eat? "

" Well, it wouldn't be *my* taste," said James; " but ladies has their fancies."

They approached cautiously. By the clearer light Sue-Betty saw that all the trees about had had their bark gnawed off to a great height; that gave her a good idea of the moose's size. As to its strength, it moved along through the drifts like a powerful snow-plow. Its great legs trampled a wide path, its short tail vibrated in the air.

" Shall we shoot from here? " asked Sue-Betty.

" That would be the quickest way to the Golden Shore," said James solemnly. " We couldn't more than pepper them leather-covered legs of his, and he'd leave that there moss in a hurry, for the pleasure of makin' us into hash. The only place to hit a moose is right between the eyes."

" Come on, then! " said Sue-Betty ex-

citedly. "Let's get him right in front of us when he comes up."

But James rather hung back.

"If we get him right in front of us," he argued, "don't you see, that he'd have *us* right in front of *him?* That would be an undesirable position for us—very."

Sue-Betty felt a little disgusted with James.

"I see you are no hunter," she remarked.

"Well, I was hired for a coachman," he returned sulkily. "You can't get a Buffalo Bill for sixty dollars a month."

Sue-Betty could not understand him; for her part, she felt no fear whatever. She drew out her Arab horse-pistol, cocked it, and strode away to head off the moose, calling to James to follow.

She had hardly reached her vantage-point, when the moose began to show signs of emerging from the drift, trampling backwards and shaking itself violently.

"Now, James, when I say fire——!"

cried Sue-Betty, looking for her companion. To her amazement he was nowhere near her. Away back where she had come from, she saw him; and he—oh, shame!—he was rapidly climbing a large tree.

"All the more glory for me," thought Sue-Betty.

But the moose, now lifting its great head from the snow, proved to be so terrific, that Sue-Betty was almost alarmed. She remembered in her school-reader the sentence: "The moose, when pursued, trots off with great rapidity." But this monster made no sign of trotting off. The instant it caught sight of the little girl, it came charging along towards her through the snow.

Sue-Betty raised her pistol and, aiming between the two fiery eyes, she blazed away; it went off with the report of a cannon, but with no effect on the moose. Could it be that the Arab pistol was only loaded with a cap? The moose came bounding on. Its broad flat horns, its long quivering snout,

its great shaggy ears and the coarse, long black beard under its chin made it the most fearful face that Sue-Betty had ever seen in all her dreams; and as it plunged nearer, she wished herself up the tree with James.

"*Dodge* him! *Dodge* him!" bellowed James from afar. But poor Sue-Betty did not know how to dodge on snowshoes, and stood helplessly still.

On came the moose, and when it reached her it rose, just as she expected, a great dark body over her, hoofs together, ready to nail her to the ground; but its great hind legs made an arch before her, a gate of escape out of the danger, and fleet as the wind on her snowshoes, Sue-Betty shot through.

Fortune seemed to favour her. A tree had fallen against another, making a bridge slanting upward; Sue-Betty went skimming up this perilous path in safety, and in another minute was among the branches of a tall pine.

She turned, and saw the moose turn also.

The animal glared about for a moment, caught sight of her then, and viciously lowering its great horned head, it charged the stem of the tree in which she was clinging.

It butted squarely, there was a fearful crash, and Sue-Betty came tumbling down.

She did not fall far.

She landed right on the moose's back, clutched fast at its horns, and got herself safely astride of it. The creature bounded and bucked to get her off, and she hung on for dear life; and James shouted to her from the distance in a trumpet voice:

"*Sit down to your seat,*" he roared, "SIT DOWN TO YOUR SEAT! Curve your sitting bones under you! Let him have his head!"

She tried to obey; and the frightened moose gave up trying to buck her off and decided to run: They were off like a rush of wind. As they passed hard by the tree where James was clinging, Sue-Betty heard

THEY WERE OFF LIKE A RUSH OF WIND

him shout, by way of last advice: "*Sit down to the gallop!*"

Then she was out of earshot.

"The moose, when pursued, trots off with great rapidity." But the moose, when mounted, dashes off at a pace which the books have not yet described. Sue-Betty drew about three long breaths to the mile, and the night wind whistled past her ears like bullets. They left the forest and crossed white moonlit fields and entered the woods again, like the winking of an eye. Now they were on a great bare hill, now they were leaping a frozen brook in the bottom of a valley, now they flashed past lighted farms, now they flew across great deserted snow-covered plains. The moose seemed to have no idea but to cover the ground. It went at a long swinging gallop, without shying, and Sue-Betty had no trouble now to stick on.

But think of her anxiety as to where she was going!

In some ways the ride was unusually interesting. The moon was well up now and very bright, and Sue-Betty could not but notice that she was passing through a country different from any she had ever seen (except in frost pictures on window-panes, early in the morning). The forests were ferny, frosted, delicate, like lace, and such club-moss trees prevailed as in ancient days were turned to coal; everything shimmering white, as if done in silver and glass and crystal and white porcelain. And everything crackled and snapped off sharply as they brushed past, and crashed down in a shower of diamonds behind them, and fell noiselessly into the feathery snow. Once, glancing up the silvery moonlit aisle of this fairy-like forest, Sue-Betty saw a white fox on his hind legs, stretching up a tree; but she was a mile away before she could look to see what he was stretching for.

"If I could only steer this beast," thought poor Sue-Betty; for she dreaded being car-

ried to the very polar regions, and perishing there in a world of ice; and then, as usual on such night adventures, a practical thought came to her aid.

She drew the little ivory-handled dagger from her belt, and tried the effect of pricking the moose lightly on the left side of the neck.

He promptly veered to the right.

She pricked it on the right; it turned to the left.

"Why, it's a *perfectly good saddle-horse!*" cried Sue-Betty with delight; and she made up her mind, then and there, that this moose should never be cut into steaks and chops, for any grown-ups' luncheon. She would take it home, she would indeed, and tame it, and keep it for her own. And the next time the little girls at school talked about their goat-carts, and donkeys, and ponies, she, Sue-Betty, would casually speak of her *new saddle-moose.*

She guided her flying steed up the slope

of a big bare hill, and though it flew over the top, and went pell-mell down the other side, Sue-Betty was up there long enough to catch sight of the lights of the city, ever so far away. She noted what stars it was under (as travellers should) and after that kept her steed in a straight course for home by repeated pricks with that invaluable little dagger.

. . . . .

By the time they had reached the outskirts of the town, the moose was beginning to show signs of weariness. Its speed abated. It went through the park at rather a lame lope; it came into the quiet city streets at a jog-trot; and by the time they had reached the square where Sue-Betty's aunt and uncle lived, it lapsed into a walk.

"Dear me, it will be lying down next and rolling over," thought Sue-Betty, and she used her dagger for a spur, and brought her steed at a sharp trot down the side street to her uncle's stable.

There stood James, just where he always stood when Sue-Betty's uncle brought the horses home. He flung open the stable door and let the moose and rider enter the carriage house.

"You got home first, James," observed Sue-Betty, with great surprise.

"Well, and what if I hadn't," he said in a growly tone. "Who was to put up this here beast, I'd like to know?"

By the light of the lanterns he put a halter on the moose and fastened it to the two swinging tie-straps. Then he came and helped Sue-Betty down. Oh, but she was stiff!

"What kind of riding-boots is these, for a young lady?" he inquired, with strong disapproval, as Sue-Betty kicked and pulled off her snowshoes.

"You know very well I didn't have time to change," cried Sue-Betty reproachfully.

"If people can't dress proper for it, they ought not to ride at all," said James inex-

orably. "And what sort of shape is this to bring an animal into the stable?" he continued still more severely, holding up a lantern to the moose's steaming flank. "The critter's pretty nigh foundered. See it heave? You can't use him to-morrow, nor yet the day after, not if I have *my* say about it."

Sue-Betty was very much crestfallen. She knew that in everything pertaining to the stable, James always *did* have his say; and though she felt it was hardly her fault that the moose was in such a lather, she did not believe James was in a mood to accept any excuses. Grumbling and muttering all the while, he fetched his curry combs and brushes and cloths and gave the moose a thorough rubbing down. Sue-Betty humbly held the lantern.

"Never saw a beast in such a fix! It'll be an hour before it's safe to water him. This is what you've got to expect when you let children ride out alone," growled James.

He groomed and he groomed, and Sue-Betty held the lantern, aggrieved at the way she had been received, yet afraid to speak her mind, with James in such a humour. He was such a very different person here, on his own ground, from what he had been out in the woods. At last she ventured timidly:

"James, we won't have it killed for the luncheon, will we? I want to keep it to ride."

"Not if I have my say," said James.

"About which?" asked the little girl anxiously, "about the killing or the riding."

"He won't be eaten, nor yet he won't be ridden," said James firmly. "This here moose *is in my care,* and in my care he'll *be.*"

And James groomed away assiduously, and refused to say another word.

After awhile Sue-Betty got so sleepy, she could not hold the lantern any longer. She put it down, and crept away to the hay-mow, and went fast asleep.

And she did not wake up again till next

morning, and found herself in her own bed. James must have carried her home, and Olga must have undressed her. Before she had her breakfast, she went anxiously to the kitchen to ask about the moose. To her immense relief, she heard that Pisani was going to send some after all. Then she went to the stable telephone, and called up James. He was evidently stupid from having lost so much sleep, for it was hard to make him understand what she wanted to know; but when he did understand, he guffawed loudly through the telephone, and said that the moose had kicked so much in the night, he had feared it would kick the stable down, so he had turned it out at daybreak.

When Sue-Betty hung up the receiver, she was ready to cry. It was *her* moose, and she had wanted to keep it.

"But I could never have ridden again," she comforted herself, "not if James had had *his* say; and he always does, about everything in the stable."

THE FISH PICTURE

THE FISH PICTURE

THE postman came while the family were still at the breakfast table and Sue-Betty brought in the mail.

"A nice, big, fat envelope for you, Cousin Frank," she called to her grown-up cousin. She thought he would be pleased; but he only looked annoyed when he took it.

"This is my famous article, come back for the seventh time," he said to Sue-Betty's mother, making his mouth smile. "I won't try again."

"Oh yes, you must try again, Frank," she answered. "I am sure there are some more likely magazines. If you would only go and see the editor personally——"

"I say, Frank," put in Sue-Betty's father, looking up from his mail, "why don't you

try your manuscript on the editor of the powder magazine?"

But Cousin Frank did not answer. He got up, took his mail, and went out. Sue-Betty's eyes followed him as he passed through the library, and she saw him angrily chuck the big, fat envelope into the waste-paper basket.

"What is it?" she asked her mother, in a whisper—for her father was reading again.

"Something he has written, dear—no, not a story. It's about Government. You would not even understand the title, little girl."

"And won't anybody print it? Asked Sue-Betty.

"Oh yes, surely. Some magazine will be found," said her mother. "It is a very clever article, and took him a long time to write. It's hard to find the right editor, sometimes—and so he is a little discouraged. But he'll try again."

Sue-Betty did not tell her mother the manuscript was thrown away. She slipped into the library, rescued it from the basket, carried it to her room and hid it in her bed. Later, she thought, when Frank had grown sorry and had begun to look through the paper barrels in the cellar and question the girls, she would bring it out and joyfully surprise him.

It was a rule in those hot summer days that Sue-Betty was to take a nap every afternoon; that is to say, she had to lie down two hours every day and try to sleep. "Don't think about anything at that time," her mother would say. "It is thinking of too many things all day that makes my little girl so skinny-thin." Well, one can't help thinking; and if one lies right on top of a bump of manuscript, hid under the spread, one naturally thinks of that.

Why should Frank refuse to try the editor of the Powder Magazine? Sue-Betty wondered and wondered. It was so near by.

You only had to go half a mile, about, along the East Plank road, and turn towards town, and there you saw the building of the powder magazine in a grove of trees. Sue-Betty had often driven by there.

"But Frank is very obstinate," said Sue-Betty to herself. "If he says he won't, why he just won't. And it is such a pity! All that work of writing it! And it's clever, mother says. What a pity! What a pity!"

Suddenly a happy idea came into her head and she eagerly sat up and looked at the clock. No, it was not time to get up yet—not for an hour. She sighed and lay down. She rooted the manuscript out from under herself, and lay with it clasped in her arms.

"Oh, an hour is so long!" she sighed. "I wish I were fat: then I wouldn't have to take naps."

She waited and waited. Time crawled along.

"Why, dear me!" exclaimed Sue-Betty,

suddenly. "Some offices *close at four.* I'll have to finish my nap later."

She was up as she spoke, slipped on her shoes in a hurry, and, without stopping to put on her hat, she scampered downstairs and out of the house, Cousin Frank's manuscript under her arm.

She was off for the Powder Magazine, to see the editor personally.

It was rather a gloomy bit of road, where the building stood, far back from the high picket fence, and screened by trees. There were several signs of "no trespassing" on the fence; and on the first gate she came to was hung a sign: "Author's entrance."

"I'm not an author," said Sue-Betty, and looked further; but she had to come back, for the only other gate she could find was marked, "For the Editor only," so she went in by the author's way.

There was a boardwalk that wound about and wound about through the thick grove,

instead of leading directly to the building. Sue-Betty grew a little tired trotting around these senseless curves; but an occasional finger post with the legend "Authors this way!" assured her she was on the right path even when she lost sight of the building itself. Presently she came to a hedge and a gateway marked "for Authors." Sue-Betty went through and up a bit of lane; and there she found herself, to her amazement, out on the road again, not ten feet from where she had started in.

"Well!" she gasped. "It would have been a *little* politer, I think, to say 'Authors not admitted.'"

But she was not going to be balked of her purpose. This time she went resolutely to the entrance for the editor. Here the board-walk led towards the main building straight as an arrow, and Sue-Betty started up it; but coming to meet her was a tall man with eyeglasses. He had a parcel under one arm, and on the other he carried a black cloth

bag, drawn up with cords. He stopped and Sue-Betty had to stop.

"You're on the wrong walk, little girl," he said, rather severely.

"I know,—but the other one is no good, and I want to see the editor," Sue-Betty explained.

"Oh, you do, do you?" said the tall man. He wrinkled his nose so that his glasses fell off, and put on another pair, and looked Sue-Betty over from head to foot; so that she knew perfectly well that he himself was the editor of the Powder Magazine.

"I have a manuscript here—about Government—written by a friend of mine——" faltered Sue-Betty.

"You are very young to be writing articles about Government," observed the editor, "But it's a sign of the times."

"Written by a *friend,*" Sue-Betty repeated.

"I understand, I understand," said the editor. "They all say that, for fear we

should not be favourably impressed by their exterior. Realise, tender juvenile, there are very few things about an author that an editor does not know at first glance. Is your article illustrated? We cannot consider articles without pictures."

"I'm afraid this hasn't any," said Sue-Betty. "The gentleman who wrote it can't even draw a horse."

"The gentleman who wrote it," repeated the editor, shaking his finger at her. "Tut-tut, little girl! Do not think to deceive us."

Sue-Betty felt very indignant at not being believed. She sat right down on the board-walk, pulled open her parcel and took out Frank's manuscript. It was typewritten very neatly, but had been sent about so much and read so often it looked worn. At the top was Frank's name, written with his own hand.

"There! Now you see it is not mine," said Sue-Betty, handing the manuscript over to the editor. He seemed very much struck

by it, turning it over and over, reading the title, reading the last page, weighing it in his hand.

"What is it about?" he asked Sue-Betty with interest.

"It's about Government," said Sue-Betty for the second time.

"Just exactly what we want," sighed the editor. "But you say there are no illustrations to go with it." He handed it back.

Sue-Betty eagerly leafed through the page: all typewriting—not a single picture!

"It is a *very* clever article," she ventured.

"We can't use it, can't possibly use it," said the editor regretfully. He wrinkled his nose so that his glasses fell off on their string, put on his other pair, picked up his cloth bag, and was going on.

Tears came to Sue-Betty's eyes.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the editor, suddenly turning back hopefully. "It just occurs to me. Probably *you* can draw."

"Only a little," stammered Sue-Betty. "And—mostly animals."

"Never mind! Come on! Hurry up!" cried the editor with the greatest change in manner. He took the parcel from Sue-Betty, clapped it under his arm with his other things and again calling, "Come on!" was off to the building with long strides.

"Only animals! And not very good animals," cried Sue-Betty anxiously, as she skurried along behind him.

"They'll do," the editor called back over his shoulder. "Since we haven't any better, we'll make them do. Come on!"

Sue-Betty was quite out of breath when they reached the main building. She was glad to have the editor pause a moment on the front steps.

"Do you see the printer in there?" he said, pointing through the basement window. Inside was a huge machine with a man moving about in front of it. "He has

to work from now till dark to finish up—so if you hurry, we can get your cousin's article in to-day."

Now Sue-Betty felt doubtful enough, anyway, about being able to draw pictures good enough to print. Knowing she was expected to do them in a hurry did not make her feel any easier. With a heavy heart she followed the editor up two flights of stairs.

But when she reached the office, it was such a nice, light place with lots of books and big tables, that she felt more encouraged. Besides, the editor gave her stacks of paper and lots of beautiful coloured pencils.

"Now, this button on my desk rings up the printer," said the editor. "When you finish, just press it and he'll be right up to take the manuscript and drawings. Now I must be off——"

"Oh, aren't you going to wait?" cried Sue-Betty in dismay. "Aren't you going

to see whether my pictures are good enough, and whether they fit in——"

"What do you suppose my time is worth, little girl?" cried the editor, almost irritably. "I have four manuscript novels in my bag here to revise before to-morrow morning. You must make the best pictures you can, and we must take the chances on their fitting in. Good-afternoon."

And he was gone.

Sue-Betty thought he was asking a pretty hard thing of a little girl. She sat and sighed and could not think what to draw.

But then she remembered Frank. How *delighted* he would be to see his article printed! And he always liked her drawings, even though they were not so very good.

So she went to work and drew two green parrots sitting on a branch, and a lovely pink flamingo, walking under the tree. She took a great deal of pains with this picture,

and judged it about the best she had ever drawn.

Then she took another sheet and thought and thought——

"Now then!" said a sharp voice, and Sue-Betty jumped. Beside her stood an ugly, blackened little man with bristly hair and snappy eyes. He wore an inkstained linen coat and his hands were inky—evidently the printer from below.

"Now then! Got that copy ready?" he asked.

"I didn't ring," said Sue-Betty.

"No, nor wouldn't, I s'pose, for a year or two longer," he said crossly. "Meanwhile I'm s'posed to wait, I s'pose."

"This picture is ready, and that's the writing to it," said Sue-Betty.

The printer snatched them up.

"All right; I'll rush 'em through," he said, nodding. "See you later——"

He was starting out. "But wait," cried Sue-Betty. "There are going to be more

pictures. The editor gave me all this paper."

"What? More? Well, get a wiggle on. I'll wait."

Sue-Betty wished he would wait downstairs. He leaned over the desk to watch her draw. Now it is very hard to do anything well when somebody you don't know is watching you. Sue-Betty tried to draw a salmon leaping up a waterfall, but she could not seem to make it look like anything. At last she gave it up, and took a fresh piece of paper to try again. The printer took up the spoiled sheet.

"That has to be thrown away," said Sue-Betty.

"What for?" asked the printer.

"Because it's not good." said Sue-Betty.

"Aw, it's good enough," he said scornfully. "The Powder Magazine ain't so particular."

"But nobody would know what that is," said Sue-Betty.

"Shucks! I always print under 'em what they are."

He took out a little stub of a pencil and wrote under the picture, "Fish Served with Asparagus."

"It isn't *cooked* fish—it's alive——" began Sue-Betty.

"Oh, I see," he exclaimed, and he smooched out what he had written and wrote again: "'Flying-fish, Astray in a Cornfield.' Might call it 'On the Road to Mandalay,'" he said thoughtfully.

At this Sue-Betty began to giggle.

"Well, what is it?" asked the printer impatiently. "It looks like a fish. What shall I write?"

"It's a leaping salmon; but I'm going to draw it again," said Sue-Betty. "So don't write anything. Throw it away."

But he calmly wrote under the picture what it really was, and then put it in the manuscript he had under his arm.

"Go on! Hurry up! Draw a camel or

something," he said to Sue-Betty. "Three pictures will be enough."

"*Give me back that fish picture,*" said Sue-Betty emphatically. "I don't *want* it put in the magazine."

"I won't give it back. It's good enough," said the printer. "You're only wasting time."

Sue-Betty was getting a little hot and vexed. She knew perfectly well it was a ridiculously bad drawing, and that, if her cousin saw it in his article, he would be perfectly disgusted.

"I am going to do it over again," she declared.

"All right, do it over," said the printer grinning like a jack-lantern. "But if you think *I'm* going to wait for you here a few more months, you're mighty mistaken. I've got my work to finish downstairs. These here two pictures go in, just as they are; I don't care how long you sit up here and draw salmon."

At the Head of the Basement Stairs Sue Betty Got Hold of the Printer's Coat Tail

So saying he walked out of the door. Sue-Betty, however, was not going to put up with such treatment. She ran after the printer and *he* began to run. Down two flights of stairs they flew and along a hall, and at the head of the basement stairs, Sue-Betty got hold of the printer's coat tail. The next instant she found herself sitting on the steps, with his coat in her hands: he had slipped out of it and escaped. At the foot of the stairs was a door—which he banged. When Sue-Betty got down there and tried it she found he had shot the bolt on the other side.

She knocked at it and called for a while, but the printer would not open. She heard his machine begin to go with a big thumping noise.

Sue-Betty did not lose much time at the bolted door. She thought of the basement windows, and ran up the stairs and out; but she found the windows all had iron bars. She could only look through in a fury of

impatience and watch the printer inside, attending calmly to his work, just as he had been before—except that he was now in his shirtsleeves, perforce. The printing machine was a huge affair of wheels and large rollers and running leather belts. There was a hopper at one end, into which the printer fed the manuscripts that lay piled beside him, and a place where he inked the type, and a place where the new magazines dropped out, all neatly bound in fire-cracker red, ready to be done up for the postman.

Near the top of the pile of manuscript Sue-Betty saw her cousin's—she could tell it from all the rest by its looking so old and worn. She knew her ridiculous fish picture was in it. In a few minutes more it would be printed, and Frank's clever article would be entirely spoiled.

"I must stop him. I *must,*" she declared. And as she could do nothing by force, she tried strategy. She ran back upstairs to the editor's office, and gave a big push at the

button on the desk, of which the editor had said it called the printer. Then she hid behind the door and waited, quiet as a mouse.

Sure enough, the printer presently came storming upstairs. He walked right into the middle of the room, and demanded, breathlessly "Who rang? Where's the editor?"

The same minute Sue-Betty whisked out, closed the door, and in a jiffy, had him locked in. He began to shout; but she drew out the key and rushed downstairs to the basement. There she pulled out Cousin Frank's manuscript, found her fish picture, and tore it to hundreds of little bits. It was the greatest possible relief to her to do that. Now she knew it could never be printed, and nobody would ever see it again.

All this had been so exciting that she had to sit down on a bench and cool off. The big machine was still running, thumping away regularly; but as there was nothing being put in, of course no magazine came

out. It seemed to Sue-Betty she really ought to finish the printer's work for him. She was afraid to go up and let him out. After the trick she had played him, he might be very angry. She could hear him bawling and pounding away upstairs, and every now and then he rang his own call-bell furiously. As the gong was just over the machine, it made Sue-Betty jump every time.

So she began to feed the machine, just as she had seen the printer do it. Soon the bright new magazines began dropping out at the other end, as before.

It was great fun. The only thing Sue-Betty minded was the fact that Frank's article had only one picture. However, that could not be helped now; and the one picture was at least a good one.

She finished the whole pile of manuscript. Then she knew the machine ought to be stopped and oiled and cleaned. But she could not do it herself and she did not dare to let out the printer.

"He'll be so angry by this time, he might be *very* dangerous," she told herself. "If I could only unlock him and get away fast enough."

She thought a long time, and when she finally hit on a plan the thing seemed so simple she laughed at herself for not thinking of it sooner.

The editor's room, as has been said, was in the top story of the building. Sue-Betty went out of doors, and threw a pebble up at the window, to get the printer's attention. Immediately the window flew open and the printer stuck out his head.

He *was* angry. High up as he was, and glaring down, he looked like a gargoyle. Sue-Betty held up the key for him to see.

"Let down a piece of string," she called, "and I'll send you the key."

"Yes, and you guess you'll light out, do you, before I get a holt of you, eh?" shouted the printer. "Not on your linotype! You just come up here and let me out yourself."

"All right, then; I'll leave the key here on this stump and go home," called Sue-Betty in a calm tone. "You needn't worry, I finished the printing——"

"You — finished — the — printing —" yelled the printer, and he was so angry and excited that he put one leg out of the window besides his head. "Why, *you* can't print. You ain't nothing but a poor, miserable, skinny, half-starved author, who can't even get anybody to illustrate your stories. *You* print! A nice mess you've probably made of it! And I'll lose my job, along of you. Let me out, I say——"

By this time he had stuck out his other leg so only his arms were inside holding on. Twisted up like that, his angry face peering down between his legs, he looked more like a gargoyle than before.

"Let down some string," called Sue-Betty, getting a little afraid of him even at that distance. "Let it down before I count one hundred, for I'm going away after that."

"I *won't—never!*" roared the printer; but the head and the legs disappeared.

Sue-Betty counted fifty. He was probably hunting for string and she counted slowly. She counted seventy—no printer at the window. She began to be uneasy and counted out loud, very slow—shouted, in fact, so that he could hear that she had reached eighty.

"Suppose there isn't—eighty-one——any string—eighty-two—in the office—eighty-three. I'll have to go—eighty-four—and he'll starve—eighty-five—" (She was half singing now) "To-morrow's Sunday—eighty-six—No one'll come here—eighty-seven—Oh, dear me!—eighty-eight—*Printer! Do you hear me?*—eighty-nine——"

At last there he was, at the window again, and shied a ball of twine at Sue-Betty's head. She easily dodged it. He had held fast the end.

"Silly thing to do!" cried Sue-Betty, "you couldn't have hurt me, anyway, and

this just makes a longer string to pull up."

She pulled the inside end from the center of the ball, and tied the key to it. The printer raged and threatened, and commanded her to break it off and tie it to the shortest piece she could; but Sue-Betty thought he deserved to be punished.

Skipping down the boardwalk she was soon out of ear-shot. Then she hurried home, for she had an hour to make up on her nap.

WORK WITHOUT WAGES

WORK WITHOUT WAGES

I AM going to get a hired man I don't have to pay, to do that sort of work for me," said Mr. Sutherland, as he and Sue-Betty stood in the barn watching Charlie pump fresh water into the horse-trough.

Sue-Betty looked up in great surprise.

"Do you know one who will come and work for nothing?" she asked.

"I know one that ought to—he has nothing to do. He's always skirmishing around the place here, whistling. Why not set him to work at my pumping?"

"He *might* do it, just to be obliging," said Sue-Betty doubtfully. "But you couldn't *make* him do it, could you?"

"Well, no! I suppose not," said Mr. Sutherland. "I suppose I shall have to fool him into thinking he does it for fun. And

I've bought the machine to fool him with, of the Creak and Croker Company, to-day. Come up to the house, and I'll show you a picture of it."

Very much puzzled, and very eager to understand the matter, Sue-Betty trotted after him to the house. At his desk, Mr. Sutherland opened the catalogue of the Creak and Croker Company, and showed her a picture of a windmill.

This did not make matters plain to Sue-Betty at all. How could one fool a person with a windmill? But Mr. Sutherland only laughed and told her to wait till to-morrow and see.

When Sue-Betty stayed at the Sutherlands' farm, she always slept in the little bedroom in the wing. This was just under the big room where the farm-hands slept, and as she always heard the men when they got up, she was in the habit of being waked early in the morning. She went to bed that night meaning to be up especially

early. She wanted to see the new man as soon as he came, and she wanted to see the windmill put up.

The new hired man must have come after she went to sleep, for it was certainly a stranger, and not one who knew the rules of the house, who waked Sue-Betty in the grey dawn by the way he rushed down the back stairs, and out the back way, slamming every door he went through.

"Why, he'll wake the whole family!" thought Sue-Betty anxiously. "Has no one told him he must go tip-toe?"

She hastened to get up and dress by the dim morning light. Then she hurried away to the barn to make the acquaintance of the newcomer. Sue-Betty was a great little farmer and was more interested in what went on at the barn than in anything at the house.

She had never been up quite so early before. The sky was white, without any of the sunrise colours in the east, and the big barns

looked black against it, and the cows, already at the pasture gate, looked dark and quiet, like big, black statue cows. The barn was still closed up, but from within came such a sound of pumping as was never heard; it seemed as if a triple-power steam engine had got to work. And with it came the gush of water, as if a very cataract was pouring into the horse-trough; and above all was the loudest whistling Sue-Betty had ever heard.

"Look out there! Keep your hat on! Hold onto your wig!" someone shouted as she slid open the barn door. Sure enough, she was met by a gust of air that would certainly have carried off her hat if she had had one on; it blew her hair back straight and long, and took her breath away. With some difficulty, she got inside, and pulled the door shut; and now, in comparative calm, she could see a little of what was going on. The barn was still dim and dark, but she made out that a huge fellow in blue overalls,

was at the pump, working it furiously and whistling a shrill tune. The trough was full and overflowing, he was pumping faster than the wastepipe could carry it off, and the water was swashing and slopping all over the floor.

"What a mess!" exclaimed Sue-Betty. As neither Mr. Sutherland nor Charlie was there to show the new man about things, Sue-Betty felt she must undertake it herself. She hopped across by the dry places, to get near him. He was making so much noise she had to shout before he heard her:

"Stop pumping, won't you please? The trough is full."

"I'm just giving a few extra strokes for good measure," he shouted back, and kept vigorously at work. The flood on the floor increased and Sue-Betty was really getting frightened, when by good luck there was a crack and the handle of the pump broke off.

"Whoopee!" yelled the new man, and he flung the pump handle up towards the raf-

ters; it spun like a cartwheel and flew into the hay loft. He seemed to be glad he had broken it.

"Dear me, he will never do at all," thought Sue-Betty.

"Have you come out to help me with the chores?" the new man asked her now, and she nodded. "That's good! Come along! Milking next!"

She had no time to reply; he went ahead and she had to follow. She seemed to be sucked along behind him at a tremendous pace. They rushed through the horse stable, where the straw flew up around them, came into the cow stable, and banged the door behind them, as if to batter down the barn.

"What's the use of all this noise?" protested Sue-Betty; but the new hired man did not have time to listen to her. He burst open the door to the barnyard and gave a whoop to the cows; and in they came pell-mell, in great disorder. They were so rattled in

their hurry, that half of them got into the wrong stanchions and had to be backed out again and righted. Sue-Betty, with the greatest difficulty, did this all alone; the new man did not help a bit. He was standing on his head in the feed-box, his legs kicking in the air, clouds of meal rising around him. Every now and then he emerged with a scoop full, as if to feed it to a cow, but he always managed to spill and scatter it, and then dove in after some more.

"Here! Let me do that; you get the cans and pails," said Sue-Betty at last, and he flung her the scoop and dashed away, whistling as hard as he could go.

"At least he doesn't dawdle, like some of them," thought Sue-Betty, as she began to scoop out the feed and give it to the cows methodically, as she had seen it done. "At least he seems willing."

She felt very proud of the way she was feeding the cows, all by herself, and inclined to feel friendly towards the new man for let-

ting her do it. Charlie never would have let her. If this one had not let her help, however, it is doubtful whether he would ever have got through the work, he made so much trouble for himself for nothing. Before Sue-Betty had fairly finished, he was back, pushing the hand-cart full of milk cans and pails. He had brought everything he could lay his hands on from the shelves where the milk tins were aired, and the cart was loaded up tipsily with them. When he stopped with a bump, having come in so fast, he dumped the whole lot with such a clash and clatter as never was heard.

"If that doesn't bring the whole family out, they *are* good sleepers," thought Sue-Betty. She was very much distressed, too, on account of the cows. She knew they ought to have everything quiet and regular about them, especially when they were going to be milked. Here this fellow was flying about, still whistling vigorously, standing all the cans and pails in a long row down the stable.

"You brought too many," said Sue-Betty.

"See me fill 'em all up," he returned cheerfully.

"You can't; they never give more than two cans," said Sue-Betty.

"Well, if we haven't the milk, we have the water," returned the new man very coolly. "Guess I can pump what I can't milk."

"Oh, but Mr. Sutherland wouldn't like that," cried Sue-Betty scandalised. "The milk can't be watered; why, it has to be sold!"

He only guffawed for all reply. They each took a pail and went to milking.

Sue-Betty began with Daisy, because that was the cow she had learned on, the cow she was always allowed to milk; and the new man, apparently for no other reason than to be next to her, began on the cow that the men usually called the Jig Dancer, because she was so uneasy, and moved about so much.

"What do they pay you?" asked the new man conversationally, when the milk began to sing into the pails.

"Nothing; I'm just a friend of the family," said Sue-Betty.

"Same here," said he, cheerfully. "Don't get a red cent."

"But *I* try, as well as I can, to do things right," said Sue-Betty, milking steadily on. She hoped he would take the hint.

"So do I," he returned with pride. "Whoa, there, you!" (This to the cow, who evidently did not like him.)

"I try to work slowly and carefully," said Sue-Betty.

"*I* try to work fast, so's to get the work done—(whoa, you old hay-tedder you!) —but I'm very careful, same as you," said the new man. "Fast *and* careful, that's my motto. (Stop your fooling you crazy, slab-sided old weathercock——")

"It is a rule in this stable to be very polite to the cows," Sue-Betty told him; though,

indeed, there did not seem much use in telling him anything, he seemed so *very* well satisfied with himself. Just at this moment the Jig Dancer kicked over his pail.

"You had better let me milk her," suggested Sue-Betty soothingly when he rose up, snorting. "She is a little queer—she likes peace and quiet."

He muttered something Sue-Betty could not understand, left the Jig Dancer, and went to the next cow, Mollie. Now Mollie was usually the gentlest of animals; but this morning a perverse spirit seemed to possess her. The new man had hardly drawn up his stool, when she kicked him over, stool and all.

"I suppose she's another one that likes peace and quiet," he blustered. "Mighty queer way these cattle have of showing their peaceful disposition. *She's* about as peaceful as a torpedo-boat destroyer, she is."

"Why don't you go and feed the horses?

Then they will be all through eating when it's time to go into the field," suggested Sue-Betty. "I'll just finish up the milking, there isn't much more to do."

Off he went, post haste, without making a single objection. Evidently milking was not to his taste. And there was Sue-Betty, left alone, with ten cows to milk, and she had never milked more than two at a milking in all her life before.

"I'd rather do it myself than have him around," she said, quite in the tone that Mr. Sutherland sometimes used when he did some farm work; and she milked steadily on. It was unusually easy that morning, too. The cows were so pleased that the noisy fellow was out of the stable, they gave their milk readily and much more than usual. Every time Sue-Betty had a pail full and emptied it into the strainer over one of the cans, she noticed that the amount was larger than usual.

"That's because I am a little child, and

the cows love me," said Sue-Betty, who was very wise in these important farm things. To show her gratitude, she gave each cow a handful more of meal when she had done milking her. They lowed softly and comfortably. The rising sun came slanting into the stable windows. Sue-Betty was so happy and so busy, she had to sing.

Meanwhile there seemed to be great doings down in the horse stable. The horses were neighing, there was a lot of banging about and a great swishing of straw.

"He can't do as much harm in there as he can with the cows," thought Sue-Betty and she stuck to her work.

Suddenly Mr. Sutherland stood beside her. He had come in so quietly, she had not noticed him.

"How does he seem to be taking hold?" he asked anxiously and in a low voice, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder towards the horse stable.

"Well, he seems strong and willing,"

said Sue-Betty, who did not like to complain of her fellow-worker; "but I am afraid he hasn't had much experience with stock."

"*Experience with stock?*" echoed Mr. Sutherland in amazement. "Well, I should rather think not! Why, whom do you take this fellow for, anyway? Don't you know it's the wind?"

"The *wind?*" cried Sue-Betty.

"Sh-sh! Don't let him hear we're talking about him," said Mr. Sutherland in an excited whisper. "You know what I'm after don't you? I want to get him to turn the windmill. But he only likes to lay his hands on things that are loose, and that he can make a great clatter with. He thinks he's fit for any kind of work—and yet, if I went in there and tried to talk windmill to him, ten to one he'd be off."

"Why, he seems so much interested," whispered Sue-Betty.

"He likes it, so long as he has his own way; that's the reason I let him into the barn

to do what he pleases till I can lay my little plan to fool him. You keep your eye on him, Sue-Betty, and don't let him break too many things. It will cost me seventy-five cents to replace that pump-handle."

"I had better finish the milking alone, hadn't I?" whispered Sue-Betty, feeling very important.

"Oh, by all means! And by the time you've finished, I'll have the windmill set up. Creak and Croker's men are out there with it already."

He hurried away. Sue-Betty could not help thinking he was expecting a good deal of a little girl, to milk ten cows alone and oversee the wind besides. But sometimes the more is expected of one, the more one can do. Sue-Betty kept steadily at work, and listened meanwhile to all the noises of the stable.

"Now he is currying Totem, and Totem is kicking and stamping," she thought. "How the horses must hate to have him

working around them, and how they must wonder! The wind never came into their stable before. But they must know who he is, by the way he whistles. Why didn't I know him by his whistling? It's as plain as anything, now that I know."

It had been so dim-dark in the barn before, that Sue-Betty had not tried to see what her fellow-worker looked like. Now that the sun was up, she was eager to get sight of him. Anyone would want to see the wind. But when he burst in again, after the milking was done, it seemed impossible to get a good look at him. He dashed past her and flung open the stable door to let the cows out, and then tore back and forth, unfastening the stanchions, yelling at the cows, so that they went out on a wild stampede.

"He hasn't got a real body you could stick a pin into," Sue-Betty decided after she had tried in vain to decide what he looked like. "If he weren't wearing those common blue overalls, he'd be invisible. I

SUE BETTY HAD TO RUN ALONG AT ONE SIDE, OR HE WOULD HAVE UPSET THE WHOLE BUSINESS

only seem to get a glimpse of his baloony legs, and feel cool when he goes past me."

She was deeply interested in this discovery, and very well satisfied; for it showed her that Mr. Sutherland was right and that this was really the wind.

Four cans were brimming full, so there was no danger of any chance to water the milk. Sue-Betty was glad of that. It was clear the wind had no principles whatever. And now that the cans were full, the wind was no more careful of them than before. He loaded them into the cart and went clattering away to the spring-house. Sue-Betty had to run along at one side, steadying the cart with her hand, or he would certainly have upset the whole business. At the spring-house, he plumped the cans in as if his one idea was to see how much water he could splash.

"Now let's go and toss the hay," he said to Sue-Betty. "Watch me make it sail

around in the air. Bet you by the time I'm through, most of it will be a mile away! Bet you I can send some of it into the next county!"

"I've no doubt you can," said Sue-Betty. "But, on this farm, we don't make hay so soon after sunrise. We wait till the heat of the day, so the hay will dry quickly."

"Then let's go and pick the peaches," said the wind, who seemed to regard the farm work as all play.

"The peaches aren't ripe enough," said Sue-Betty.

"Watch me get 'em down, just the same!" laughed the wind. "If I get at 'em right, down they'll come like hail!"

"But they have to be sold," objected Sue-Betty. "People won't buy green peaches."

"Tell you what," said the wind, and he crept around behind her and whispered in her ear, "I'll shake down a few ripe ones, and we'll put those on top of the crates, and that'll fool people."

"How would *you* like to be fooled?" asked Sue-Betty without turning round, so that he should not see her smiling.

"Huh! No one could fool me!" he cried, and whirled away from her under the bending branches, and cut a pigeon-wing in his joy and pride. The leaves danced and the grass bent low, and the daisies nodded, all in the slanting morning sunbeams.

"He is just the one to be fooled," thought Sue-Betty as she watched him whirl about. "He has no head."

Really, as nearly as she could see against the sun, he had no head at all. It seemed to be just a pair of blue overalls full of wind, cavorting among the daisies, under the trembling leaves.

"But what *shall* we do?" he sighed, suddenly tired. "I never saw a farm with so little to do."

"Of course, if one avoids the milking ——" murmured Sue-Betty, hoping to shame him a little.

"Let's go and scatter corn to the chickens," he proposed.

"He'll scatter it too much," thought Sue-Betty; but she started back to the barn with him, both running, and pushing the milk cart.

Suddenly the wind went "Whew!" and stopped short. "Will you look at that?" he said to Sue-Betty in a tone of utter disgust; and he lay flat down in the path and would not stir.

Over by the barn stood a brand new windmill, high on its red painted tower.

"How *pretty!*" said Sue-Betty. "What *is* it?" (She pretended she had never seen one, just to find out why the wind did not like it.) "What is it for?"

"You think that's pretty?" he demanded angrily, rolling over and over. "I'd like to smash it into a hundred and fifty-seven little slivers, I would."

He would not answer her question as to what it was for. He rolled and muttered to

himself a few minutes, and then suddenly jumped up. "Let's go over to the woodlot and see if there aren't some dead trees that want to come out," he suggested.

"But we haven't fed the poor, hungry, chickens yet," said Sue-Betty.

"You go feed them alone," said the wind, hanging back.

"If you don't come with me," said Sue-Betty, "I'll think you're afraid of that new thing over there, and I'll call you Fraidcat."

"Pooh! I scare other people, no one scares me," he cried, and he blew along behind her as she took her way to the barn.

Mr. Sutherland was standing with his hands behind his back, looking rather anxiously up at his windmill. When Sue-Betty and the wind came nearer, he held up a hand warningly without looking towards them.

"Look out, you people! Don't come too close. It's not very safe."

"What's the matter?" asked Sue-Betty, as she and the wind came to a halt.

"Oh, everything's the matter!" said Mr. Sutherland in a cross tone. "Those Creak and Croker people have made an awfully poor job of this, and I'm expecting the whole business to topple over."

Sue-Betty and the wind crept up a little nearer very cautiously, and looked up at the windmill wonderingly.

"It *looks* perfectly strong," said Sue-Betty.

"Well, perhaps she'll stand, if we're very careful," said Mr. Sutherland, not exactly hopefully. "I'll just see that nobody brushes against it."

He took a piece of chalk out of his pocket and wrote on a board:

"DANGER! No one allowed to go up!"

Then he very, very carefully leaned the board against the tower, where the little iron ladder came down.

"There, that'll brace it a bit and keep

mischief-makers away," he said in a tone of satisfaction. "Kill two birds with one stone."

He looked at Sue-Betty and gave her a quiet little wink. She understood the joke now, and almost giggled. Mr. Sutherland walked away, never once looking in the direction of the wind.

"Now we can feed the chickens," said Sue-Betty. The wind did not answer. He was snooping round and round the windmill as if greatly interested.

"Oh, *please* be careful!" Sue-Betty called. "This thing must have cost a lot of money. It would be a shame to push it over and break it."

"Who is thinking of breaking it?" snapped the wind. "Say, you're hair is awfully untidy," he went on in a rude tone of voice. "You're a sight! You'd better go in and brush it."

"He just wants to get me away," thought Sue-Betty. She could not help being a little

offended, considering that the wind himself had blown her hair about; but she ran off without answering him a word, and went into the house.

There all was quiet; for, bright morning as it was, the family were still in bed. Sue-Betty tip-toed to her room, closed her shutters, and then stood behind them peeping through to see what the wind was up to. On the lawn she noticed Mr. Sutherland, hiding behind a tree. He was peeking out, too.

First the wind fed the chickens, calling them in a loud voice, as if to seem very unconcerned, and throwing the grain so far it would take the poor things all day to find it; then he hurled the grain-measure sky-high, and kicked it when it came down, as if he were angry at it; and *then* he began to sneak around the windmill. For a time he seemed to consider, and all was quiet.

Suddenly the board marked "Danger" was whirled away, so that it flew across the barnyard and nearly scared the chickens to

death; and the next instant there was a flash of blue overalls running up the little iron ladder; the wind appeared on the platform above, and the windmill began to work. First the wheel turned slowly, and the machinery began to creak and croak. But when the wind saw he was not hurting the hated windmill at all, he began to work harder; and, presently, the big wheel was whirling and spinning, and the pumping-rod working like mad.

"He's at work! He's *fooled!*" cried Sue-Betty excitedly. She caught sight of Mr. Sutherland behind his tree, dancing a happy jig, and rubbing his hands. This seemed so funny to Sue-Betty that she was convulsed with laughter; and not to wake the family, she had to throw herself upon her bed and laugh into her pillow.

When she had quieted down a little she found out that all her work that morning had made her pretty tired, so she just lay still. After a while the steady sound of the

windmill, and the angry whistling of the wind, lulled her into a little sleep.

Her mother came in to wake her and threw open the shutters, saying it was breakfast time.

"Aren't you rather a lazy little farmer?" she asked; but Sue-Betty could not answer and tell her all she had done that morning. She was sitting up in bed and looking out of the window in great surprise.

"Why, *where* is the new windmill?" she demanded.

"There isn't any new windmill," said her mother.

Sure enough, there wasn't! The place was empty. It was plain as day, however, what had happened. During the time Sue-Betty had slept, the wind's rage had made him so cyclone-strong, that he had carried the whole business clean away, tower and all.

"Oh, I wish I'd seen it go!" sighed Sue-Betty.

She was too considerate to speak about it to anyone, but she felt Mr. Sutherland had been served right for trying to get work done without pay. Perhaps he thought so himself, for he never said a single word about the matter, and was rather serious, not to say glum, at breakfast.

ONE OF PLUTARCH'S LIVES

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ONE OF PLUTARCH'S LIVES

SUE-BETTY was on the couch in Mr. Stimson's studio, stroking Plutarch, the big, grey cat.

"Mr. Stimson, how has a cat nine lives?" she asked. "Does it have them one right after another, joining on?"

"Well, they say so," replied Mr. Stimson. He was at the easel, his nose so close to the canvas it looked as if he were smelling the paint. "They say a cat can get killed eight times, and go right on living. But *I* rather think——"

He stopped, absent-mindedly, and went on painting. Sue-Betty waited patiently. It was important to her to know what he thought: he was her most interesting friend. At last, after he had walked off across the room, folded his arms and squinted at his

canvas, he turned again to the little girl, who sat looking at him expectantly.

"You don't think he has quite nine lives?" she asked, pointing at Plutarch.

"Oh, he must have nine; I've always heard that," said Mr. Stimson confidently. "But whether he has them one after another, or several at a time—that is a very interesting question, my child. My own idea is, he doubles up on his lives: uses up two or three at a time. I dare say Plutarch is contemporaneous with himself several times over."

"That's rather hard to understand," said Sue-Betty.

"I mean he may be leading one life by day and quite a different life by night," said Mr. Stimson, looking thoughtfully at Plutarch, who kept his green eyes shut. "I've known of such cases."

"Oh, so have I," said Sue-Betty quickly.

"And he may lead still a third life—a life of contemplation—when he's snoozing,"

continued Mr. Stimson. "And who knows but Plutarch may be a different cat to one friend from what he is to another. Indeed, it is quite possible that he's using up his whole allowance of nine lives at once."

"That would be very wasteful," said Sue-Betty. Mr. Stimson nodded and went back to his easel.

It was very quiet in the studio. Sue-Betty snuggled down among the cushions, her face close to the cat's.

"Plutarch, are you asleep?" she whispered after awhile, laying her hand on his side. He purred in response, but did not open his eyes.

"Because I want to tell you a secret," whispered Sue-Betty. He showed his interest by rolling out another soft purr.

"Plutarch, I have two lives, myself," whispered Sue-Betty. "What do you think of that?"

Plutarch *was* surprised: he opened his

green eyes wide for a moment, then closed them as if to listen further.

"You have nine—and I have two," continued the little girl earnestly: "and—and I am using both of mine. I suppose I ought to save one, in case of a railroad accident."

"That depends," said Plutarch, looking very wise, with his eyes tight shut. Sue-Betty was delighted to have roused his interest enough to make him speak. She went eagerly on.

"One is just my everyday, little-girl life, in which I have to be taken care of, and in which almost everything I try goes wrong. But my *other* life, the one I use mostly at night, is so different. In it I can do all sorts of things very well, and as easy as anything. Once I was a pirate, and once I hunted moose, and once I milked ten cows. Oh, Plutarch, I like that life best, I do. I don't want to put it aside and save it up; but I *ought* to save one."

"I'm not so sure you ought," said Plu-

tarch, opening his eyes now, and speaking very seriously. "If you should live only your helpless little-girl life, you might get discouraged; and if you should live only the other life, in which you can do things, you might, perhaps, get very conceited. Better run them along, one beside the other. Did you ever see the cat-o'-nine-tails?"

"No indeed."

"Well, you can imagine him. Suppose he wore his nine tails all fastened one to the other, think of the length! It would be a nuisance to drag around. But he has them all starting out at once, and it makes a magnificent appendage. He can spread it like a peacock. It's his pride and joy to have nine tails. In the same way, if you have several lives to live, you can make more of yourself by using them together."

"How I should like to see the cat-o'-nine-tails," sighed Sue-Betty.

"You can't; he's gone on a long sea-voyage," said Plutarch.

"I should think the sailors would think it unlucky, and object to having a cat on board," said Sue-Betty.

"They do," said Plutarch with a smile the little girl could not understand.

"Plutarch," she whispered after a pause, "what are you like in some of your different lives."

"I'm different in each one," returned the cat. "For instance, in one of them I wear boots, and talk English."

Sue-Betty gave a little start and looked down his sleek legs. Sure enough, on his hind feet he wore a dear little pair of boots, old and shabby, to be sure, but made of finely stamped leather, and turned over widely at their tops, in a quaint, old-time way.

"Why you're *it* now, you dear thing!" exclaimed the little girl delightedly. "Have you been it all the time we've been talking?"

"Of course I can only talk when I have my boots," said Plutarch.

"Oh! Now tell me about the Marquis of Carrabas, and the lovely princess he married and the rich castle," urged Sue-Betty, snuggling down nearer to the cat.

"Well, the Marquis is still Carrabas, and the princess is as lovely as ever—but they've lost the castle," returned Plutarch, sadly. "You see, they never had a good title to it. My gobbling up the ogre, and pretending the miller's son was a marquis, was a bold and successful stroke,—but we could not follow it up with any really effective policy. We were in possession just about long enough for Carrabas to marry the princess, and then began a peck of trouble. That ogre had about forty-'leven near relatives, who, of course, were his legitimate heirs, and they all began suing us at once for fraudulent possession of the property. We had lawsuits, one on top of the other, and we lost them, too. Why, we hadn't the shadow of a case, you know. And the king wouldn't or couldn't take our part. His

Majesty had troubles of his own. The matter had got into politics, he was openly accused of favouring fraud and violence because it was his own son-in-law who got the benefit. The upshot of it was, Carrabas lost everything but his title, and was exiled—so he came over here."

"His title isn't much use, in America," observed Sue-Betty with regret.

"More than anywhere else," said Plutarch. "They get asked to dinners here, and that's the only way they live, poor things. Of course, I have never deserted them. When they took ship, I followed them, and shipped before the mast as a common sailor, to work my passage. That is where I met the cat-'o-nine-tails we were speaking of."

"And do they live here, really? Oh, how I should like to know them," sighed the little girl.

"I should have to introduce you through a skylight, if I introduced you," returned Plutarch, doubtfully. "They are so poor

they live in the very top of a tenement—on the floor where nobody pays rent—and I always go to them over the roofs. You couldn't go over the roofs, I'm afraid."

"Oh, please, please try me," begged Sue-Betty, ardently.

Mr. Stimson had his nose against his canvas again. He never turned round when the little girl and the cat jumped from the couch and slipped into one of the dormer windows. Sue-Betty softly raised the sash, and Plutarch led the way. The next minute they were out, high above the city street, in the leader that ran along the edge of the roof.

"Take off your shoes," Plutarch advised, and he himself pulled off his boots for safer travelling. "Then follow me closely, mind where you step, and keep perfectly cool."

He was off, and Sue-Betty was after him like a squirrel. There was evidently some safety in going fast, for Plutarch set a pace that made the little girl leap and jump to keep up with him. Now they were running

on all fours up the steep slope of one roof, now they were sitting down and sliding in one shoot to the gutter on the other side, now taking a flying leap to the next roof, and so on. Here, where the tops were flat and made of tin, they skipped along hand in hand, there again they had to balance themselves along a sharp ridge-pole; but never once they slipped or stumbled. It was one of the jolliest runs Sue-Betty had ever had. She looked far away, over the whole city, with its steeples against the sky, all in a golden afternoon light. It seemed to stretch for miles. From the roofs' edges they sometimes glimpsed the lively streets far below, where everything was bright and little and full of motion. And such a sweet fresh wind blew in her face as she ran; and she was going to meet a real princess,—no wonder the little girl was elate.

They soon came to a poor part of the town, and on the flat roof of a tenement, where a good deal of washing hung out on

lines, Plutarch stopped at a skylight. It was half raised, as if for ventilation. Having peeked in himself, Plutarch beckoned Sue-Betty to his side.

She looked down into a poor, forlorn little room, where directly under her sat a young woman, dressed in a worn-out, faded silk dress. She was cleaning a pair of white satin slippers, the smallest, daintiest shape imaginable.

"Princess!" called Plutarch softly, whereupon she raised a lovely, delicate face, a little pale and sad, but very sweet.

"This little girl earnestly desires the honour of making your acquaintance," said Plutarch, and thereupon he formally presented Sue-Betty to the lady below.

"Won't you walk in?" said the Marchioness of Carrabas, in a gentle voice, smiling up at them.

They did not exactly *walk* in: Plutarch took a jump; but the little girl, having no cushions on her feet, had to let herself down

legs first, hanging by the edges of the skylight and then dropping. She felt a little embarrassed, doing this. It did not seem a very formal way to enter the presence of one who was of royal blood; but the Princess shook hands with her so kindly, it put her at her ease.

Then she stroked and kissed Plutarch, called him dear, loyal old fellow, said how she had missed him, and so on; Sue-Betty, meanwhile, looked about the room.

It was a very poor room, with dingy walls and hardly any furniture. The bed was made of straw in bags on the floor, only the sheets and pillow cases were embroidered richly with a crown, to show they belonged to the trousseau of a princess royal. Some of her beautiful, rich robes too, hung upon the wall, and an ermine-trimmed mantle was hung across one end of the apartment to curtain off a dressing-room. There were, besides, two old chairs, a bench, a cook-stove and a plain kitchen table; and that was all.

Sue-Betty was much distressed to find a lovely lady in these surroundings.

"And where is my lord, the Marquis," asked Plutarch, when they had all sat down.

"He hasn't come in till after six any night this week," returned the Princess. "Poor fellow, he tries so hard—and has no success at all."

"What," cried Plutarch, "doesn't he get plenty of invitations?"

"We used to get them for every night in the week," she returned. "But lately they have stopped entirely. I can't account for it."

Although it was a desperate matter, she spoke with great self-possession, as becomes a person of high degree.

"We should have starved," she continued sweetly, addressing Sue-Betty in a tone of polite conversation, "if I had not had some rings I could sell. I assure you, it has been very disagreeable."

"And how does Carrabas bear it?" asked Plutarch, anxiously.

"He has been unusually cheerful," returned the Marchioness. "The truth is, these dinners we have been going to have bored him. He likes bread and cheese at home with me, he says. Well, we can't have even that to-night." She turned to Sue-Betty again. "I should so like to ask you to supper," she said regretfully, "but there isn't going to be any supper."

At that moment the door suddenly opened, and a butcher's boy stuck in his head and shouted loudly:

"MEAT!"

He slapped the parcel down upon the floor and slammed the door again.

"It must be a mistake," said the Princess, looking annoyed. "Someone else's meat has come here—these people are so careless."

"Perhaps the Marquis has bought it, and sent it home," suggested Plutarch, who was sniffing at the package with great interest.

"No, indeed, he has no money; no way of getting any money," said the Princess decidedly, and a little proudly. "He only gets invitations."

At that moment the door burst open again, and there stood a big man with a basket on his arm.

"Is this number seventeen?" he asked, and when the Princess nodded, he said shortly: "Groceries, Ma'm," marched in and began piling a lot of parcels on the table.

"Take them away. It's a mistake," commanded the Princess. "They belong in some other house."

"No, Ma'm, this here's the house," returned the grocer man respectfully but firmly, as he took up his basket and went out.

"How very distressing," said the Princess. "It will only make us hungrier to see those things about."

"Perhaps they were sent by a friend, as a present," suggested Sue-Betty.

"Who would send a present of meat and groceries to a Marquis?" asked the Princess. Sue-Betty had to admit the improbability.

And then the door opened a third time, and in came the Marquis of Carrabas himself. He was very tall and handsome and jolly looking, and it did not seem possible that such a man could have been out after invitations in vain; but when he had kissed the Princess and she asked him, "Any luck, my love?" he answered, with a laugh: "Didn't get a nibble all day."

Now he greeted Plutarch, and after that he and Sue-Betty were introduced.

"I am awfully glad to see you," he said warmly, as he shook her hand. "I was wishing we could have some company tonight. We're going to have a little supper-party, and request the honour of your company. I see the things I ordered have come" (he glanced at the groceries and meat). "May we have the pleasure?"

Hat in hand, he swept Sue-Betty a very fine bow, and she made a courtesy and accepted his invitation.

"But my love," said the Princess, "won't you tell us how you happened——?"

"Let's have supper first, and then I'll explain," cried the Marquis. "I'm hungry as a bear. Puss, old man, you start up a fire, will you? My love" (to the Princess), "as you don't know much about cooking, suppose you retire and put on a pretty gown to grace our feast." He took her hand and led her to her dressing-room, drawing aside the ermine-trimmed mantle for her to pass. She paused.

"I think *you* had better dress, my love," she said. "There seems to be a good deal of whitish dust on your coat."

"Oh—ah—I thought I had shaken it all out," he exclaimed, looking more annoyed than seemed worth while. "Well, just hand me out another coat, dear."

He slipped off the one he had on, turned

it inside out as if he were anxious to hide the dust, and hung it up on a peg. Then he put on the one the Princess handed him from behind the ermine-trimmed mantle.

"Now for the supper!" he said in a relieved tone of voice.

Plutarch hurried to the stove and the Marquis, with a cheerful whistle, began to open all the parcels.

"I can cook," said Sue-Betty.

"Can you, really? Why, that's awfully jolly," he said, looking very much pleased. "It would be so good of you to help."

So she and Plutarch and the Marquis all began to get supper and a very good time they had over it, too. They broiled chops and boiled potatoes and cooked canned corn and baked a rice pudding with just as many raisins as rice in it. "Let's make everything awfully good," said the Marquis when he dumped the raisins in. And they lit a lot of candles stuck in bottles, and set the table with the best cut glass and silver

that the Princess had got for wedding presents, and in the middle they put a dish of peanut candy and some mottoes that the Marquis had bought. Then there were pickles and olives and lots of ginger ale and brown bread, and white—and butter, of course.

"But we must have some hot bread," said the Marquis. "Who can make flap-jacks?"

"I can," said Sue-Betty; she was feeling extraordinarily capable. So she mixed flour and milk and eggs and things, while Plutarch heated the pan; and then she baked the lightest flap-jacks that ever were seen. Everytime she threw one up in the air to turn it and caught it in the pan, the Marquis and Plutarch shouted "Hurrah." It was the best fun she had ever had.

When everything was ready the Princess came out from behind the curtain, dressed so beautifully that Plutarch and the Marquis shouted hurrah again, and Sue-Betty

clapped her hands for joy. The gown was white, all embroidered with pearls, low-necked, and had sleeves that nearly touched the floor, and a train that filled the room. The Princess smiled a lovely smile, when she saw the feast that was spread, and said everybody was a dear; and then they all sat down to eat. There were only three chairs, but Plutarch sat on the Marquis' shoulder and was given the very best bits of everything.

Such a delicious supper—and such delightful conversation as they had! The Marquis told such funny stories that the Princess and Sue-Betty laughed till they cried; and then they tried to make Plutarch drink ginger ale, but when they put the glass to his nose the fizz flew out up into his eyes and he made faces, till everybody roared: After that the Princess grew jolly, and every time she offered anyone chops she imitated the way the butcher-boy had shouted "Meat!" so that the others fairly

screamed with laughter. At last something was said about pirates, and Sue-Betty told them all about her adventure with Willie Lamb: and at this they were very serious and intensely interested, all leaning on the table and asking her eager questions. It was a most delightful supper.

"And now, my dear," said the Princess, when the table was cleared and they sat around drinking ginger ale and eating candy, "now you must tell us where you got the money to buy these things."

"My love," said the Marquis, "*I earned it.*"

"Miau!" said Plutarch,—in his great surprise he forgot his English and went back to his primitive speech. The Princess said nothing; but she had turned pale, and gazed at her husband with horror. At last her lips opened, and she faintly whispered:

"How did you earn it?"

"By working in a flour-mill," said the Marquis of Carrabas, firmly.

They all thought she was going to faint, but she recovered herself and rose to her feet, holding her pretty head very high.

"Carrabas," she said in a voice, trembling, but stern, "have you fallen to this?"

Now her husband rose too, looking pale and proud as she, and Plutarch stood on his shoulder, back up, and tail bristling with excitement. Sue-Betty gazed from one to the other in the greatest alarm.

"Madam," said the Marquis, in a low voice, "remember that I confessed to you the night before we married that I was only a miller's son."

"True," cried the Princess with flashing eyes, "but you had then, or *seemed* to have, all the instincts of a Marquis."

"That may be," he answered; "but I want to prove now that our misfortunes and losses have made a better man of me."

"Is it better to work," cried the Princess bitterly, "than to sit in gold chairs and eat ice cream?"

At her words a startled look came over her husband's face.

"Jiminy Crickets," he exclaimed, "*I forgot the ice cream!*"

He hurried to his discarded coat and out of the pocket took a wet, soft, shapeless, pasteboard ice cream box. He carefully opened it and looked in.

"Might have known it! All melted!" he muttered sadly. "It was vanilla and chocolate mixed. What a fool I was to put it in my pocket."

With a sudden rage he threw the box smash into the coal scuttle. At the sight of this the Princess burst into a hysterical little laugh; then sat down in her chair, laid her face on the table and began to cry.

Plutarch went bounding to her and began to purr and rub his cheek against her in the caressing, comforting way that cats have. The Marquis hurried to her side and lovingly bent over her.

"Never mind, dearest, now that I get

money every Saturday, I can buy loads of ice cream."

"It's not for that I care," she sobbed. "It's for your *dignity*. If the people at home should hear you were working in a flour-mill——"

"So much for the people at home," cried Carrabas, snapping his fingers loudly.

"Or the people here that we've been dining with——"

"Bah! Most of them have worked in mills themselves," said Carrabas. "If I keep this job and get promoted, some day you and I will be entertaining Dukes. Not——" he added, smiling at Sue-Betty, "that we'll have a bit better time then than we've had to-night."

At this the Princess wiped her eyes and looked up apologetically.

"We *are* having a beautiful evening and it is so kind of you to stay," she said. "I'm afraid you'll think it very silly of me to cry."

Before Sue-Betty could answer, Plutarch spoke up.

"It is *very* silly," he said gravely. He had sat down on the table before the Princess, his tail curled around his legs, and he said it right into her face.

"What, Plutarch! you too?" cried the Princess in astonishment.

"Yes," said Plutarch, "me too! I side with Carrabas."

"But you're the one that made a Marquis of him."

"Well, live and learn!" said the cat. "Have you forgotten the lawsuits? Have you forgotten how hungry you've been today? A title without a castle, or a castle without a title are no good. You had much better join the common people, and eat peanut candy on Saturday night."

"But," cried the Princess, still unwilling to cede the argument, "if my husband hadn't gone into the mill, he might still have had invitations."

"Undoubtedly," said Plutarch. "They would never fail. A Marquis and a Princess will always be asked. But in a few years your fine clothes will be worn out. What then? You can't go to any more parties after that."

This impressed the Princess as very true.

She sat looking away into a corner, deep in thought a few moments. Finally she asked Sue-Betty for her opinion.

"*I* think your Royal Highness would like a cunning little flat, with an ash-chute, and a cold-storage box out of the kitchen window, where you keep cream in funny little bottles, and a sideboard built in the wall for all your silver wedding-presents, and couches that turn into beds at night," said Sue-Betty with enthusiasm. She was describing Ned and Caroline's apartment in New York, where they had moved when they left the lighthouse. The Princess listened with evident fascination.

"Could I have all that?" she asked timidly, looking up at her husband.

"You could move into one to-morrow," he declared. "If I don't have to go to any more of those tiresome dinners, I can sell my diamond studs and get you anything."

"And I could sell this pearl dress," she cried with sudden enthusiasm, "and hire a cook."

"You darling, would you do that?" cried her husband; whereupon they embraced each other.

"I say, let's skip," whispered Plutarch to Sue-Betty. They put a chair on the table, climbed up, opened the skylight and got out onto the roof; the Marquis and his wife never saw them. When they peeked down at them, they were still standing with their arms around each other, looking into each other's faces with a happy smile.

"They're all right now," said Plutarch. "That was a happy thought of yours about the flat."

"Only they can't have a cook in the size I mean," said Sue-Betty.

"Never mind, if they've got a thing or two to learn yet," said Plutarch. "They're started right."

Faster than they had come, the little girl and the cat sped back across the city roofs. The West was still glowing, so long was the Spring twilight.

Mr. Stimson was washing brushes when they slipped into the studio window and jumped back to their places on the couch.

"Plutarch, I've had a very nice time," the little girl whispered. "Thank you for taking me into one of your lives."

The cat only purred in reply. His boots had disappeared.

THE END

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