Mystery at Four Chimneys

Nina Brown Baker

MYSTERY AT FOUR CHIMNEYS

Other Mystery Stories for Girls

BY

NINA BROWN BAKER

THE RANEE'S RUBY

THE CHINESE RIDDLE

THE SECRET OF HALLAM HOUSE

THE CINDERELLA SECRET

"Look, Pat, isn't this adorable?"

MYSTERY AT FOUR CHIMNEYS

By

NINA BROWN BAKER

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RUTH KING

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LADY BEATRICE GRAHAM

The Present-Day Chatelaine of
"Four Chimneys"

CONTENTS

I

Anne and Patricia Patterson, hurrying home from their separate schools, met at the garden gate. As they walked up the path together, Patricia wrinkled her nose rapturously.

"It can't be—and yet I'd swear it is!" she exclaimed. "Sniff hard, Sis, and see if you smell what I smell?"

"I do smell something, but why does it make me think of a broken arm? Oh, I know now. That time winter before last, when you tangled up with your skates—"

"And had to stay in with a broken arm, and

Mother took a week off from the office to stay with me. Every day, every single day, she made me doughnuts. It's the first and only time in my life I ever got enough. Real ones, I mean. I don't count the ones I get at the school cafeteria, or at Mrs. Fischer's bakery either. Mums makes the only *real* ones, but she almost never has time. Oh, look, I can see her through the kitchen window! Do come on!"

The girls raced around the side of the small house and burst in at the kitchen door.

After the raw gray chill of the late February afternoon, the kitchen glowed warm and bright. Waves of cinnamon-rich fragrance rushed out to meet them. A huge pile of fat crusty brown rings lay draining on white paper. Mrs. Patterson, long fork in hand, stood over a bubbling kettle.

"Doughnuts—oh, Mother, you *angel!*"

Pat threw her books on the table and rushed to the stove.

"Did you fry me some holes, darling? It's been so long since you made them—you didn't forget and roll them back in the dough, did you? Oh, bless you, here they are!"

She found her own special pile of small round

cakes and sank her strong teeth into the crisp crust. "Oh, are these *yummy!*" she cried ecstatically.

"One at a time, sweetheart." Mother, her pretty face pink from the heat, her chestnut hair loosened into little tendrils, turned to smile at her quiet older daughter.

Anne had stopped a minute to hang up her hat and coat. Now she came forward and took the fork from her mother's hand.

"Let me finish these, dear. Oh, but they look marvellous! Is it a birthday or something? And you're home from the office early, too. Explain yourself, Mrs. Patterson! What are we celebrating?"

Mother's face turned a bit pinker as she perched upon the high kitchen stool, and absently selected a doughnut from the pile.

Her voice was carefully careless as she answered between nibbles, "Thanks, darling. That's the last batch. Don't burn them now! Why—things were very slack at the office, and I knew Mr. McIntyre wouldn't mind if I asked for a couple of hours off. It's odd, but a sort of domestic fit overcame me. All at once the clatter of my typewriter got on my nerves, and I just ached

to be doing something around the kitchen. Silly of me, wasn't it?"

"No, of course it wasn't silly," Anne answered. "But it does seem queer. You're so wrapped up in your work at the office, and so efficient, so—well, always the perfect secretary. I didn't suppose you ever got tired of that!"

Patricia looked up from the rapidly-disappearing plate of "holes."

"I know exactly how you felt, Mums. That very same feeling comes over me in school. My soul just yearns to flee from Caesar and his everlasting Commentaries, and to rush home to turn out a batch of pralines. But of course *I* never yield to such impulses," she added virtuously.

"Because you know what would happen if you did," her sister laughed. "Keep still a minute, can't you? Mother, you don't usually yield to such impulses either—I never even guessed you had them! You—you're feeling all right, aren't you?"

"Of course, dear!" Mother answered swiftly. "Do I look ill?"

Anne's soft brown eyes surveyed the slight figure on the stool. The sisters were enormously proud of their pretty young mother. Not that

Mother actually *was* young, when you counted the years. She had been twenty-one when that tragic motor accident left her a widow, with Patricia a month-old baby in her arms. Pat was fourteen now, and those fourteen years had not been easy ones for Margaret Patterson. There had been no close relatives to depend upon, and very little money. What there had been she had invested in a business school training, and then had courageously taken up the burden of supporting her orphaned babies. No one had ever heard her complain; laughter and blithe comradeship had ruled in the little house to which she had come as a bride. Her own grief resolutely hidden, she had made the father they could not remember a happy, living person to the girls.

Little of those early struggles showed in her face now. With her youthful figure and laughing eyes, and in the smart simplicity of her clothes, she was invariably mistaken for an elder sister when the two girls went out with her. In everyday life she was far more like a sister than a mother, Anne thought. It was only when one was ill, or hurt, or discouraged, that one realized how real and deep the mother-feeling was.

"Well, Solemn Eyes?" Mrs. Patterson tucked

back a straying curl and reached for another doughnut. "What's the verdict? *Do* I look ill?"

"I should say not! You look positively blooming. I'm glad you took the afternoon off. It's done you good. I suppose the office must get on your nerves sometimes."

"Oh, it isn't that. I like the office. But I like home too, and I see so little of it. There's such a mad rush to get off in the mornings, and then the hurry-up dinner at night—it isn't the sort of housekeeping your grandmother brought me up to. Just makeshift, really—" her voice trailed off, and Anne looked at her in surprise.

"Why, Mums darling, I never heard you talk like that before!" she exclaimed. "Everybody says it's marvellous, the way you manage! Mr. McIntyre tells everyone he has the perfect secretary, and there isn't a girl I know who doesn't think we have a perfect home. Of course it's hard on you, with two jobs instead of one, but you've never seemed to mind. And now that Pat and I are old enough to help it's lots easier than it was. I don't—"

Patricia captured the last crumb on her plate and joined the discussion.

"The fact is, Mums is just a home-body at

heart," she pronounced gravely. "All that brisk efficiency is put on to fool Mr. McIntyre. Look at her now, in that cunning flowered house-coat, with doughnut-dough under her finger-nails! You can see it's what she was born for. If she had her way—and if I had mine—she'd never go near that office again."

Anne lifted the last doughnut from the fat and turned off the flame. Outside the rain had begun again. It beat against the window panes and made the little kitchen glow more warmly bright. With a paper towel Anne carefully wiped every spatter from the trim ivory gas range. Then she shifted the fresh doughnuts to an immense platter.

"There's another home-body for you," Pat observed, watching her deft movements. "Come and sit down, Sis, you exhaust me. It isn't time to begin getting dinner yet."

Anne came to sit beside her sister on the painted settle which formed half of the breakfast nook.

Seen together, the two girls were alike and yet unlike. Sixteen-year-old Anne, slender and lovely, had delicately-cut features of ivory pallor, lighted by golden-brown eyes and shaded

by a cloud of dark hair. She looked far more fragile than she actually was, although she lacked the sturdiness of her little sister.

Patricia, two years younger, had the same gold-flecked brown eyes. But where Anne's were still deep pools, Pat's sparkled perpetually with eager life. The sun-tan of summer sports never quite left her cheeks, with their undertone of dusky rose.

Friends of the family conveniently classified them as "Anne, the studious one," and "Pat, the tomboy," but that division was hardly fair. Anne really enjoyed some of the less strenuous outdoor sports, and Pat didn't mind a book on a rainy afternoon—if it had enough adventure in it.

Mrs. Patterson glanced toward the china clock on the wall. She opened her mouth to speak, then closed it again.

"Something I can do, Mums?" Anne asked. "Peas to shell, maybe, or potatoes to pare? You must be tired."

"I'm not, a bit. No, everything is ready, in the refrigerator. The chicken won't take long to fry."

"Fried chicken?" Pat rolled her eyes. "*And* doughnuts! You must be right, Sis, we are cele-

brating something. Mother has a mysterious gleam in her eye, too; I saw it the minute I came in. What is it, darling? Tell us!"

"Don't be silly. It just happens we're having a guest for dinner, that's all." Mother hesitated a minute, then added very casually, "I asked Doctor Dick to drop in."

"Oh!" The curiosity died from Pat's face. "But he isn't a guest. More like one of the family, Doctor Dick is. I'm glad he's coming, though. He said he'd take a look at one of my skis that's beginning to split. He's wonderful at fixing things like that. I'll go haul it out now so I won't forget."

"Wait a minute, dear. There's plenty of time."

Mother's tone was so odd that both girls turned to look at her. She still sat on the kitchen stool, one foot tucked up on the highest round; the other, in its slender high-heeled slipper, swinging restlessly.

"What *is* it, darling?" Anne asked. "You've had something on your mind all afternoon. Playing truant from the office, a thing you never do, and now—well, you're positively fidgeting! What have you been up to? Buying another electric refrigerator, and trying to break it gently

to us that we'll have to wear our old clothes till it's paid for? You look exactly as you did that time; thrilled to death and yet sort of apprehensive too. Come on, you might as well tell us and get it over with."

"A car—she's bought a car!" Patricia shrieked. "Oh, Mumsey dear, is that it? You said we couldn't possibly afford it! Now we can go to California this summer, Sis—isn't it marvellous? Where is it, Mums? Oh, I can't wait to see it!"

"Sorry, Puss." Mother shook her head. "You've guessed wrong this time. There's no car."

"No car? Oh! Well, I didn't really suppose there would be, but there's no law against hoping. No car. Then let's see. Not new draperies for the dining-room, I hope and trust? No, you wouldn't be all of a twitter over them. Don't make us guess, darling. Tell us."

"I suppose I'd better." Mother straightened on the stool, and took a deep breath.

"I was trying to lead up to this tactfully, but I don't seem to be making much headway. So I'll just come out with it, and then you must tell me what you think. What you *honestly* think. And remember, it won't happen at all if

it would make you girls unhappy. I made that perfectly clear to him. After all, your lives will be affected as much as mine, and I simply won't consent to anything that would upset you, or make you feel—" the pretty voice trembled suddenly, the long-lashed eyes misted. "You come first, darlings, you always will!" she ended.

Pat's eyes widened. "What on *earth*—" she began.

But Anne rose, and brushing past her, laid a tender arm across her mother's slim shoulders.

"I think I know now, dear," she said softly. "You've promised to marry Doctor Dick, haven't you?"

"Not promised!" Mrs. Patterson threw up her head. "I've told him *definitely* that I had to know how you felt first. If you'd hate it, then we'll forget the whole business. Maybe you'd like to think about it, and talk it over between yourselves," she added anxiously. "He's coming for his answer tonight, but he won't mind waiting—"

"Here, just a minute. Let me get this straight!" Patricia broke in. "You mean—you mean you're talking about *marrying* Doctor Dick? And Sis standing there with that smug

'I-knew-it-all-the-time' look on her face! For pity's sake, where was I while all this was going on? Anne, you didn't know it; you couldn't have!"

"I did, though," Anne answered serenely. "No, nobody told me. But I have eyes in my head, I hope. He worships the ground you walk on, Mums, and did from the first time he came here —to set Pat's broken arm, wasn't it? I've been wishing he'd gather up courage enough to ask you."

" 'Wishing'? Then you—it's all right with you, Anne?"

"It's more than all right, dear." Anne's arm tightened about her mother. "It's the nicest thing that ever happened to us, and I'm almost as thrilled as you are."

"Bless you, Anne! I felt sure—and yet I couldn't be sure—" Mother gave a little broken laugh, and hugged her elder daughter to her. Then her eyes turned to little Pat, sitting very quietly at the table, her face still a mask of bewilderment.

"Pat, darling?" Mother prompted her gently.

"Yes? Sorry, Mums, I just can't seem to take it in. You aren't by any chance having fun

with us, are you? No, I can see it's real. Well —well—my goodness, you're surely not waiting to hear what *I* think! Doctor Dick is my own special pal; you might say I discovered him! And now to have him in the family—well, it's the one thing you could have got for us that's better than a car. Come to think of it, Doctor Dick has a car, too. Oh, but that makes everything just perfect!"

"Then I understand that you give your consent?" Mrs. Patterson smiled.

"Well, of course!" Pat's face broke into a wide radiant grin. She jumped up and ran to her mother's side. "Oh, dearest, I'm so happy for you! Forgive me if I was slow about saying so; I was simply dumbfounded. I can *not* understand why nobody ever tells me these things!"

II

"Doctor Dick!"

Patricia, lurking in the shadow of the lilac bushes, pounced upon the tall figure as it turned in at the gate.

"Anne said to mind my own business," she began breathlessly. "It's Mother's place to tell you, she says. We're going to be very tactful, and leave you alone with her before dinner. That's Anne's plan. But I couldn't wait—I just couldn't! After all, I discovered you, didn't I? It was my arm that was broken—Remember? And if I hadn't howled with pain, Mums might

have called some other doctor, instead of having to hurry so that she called the very first one in the telephone book. If it hadn't been for me you mightn't ever have known her, so you really owe your whole life's happiness to me! That makes it all right for me to tell you first, don't you think? Only you needn't let Mums know about it. You can be terribly surprised when she tells you. I guess you're pretty relieved to know it's all right, aren't you?"

She skipped along at his side, both hands clasping his arm.

"I guess I am, if you mean what I hope you do."

Dr. Richard Driscoll was a big, broad-shouldered man in his early forties, with friendly gray eyes and a thin earnest face. The Patterson girls were so abundantly healthy that there had been little need for his professional services since Pat's accident. But by the time her arm was well he had become firmly established as a friend of the family. He came often to the little white house when his calls were over, always to find a warm welcome from mother and daughters alike.

He stopped Pat on the doorstep now, his usually calm voice just a little husky.

"It's all right then, Young 'Un? You girls think you can put up with me around here?"

"We think maybe we can, if we try terribly hard," she teased him. "Goose, can't you see I'm just bubbling over with delight? It's the most gorgeous thing—oh, hello, Mums! Here's Doctor Dick. I just happened to meet him at the gate. Make her sit down in the living room and rest a few minutes, Doctor Dick. She's been working hard all afternoon. I'll just run out and help Anne get dinner on the table."

What Pat called "the betrothal dinner" was so gay that it was not until Anne had cleared the table, leaving the great platter of doughnuts to linger over, that the talk simmered down to a sober discussion of plans for the future.

"I've told your mother, girls," Dr. Driscoll began, "that I'd like us to be married around the last of May, if it suits her. I have a chance to spend the summer in London, as temporary assistant to Sir James Hodson. It seems to me an English honeymoon would be delightful."

"I should think it would!" Anne agreed. "Sir James Hodson—isn't that the man who has that wonderful hospital for crippled children? You're

going to work with *him?* But that's just what you've been hoping for, isn't it?"

Doctor Dick nodded. "I think I told you about Sir James when I first began corresponding with him, early this winter. I've always meant to specialize along that line, but it's easier said than done, when you're in general practice. Three months with Sir James will give me more than I could get from years in the best post-graduate school. When I performed his new operation on that Fiorelli boy—and had to fight the whole staff at the hospital here to do it—well, it was the best piece of work I ever did, in more ways than one. It brought me my first letter from Sir James, and it led to this offer. I don't mind telling all of you that I'm quite well pleased with myself."

"You have a right to be," Mrs. Patterson said. "It gives me a warm glow every time I meet Johnny Fiorelli marching along beside his mother, and think of the years I used to meet her patiently pushing his wheel-chair. You have some good friends in that family, Dick."

"I know. And yet, it's only a drop in the bucket. The city's done a lot for the crippled kids, with the special school and the bus to gather

them up, but every time I see a load of them going by I think—if I could only get my hands on the lot! Some of them are hopeless, of course. But there are others I *know* I could help, if I just had the time and the money and a free hand. Oh, well—stop me, someone! There I go off on my one track again. What were we talking about before this?"

"Mother's honeymoon!" Patricia said, a little indignantly. "Do you mean you're asking her to spend it in a hospital?"

"No, no, of course not!" Doctor Dick looked appealingly at his prospective bride. "You understood that we wouldn't be quartered at the hospital, didn't you, Margaret? We could take a little furnished flat. I'm sure you'd be comfortable, and I think you'd enjoy London."

"Oh, I know we will!" Pat said enthusiastically. "We've never been abroad, and I think it'll be wonderful. Even better than California, Sis, although I know you had your heart set on—why, what's the matter, Doctor Dick? You look so funny."

"I'm sorry, Pat," he said awkwardly. "I wish I could plan to take you girls to London too. But I simply couldn't manage it."

"Not take us?" Patricia stared at him. "But you just said—oh, I see. You're only asking Mummy, not us!"

"It isn't settled yet, dear," Mrs. Patterson put in. "And I really don't see how it can be done, Dick. Let's just forget the English trip, as far as I'm concerned. You go on and put in your summer with Sir James. I'll take the girls to California for my two weeks' vacation, as we'd planned. Then in the autumn we'll talk about the wedding."

"But I wanted you to come!" His voice was boyishly disappointed. "I haven't been in London since the War, but I love it. There are so many places I want to show you—it would make a perfect wedding trip. Couldn't we figure out some arrangement, get someone in to stay with the girls? I'll make it up to them later, I promise. You see how it is, don't you, Pat? It isn't that I don't want you; you must believe that. If I could only afford it—but there it is. I can't, and it's no use pretending I can."

He looked so wretched that Pat's own disappointment receded swiftly.

"Never mind, Doctor Dick. I should have known better, if I'd stopped to think. But

Mummy can go; of course she can. Sis and I will be perfectly all right here by ourselves."

"I really think we could manage, Mother dear," Anne said. "We're pretty good housekeepers, you know."

Mrs. Patterson shook her head. "I'd never know a moment's peace. You'd read all night, Anne, and heaven knows what Pat would eat. No, my plan is much the best. You know how much you've looked forward to seeing California, Anne."

"I do hate to give that up," Anne acknowledged. "But I don't see how I could enjoy it now, Mums, thinking every minute I was cheating you out of your wedding trip."

"What's all this about California?" Doctor Dick asked. "Do you hear Hollywood calling you, Anne?"

"Oh, mercy, no! I don't care anything about Hollywood. It's just that—well, ever since I read 'Ramona' when I was a little girl I've been wild about Old California. The missions, and the ranchos—of course I know it's all changed now, but there are lots of relics still. I've read everything I could find about that period, till it's so real to me I can almost *remember* it.

There's a marvellous book, *The Splendid Idle Forties,* all about the days when California was Spanish. Did you ever read it, Doctor Dick? I nearly know it by heart."

"She does know it by heart," Pat put in. "When she was younger she used to dress up in a striped shawl, with a lace curtain for a mantilla, and do us the scene where Doña Ysabel, the Star of Monterey, says that any man who wins her must first fill her lap with pearls. Remember, Mums? She was—what's the word? Colossal!"

"I remember," Mother laughed. "Anne's had that dream for years, and I had faithfully promised her that some day I'd take her West. I can't disappoint her now."

"Oh, Mummy, please!" Anne protested. "I've waited this long and I don't mind a bit waiting another year. Maybe next summer we can all go. Don't you think we might, Doctor Dick?"

"Of course we can. We'll drive out and really see the country right. That's a promise, Anne, and you can depend on it."

"That settles that, then," Anne nodded contentedly. "And now—oh, we simply must think up some plan that will let you go to London, Mums. I'll be more disappointed than anybody

if you can't go. Isn't there someone you could get to stay with us, if you won't trust us alone? We'll promise to be very good."

"I'm trying to think." Mother's pretty forehead wrinkled. "I don't know of anyone."

"We could go back to camp, I suppose," Anne offered, when the problem had been thoroughly discussed.

"Oh *Anne!*" Patricia wailed. "Not for three whole months! Four weeks at camp is grand, but after that you get so *tired* of getting up to a bugle. Besides, we've been to Mishawaka over and over, till I know every path and every stump by heart."

"There are other camps, though," Anne protested half-heartedly. "We could try a new one. What do you think, Mums?"

"I don't know, dear. You aren't very enthusiastic about it yourself, are you?"

"Oh, I don't mind. I can't think of anything else, and—"

"Listen, girls!" Doctor Dick struck the table a resounding blow. "I've just had an inspiration, a real one. How would you like to spend the summer in New York?"

"New York!" Patricia shrieked. "Oh, you

don't mean it, you can't! Why, that's farther away than California."

"Never you mind how far away it is. Would you like it?"

The two sisters turned shining eyes toward him. "Like it!" Pat exclaimed. "Sis, do you hear him? He's asking us if we'd like *New York!*"

"Here's my idea," Doctor Dick began. "I still own the old house in Brooklyn where I was born, and my father before me. 'Four Chimneys,' it's called. I haven't lived there since my college days. New York is overcrowded with young physicians, and when I was ready to hang out my shingle I took the advice of my favorite professor and came out here to the Middle West. My father never would leave the old house, although it was much too big for him, and terribly old-fashioned. But he was comfortable there, with his books and his stamp collections, and Ellen and Dougal to look after him."

"Ellen was your old nurse, wasn't she, Doctor Dick?" Pat asked. "You told me about her once."

"I expect I did—I have a pretty warm spot

in my heart for Ellen, bless her! She practically brought me up, you know—my mother was an invalid for years. She died when I was fifteen. Well, when Father died two years ago, I found myself with the house on my hands. The land on which it stands is valuable, but the house itself is a white elephant. There's no demand nowadays for a twenty-room mansion with imported marble fireplaces, gas lighting and one bathroom! And right now, there's no demand for the building site. So until my agent can get me a good offer, the place is simply standing there, with Ellen and her husband in charge as caretakers. And I can think of no reason on earth why you girls shouldn't spend a very pleasant summer with them."

"Oh, Doctor Dick, I think that's a *marvellous* idea!" Pat exclaimed. "I've always wanted to see New York, but to think of actually *living* there! Aren't you thrilled to death, Sis?"

"I think it would be pretty nice," Anne agreed. "Rather like living in a book, because I've read so many stories that happened in New York. I think I know the names of streets and shops there nearly as well as I do our own. Yes, I know I'd love it, Doctor Dick."

"I'm glad to hear that," he told her. "Perhaps you won't be so disappointed about postponing the California trip, then."

"I'll take New York instead of California any day," Pat proclaimed. "Less scenery and more people, that's what I like. Not that I care so much where I go, as long as I go *somewhere!* Do you know we were born here in Middletown, Doctor Dick, and we haven't been a hundred miles away from it in all our lives? I never hear a train whistle that I don't wish I were on it, and I don't care *where* it's going! But New York —oh, I'd never dared hope for that! Do you really mean it, Doctor Dick? You're not fooling us? You really mean we can go?"

"I don't see why not, if your mother agrees. What do you think, Margaret?"

"Well, really, I haven't had a chance to think," Mother said. "It sounds like a good plan, but—"

"No buts, Mumsey dear!" Pat pleaded. "Can't you see that it settles everything just perfectly? You'll have your honeymoon in England, without having to worry about us at all. Sis and I will be perfectly happy exploring New York—oh, I can't believe it! Radio City, and Coney Island, and Chinatown, and the Bowery—we'll

actually *see* them, Anne, with our very own eyes."

A little furrow crinkled Mrs. Patterson's forehead. "That doesn't exactly reassure me, Pat. I don't think I would be entirely carefree in England, if I thought you girls were wandering about by yourselves, 'exploring' the Bowery. You'll have to promise me here and now not to do anything so ridiculous, if you expect my consent."

Pat's face drooped, but Doctor Dick said comfortably, "Oh, you'll have plenty of help with your sight-seeing, girls. Dougal, Ellen's husband, is a retired policeman. He'll see to it that you're properly protected, if you want to go poking about where young ladies don't belong."

"Tell me something about these people, Dick," Mother said. "They must be quite elderly, aren't they? Would they want the responsibility of two strange girls?"

"They'd love it," Doctor Dick answered. "Ellen and Dougal MacDougall are the salt of the earth, Margaret. Or maybe I should say the oatmeal, for they're as Scotch as the Highland Fling. Tell you about them? Well, let's see. I can't remember a world without Ellen in it.

Which is hardly strange, because she nursed me from the day I was born. I remember her as quite a young girl, blue-eyed and red-headed, with a wealth of freckles and a wide generous smile and a boundless good-nature that never faltered. I was an only child, you know, and we were a quiet family. My father married late in life—he was well past forty when I was born. He was a shy, scholarly man, fond of me in his own quiet way, but not the sort of father who romps with his boy. My mother was always delicate. She was an angel, sweet and patient under constant suffering. What I'm getting at is, all the *fun* I had as a child came to me through Ellen. It was she who took me to the Zoo, and to the circus, who planned my birthday parties, and encouraged me to bring my gang to the kitchen so that we wouldn't disturb my parents. And oh, the goodies she used to make for us! Wait till you taste her hickory nut toffee, Pat! She'll be tickled to death to have some young life about the place again, I can answer for that."

"But her husband?" Mother persisted. "How will he feel about it?"

"Dougal? Well, now let me tell you about him. Dougal MacDougall was the policeman

on our beat. The courtship started one day when I fell off the dock—Ellen had taken me down to see the boats come in. Four Chimneys overlooks New York harbor, you know—or did I tell you that?"

"You haven't told us anything about the house yet," Mother smiled. "But go on now about Dougal."

"Oh, yes. Well, Dougal fished me out, and took me to the station house to dry, so my mother wouldn't know and be worried. He and Ellen grew quite friendly over the drying-out process, and after that we used to meet him and stop to chat every time we took our walk. Ellen and I were both convinced he was the handsomest man on the force, and we were positive he was the biggest and the bravest."

"How sweet!" Anne commented. "You must have missed her, though, when she married him."

"Oh, that didn't happen for years and years after their first meeting. She firmly refused to listen to him while I was small and needed her. Then, when I was older, my mother grew worse, and Ellen felt that she couldn't leave her. They weren't married until after Mother's death. Father closed up the house then, and went abroad

for a few years. When he came back, the servant problem rather floored him, and it ended in his coaxing Ellen and Dougal to come and keep house for him. They retired Dougal as disabled about that time. He has a stiff knee, caused by a bullet he received when he captured a trio of pay-roll bandits single-handed,—quite a glorious affair, by the way, for which the Commissioner publicly thanked him. Ellen will show you her newspaper clippings, I haven't a doubt. Oh, they're fine people, Margaret, both of them. The girls couldn't be in better hands."

"They do sound nice," Mother agreed. "Well —" she hesitated, while the girls waited, imploring eyes fixed on her face.

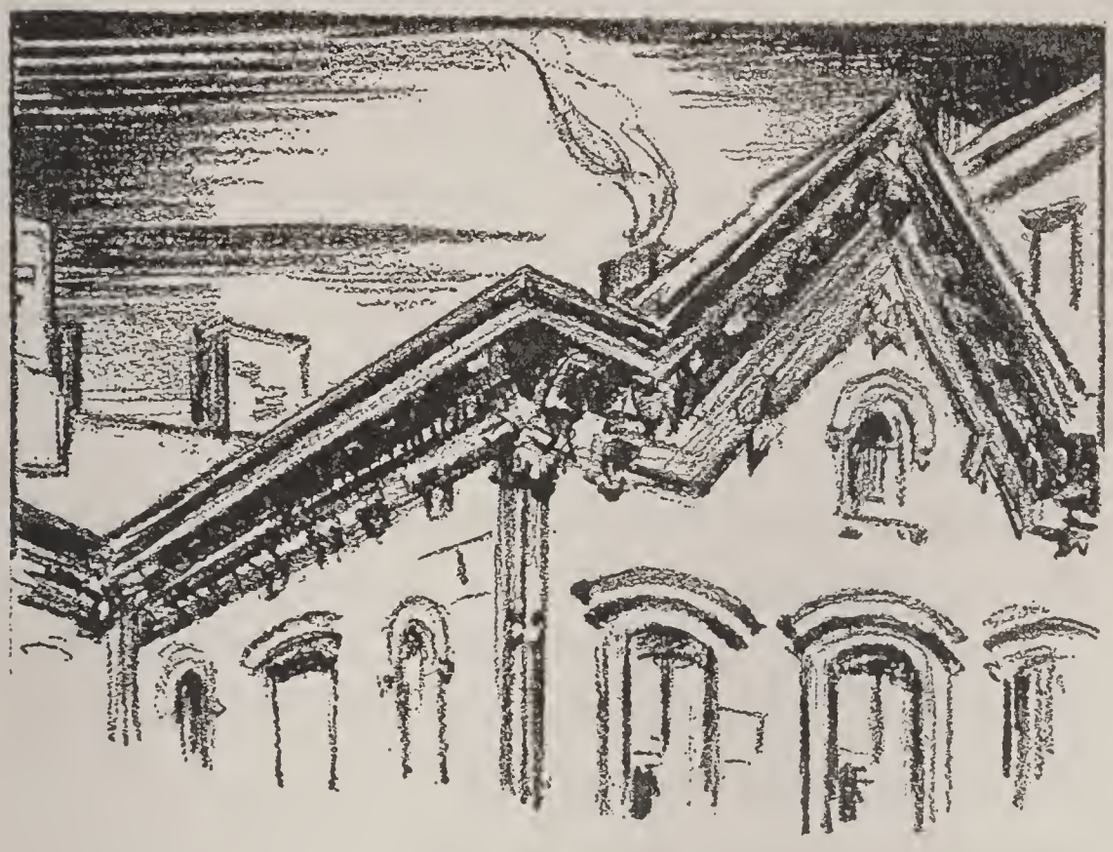
"Suppose we leave it this way, Dick," she decided. "You write to your Ellen right away, and see what she thinks of the plan. I won't have the girls forced upon her if it would inconvenience her in any way. But if she invites them —now wait a minute, Pat. We can't possibly know how Mrs. MacDougall will feel about this now. So let's just wait and see what she says."

"And if she says it's all right, we may go?" Patricia pressed. "That's definitely a promise, Mums? Oh, good! Ellen *will* want us, won't she,

Doctor Dick? You're sure about it, even if Mummy isn't?"

"Couldn't be surer, Small One. I'll write her tonight, though, so there won't be any question about it. And now, could we drop all this and talk about—well, after all, I've never been married before, and it's rather an important event to me. So if—"

"And what do you think it is to us?" Pat challenged. "You're right, too, the big thing is the wedding. Now, this is my idea of what the bride ought to wear—"



III

"My word, it's a *cathedral!*"

Patricia looked about the vast spaces of Grand Central Terminal with an awe that was not pretended.

Doctor Dick laughed. "You'll get used to it. By the time you're ready to go home, this will seem the proper size for all railroad stations, and you'll smile pityingly at the smallness of Middletown's proud Union Terminal. Well, let me see. I thought we might as well eat here, and take a taxi over to Brooklyn. I wired Ellen to expect us about nine o'clock, and that will give us just

time for dinner. Does that suit you, Margaret?"

"Perfectly." Mother, slim and pretty in her "going-away" tweeds, laid a hand on Anne's arm. "You're tired, aren't you, honey? Come along, you'll feel better when you've had a bite to eat."

"Tell us about Four Chimneys, Doctor Dick," Patricia urged, when they were comfortably settled at their table. "This is the last chance you'll have, because I'm going to be much too busy craning my neck out of the taxi window to listen to anything on the way. Do we go over the Brooklyn Bridge? There was a picture of it in my geography, and I'm dying to see if I can recognize it."

"Yes, we cross the bridge, and I don't think you can fail to recognize it. It hasn't changed in my time, and it's one of my first memories. Four Chimneys lies almost in its shadow."

"I can look out of the window at the Brooklyn Bridge?" Pat asked. "Oh, Sis, do you hear that? Then I'll really *know* I'm in New York. But go on, Doctor Dick. About the house. Is it terribly old? And has it really four chimneys?"

"It really has. And—yes, it's old, as American houses go. Not as old as the original Four Chim-

neys, which stood within a few hundred feet of this house. *That* Four Chimneys was built in early Colonial times. It belonged to the Pierrepont family, and General Washington was their guest when he planned the Battle of Long Island. Forty years later it was the scene of a magnificent reception when Lafayette paid his second visit to America. However, all that has nothing to do with *my* Four Chimneys, except that my great-grandfather, who was a friend of the Pierreponts, gave the old name to the fine new house he built in 1840. The original Pierrepont house was destroyed many years ago, although the family still occupies a beautiful home quite near mine."

"1840—then your house is a hundred years old!" Anne exclaimed. "Oh, how fascinating! There's nothing as old as that in Middletown—I don't think the town itself is, for that matter. And I do love old houses."

"Then you're going to be very happy in Brooklyn Heights." Doctor Dick smiled. "Except for a few hotels and modern apartment buildings, the whole district is old. Old and mellow, with a restful autumnal feeling that I've never found anywhere else. All of the houses were very grand in their day, and they've grown old in pride and

dignity, with no need to apologize to this streamlined era. What I mean is, they don't try to pretend they're modern and up-to-date. If you want that sort of thing, go and look for it somewhere else. What was good enough for Queen Victoria and Abraham Lincoln is still good enough for Brooklyn Heights, thank you."

"How refreshing!" Mother laughed. "Are those the sentiments of the inhabitants, or only of the houses themselves?"

"Oh, both! The inhabitants who felt differently have long since moved to Manhattan, or Long Island, or heaven knows where. That leaves the Old Guard, a shrunken remnant but indomitable still. The old gentlemen totter out into the sunshine with their gold-headed canes; the old ladies—there are more of them, for some reason—cling to their high-boned net collars, and their pompadours and their high shoes. You needn't giggle, Pat, wait till you see! They go sedately to their Browning Club, or to a concert at the Academy of Music. They pay formal afternoon calls, and they entertain each other at tea. And at those tea-parties, they engage in long involved discussions over weighty social matters. 'She was a Remsen on her mother's

side, of course, but her father's people were nobodies, my dear, absolute *nobodies!*' 'Well, now, Lucy, are you *sure* she was a Remsen? It seems to me it was her mother's *sister* who *married* a Remsen—not at all the same thing!' And then—"

"Dick, stop!" Mother choked on a bit of roll and reached for a glass of water. "There aren't people like that in the world any more, there can't be. You're simply making this up!"

"I am not!" he answered indignantly. "I was in great demand at my Cousin Julia's tea-parties, I'll have you know. *Such* a little gentleman, and doesn't he hand around the cakes nicely! Well, when I was here two years ago to settle Father's estate, Cousin Julia commandeered me for another tea-party. And I give you my word, nothing, absolutely nothing had changed about them since I was ten years old. Except that the ladies themselves are that much older, poor dears. But they're just as genteel, just as passionately interested in bits of genealogy—and I *think* they were wearing the same clothes. No, Brooklyn Heights society hasn't changed in the least degree since the days when my revered great-grandmother ruled over it with an iron hand."

"Who *are* all these female relatives you're dragging into the conversation, Doctor Dick?" Pat asked. "I never heard of your Cousin Julia before, nor your revered great-grandmother either."

"You'll see Cousin Julia, I expect, if she's in town. And as for my great-grandmother—do you mean to tell me, child, that you never heard of Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll?"

Pat shook her head. "Should I have? Is she historical or something?"

"Is she historical! My dear, I'll have you know that my illustrious ancestress bought and freed the slave whom Henry Ward Beecher auctioned off in front of Plymouth Church, to bring home the horrors of slavery to his congregation. Surely you've heard about that?"

"Very dimly," Pat acknowledged. "I do remember that Mr. Beecher auctioned a slave, but our history didn't tell us who his customer was. Is that all she was famous for?"

"By no means. She was a fervent Abolitionist. She armed and equipped, from her own purse, a whole Civil War company, and she organized the great Sanitary Fair to raise medical supplies for the Union Army. Later she was a patroness

of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and—oh, really, I despair of enumerating all her accomplishments. Put it this way. You know what Queen Victoria was to the British Empire? Well, even so was my celebrated great-grandmother to Brooklyn Heights. Only a little more on the regal side, if anything."

"Good gracious!" Patricia breathed. "Did you *know* her?"

"Alas, no. When I entered upon this mortal scene she had passed to her reward, and her mantle had fallen upon the shoulders of Cousin Julia Kinnott. Ellen will tell you all about her, though. She didn't know her either, but Jeanie Fraser, Ellen's great-aunt, was the old lady's parlor-maid, and Ellen has had some rare stories from her. And you'll be able to get an excellent impression from Cousin Julia, who took great-grandmamma as her model in all things."

"And we have to know *her?*" Pat sounded frankly terrified. "Doctor Dick, you should have warned us. You never said a word about anyone but Ellen and Dougal."

"Oh, I don't expect you'll see much of Cousin Julia. She lives down the street, but she spends quite a bit of time with her married daughter in

Boston. She may not be in town all summer. Anyway, she's not a bad old thing when you get used to her. She doesn't really bite, she only barks, though I'll admit I was a grown man before I made that comforting discovery."

"Don't look so distressed, honey," Anne put in. "We're not going to visit her. And I know we're going to like Ellen and Dougal. I feel as if I knew them already, Doctor Dick. You've told us so much about them."

"I can guarantee satisfaction there." He glanced at his watch. "Well, if everyone's finished, I suggest we move on. They'll be waiting for us."

Four Chimneys was the end house of a tall brownstone row, separated from the sidewalk only by a shallow area enclosed by ornate iron railings.

To the girls, accustomed to the more spacious Western architecture, where each house was set apart surrounded by its own green lawns, the effect was grim and forbidding. The windows were dark; only a faint glow showed through the ground glass panels of the massive double doors.

"Well, here we are. Just dump the luggage on the stoop, driver; I'll have it taken in."

Doctor Dick helped his little family out, and they followed him up the wide flight of steps. Patricia observed with amazement that there were three sets of doors. Heavy wooden storm doors were folded back, but beyond them another pair in beautifully-wrought iron guarded the inner ones with the glass panels.

Doctor Dick gave a firm pull to a chased silver handle beside the iron door. A muffled ringing, faint and far away, showed that it was truly a doorbell, though quite unlike the girls' idea of one.

No response came from within the dark silent house.

"I can't understand this." Doctor Dick pulled vigorously at the bell again. "Where can Ellen be? I thought we'd find her waiting on the front steps."

"You did send the wire, didn't you, Dick?" Mother asked. "You're so absent-minded—you're sure you didn't forget?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I did forget yesterday, what with the excitement of an early morning wedding, and getting the train and all.

Had it all written out, too, and carried it around in my pocket. But I thought of it in time," he finished triumphantly. "Sent it off this morning, when we stopped at Buffalo. So it certainly arrived long before this."

Mother sighed. "Do you remember what it said, by any chance?"

"Certainly. I made it short and sweet. 'Arriving nine o'clock tomorrow night.' Couldn't be plainer. Why, what's the matter? What have I done now?"

" 'Tomorrow night'—and you sent it this morning!" Patricia pounced. "Oh, Doctor Dick, *really!*"

"Good heavens! Well, that shows you what being a bridegroom will do to a man's wits! Sorry as I can be, everybody. But I don't see it makes any real difference. Ellen knows we *are* coming, so she's bound to be expecting us, even if we did arrive a day earlier."

He pulled again at the bell handle.

Mother leaned against the iron railing, shivering a little.

"There's quite a heavy fog coming up," she remarked. "It was misty when we crossed the bridge, but now it's getting really thick."

"Yes, we often get them up here; we're right above the water," Doctor Dick answered absently. "Margaret, I *am* sorry about this! I don't know how I came to be so stupid. I'm ashamed—"

"Someone's coming now, I think," Anne put in.

The door opened a cautious crack, and a man's face peered out.

"Dougal!" Doctor Dick exclaimed. "Open up, for heaven's sake, and let us in."

"Master Richard!" The door was flung wide.

In spite of his years, Dougal MacDougall was still a fine physical specimen. Erect and soldierly, narrow-hipped and broad-shouldered, he stood as smartly at attention as ever in the days when he had won the hearts of Ellen and her small charge. From his bronzed face under the thick white hair, the bluest eyes the girls had ever seen beamed hearty welcome.

"It's all my fault, Dougal," Doctor Dick was explaining, as he shook the old man's hand. "I balled up the message—sorry if we're putting you out. But here I am, and my new family with me."

"And right welcome ye are, Master Richard! Will ye not come your ways in, Ma'am, and the

young leddies—eh, but we've been lookin' forward to this, the wife and me! If ye'll just be steppin' into the drawin'-room, now, Ellen'll be here the minute."

Dougal left them standing for a moment in the high vaulted entrance hall, and rolled back heavy folding-doors to the right. He disappeared into the blackness behind them, and they heard the scratch of a match. He returned to usher them into a formal drawing-room of incredible vastness.

"If ye'll just make yourselves at home, Ma'am —Ellen will be here the minute she's dressed. We'd gone early to bed, not thinkin' to see anyone the night—"

"It's a shame to disturb you both like this," Mother said. "But I'm afraid you'll have to blame my husband for it."

"Eh, it's no a matter for blame, Ma'am—'tis only bringin' nearer a pleasure we'd been lookin' forward to these many weeks. I'll just bring in your gear from the stoop, Master Richard, and take it up to your rooms. They're all aired and ready for you. And here's Ellen."

She stopped just inside the door to bob an old-fashioned curtsey. Ellen MacDougall was a

round little roly-poly pudding of a woman, with twinkling eyes and rosy cheeks. Although she was well over sixty, her reddish curly hair showed only a trace of gray, and she moved with the easy vigor of sound health. She had dressed hastily, but there was no sign of it in the prim blue gingham uniform, with its starched white apron and old-fashioned maid's cap.

"Eh, this is a proud day, Ma'am," she said, as Doctor Dick made his presentations. "To think of Master Richard bringin' home his bride to the old house! And the bonny young leddies, too! Me and Dougal have been that excited since the first letter come! And then us not bein' up to welcome ye—I declare, I'm fair ashamed to meet your eye!"

"But that wasn't your fault, Ellen," Mother told her. "We're here, anyway. That's all that matters. Only I do hope our coming without notice isn't going to inconvenience you."

"Not a whit of it, Ma'am. I've had the rooms open to the air for the last week, and everything is ready, barrin' the makin' up of the beds. I put that off to the last minute, but 'tis quickly done. If ye don't mind waitin' here for a few minutes, while I just run upstairs—ye don't feel cold?

There's a fire laid, and if ye say the word I'll kindle it."

"Oh, no, don't bother," Mother said. "We'll be going upstairs as soon as our rooms are ready. We'll be quite comfortable here."

"It *is* chilly in here," Doctor Dick said, as Ellen bustled out. "This room has been shut up for years; I think that accounts for it. My father never used it at all. Look around you, girls. This was the scene of my great-grandmother's famous receptions, and it's almost exactly as she left it. What do you think of it?"

The wide lofty chamber was badly lighted by an ornate central chandelier fitted for gas. There were enough burners to provide a flood of illumination, but Dougal had lighted only two of them. The far corners of the room were in shadow. In one of them loomed an enormous black grand piano, tightly closed. Carefully spaced about the walls were high straight-backed chairs, elaborately carved of black teakwood, inlaid with mother of pearl.

The mantel, of heavily-carved greenish marble, held two enormous dark blue urns and a huge ormulu clock, adorned with nymphs and satyrs. On the walls, which were covered entirely in rose

satin, hung dark oil portraits in thick gold frames. A number of bulging gilt cabinets, ranged primly against the walls between the chairs, displayed through their glass sides a collection of small indistinguishable objects.

Scattered over the flowered Aubusson carpet were small gilt-and-satin chairs and little tables.

Doctor Dick looked appraisingly about, and then led the way to an oddly-shaped satin couch near the fireplace.

"To the best of my recollection, there isn't a comfortable chair in the room," he said cheerfully. "But try the Recamier sofa, Margaret, and don't be surprised when it turns out to be harder than it looks. Girls, make yourselves at home."

"Do you mind if we look about a bit?" Anne asked. "I've never seen anything in the least like this. It's more like a stage setting for a period play than a real room. Come on, Pat."

The two girls walked over to the nearest cabinet, which proved to contain a number of ivory fans, snuffboxes and carved jade statuettes. In spite of Doctor Dick's permission, they felt oddly ill at ease in the great unfriendly room. After wandering constrainedly about for a bit, they

came back to take little gilt chairs beside the sofa on which their mother and the doctor were sitting.

Both girls were beginning to feel a little tired and dispirited, and they suspected that Mother shared the feeling. It was with relief that all of them welcomed Ellen's return. "I've given the young leddies your old room, Master Richard," she explained, as she led the way upstairs.

The bedroom on the second floor was large, and it was pleasantly furnished in maple and flowered chintz. It was at the back of the house, with long windows opening onto a narrow balcony.

"Come and see the harbor, girls," Doctor Dick said, leading the way to the window. "This is absolutely the most magnificent view in all New York. You can see the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan, and the shipping—oh! No, you can't, not tonight. I'd forgotten the fog."

Only a wall of heavy darkness met their eyes, pierced by a dim glimmer of winking lights.

"Well, never mind." Doctor Dick dropped the curtains. "You'll have plenty of time for the view later. I expect you're too tired to appreciate it tonight anyway."

"I'm sure we are," Anne agreed. "Where—oh, here are our bags. The only thing I can

think about right now is bed. Where's Mummy?"

"Here I am, dear. We're right across the passage, if you should want to call us. You won't be nervous? That's right. Then goodnight, my darlings, and sleep well."

Side by side in the wide bed, the girls settled themselves to sleep. Silence hung like a pall over the old house, broken only by the muffled, mournful hoot of foghorns as the river traffic felt its cautious way across the black water.

In spite of her weariness, Anne found herself lying tense and wakeful in the dark. She resisted the impulse to toss restlessly because of her younger sister lying beside her.

Presently, however, she became conscious of a faint sound, not so much as a whimper, which rose and fell at her side. She reached out her hand, and touched Patricia's cheek. It was wet, and so was the pillow on which it rested.

"Pat!" she exclaimed sharply. "You're crying, honey! What's the matter?"

The carefully suppressed sobs broke out in earnest.

"I'm so thirsty! I want a drink of water!"

"Good gracious! Why don't you go get it,

then? You know where the bathroom is. Right down at the end of the hall."

"Sis, I can't!" A shudder shook the bed. "That bathroom—it looks like a tomb! All that dark green marble, even to the *tub!* It's not a bath-tub, it's a c-coffin, I know it is! Oh, I wouldn't dare go in there in the dark! I'm afraid a—a *body* would rise up and clutch me with bony hands, and—"

"All right, all right, I'll get your drink for you." Anne sat up, but Patricia clutched at her arm.

"No! You can't go and leave me here all by myself! It's so dark, and there are those weird noises outside, wailing like lost souls—oh, Sis!" the sobs broke out again. "I don't like this house! It's—it's *sinister,* that's what it is! I know it's haunted, I can feel it! And I don't like the town. It's too big,—there are too many buildings, and too many people, and they're all *strangers!* Oh, what did we ever come here for? I want to go *home!*"

"Pat, darling, don't be an idiot!" Anne reached for and found a cold little hand. "You're just tired, and over-excited. You'll feel quite differently in the morning, when you've had a good night's sleep."

"Sleep! Can you sleep, then? With those awful banshees wailing out there in the dark, and ghosts creeping along the corridors, and—oh, Sis, I can't stay here all summer, honestly I can't! I'd rather a thousand times go to camp. Oh, why did we ever do it?"

Her voice rose to a babyish wail, and Anne was striving frantically to hush her when there came a quiet knock at the door. Then it opened softly, while little Pat, panic-stricken, clung to her sister.

"Are you all right in here, girls? I thought I heard you talking."

"We're all right, Doctor Dick." Anne gasped a little in her relief. "Pat wants a drink, and she's such a baby she's afraid to get it."

"I'll bring it." They heard him stumbling along the dark hallway, and a moment later he stood over them with a brimming glass.

"All comfy?" he asked, in his kind, pleasant voice. "I thought you'd be sleeping, by this time. Your mother is, like a baby. She was pretty tired. In fact, though you girls probably don't realize it, she's been tired for a long, long time. This trip is going to do her a world of good. Well, nothing else you need? Then I'll say goodnight again, kiddies. See you at breakfast."

"Goodnight, Doctor Dick. And thanks for the water."

The door closed behind him.

"He's sweet, isn't he?" Pat snuggled back into her pillow. "Always thinking about Mother, and what's best for her. They're going to be an ideally happy couple, I can see that. He's right, too, about Mums' being tired. She's had a pretty strenuous time of it, what with her job and keeping up the home for us. I'm glad that's over, and she can give a little thought to herself. Ooh!" she yawned luxuriously. "I *am* sleepy! 'Night, darling."

"I hope it really is goodnight this time," Anne said severely. "If you wake me up with any more nonsense about not wanting to stay here—"

"Oh, *that!*" Pat chuckled, with one of those lightning changes of mood to which Anne should have been accustomed by this time. "You know, there *is* something sinister about this house, Sis, I'm certain of it. But all at once I don't want to go away. There isn't a girl we know who's ever had a chance to spend a summer in a ghost mansion. Won't I curl their hair for them when I get back to Middletown!"

IV

"GET up, lazy ones! Are you going to sleep all day?"

The sisters opened their eyes to broad daylight, and Mother's smiling face.

"Hurry into your clothes, darlings. It's eight o'clock, and the *Queen Mary* sails at noon. If you expect to come and see us off—"

"Oh, we do, of course we do!" Anne sprang up, dragging the covers from her slowly awakening sister. "Come on, Pat. We won't be a minute, Mums."

They dashed for the bathroom, which, even for imaginative Pat, had quite lost its tomb-like as-

pect in the bright morning light. All of her overnight forebodings had vanished in sleep. She chattered happily to her sister as they hastily brushed and splashed.

Mother waited in their room, and Doctor Dick met the three of them at the foot of the stairs.

"This way to breakfast," he told them, leading the way to a door behind the stairs. Long windows stood open wide to the warm June morning. The air of the rather small room was sweet with garden flowers.

Ellen, who was laying the table, came forward with a smile.

"If ye'll just be takin' your places, now, I won't be keepin' you a minute. I hope ye rested well, Ma'am?"

"Indeed I did, Ellen," Mother answered. "And how nice your table looks! Are the flowers from your own garden?"

"They are that, Ma'am," Ellen beamed. "Dougal takes sinful pride in his flowers. If ye'll just sit here, now, and Master Richard, I've no forgot 'twas the pink-sprigged Haviland china ye loved best. 'Tis like the old days to be settin' it out again."

"Isn't she a darling!" Anne exclaimed, as Ellen

bustled out of the room. "She thinks you're still about ten years old, Doctor Dick. She's awfully fond of you, isn't she?"

"I'm proud to say she is. And Dougal too, if I'm not mistaken. Yes, I told you they were fine people. Can you understand them? The Scottish burr is a little confusing if you're not used to it. Ellen came to this country as a girl of sixteen, and Dougal has been here even longer, but the Old Country speech still clings."

"Oh, yes, I can understand her perfectly," Anne answered. "And I love the way she talks, although I couldn't understand her at first."

"So do I," Patricia agreed. "And I like her face, it's so honest and friendly. I think I'm going to like Dougal, too, from the little I saw of him last night. Where is he, by the way?"

"In the garden, I expect. He practically lives there. When I was a boy they had a saying, 'Brooklyn's gardens are Brooklyn's pride,' and ours was always one of the finest of them. Thanks to Dougal, it still is. We'll have a look at it after breakfast."

Ellen appeared just then, with a smoking platter of ham and eggs. While they ate the hearty and delicious breakfast, the girls and their mother

exclaimed with pleasure over the view framed by the windows.

Just outside lay the garden, a riot of color in the summer sunshine. It consisted of two terraces, separated by a steep grass slope, with a flight of flagged steps running down to the lower level. It ended abruptly at an iron fence overgrown with morning glories in full bloom.

Beyond stretched the bay, its sunlit waters ruffled by craft of every description, large and small. And beyond them towered the famous skyscrapers, sharp and clear against the blue sky.

"You should have had your first view at night," Doctor Dick said. "But it's impressive at any time of day, don't you think?"

"I should say so!" Anne breathed. "Everyone told me how big the New York buildings were, but no one told me they were so beautiful! And that water out there—what *is* it, Doctor Dick? The ocean?"

"No, the open sea is that way, down past the Narrows. What you're looking at is the upper bay, where the Hudson and the East Rivers come together at the tip of the island. The Hudson is away over there, on the other side of those low green buildings. That's the Battery, where the

buildings are, and the Hudson lies just beyond it. The water right under our noses here is the East River."

"East?" Anne looked puzzled. "But I can't see the sun. Shouldn't it be—"

"The East River is east of New York," he explained. "We're in Brooklyn, remember. That's on the farther bank, so the river is west of us."

"When you look at the East River you're looking west," Pat said. "Really, Doctor Dick, that doesn't make sense. No, never mind explaining again, I'll take your word for it. Who was it in *Alice in Wonderland* who made a practice of believing one impossible thing before breakfast? You've given me mine for the day. Oh, look—right out there. Is it? No, it can't be!"

He followed her pointing finger. "Liberty? Of course it is. You knew she was there, didn't you?"

"I knew she was somewhere, but I certainly didn't think she would be practically in my own back yard! Look, Sis—with her torch and everything! Isn't she cute?"

"Cute?" Anne began, but before she could finish Pat had slid her chair away from the table.

"I know you haven't finished your coffee, Mums, but may we be excused, please? Sis, you're through, aren't you? I'm wild to get outdoors."

"Run along, youngsters," Doctor Dick told them. "You'll find Dougal in the garden, I think. He'll answer all your questions. But remember we haven't much time to spare."

The girls hurried through a side door, to find themselves in a narrow pergola which ran along the open side of the house to the garden at the back. It was a cool green tunnel of grapevines. As they came to the end of it, they encountered a figure in blue denims ascending the stairs from the lower terrace. He greeted them smilingly.

"We only have a little time before we go to the pier with Mummy, Dougal," Pat said. "But we simply had to see your garden."

Beaming with pride, he led them about into every nook and flowering cranny. The garden was not large, but Dougal had made the most of every foot of it.

When they had descended the steps and had inspected the lower terrace, Patricia went to look over the spiked iron fence.

"Good gracious, there's a street down there!" she exclaimed. "Come and look, Anne, right

straight down. See the trucks, and the people scurrying along?"

Anne and Dougal came to join her. A rough stone wall, solid and grim as a battlement, dropped sheerly below them, a good forty feet to the narrow hidden little street. Gloomy warehouses, alternating with docks, shaded it on the opposite side, but on this side the wall ran unbroken as far as they could see. Only the roofs of the warehouses had been visible from the house level.

"What's the wall for, Dougal?" Pat demanded. "It looks like a prison, or a fort."

The old man smiled. " 'Twas built for a peaceful purpose, miss. Just to keep the gardens from slidin' downhill into the water, and the houses on top of 'em, likely."

"But it looks so *old!*"

"Ay, it's old. These houses weren't built yesterday, miss. Yon house of your father's was an old house when I first laid eyes on it, many's the year ago. I've heard tell there was a fine mansion here before your Revolution. This one would be built on its foundations, I make no doubt."

"Doctor Dick said the house was a hundred

years old," Anne told him. "But it doesn't look nearly as old as the wall down there."

"Ah, but looks are deceivin' there, miss. The brownstone house walls ye see are nought but a blind, laid on when Master Richard was a wee lad, to suit the style o' the day. Good honest red brick it is underneath, and the walls near three feet thick. The brownstone's a fancy job I wouldn't thank ye for."

"I like brick best myself," Anne agreed. "Then you think the house is older than the wall, Dougal?"

"By a good fifty year, I'd say, miss. Not that there wasn't always a retainin' wall here, each private owner buildin' to protect his own property. But this job ye see was city work, put in at the time the Brooklyn Bridge was buildin', when a mort of improvements was made all along the water side. That would make it date back only to about 1887 or '88, for all it looks so old."

"Goodness, you know a lot, Dougal!" Pat exclaimed admiringly. "We'll be worrying you to death with questions, I expect."

"The more the better, miss. Ye've had no time yet to see the house properly, I doubt. Eh, but

it's a rare fine gentleman's dwelling, is Four Chimneys."

"The drawing room simply took my breath away," Anne admitted. "It's so *big,* and so—well, stately."

"Ye've no seen the dinin' room yet? Ah, but that's a lovely one, like a laird's hall at home. Fine old walnut panellin', and a fireplace ye could roast a stag in. The room ye breakfasted in opens off it. The music room, they called it. Ye'll have noted the domed ceilin'? 'Tis a sweet little place, but not to compare with the great dinin' hall."

"We haven't really seen the house at all yet," Patricia said. "I'm dying to explore all of it. But we've all summer for that. Is that Mums calling from the window, Sis? They must be ready to start. Thanks for showing us your garden, Dougal. We'll be seeing you!"

More tired than they would have liked to admit, the sisters sought their room that night.

They had lingered on the pier, waving frantically, till the great liner slipped out of sight downstream. Then, to counteract the sudden depression that gripped them, they had a wildly ex-

travagant luncheon in a world famous tea-room.

Somewhat cheered, they spent the afternoon prowling about the shops, marveling at the endlessness of them and the variety of the wares they displayed.

Mother had suggested that they take a taxi back to Brooklyn, as they were still unfamiliar with the city. But Pat was anxious to adventure into the subway, pointing out that they might as well begin getting used to it. So, after a series of false starts and beginnings again, they finally emerged triumphantly a few blocks from their new home.

They went to their room soon after dinner, and were delighted to find that Dougal had put a couple of steamer chairs on the balcony outside their windows. Blissfully they relaxed, watching the sun set over the water, and the lights bloom out in the mass of buildings beyond.

"It looks like a vision of fairyland!" Patricia marveled. "No wonder Doctor Dick said it was the finest view in New York."

"I shouldn't think there was any doubt of it. See Liberty out there, honey? There's the light going on in her torch. Did I bring my hairbrush

from the bedroom? I might as well do my fifty strokes now, before I get too sleepy to do it."

"Wait till I get my brush, and I'll join you." Pat dived through the window, and returned to begin the hair-brushing ritual Mother insisted upon.

"I'm a perfect cosmopolite now," Pat announced complacently. "I've seen Times Square and Fifth Avenue, and I've actually been inside the most famous stores in the world. And I'm getting the idea of the subway! Pretty good for a first day, don't you think? And we haven't even begun. It'll take all summer to see all the things we want to see. Oh, Sis, are we going to have fun here!"

"That's what you think now, is it?" Anne teased. "Last night you were singing a different song."

"I know. Honestly, Anne, I don't know what got into me. Those silly notions about the bathroom—where did they come from? It's a perfectly ordinary old-fashioned bathroom, and it doesn't scare me a bit now. What made me so silly?"

"Oh, you were just tired, and a little homesick. I've felt that way myself sometimes, at

camp. The first night away from home often brings it on. So you're not worrying about the ghosts now?"

"Not a bit. Not after I've seen Four Chimneys with sunlight flooding in. And Ellen showed me how to light the gas. That helps too. I needn't be in the dark unless I want to. And I'm never frightened when I can see."

"Good for you, dear." Anne laid down her brush and yawned widely. "It's ridiculously early, and I hate to tear myself away from this enchanting view. But if you're as sleepy as I am, and I think you are—well, bed's the place for us."

The next morning dawned cloudy and dull with a threat of rain. Anne suggested that, instead of plunging at once into sight-seeing, they wait for a better day, and devote a little time to their more immediate surroundings.

Four Chimneys, itself, held much of interest. The girls spent a fascinating morning wandering through the rooms, which were long unused but kept in shining order by the efficient Ellen. The great dining-room quite lived up to Dougal's praise. The girls were especially intrigued by a

painting which hung over the fireplace, a portrait in oils of Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll, Doctor Dick's celebrated great-grandmother.

The painting showed a powerful face, with strong jutting nose and jaw below the looped bands of iron-gray hair. By some trick of perspective, the sharp gray eyes seemed to follow one about the room.

"I'm just as well pleased that we have our meals in the music room," Pat confessed. "I know my table manners would never pass *her* inspection! Isn't she a fearful looking creature, Sis?"

"Oh, I don't know. She looks commanding, certainly, but then she *was*. We know that, and from all we've heard, she did a great deal of good in the world. A reformer has to be forceful. Wishy-washy people never accomplish anything. And she accomplished a lot, Doctor Dick said."

"I feel sorry for anyone who tried to stop her," Pat agreed. "Listen, I think that's Ellen calling us to lunch."

Later in the afternoon Dougal invited the girls to go marketing with him. They took a roundabout way home through the quiet streets,

and Dougal pointed out the many magnificent churches and some especially fine old homes. All were very similar in architecture to Four Chimneys; tall and narrow, set close to the street and joined in block-long rows. Edwin Booth had stayed in this one, Dougal told them. A few blocks away was the house which had sheltered Talleyrand in exile. Here Tom Paine had lived, and here had been the "pleasant manor" of Philip Livingston, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Names dimly familiar in American history sprang into new life and meaning as the girls realized that those famous men had walked these narrow streets, had lifted their eyes to look, as they looked now, upon the harbor crowded with its shipping from the Seven Seas.

They approached Four Chimneys from the north, stopping while Dougal pointed out the site of old Fort Sterling not a stone's throw from their door.

"What *is* that in front of our house, Dougal?" Pat asked suddenly. "That—I suppose you'd call it a car, though *I* certainly never saw anything like it."

The vehicle which stood at the curb was like nothing so much as one of the curved glass-sided

cabinets in the drawing-room. Tall and narrow, its glass sparkled and its black paint gleamed.

"I don't suppose ye ever did, Miss Pat," Dougal laughed. "Though they were a common enough sight some twenty-five years ago. That's what they called an electric brougham."

"Oh, you did see one, Pat," Anne reminded her. "Don't you remember, at the automobile show last year, in the 'Parade of the Past'? When they had all the funny old models? Doctor Dick told us something about the 'electrics,' but I didn't understand it very well. I think they don't have any engines—isn't that it, Dougal?"

"That's it, Miss Anne. Run on a battery, they do; ye take it into the garage to be re-charged every few miles. Very popular they were for ladies, for town use. Perfectly safe, and easy to operate. I mind when all the ladies about here gave up their carriages and took to electrics instead. Eh, these streets were black wi' 'em once. But now—well, yon's the last specimen outside a museum, I'm thinkin'."

"Who owns it, Dougal?" Pat asked. "Someone you know? It's at our house."

"It belongs to Mrs. Kinnott, Miss Pat, her that is Master Richard's kinswoman. Very set in her

ways, Mrs. Kinnott is, and not one to mind that her carriage is out of style. She'll be out makin' her round o' calls, and I misdoubt she's stopped to leave her card on the two of ye."

"Doctor Dick's Cousin Julia?" Pat asked. "And calling on us? Oh, my goodness, let's turn down this side street! Come on, Sis, quick!"

"I don't think we can do that, honey," Anne objected. "We'll have to meet her sometime, so it may as well be now. It's very nice of her to come to see us so promptly. Come on, and let's get it over with."

They found Ellen anxiously waiting to usher them into the drawing-room.

"She's been waitin' a good ten minutes—I thought ye'd be back long since," she whispered. "Please don't stop to primp, Miss Pat. She's a very imperious leddy!"

Inwardly quaking, the two girls entered the drawing-room. A woman who had been sitting stiffly in a straight chair beside the fire-place stood up.

The girls' first impression was of towering height. This was due in part to the lady's extreme thinness, and in part to the white hair piled into a lofty "pompadour," and surmounted by

an even loftier hat. The face beneath was long and thin, framed in dangling earrings of jet which were inset with small cameos. The black velvet band about the thin neck was adorned with a larger cameo, and still another was pinned to the black taffeta dress.

As the girls advanced down the long room, Mrs. Kinnott put up a pearl-handled lorgnette and surveyed them calmly. It was not until they were within a few feet of her that she dropped the glasses and extended a bony white hand.

"You are Richard Driscoll's step-daughters? I am calling upon your mother, but Ellen informs me that she has left the city."

"Yes, Mrs. Kinnott, they sailed yesterday," Anne stammered. "They went to London, you know, on their honeymoon. My sister and I are staying here for the summer."

"So I am informed. I consider it very odd. I should certainly have supposed that, as I am his last living relative, Richard would have felt it fitting to present his wife to me."

After a brief handclasp, which each girl in turn found singularly cold and lifeless, Mrs. Kinnott resumed her chair.

"I'm so sorry—he'd have loved to have had

Mother meet you, I know," Anne floundered. "But he rather thought you were in Boston, and there was so little time—Mother will be very, very sorry to have missed you."

"Draw up a chair, child, and don't fidget so," their caller commanded. "You are the elder sister, I take it? What is your name? Ah, Anne. A very good old English name. And—Patricia? A ridiculous affectation. We have no Patricias in Brooklyn. What possessed your mother to give you such a silly name, little girl?"

"My father's name was Patrick, and I don't think it's a bit silly," Pat answered, indignation breaking through her awe.

"Mind your manners, child!" the old lady answered sharply. "Impudence is something I will not tolerate. Take that stool there and sit quietly, while I talk to your sister. Children should be seen and not heard."

Incredibly, although inwardly boiling, Pat found herself doing as she was bidden. There was something about this masterful old lady which compelled obedience. Fury so possessed her that at first she heard nothing of the conversation going on above her head. When she finally collected her wits, she was thankful that Mrs.

Kinnott had decided to ignore her. For poor Anne was being put through a withering cross examination.

Cousin Julia desired to know, and intended to know without further delay, just what kind of people Richard Driscoll had brought into the family. She apparently had no opinion whatever of Middle Westerners, and was prepared to have her very worst preconceptions confirmed.

Patricia could not help admiring the skill with which Anne met the ordeal. In her quiet way Anne had a great deal of family pride. She did not attempt to conceal the fact that Mother had worked for her living, but she referred quickly to Mother's late father, a liberal clergyman, of whom, as it happened, Cousin Julia had heard. Anne mentioned the Southern boarding-school at which Mother had been educated, and did not neglect the great-uncle who had held a minor diplomatic appointment. Anne seemed to know by instinct those bits of family history which would most impress the aristocratic old lady before her. Mrs. Kinnott stiffened when Anne, in answer to her question, said that their own father had been a newspaper man. Reporters, Cousin Julia said acidly, were a prying lot,

with no respect for the privacy of others. Anne agreed with that, but added gently that Father had not been a reporter, but an editorial writer. Questioned further, she was able to remember that Patrick Patterson had supported, what was evidently in Mrs. Kinnott's mind, the only possible political party. Anne, herself, drew a distinct sigh of relief when that bridge was crossed, and their caller rose to go.

Her manner toward Anne was almost amiable as she said goodby, although her farewell to Patricia was a glacial one. Thankfully, the two sisters saw her to the door, and watched her trundle majestically off down the street in her antiquated vehicle.

"Good gracious!" Pat sprawled limply on the hall window seat. "I never saw anyone like that in all my life! Talk about Medusa—I could feel myself turning to stone every time she looked at me. One more glance, and you could have chiseled a nice inscription on me and set me up in any churchyard. What a horror!"

"Oh, she isn't so bad!" Anne laughed, although she too looked exhausted as she sank down beside her sister. "She softened up quite a bit there towards the last."

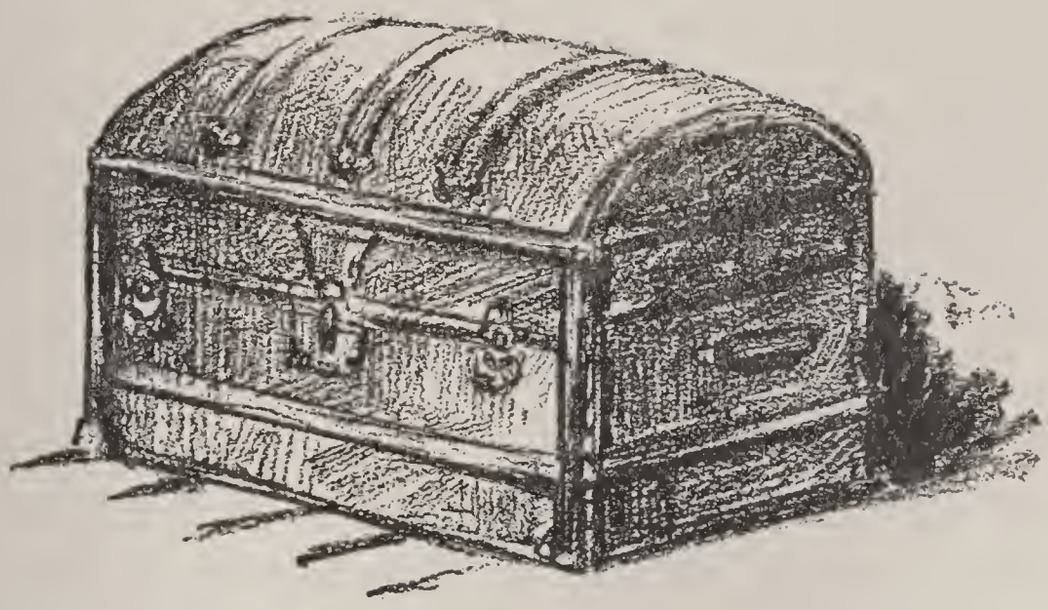
"Thanks to your masterly diplomacy. I must say, Sis, I've never admired you more. She certainly put *me* in my place, early and completely."

"I was terribly afraid you wouldn't stay there. Pat, do you know who she reminds me of? Not in looks, of course, but her manner? She's exactly like I'd pictured Doctor Dick's great-grandmother."

"The Queen Empress of Brooklyn Heights? I'd thought of that too. No wonder local society cowered before her. Before both of them, for you remember Doctor Dick told us Mrs. Ephraim's mantle fell upon Cousin Julia? I rather doubted some of his tales about his great-grandmother's power, but now—well, now I don't. After the specimen we've seen this afternoon, I'm prepared to believe anything. It's my personal conviction that Cousin Julia would have Attila, the Hun, and Tamerlane, the Terrible, crying like babies if she turned her baleful glance on them. And what Mrs. Ephraim would be like I don't dare *think!*"

"Well, cheer up, you lived through it this time," Anne laughed. "And I don't suppose we'll have anything to do with her. It was really Mother she came to see, not us."

"And *she's* safe in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, thank heaven. I do think Doctor Dick should have warned us there was a basilisk loose in his family, though. You don't suppose there are any more of them we haven't heard about, do you? No, she said she was his last living relative. Well, that's something to be thankful for, anyway!"



V

Ellen and Dougal sympathized warmly with the sisters' desire to see all there was to see in New York. If Doctor Dick had casually asked his old friends to "keep an eye on them," the girls never suspected it. There was no feeling of obnoxious guardianship when Dougal took them to the lower East Side, to Chinatown and to Harlem. He had acquaintances everywhere, and all an old policeman's expert knowledge of his city. Under his guidance they saw and understood far more than they could possibly have accomplished alone.

Ellen, who frankly stated she preferred "nice places," was an equally competent guide to parks and museums, to broadcasting studios and movies.

Thanks to the friendly Scotch couple, they saw the city as a whole. They saw its squalor and its splendor, with a thoroughness that many lifelong residents could not match.

The weeks slipped by, and gradually their thirst for sightseeing was quenched. The days were growing very warm, and it was more pleasant to lounge on their balcony, or in Dougal's garden, reading and knitting, just being frankly lazy. Mother's letters came frequently, brimming with happiness. London was wonderful; she had made some good friends; Doctor Dick was working hard and enjoying every minute. She was so pleased to hear that Anne had gained three pounds. They must thank Ellen for taking such good care of them.

One morning in mid-July Ellen stopped at their door.

"I'm awa' to give the attic a good turn-out," she told them. "It's a bit of the house ye've not seen, and I thought ye might like to come with me."

"Oh, we'd love it, Ellen!" Patricia sprang up. "Come on, Sis, we can do our nails later. I love rummaging in attics."

They followed her past the third and fourth floors, with their closed and shuttered bedrooms. The magnificent winding staircase ended with the fourth-floor landing, and Ellen opened a door at the end of the corridor. Ended, too, were the damask-hung walls with their gilt cornices. The steep narrow staircase here ran between plain walls with dingy plaster.

"This was the servants' floor," Ellen told them. "Except for the butler and cook, who had the suite in the basement where me and Dougal live now. But the maids slept up here. A rare lot of 'em there was, too, in the old days. When my Great-Aunt Jeanie come—mind the step, Miss Pat. Let me go by and open the shutters. It's dark as your pocket in here."

The sisters waited through a confused clatter in the darkness, until suddenly a beam of sunlight shot through the gloom.

Ellen called to them from above their heads. She was standing at the top of a set of rolling steps such as they had seen in the public library. The ceiling, where she was, shot upward into a square tower, glass-windowed on four sides. She had raised a window and opened the outside shutter. Now, pulling the steps along by a rail set

beneath the sills, she opened the other shutters, letting a flood of light into the room. She descended then, striking thick dust from her hands.

"How ingenious!" Anne exclaimed. "So that's what the tower is for; to let in light up here. I've seen it from the garden, and wondered whether it was purely ornamental, or had some use."

"It had still another use once," Ellen answered. "When Captain Jack's ship was due—ye'll mind Dougal has told ye of Captain Jack and the *Brooklyn Belle?*"

"Oh, yes!" Pat said. "There's a picture of the *Brooklyn Belle* hanging over our bed, a beautiful clipper ship with all sails set. And Captain Jack was Doctor Dick's grandfather, the son of the terrifying Mrs. Ephraim. We've got that straight, Ellen. Go on. What about him?"

"Why, just that when his ship was due one of the men-servants was told off to keep watch in the tower here, with a spyglass. The lad would sight the *Brooklyn Belle* when she was a wee speck far out at sea—there were no tall buildings to get in the way then, remember. Even now ye can see a long way, for this is a main high point of land. Well, and so that's how it come about that

the dinner was always done to a turn and ready to sit down to when the Captain made port. The *Belle* docked at her own slip at the foot of our garden. And now, if ye'll make yourselves comfortable, I'll just be goin' for my broom and pail."

Patricia was already at the top of the rolling steps.

"Oh, come on up, Anne!" she cried. "The view is marvellous! I do wish we had glasses. Even as it is, I can see the real ocean."

The deep window ledge made a comfortable seat, with an unobstructed view on all four sides. Boats like toys plied about the harbor. The bridges with their endless strings of motor traffic seemed very small. The tall towers across the bay, their windows blazing in the morning sun, looked almost near enough to touch.

Reluctantly they came down again as Ellen returned.

"I could stay up there all day, if there weren't so many other things I want to see," Pat remarked. "I thought we had a wonderful view from our balcony, but this—why, it's like sitting up in heaven and looking down on the earth!"

"You don't have to come down, Miss Pat," El-

len said. "Ye can stay up there as long as ye like."

"I can't, though—not with all these closed doors around. They rouse the Mrs. Bluebeard in me. This is the queerest room I ever saw. No windows in the walls, but doors in every direction. Where do they all lead to, Ellen?"

"Open them and see," Ellen smiled. "This middle room, d'ye mind, was the maids' sittin' room. Some of the doors lead to their bedrooms, and some to store rooms. Just make yourselves at home, now. I'm going to start to give this a good cleaning."

The four walls of the enclosed room were, as Pat had noticed, almost a solid mass of doors. The woodwork was of plain stained pine. The girls had been suitably impressed when Dougal told them that all the doorknobs in the house were of solid silver. Evidently he had forgotten the attic, for the knobs here were mottled brown china. The stately splendor of the old mansion ended abruptly with the fourth floor. The attic, constructed for use and not for show, was frankly ugly.

A little flame of indignation blazed in Patricia's heart as she opened one door after an-

other, revealing the tiny cheerless cells which had housed the faithful workers. Their low ceilings sloped at awkward angles. Some had small windows and some had none. The attic floor was unheated, Ellen told them. It must have been bitter cold in winter, and, as it was directly under the roof, stifling hot in summer.

Most of the bedrooms were bare and empty now. A few held bits of broken furniture. A narrow cot bed, a straight chair, a washstand. One hideous china bowl and pitcher provided the clue to the painful means by which cleanliness had been attained.

"Ye'll find the storage chambers more interestin', I'm thinkin'," Ellen called to them. "Try the corner doors."

A pleasant whiff came out of the dimness as they opened the first corner door. It was a large room, cedar-lined for protection against moths. Large cedar chests were built into the walls.

The girls went about lifting the lids. Piles of thick wool blankets, pillows and rugs. Discarded portieres of somber velvet. Everything was neatly arranged, but not, as Patricia complained, very exciting.

Another storeroom held furniture, so tightly

wedged that it was impossible to get past the doorway. In still another they found books, chiefly bound volumes of sermons. Besides the boxes of books, there were barrels of china, broken mirrors, banished pictures and a miscellaneous collection of bric-a-brac.

It was the last room of all which proved really interesting. Here also the girls found an assortment of odds and ends, umbrellas and walking-sticks, and even an unstrung harp. But behind these a number of trunks were ranged around the walls.

"Clothes—that's what I've been looking for!" Anne cried, lifting the first lid. "Look, Pat, isn't this adorable?"

Carefully she lifted out a flowered challis tea-gown, trimmed with cascading yellowed lace. Patricia came to help her, and eagerly they went through the trunk.

The garments were neatly folded, with little bags of dried lavender scattered between their folds. They were all feminine clothes, silk and velvet and lace of the finest quality.

"Ellen, come here!" Anne called. "These lovely, lovely things—whose were they?"

"Likely there's plenty belongin' to all the fam-

ily here," Ellen answered. She dropped her work good-naturedly and came to the door. "What have ye got hold of, now? Them would belong to Master Richard's mother, Miss Anne."

"The '90's, and a bit later? Yes, I can tell by the styles. Are there any really old ones, Ellen? Hoopskirts, and all that?"

"Not in that trunk, Miss Anne. Ye'd have to go back to the old madam's time for them. There's plenty of hers here, surely. She was a rare one for clothes, and never threw anything away. The rest o' the trunks will be hers, mostly."

Anne sat back on her heels. "The old madam, Ellen? Would that be the famous Mrs. Ephraim?"

"Yes, Miss Anne. I hope you don't think I mean any disrespect, callin' her that. 'Twas Aunt Jeanie's name for her, and that's where I picked it up. 'Tis an Old Country way o' speakin'. Aunt Jeanie was head parlor-maid here in the old lady's day, and she served her long and faithful. Auntie was gettin' past her prime when the old madam died, but she stayed on with Mr. Edward till he married."

"Wait a minute, Ellen," Pat begged. "Mr. Edward—who was he?"

"The old madam's grandson, Miss Pat. Master Richard's father."

"Captain Jack's son? All right, I guess I've got it straight. Go on, Ellen."

"Well, when Mrs. Edward wanted a young girl she could trust with her baby, Aunt Jeanie —she was my great-aunt by rights—spoke up and got the post for me. I was just a slip of a girl when I come over from Scotland. 'Twas my first place, and my last one. This here would be one of the old madam's trunks, Miss Anne." Ellen threw back the lid. "Ay, here's the gown she wore to President Lincoln's funeral. Purple broadcloth, with the foot-wide bands of crepe, and the purple bonnet with the mournin' veil. She never wore it but the once. Eh, that's handsome now, wouldn't you say?"

"It looks perfectly gruesome to me!" Pat shuddered. "This is pretty, though. The green velvet with the little silver-embroidered jacket. She must have been quite a dressy person. I suppose her social position required it. She was quite a power hereabouts, wasn't she, Ellen?"

"Ye may well say that, Miss Pat. From all I've heard, the old madam was a rare masterful

woman. She ruled her servants, and she ruled her family, and she ruled this town, or leastwise the part she thought worth it. You couldn't say she led society; it was more like she *drove* it. You were in or you were out on her say-so, and there was no gainsayin' it. If she didn't call on you, all your money and your blue blood and your fine belongin's was so much sawdust."

"Sounds like a sweet soul," Anne laughed. "Was your aunt fond of her?"

"I wouldn't want to say fond, Miss Anne. Auntie went in mortal terror of her, like everybody else. She paid good wages, and her servants were better fed and housed than many—there was no pamperin' of the help anywhere in them days, mind. But love her they didn't, and ye couldn't expect it. Auntie stayed on mostly for Mr. Edward's sake. The poor wee bairn, he had a hard furrow to plough, that he did. 'Twasn't much Auntie could do to soften it, but what she could do by stealth she did."

"Do you mean she was cruel to him, Ellen?" Pat asked. "Her own grandson?"

"I've not said that, Miss Pat. There's no doubt the old lady loved the child fiercely. But she was

determined to make a man of him after her own pattern, and she took a rare stern and hard road to it. No softness, no tenderness—and him a gentle timid child and easy hurt. Many's the time, when he'd been sent supperless to bed for some little slip, Auntie carried her own bite and sup up to him. He never forgot it, neither. He saw to it that her old age was provided for, and decent burial when she passed on. Eh, poor old Aunt Jeanie, she give him all the motherin' he ever had."

"What about his own mother?" Patricia asked. "Didn't she have anything to say about it?"

Before Ellen could answer Dougal's voice hailed them from below. In a moment he appeared at the head of the stairs.

"What sort of house is this?" he demanded in mock indignation. "Don't a workin' man get fed these days? Here it's gone twelve o'clock, and not a hand turned in the kitchen."

"Oh, Dougal, it's all our fault!" Pat cried. "We've been keeping Ellen from her work up here. Look, we'll come down and lend a hand. And then you're coming back up here, aren't you, Ellen? We haven't half begun to explore the trunks. Oh, this is fun—I do love attics!"

Lunch was a hasty meal for the girls. And as soon as it ended they hurried back to the attic, leaving Ellen to follow later.

When she came, she brought Dougal with her to help with the cleaning. He unearthed a full-length cheval mirror for them, and set it up under the tower windows where the light was strongest.

They spent an enchanted afternoon digging in the old trunks, running back and forth to try on some costume which took their fancy. Anne saw to it that each box was repacked as they finished with it, and Ellen looked on with silent approval.

They came at last to a large round-topped trunk in a far dark corner. Unlike the others, it was locked.

"Ellen, how about this?" Pat called. "Have you the key to this trunk?"

Ellen came to the doorway. "The old horsehide! No, Miss Pat, there's no key to that. Never has been, in my time. It used to worry me, for I like to air the things once in awhile, to make sure the moths haven't got at 'em. That's why I keep the others unlocked. There was that many keys I fair went crazy keepin' track of 'em, and there's no sense in locks where there's none to

steal. But I never could find a key to fit the old horsehide, so whatever's in there has not seen the light of day these many years."

"But how disappointing!" Pat fingered the massive lock. "It looks so old, too, really the oldest of the lot. I suppose it was one of Mrs. Ephraim's? Oh, I do wish we could get inside!"

"And haven't ye seen enough old clothes for the day, Miss Pat?" Ellen smiled. "It'll just be some more o' the same, I make no doubt."

"Yes, I know, but—oh, there's something so tantalizing about a locked box that you can't get into! Don't you feel it too, Sis? Aren't you wild to see what's in this one, just because we can't?"

"Well, I'll admit I'm curious," Anne answered. "It's a pretty common feeling, I guess. There was Pandora, and Bluebeard's wife—and Adam and Eve, for that matter. But I don't exactly see what we're going to do about it, darling. It's certainly locked tight."

"We could force it," Pat proposed. "Dougal could get it open, I know. Oh, Dougal!"

"Oh, no, Miss Pat!" Ellen protested. "I'm not one to meddle with what's not my property. It wouldn't do, indeed it wouldn't."

"But whose property is it?" Pat persisted. "Surely it's Doctor Dick's now? I know he wouldn't care."

"Well—" Ellen looked up as Dougal came in answer to Patricia's call. "Miss Pat is at me to have ye open the old horsehide," she explained.

"Well, now, that's a thing I've been tellin' ye every year at spring-cleanin' time," he answered. "The box ought to be opened, there's no doubt of it. Likely the moths will ha' chewed the inside to dust by now. 'Twould be no task at all to open it with my chisel."

"I think there's a bit of Pandora in you too, Dougal," Anne laughed. "But he's perfectly right, Ellen, it should be opened. If there are clothes inside, it's doing them no good to be shut away from the air for years on end."

"I know that well, Miss Anne. And I don't like to be makin' difficulties. If you young leddies are willin' to take the responsibility—"

"Oh, we will, of course we will!" Pat cried. "Doctor Dick won't mind, I know, but we'll tell him it was our idea entirely. Get your chisel, Dougal."

The trunk's contents looked as though they had been thrust in hastily by an angry hand. There was no attempt at order. Delicate garments had been ruthlessly wadded and crumpled. Shoes crushed a plumed hat, a broken scent bottle had scattered treacherous slivers of glass.

"What a job!" Ellen exclaimed angrily. "Some careless maid has done this, and she'd 'a' got the sack for it, if this had come to Aunt Jeanie's eye."

"It's quite a contrast because the others are all so neat," Anne agreed. "Pat, what in the world have you got there?"

"I'm wondering myself." Laughing, Patricia held aloft a pair of red satin corsets, curiously curved, and laced with black silk. "Some sort of prehistoric foundation garment, I suppose—but look at the *size* of it! I've heard of wasp-waisted ladies, but I never dreamed a human being could get into this! And the stays every inch of the way around—heavens, it makes me gasp just to look at it."

She laid the absurd little garment on the floor beside her, and dived again. This time she brought up a fringed shawl of bright green silk, heavily embroidered in large pink roses.

"A bit gaudy," Pat commented. "But the embroidery is perfect. Here's a dress. Gracious! I thought the shawl was gaudy, but look at this! It's terrific!"

The frock, made with a tiny pointed waist, was in wide glowing stripes of red, yellow and black. The full gathered skirt had been partly ripped from the bodice.

"Made by hand, and not very well made," Anne commented, as Pat handed it to her. "No wonder it ripped. The stitches are too big, and the seams aren't reinforced at all. That's odd, isn't it? All the clothes in the other trunks are so perfectly finished. I'm sure none of those dressmakers turned out a job like this. This wool is rather coarse, too. Not like the fine cashmeres we found before."

"I've found some darling little shoes," Pat said. "Cinderella's, I'd say, by the size of them. This tooled leather is beautiful—and see the high red heels! Do you suppose she really *walked* in them? Here's a white silk dress—oh, how lovely! You can't criticize these stitches, Anne. And look at the embroidery!"

"That *is* lovely," Anne agreed. "It might be a wedding dress. I wonder—get that wad of

white lace down there, dear. Yes, it is. A bridal veil!"

This trunk, in spite of its crumpled disorder, was by far the most interesting one they had found. Besides clothing, it contained a number of personal belongings quite unlike anything they had yet come across. There were manicure tools, high carved tortoise-shell combs, silver-backed brushes, and a cardboard box of what could only be called cosmetics. Odd little pottery jars of hardened creams and gummy lotions, a large china box of white powder with a swansdown puff, sticks of charcoal and a reddened rabbit's foot. And—yes, a round tin whose stubborn lid came off to reveal a thick red paste.

"Rouge!" Patricia exclaimed incredulously. "But, Sis, it simply can't be—there's something wrong somewhere! No one but actresses used make-up in those days, you told me that yourself. And the old madam wouldn't have had an actress in her house, would she? What in the world—"

"I don't understand it either," Anne confessed. "There's something odd about this trunk, anyway. It's different from all the rest. Those clothes were rich and lavish, but they were—well, sedate. I don't mean Doctor Dick's moth-

er's, of course, but the older ones, the ones that belonged to Mrs. Ephraim. They looked like her. Like the picture you'd get from what we've heard about her. A very conventional dowager, and all that. But these—why, they aren't her at all, they're as far away from her as you could possibly get. They couldn't have belonged to her."

"Maybe when she was younger?" Pat ventured. "There's the wedding dress, you know. Maybe this was her trousseau."

"*She* was never married in red satin corsets!" Anne said positively. "She *couldn't* have been—not if she chose those olive greens and plum colors and dove grays for the rest of her life. She couldn't have jumped from these clothes to those, I know. People's tastes don't change that much. Besides, there are the little red-heeled slippers, and the make-up—that was none of hers. This trunk belonged to somebody else."

"Somebody young, and gay, who loved bright colors and didn't care whether they clashed or not," Pat supplied. "But how mysterious! Was there ever anybody like that in the family? I certainly never heard that there was. Ellen!"

"They went back to the blanket room. Dougal

was quite disappointed when he saw there were only women's clothes in the mysterious trunk—I think he expected pirate gold. You shouldn't be calling Ellen from her work every minute, honey."

"Yes, but I have to know! Anyway, here she is. Ellen dear, look at these things. They never belonged to the old madam, did they? These slippers, and the rouge! Whose were they?"

Ellen hesitated for a moment, as though reluctant to answer. The she said slowly, "I couldn't say for certain, Miss Pat. Happen these were the belongin's of the Spanish bride. 'Tis the first trace of her I've ever come upon, and I misdoubt now this trunk was locked for a good reason."

"What do you mean, Ellen?" Anne's eyes widened. "What reason? Have we stumbled upon a family skeleton?"

Ellen did not smile. "I'm thinkin' ye have, Miss Anne. Better to put the bit things back in the box and think no more of 'em."

"But Ellen!" Pat burst into quick protest. "You *can't* just leave us in the air like this. Who was she—what did she do? The Spanish bride, you said. Whose bride?"

"Captain Jack's, Miss Pat. The one he brought home from California, in the days of the gold rush. There now, will that no content ye?"

"I should say it won't! A Spanish bride from California—why, that's right down your street, Sis! Come on, Ellen," Pat coaxed. "If it's a secret, we'll cross our hearts never to tell a soul. And we're in the family now, you know. It isn't as if we were outsiders. But you must tell us, you simply must! Help me to persuade her, Anne."

"We'd like to hear, Ellen," Anne said. "But if it's something you've promised not to tell—"

"I made no promise, Miss Anne. The old madam told Auntie that her name was never to be mentioned in this house, and Aunt Jeanie passed on those orders to the other servants. But that was long before my time. The old madam was in her grave when I came to the house, and the whole sad business long forgotten. The little I know is what Auntie let drop in her old age, when she grew childish like, as old folk will. Eh, ye won't want me to be rakin' up the story now, Miss Pat. 'Tis a sad one, with a bitter sad end. Ye'd be no better for hearin' it."

"Ellen, I could *shake* you!" Pat cried. "Every

word you say just adds fuel to the flame of my curiosity. What *happened* to the Spanish bride? Was she murdered in this house? Oh, that was it. I know it was! Who did it? The old madam? I wouldn't put it past her. And does the poor little senorita walk the dark corridors by night, wailing and moaning—ooh, Sis, didn't I tell you the house was haunted? I knew it, that very first night—"

Pat's speech had begun jokingly, but her sister saw with concern that the picture her vivid imagination painted was growing all too real to her.

Anne turned despairingly to Ellen. "You see what you've started, Ellen dear. She'll go on from there, making up one fearful detail after another, and about bedtime tonight she'll get herself worked into hysterics over this ghost."

"But there's no ghost, Miss Anne!" Ellen twisted her work-reddened hands in confusion. "I said nought of a ghost! And as for murder —why, such a wicked thought never entered my mind. I can't think where Miss Pat gets her ideas from, indeed I can't!"

"None of us can, but she gets them, just the same," Anne answered resignedly. "I really

think, Ellen, you'll have to tell us the story of the Spanish bride now. Otherwise, there'll simply be no living with Pat."

"How well you understand me, sister dear!" Pat dragged a low steamer trunk forward. "Sit right here, Ellen, and make yourself comfy. Begin at the beginning, and don't leave out a single word."

With a sigh Ellen yielded, sinking upon the trunk with the girls on the floor at her feet.

"There's no reason ye shouldn't have the truth of it, if so be the truth'll rid your brain of them wild notions, Miss Pat," she said, more severely than they had ever heard her speak. "And I hope when I'm through I'll hear no more o' ghosts and murders."

"Yes, Ellen," Pat answered meekly. "I'll be good. But please, *please*—we're simply quivering with impatience. Do get on with it, won't you?"

"I'm beginnin' now, Miss Pat. This is the way it was."

VI

"Captain Jack Driscoll was well known in the shippin' trade," Ellen began. "His *Brooklyn Belle* was as fine a clipper ship as ever spread her sails. When the gold rush to California begun, back in '49, the *Brooklyn Belle* carried many a load of treasure-seekers safe round the Horn. Captain Jack was a fine proud gentleman, by all

accounts, and could 'a' had his choice of the Brooklyn young leddies. But when he chose a bride 'twas none o' them. Instead he brought back this strange wild Spanish creature for his wife."

"What was her name, Ellen?" Anne asked. "Do you remember?"

"That I don't. Doña something-or-other she called herself, but the servants was told to call her 'Mrs. Jack,' like they do in this family."

"Doña—oh, it's on her fan, I think," Pat cried. "The little ivory one, Sis, wait till I get it. There was some writing in gold—yes, here it is. 'Doña Ignacia Castillero'," she spelled out the faint gilt letters.

"The Castilleros—why, I know about them!" Anne exclaimed. "Don Diego Castillero commanded the military escort of Father Junipero Serra, when he went north from Mexico to found the first missions in Old California. General Luis Castillero was one of the early Spanish governors, and another Castillero—I've forgotten his name—was military commandant at the Presidio of Monterey. They had a famous country estate called *el Rancho de Refugia,* and—"

"Anne, *please!*" Pat interrupted. "You know all about the early Castilleros and that's fine.

But only Ellen knows about Doña Ignacia, and she's the one we're interested in. *Will* you keep still and let Ellen tell us?"

"Oh, all right. But I do know about them, Ellen. They were one of the most prominent of the Californian families."

"That may well be, Miss Anne," Ellen answered. "It made no difference to the old madam. They weren't her kind of gentry, and as far as she was concerned there was no other kind."

"But that's ridiculous! You have no idea how proud those Spanish families were, Ellen. Why, all Americans were just riffraff to them—yes, even Brooklyn Americans. I'm surprised they let their daughter marry one."

" 'Twas a very hasty love match, Miss Anne, and I don't know that her family had any more to say about it than his. Anyhow, there it was. He married her and brought her home to his mother. And then the trouble commenced."

"What kind of trouble, Ellen?" Pat asked. "Didn't she get on with her mother-in-law?"

"They were not two who could ever have got on, Miss Pat. The old madam was a determined woman who must rule or ruin. The young one was a spoiled beauty who'd never been crossed.

Ye can see they'd be flint and tinder to each other. The sparks begun to fly before she'd been twenty-four hours in the house, my auntie said. The old madam, wishin' to put the best face on things, gave a dinner party for her to meet all the family's friends. And that party was a scandal to set the tongues waggin' and clackin' for many's the day."

"Scandal, Ellen?" Pat wriggled delightedly. "Next to romance, I adore scandal—and this seems to have a touch of both. Do get on with it. What happened at the party?"

"Young Mrs. Jack come down in scarlet silk, with a lace mantilla over her hair—an outrageous get-up to begin with. But 'twas nothing to the face on her. Painted and powdered she was, and her eyes smudged with charcoal to make 'em look bigger. Not that she needed such fixin's, pretty as she was already. I can't think what made her do such a daft thing."

"Oh, but I can, Ellen!" Anne interrupted. "It was simply a custom of her people. Latin-American women have always gone in for heavy make-up. They still do. Any traveler in Mexico or South America will tell you that. I don't know why they started it in the first place, but

I do know they'd feel positively undressed without it. Doña Ignacia wanted to do honor to her guests by looking her best, and she tried to do it in the way her mother had taught her."

"Would that be the way of it, Miss Anne? I'd no knowledge of that. Nor had the old madam, seemin'ly. She'd not seen the young person till the guests were assembled, so there was nought she could do, but Auntie said you could tell she was fumin'."

"I can understand that, too," Anne agreed.

"Ay. And then the way the poor silly body carried on! She sat fannin' herself at table, and rollin' her eyes at the gentlemen over her fan till their wives were fair vexed. Would that be another o' they heathen customs now, Miss Anne?"

"Of course it would!" Anne laughed. "She was used to gallantry and compliments, and she'd been taught to flirt as one of a young lady's most charming parlor tricks. It didn't mean anything, it was just a form of good manners to her."

"Maybe so, Miss Anne, but 'twas most unfortunate. And there was worse to come. For halfway through the dinner, the orchestra, which was playin' in the music room, begun some kind of

fast gypsy music. Well, ye'll never believe what that silly little Mrs. Jack done then!"

"Wait a minute—I think I can guess!" Anne interrupted. "She got up from the table, didn't she, and began to dance? All by herself?"

"Miss Anne, I marvel at ye!" Ellen was wide-eyed. " 'Twas what she did, for sure. And such dancin' as it was; snappin' her fingers and flingin' her skirts about. None o' the company had ever seen the like."

"El sol, I expect, or maybe *el jota,"* Anne said thoughtfully. "You must be tired of hearing me say this, Ellen. But again—she was only doing what she'd been brought up to do. Californian dinner parties lasted four or five hours, and there was *always* dancing and singing between the courses. It was a hostess's duty to start it if the guests didn't. She'd have thought her party a terrific failure without it. But—oh, the poor child! I can see how it must have looked to the people here. What did they do?"

"Aunt Jeanie was helpin' Mr. Lynch, the butler, at the sideboard, and she said it was a sight to see the faces round that table. The old madam at first was too flummoxed to speak, just sat there turnin' purple, and Captain Jack with his

face froze into horror. Finally the old lady lifted her hand, and the music stopped short."

"And is *that* the scandal?" Pat asked. "I don't see anything so dreadful in that. As Sis says, she didn't know any better."

"There was more to come, Miss Pat. For as she came back to the table, one of the ladies tittered a bit and said something behind her hand. Mrs. Jack didn't know much English, but she heard it, whatever it was. And she hauled back and slapped that lady, hard, across her cheek. And then she burst out cryin' and run from the room. That was the end of her first dinner party."

"Another old Spanish custom, Sis?" Pat asked. "You seem to be an authority on the subject."

"Slapping a guest? Good gracious, no! But the poor child—you can hardly blame her. Think how she must have felt. Probably her dancing was much admired at home. But here, instead of the applause she'd always had, they stopped her in the middle of it, and whispered, and made fun—oh, that's no excuse, of course. But she had plenty of provocation, and I expect she was quick-tempered, like all her people."

"Eh, she was a hot-tempered young thing, for sure. The old madam took her well in hand after

that. She set out to teach her to behave like a lady, and I'm not sayin' she didn't succeed in the end. But 'twas a woeful weary task, for the young one couldn't bring herself to submit to guidance till her spirit was fair broke in her."

"I can imagine it was broken, all right," Pat said. "You know, Ellen, the more I hear about the old madam the less I like her. What did she do to the poor thing? Beat her? Starve her?"

"There was no beatin', Miss Pat. I'm no sayin' I didn't hear tales o' bread and water, and lockin' her in her room. But 'twas well meant, for the poor creature's own good. She was nought but a wilful child, and she had to learn discipline if she was to live in this house."

"But she was a married woman!" Pat protested. "What did her husband say about it? Did he approve of having his wife treated like a naughty school child?"

"That I couldn't tell you. Captain Jack was awa' the most of the time, on long voyages. Aunt Jeanie's thought was that he was early sick o' his bargain. He'd been swept off his feet out there in the West, seein' the girl amongst her own kind, so different and romantic-like. But

when she made him a laughin'-stock at his own table—well, he was his mother's son, Miss Pat. A proud man, and ill-suited to ridicule. Mayhap he was glad to hand her over to his mother to make what she could of."

"But Doña Ignacia must have had her pride, too," Anne commented. "I wonder that she endured it. Why didn't she go back to her own people?"

"Perhaps for that very pride, Miss Anne. Admit to her kinsmen that she had made a mistake? Or more likely, 'twas that the old madam would not allow it. She'd set herself to make a creditable wife o' the young thing, and to beat against her will was like to beatin' against a rock. I'm only surmisin', mind ye. In her place I'd 'a' gone back to my own, though I crawled on my knees there."

"What finally happened, Ellen?" Pat asked impatiently. "You were right when you said it was a sad story. What was the end of it?"

"There's not much more, Miss Pat. Things went on, with the old madam grimly determined to shape the creature to her will, and she pullin' back every step, stormy and sullen by turns. But by and by her little baby was born—that would

be Mr. Edward. And for a space that brought peace, for the old lady and the young one both worshipped the child. But he was no more than christened when the old madam begun assertin' herself. He must be brought up her way, to be a true Driscoll. The young mother fought like a tiger to keep the say-so over him, but Captain Jack backed his mother up. A nurse of the old madam's choosin' was brought into the house, and the mother shoved to one side. She had nothing to say at all."

"How utterly *hateful!*" Pat burst out. "And Captain Jack allowed it? A fine husband he must have been!"

"Eh, we'll not speak harsh o' the poor young man, Miss Pat, torn betwixt two wilful women. For before the babe was short-coated word came that the *Brooklyn Belle* was lost at sea, and her young captain with her. 'Twas then, with husband and child both taken from her, that Mrs. Jack's proud spirit broke. She got meek and quiet-like, givin' in all along the line. She wore the clothes the old madam chose for her. She paid calls and helped at teas, givin' offense to none, but with no word to say for herself. Most of her time she spent in her room—that would

be the one ye have now. Long hours she sat at the window, gazin' out to sea, or mayhap workin' at her needlework embroidery. And then, overnight, she disappeared."

"Disappeared?" Pat echoed. "What do you mean by that, Ellen?"

"Just what I say, Miss Pat. One mornin' Aunt Jeanie went to call her, and she was not in her room. No sight nor sound of her has been seen from that day to this. There was a letter on her pillow, addressed to Mrs. Ephraim. Auntie took it to her. She read it through twice, with a face of stone. Then she tore it into bits, and tossed the bits into the fire. 'My daughter-in-law has left us, Jeanie,' she said, in a strong, steady voice. 'You may inform the other servants.' Just that, and no more. Except that, as Auntie was leavin' the room, she called her back. 'I wish no gossip about this affair,' she said in that same firm way. 'Any servant who mentions my son's widow, to me or to anyone else, will be instantly dismissed.' And so far as I know, that's the last time her name was spoken in this house till now. What Aunt Jeanie told me, in the little cottage Mr. Edward bought her to end her days in, can't be said to count," Ellen added hastily.

"No, of course not. But, Ellen,—that's an incredible story!" Anne said. "People don't just vanish off the face of the earth, you know. Where did she go? What happened to her? Didn't anybody ever find out?"

"The mistress knew, for there was the letter," Ellen reminded her. "Nobody else. And she took the secret to her grave."

"What did your aunt think?" Anne asked. "She must have had *some* idea."

"She could only guess, like everybody else, Miss Anne. In spite of everything, the servants must have whispered among themselves. No doubt, too, the old madam's society friends put their heads together. Auntie heard none of this, for the servants dared not speak of it to her, and the ladies wouldn't. So Auntie never knew if her own guess was the common one, or whether it came to her alone. But 'twas her thought—" she hesitated.

"Go *on,* Ellen!" Pat urged. "What did she think?"

"I don't like to tell you, Miss Pat. But if ye will have it—Auntie thought it was likely Mrs. Jack threw herself into the bay and ended all her troubles with one desperate act, the poor un-

happy creature. That's just a notion, mind. I don't tell it for truth," she ended quickly.

"Suicide." Anne's soft voice deepened in distress. "Oh, Ellen, I don't believe it—I can't! For one thing, her religion would forbid it. Why did your aunt think that? Why not suppose she'd run away, back to her own people?"

"'Twas a mortal long journey, Miss Anne, and would 'a' cost a mint o' silver. Mrs. Jack was allowed not so much as pocket-money," Ellen answered simply.

"Oh! Well—well, I still don't believe your aunt's explanation. There's another one, there must be!" Anne insisted. She glanced quickly at Pat, and saw that the vivid little face was set in lines of horror.

"It *is* a sad story, Ellen," Anne went on swiftly. "Maybe you were right—perhaps we'd have been as well off if we hadn't insisted on hearing it. But that's our fault, not yours." She forced a smile. "Thanks for taking all this trouble, anyway."

"You're right welcome, Miss Anne. And remember, the two of ye, that the poor soul's been at rest these many years, whatever her troubles here below." Ellen rose creakingly to her feet. "And here I sit blatherin', with my work not half

done. Will I repack this trunk, now, Miss Anne?"

"I'll do it," Anne answered. "You want to get back to your scrubbing, I know. Thanks again, and we won't bother you any more."

VII

As Ellen left the room Anne picked up a lace shawl and began to fold it carefully.

"Let's take all her things out and pack them nicely, Pat. They shouldn't be jumbled in like this."

Patricia did not answer. She was sitting very still, the little ivory fan on her lap. Now, as Anne looked at her, she saw that tears were silently rolling down her cheeks.

"I can't—I simply can't bear it!" she gulped passionately. "Here they are, all the poor pretty

things she brought to be so happy with. Oh, Anne, can't you just see her? So proud and gay when she sailed away with her young husband. She was leaving her home, and her people, everything she'd ever known, to go with him because she l-loved him! And—and *look* what they did to her! I tell you I can't bear it!"

"Honey, hush. You mustn't get yourself all worked up about this. I know it's a sad story, but—"

"It isn't a story, Sis! Can't you understand? It's *real,* it *happened,* right here in this house! Oh, I told you this was a dreadful house; didn't I tell you, that very first night? I knew that terrible things had happened here—I could feel it. But I never dreamed—"

"Pat, you aren't going back to that!" Anne cried distressfully. "I made Ellen tell you the true story on purpose, so you wouldn't be terrifying yourself with wild, impossible imaginings. Use your common sense! I'm just as sorry for poor little Doña Ignacia as you are. But I can see, and surely you can, that she brought most of her troubles on herself. She married Captain Jack of her own free will, didn't she? He had a right to expect that she'd make him a wife

he wouldn't be ashamed of. If she'd really tried to adapt herself to the life here—"

"Anne!" Indignation dried Pat's tears for the moment. "Do you mean you're on *their* side? You think it was right, then, the way they treated her?"

Anne sighed. "I'm not taking anyone's part, darling," she said patiently. "I'm simply trying to see all around the question. His mother was Captain Jack's idea of what a lady ought to be. When he saw how far his wife was from that ideal, it's only natural that he was disappointed in her. But the girl was young, and he had confidence that his mother could train her in American ways. I don't really see that he was greatly to blame."

"All right, we'll leave Captain Jack out of it, then. He wasn't home much anyway. I'll even concede that maybe he didn't know about the bread and water, and all that. But his mother! Are you going to find excuses for that—that monster?"

"She wasn't a monster, dear. She was a conventional, stiff-necked dowager, acting from the highest of motives. Now, wait! I'm not talking about her *methods*. But you can't find anything discreditable in her motives. She lived here, she

knew the standards of her community. To us they were ridiculously narrow, prudish standards, but that's beside the point. They did prevail, and anyone who expected to live here in peace had to conform to them. That's true in any long-established, aristocratic community. It would have been just as true in Monterey, if the young couple had settled down there. I expect Ignacia's mother would have been equally disappointed in Captain Jack. I don't suppose he could play the guitar, or dance *el jota,* or perform daring feats of horsemanship, and—"

"Anne, stop—you're simply trying to side-track me!" Pat accused her. "I'll admit—though I simply hate to—that maybe the old madam was justified in wanting her daughter-in-law to be more like the Brooklyn young ladies. That scene at the first dinner-party must have been terribly mortifying for her, I can see that. But why didn't she *talk* to her, kindly and gently? Doña Ignacia didn't *want* to be a laughing-stock, surely. Nobody does. It was just that she didn't know any better. If her mother-in-law had been sweet and patient with her—"

"Well, there you have it," Anne put in. "Mrs. Ephraim was not a sweet and patient woman

and that was the whole trouble. I said we couldn't quarrel with her motives, but her methods are another matter. The whole tragic snarl arose from the fact that she tried to do the right thing in the most utterly wrong way."

"You don't approve of the bread and water, and taking her baby away from her, then?"

"Of course I don't! How can you ask such a question? Whatever she may have been in her civic life, in her dealings with her daughter-in-law Mrs. Ephraim was an unsympathetic, stubborn, and extremely stupid old woman. There! Will that no content ye, as Ellen says?"

"It's pretty mild—I can think of a long string of stronger adjectives myself. Look here, Sis!" Pat's brows contracted in an effort at thought. "You seem to have a pretty clear idea of what Mrs. Ephraim was like. Now about this disappearance. Would you say that she had a hand in it? Do you think she was capable of—" her breath quickened, "of *foul play?*"

"Oh, *Pat!*" Dismay rang in Anne's voice. "You mustn't say things like that! You mustn't even think them. It's Doctor Dick's great-grandmother we're talking about, remember!"

"I shouldn't care if it were *our* great-grand-

mother," Pat said stubbornly. "Look at the facts. She hated Doña Ignacia—"

"We don't know that, Pat."

"Oh, don't we? You mean we can't prove it. All right. We'll say that she tolerated her because she was her son's wife. And now that son was dead. The old madam had the baby, the heir to the Driscoll name she was so proud of. She'd tamed the mother by that time, but she never knew when Ignacia would break out again, in some eccentric act that would set the tongues wagging. Don't you suppose it was a relief to her when Mrs. Jack was no longer in the house?"

"I suppose it was," Anne admitted honestly. "But to accuse her of—Oh, *Pat!*"

"I haven't accused her of anything, yet. I'll admit that when Ellen said it was supposed that Doña Ignacia had thrown herself into the bay, my first thought was that probably her mother-in-law had helped things along with a gentle push. But I've given that up now."

"Well, I should hope so!" Anne relaxed enough to go on with her packing. "But what did you mean, then? What do you suspect Mrs. Ephraim of doing—about the disappearance, I suppose you mean?"

"Yes, I had to give it up," Pat went on. "After you've shown me how high-minded she was, it really wouldn't do. Besides, it's too undignified. Common persons stoop to crime; it would be quite beneath the noble Madam Driscoll. Just the same," she added vigorously, "I do think she had a hand in it. It happened too conveniently for her to—well, to just *happen*. No, it's no use asking me, I don't *know* what she did. That's what I'm asking you. What do you think did happen to Doña Ignacia, Sis? And how?"

"Heavens, I don't know. I don't believe she drowned herself. I told Ellen that. There's nothing left to guess except that she ran away."

"With no money? Look here, Sis. How about this? What if she was *sent* away? What if Mrs. Ephraim calmly put her aboard a ship and sent her back where she came from? Or sent her some place else, for that matter? Anything to be rid of her?"

"Well, but—that doesn't make sense, honey. Why all the mystery about her disappearance, then? The old madam would only have had to say she'd gone back to California. There needn't have been any mystery at all."

"That's true," Patricia admitted dispiritedly.

"Mrs. Ephraim didn't want any scandal. She'd surely have concocted some story in advance if she'd planned the disappearance. She did know where Doña Ignacia went, though," she remembered suddenly. "There was the letter Jeanie found."

"We don't know that it told where she was going," Anne pointed out.

"That's the whole trouble—we don't know anything! It's all such a hopeless tangle of guesswork and confusion. If we could just find something definite, something to go by! Sis, look here!" Pat spoke with rare earnestness. "Before we leave this house, I'm going to find out what *did* happen. Are you with me?"

"Pat, darling—*please!* I know how you feel. It's as if we'd been reading an absorbing mystery story, and had suddenly discovered that the last twenty pages had been torn from the book. It's tantalizing; it's infuriating, if you like. But don't you see that there's nothing we can do about it? This all happened ninety years ago. Whatever her fate was, poor little Doña Ignacia is long since dead. So is her stern mother-in-law—so is even the baby she left behind her. The whole painful story is long since forgotten. I don't

believe even Doctor Dick knows about it. Can't you let it rest?"

"No, I can't." Pat's eyes were fever-bright. "I keep trying to tell you it isn't just a story to me, it's *real!* If Doctor Dick doesn't know about it, he ought to. Why, she was his *grandmother!* Can you imagine Doña Ignacia a grandmother, in her red-heeled shoes and her lace mantilla? I can only see her as a young girl—not much older than you, Sis. Homesick and frightened in this big strange house, just as I was that first night. Only she had good reason for it, poor darling! Why, she slept in our room! Cried herself to sleep in our bed, and watched the ships from our window, the ships that could have taken her back to the home where they understood and loved her. It gives me a horrid guilty feeling to think how happy we've been in that room, the very room where they broke her heart for her. She's *real* to me, Anne—oh, won't you understand?"

Little Pat's face was working uncontrollably. Tears were very near. Anne's own eyes were misty, but her voice was quietly reassuring as she answered, "All right, dear. If you feel that way about her, I don't wonder that you feel

you must find out what happened to her. I haven't the least idea how you're going about it. But if you can think of any way—well, you can count on all the help I can give you."

"I haven't slept a wink," Patricia declared at breakfast next morning.

"Oh, now, Pat!" her sister laughed. "Don't forget I share your bed. I know better than that. You were sleeping quite peacefully when I woke this morning."

"Well, you know what I mean. I did lie awake for hours, puzzling over this business of Doña Ignacia, trying to figure out where to *begin.* If I could only find something to start with!"

"To start unraveling the mystery, you mean? You still have your heart set on that, honey?"

"Of course I have! Did you think I was going to forget it over night? I'm not going to rest, ever, until I know! And you're helping me, aren't you, Sis? You promised."

"I'm helping if I can," Anne answered. "But you'll have to tell me what you want me to do."

"That's just it, I don't know what to do! I decided last night that the first thing was to find out some more about Doña Ignacia. You know

—what she thought, how she felt about things here. But how am I going to do it? There's no one left who remembers her. And all Ellen knows—oh, there you are, Ellen!" She broke off to smile at the plate of hot biscuits. "Did you hear your name? I was just wishing you could tell me some more about poor little Mrs. Jack."

"I think ye pretty near turned me inside out on that, Miss Pat," Ellen answered, setting down the plate. "What were ye wishful to know, now?"

"Oh, anything and everything! Did your Aunt Jeanie talk about her a lot? Try to think of something else she told you."

"Auntie was not one to gab, Miss Pat. She aye kept a still tongue in her head most times. And this was a forbidden subject, remember. The bits she let fall from time to time I've already told ye of." Then, as Pat's face showed her disappointment, she continued slowly, "But there's Auntie's diary, Miss Pat, if ye'd care to go through it. She kept a bit book all her life, with the day's happenin's set down in it. I'm not sayin' ye wouldn't find mention of the young mistress there."

"Oh, that would be perfect, Ellen!" Pat's eyes

sparkled. "Have you got her diary? Do you know where it is?"

"That I do, Miss Pat, though I've not set eyes on it these many years. 'Twould be in Auntie's box, with her prayer-book and her other relics. I had it brought to this house when we sold her cottage after her passin'."

"Oh, how lucky! Could we—would you mind if we saw the diary, Ellen? We'll be very careful of it."

"I see no objection, Miss Pat, though I doubt not ye'll be disappointed. I did just glance over the books when I packed them away, but I can't call to mind there was much beyond what I've told ye concernin' the Driscoll family. Howsomever, I was not lookin' for such, and I'd no time nor heart to read the books through then. Ye can judge for yourselves if there's anything to interest ye. The box is stored in the cellar below."

As soon as breakfast was over the girls followed Ellen to the basement. Here, besides the big sunny kitchen, was the suite of rooms once sacred to the butler, and now occupied by Ellen and Dougal. The girls were familiar with this part of the house, but they had never penetrated

to the cellars which were on a still lower level.

Dougal, reading his paper at the kitchen window, looked up as Ellen and the girls entered.

"The young leddies are wantin' to see Auntie's diary, Dougal," his wife told him. "You know where 'tis, her little hair trunk? You carried it down for me."

Dougal rose to his great height, his kindly blue eyes smiling down on them.

"Have ye exhausted the Public Library already, then, with all them books ye've been readin'? Come along with ye, and we'll see what's to be found."

They descended a long steep staircase into pitch darkness. The girls waited while Dougal lighted a gas jet over the antiquated furnace which crouched like a giant black octopus among its radiating pipes.

" 'Tis a poorly-lit place here," he apologized. "Mind your step, now. I should ha' brought my torch. But I think there's a bit candle somewhere about."

He fumbled on a shelf near the furnace, and produced a candle-end which he lighted. "If ye'll just come this way—" He turned to one of the many low arched doors.

"What are all those rooms, Dougal?" Pat asked, as they followed him. "They look exactly like dungeons."

"Just ordinary cellars, Miss Pat. There's the coal cellar, and the ash pit, and the wine cellars, two of 'em. Then there'd be the laundry room, and the root cellar, and some others that I couldn't tell ye myself what their purpose was. You must recall that there was no grocery store around the corner when this house was built. Families that could afford it provisioned themselves for the winter, and they had need of storage space."

While he spoke Dougal led the way through a narrow dark passage toward the back of the house. It opened into a large room equipped with set laundry tubs. The girls had already made the acquaintance of fat Mrs. Monahan, who came once a week. Apparently this was her domain.

From his candle-end Dougal lighted a gas jet over the tubs. "This and the furnace room are the only ones with light to see by. Aunt Jeanie's box would be in the little room off here, I'm thinkin', and I hope I'm right."

The cellar adjoining the laundry held a miscellaneous collection of broken furniture, and a

small horsehair trunk. Dougal dragged the trunk into the lighted room.

The top tray was completely filled by neat bundles of paper-covered school copybooks, tied with blue tape. On the topmost one Anne read the legend, "1898."

"Is there one for each year, Dougal?" she asked.

"Ay. '98—that would be the year poor Aunt Jeanie passed awa'. And the first one would be '47, I've no doubt. The year she left the old country to seek her fortune in America. Ellen has them all in order, ye'll find. Would ye be wantin' to take the lot upstairs?"

"I think so, Dougal," Anne answered. "The light's not good enough for reading down here. Ellen wouldn't mind if we took them all up to our room, would she? We'll take good care of them."

"I want to explore the rest of the cellars sometime," Pat remarked, as they turned back. "It's like a medieval castle down here. What's that gloomy-looking cell in there, Dougal?"

He turned the feeble rays of his candle toward the archway she indicated.

" 'Tis but the cistern room, Miss Pat. Ye'll note the manhole cover in the floor? There's a made reservoir there, for the storage of rainwater. The house goes back to the days before the city water mains. Drinkin' water was fetched from the town pump on Henry Street, but they depended on rainwater for household use."

"How disappointing! It looks exactly like the dungeon in the Chateau d'If—you know, Sis, where the Count of Monte Cristo spent all those terrible years? The stone walls, without any windows, and that stone-flagged floor—and oh, look! There's even a rusty chain fastened to the wall. Oh, I'm *sure* there was a prisoner here, Dougal!"

He laughed. "The chain was for the lowerin' of a pail, to bring up water for the washin', Miss Pat. But if ye've got your heart set on something romantical down here, mayhap we should search about and find the Smuggler's Way for you."

"Smugglers?" Pat gave a last glance about the empty cistern room, and stepped back into the corridor. Her shadow moved with her, large and grotesque on the stone walls. As the candle-light flickered other shadows moved with it. Outside

the candle's range darkness crowded close, waiting, menacing—

An uncontrollable chill rippled across Pat's body. The commonplace cellars seemed to expand in the darkness, stretching on and on, one gloomy stone dungeon leading into the next. If one were lost down here, if there were no small candle, no friendly Dougal to lead the way out—oh, what dreadful thing might not happen in this weird place?

"You must tell me all about the smugglers sometime, Dougal," she said, and quickened her pace. "But right now—oh!" Her hard-won composure vanished in a terrific shriek. Trembling, she clung to her sister.

Something was moving in the shadows ahead of them. Was coming swiftly toward them. Twin points of green light, a sudden rush, and the Thing leaped full at Pat, striking her violently in the chest before it slid to the ground.

Anne stooped down. "Here, Smoky! Don't be silly, Pat. She was only trying to jump into your arms—she expected you to catch her. Honey, can't you see it's only Ellen's cat?"

She was carrying the ball of fluffy blue-gray fur as they emerged into the lighted furnace

room. Smoky cuddled in her arms, purring loudly.

Shamefaced, Patricia patted the furry head.

"I didn't know she'd followed us down. And in that dim candle-light, she looked the size of a circus tiger! I thought—I don't know what I thought. Ellen says Smoky's the nosiest cat in the five boroughs, and I can well believe it. How about going upstairs now?"

"Had enough of the cellars, pet?" Anne asked. "I thought you wanted to explore."

"I've had plenty for today, thank you! And I do want to explore, but some other time. And not without the strongest electric torch I can find. I don't like things leaping at me out of the shadows—no, not even you, Smoky darling!"

VIII

When the girls had dumped the books on their bed, they found, as Dougal had predicted, that the diaries were arranged in order by years.

"What's your idea, dear?" Anne asked. "To begin at Page 1 of the first one and read right through? Here it is.

8th April, 1847. I, Jeanie Fraser, being new come from the village of Nairn in Nairnshire to the city of New York in America, do resolve to keep this daily journal for the discipline of my thoughts and the warding off of loneliness. I have today secured my first situation with a lady of the name of Markham. She has a fine house in Washington Square, and—

"Oh, never mind that!" Pat broke in. "We don't care about her experiences in Washington

Square. Find the part where she first came to work here."

Anne turned the pages rapidly, chuckling at some hastily-glimpsed entry. "She doesn't keep up the formal literary style long—not much time for it, I guess. Her entries are short, but they're certainly to the point. Here's the last of Mrs. Markham, on June 20th. *Gave in my notice to-day. Will be put upon no longer.* Next she seems to have gone to Gramercy Park. There's nothing about Brooklyn in here, Pat."

"Well, try the next one, then, 1848. Let me see it. Oh, more Gramercy Park. And—what's this? Stuyvesant Square. She must have changed again. No, don't stop to read them, Sis, not now. We'll never get any place. Give me '49. Oh, here it is. *8th March. Four Chimneys, Brooklyn Heights. A well-found household. Think I will be properly suited here.* This is where it begins, Sis."

Hurriedly they turned over the pages. The prim entries expressed continued satisfaction. Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll, in the eyes of her parlor-maid, was *a proper lady, like it might be a laird's wife at home.*

There were approving notes on social func-

tions given at Four Chimneys, which Jeanie described as a fine new mansion recently built with all modern improvements. The young Scottish maid was evidently impressed by her mistress's eminence. There were infrequent references to Captain Jack's visits home.

It was not until midway in the 1850 volume that Pat found the entry she was seeking.

8th July. A vexing day. The Brooklyn Belle *made port the morn, carrying Captain Jack and his bride! The madam was fair stammagasted, having no warning that such was afoot. Caught but a glimpse of Mistress J. A slight young thing gypsy-dressed. No kind of wife for him, I fear.*

"And how right she was!" Patricia sighed. "Come on, Anne, let's settle down to some steady reading. This is what we've been looking for."

Less of Doña Ignacia's story than Ellen had already told them appeared in the rapidly-scanned entries. The disastrous dinner-party was recorded briefly, with only the comment, *The young madam seems ill-accustomed to good society.* Practical Jeanie had concerned herself

more with the housekeeping details than with the personal life of the family. There was an awestruck record of the cost of the new Brussels lace curtains, and a fairly detailed review of Mrs. Ephraim's triumphant controversy with the pork butcher.

Of Jeanie's own personal life there was almost nothing. She attended the First Presbyterian Church regularly; she banked the major part of her wages; she made her thrifty purchases of sober gowns and bonnets and recorded their prices. A blameless, hard-working life, if rather a dreary one, the girls thought. Pat giggled over one unexpected entry. *Gave the fishmonger's lad his right-about this day. Such impudence!* Apparently that was as close as Aunt Jeanie ever came to romance in her own right.

The birth of little Master Edward was duly set down, and an entry about that time ran, *The old madam is fair besotted over the bairn. But she will have no nonsense. I misdoubt she and the young madam will clash here.* A month later she mentioned *a hospital body* who had come to take charge of the child.

There were occasional tantalizing glimpses of the strife which must have rocked the household

in those days. Jeanie's sympathies seemed to be chiefly with Mrs. Ephraim. That was natural enough, as Anne pointed out. The older woman represented a type with which the Scotch maid was familiar, *a proper lady like a laird's wife.* She knew nothing of the entirely different background which had shaped Doña Ignacia, and had no patience with the girl's inability to make herself over at command.

After the entry recording Captain Jack's death, however, the woman's attitude seemed to undergo some change. The new, meek, spiritless Mistress Jack apparently touched her heart, as the sullen, tempestuous one had not done. A sort of casual friendliness grew up between them; cautious on Jeanie's part, listless and indifferent on her young mistress's.

Doña Ignacia, it seemed, kept much to her room in these days. Jeanie, worried by her pallor, tried to interest her in working in the garden, enlisting the old gardener's aid. Their efforts were not successful, and the girls skimmed over those entries, seeking something more significant.

The only absorbing interest Doña Ignacia appeared to have was a tapestry square she was

embroidering in fine needle-point. Upon this she worked night and day, until her eyes were strained to dizziness. She intended this, she told Jeanie, as a wall-hanging for the nursery, that room which she was allowed to enter only for brief formal visits under the jealous eye of the hospital nurse. She begged Jeanie to assure her that "they" would let it hang there when it was finished. She repeated several times that it was for her baby, and that "whatever happened" it must be given to him for his very own.

"That's rather odd," Pat commented. "I wonder why she was so anxious? And I wonder if it *was* given to him? Jeanie didn't seem so sure that the old madam would allow it, and I know she wouldn't! It must have given her a good chance to be hateful."

Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll's New Year's Day reception for 1854 was an elaborate affair. Jeanie's diary for several days before and after was given to the splendors of the event. Then, without warning, they turned a page and came upon a longer entry, written in an agitated hand. On Jan. 10th the amazing thing had happened. Mistress Jack had vanished from the house.

Briefly Jeanie reported finding the room un-

occupied, with a sealed letter on the pillow. She told of the conversation of which they had heard from Ellen, but added some further details.

After ordering Jeanie to see that the servants did not gossip, Mrs. Ephraim had gone to Ignacia's room, taking Jeanie with her. She went straight to the tapestry square and began to take it from its frame. Jeanie, helping her, had ventured the well-meant remark that it would look pretty in the nursery.

Her mistress had turned to her *with a face like a thunder-cloud. "What do you mean by that?" she demanded sharply.*

Jeanie had stammered that Master Richard's mother had meant it for him; she had told her so. And Mrs. Ephraim had answered through tightened lips, *"Nonsense! My grandson has no need of such fripperies."*

"Exactly what I knew she'd say!" Pat triumphed. "All right, Sis. What comes next? Hurry!"

Anne turned the page. "The next day Mrs. Ephraim entertained the bishop at dinner. Plans were discussed for a new church school for young females."

"But I mean the next day—the day after

Doña Ignacia disappeared. You must have turned two pages at once, Anne."

Anne shook her head. "For negro females, it is—that would be something to do with her Abolition activities, I guess. Oh, yes, I see. The bishop was appointing her to a committee for educating the colored girls whose freedom the church was buying. She went to Boston the day after that to raise funds. All right, honey, look for yourself. 11th January, 12th January—there it is. All about this freed-slave business, and not another word about Doña Ignacia."

"But that simply isn't *human!* She went right on with her good works, just as if nothing had happened. Why, the woman must have been made of iron! But Jeanie—didn't she care? Doesn't she say anything else about poor little Doña Ignacia?"

"I can't find anything. There may be something later, after the excitement of the old madam's committee work had died down. I'll see."

"Oh, it doesn't matter. There can't be anything else that would help us—we know what Jeanie thought had happened to her. But—why, that's all, then, isn't it? All we can find out. And I can't see that it's the slightest use. I'll tell you

what let's do now, Sis. Let's go back over the diaries, starting where Captain Jack brought her home, up to here. We weren't very thorough before. Now let's read every word that mentions Ignacia at all. Maybe we've overlooked something."

"All right." Anne picked up the 1853 volume. "There was a bit I skipped over in here. Let's see. Oh, yes. *The young madam questioned me today about the Smuggler's Way. She had heard the silly story from old Denis, the gardener. I bade her not to mind a daft old man's maunderings. He told me the same parcel of fairy tales when I first came, but I paid him no heed. And advised her to do the same.*

"Denis, the gardener—he sounds nice," Pat commented. "Anyway, he tried to amuse her with fairy tales, which is more than anyone else took the trouble to do. What else does it say about him?"

"Nothing more that I can see. Oh, wait, here's something about him, but it's nothing to do with Doña Ignacia. *Mr. Lynch, the butler, was obliged to reprove Denis today. He caught the old man snooping about the wine-cellar, where the Captain's choicest port is stored. Alas, that*

the craving for drink should send honest men a-thieving. That's rather a different picture of good old Denis, dear."

"Well, I don't care, I still like him. Everybody drank wine in those days,—oh, you mean because he was trying to steal it? How does she know? Maybe he had some business down there. Anything else?"

"Not a thing." Anne straightened her aching back and rubbed her eyes. "Do you know, honey, we've been at this for three solid hours? It's luncheon time this very minute, and I'm starved. Let's wash our hands and go down."

"All right. But I'm so disappointed that it's taken away my appetite."

They encountered Ellen at the foot of the stairs. She was on her way up to call them to luncheon.

"And did ye find Auntie's diary dry readin', now?" she asked. "She was a plain, sensible body, not like them fanciful writers ye're so fond of, Miss Pat."

"She certainly says what she means, and no beating around the bush," Pat laughed. "But we're enjoying it. Oh, Ellen, listen. What was

the Smuggler's Way? Your aunt mentions it, and it seems to me I've heard something about it before, quite recently."

Ellen sniffed. "From Dougal, I've no doubt. It's just an old tale, Miss Pat. One of them legends-like that cling round an old house. There's no word of truth in it."

"Oh, yes, I remember now." Patricia crossed to the window of the music room. From outside came the whirr of a lawnmower. "Oh, Dougal!" she called. "Come here and tell me about the Smuggler's Way."

Willingly enough, Dougal left his work and came to lean against the window sill in the shade, drawing his pipe from his pocket.

" 'Twas on the tip of my tongue to tell ye that story this mornin', Miss Pat, but something distracted me."

"I know—that was when Smoky jumped and frightened me out of my wits. Tell us now, Dougal. What *was* the story?"

"Here it is, Miss Pat. Ye'll mind," he began with comfortable deliberation, "that these Heights fell into the possession of the British after the Battle of Long Island. They held them for the rest of your Revolutionary War.

The spot was used for a supply depot, and a rest billet for men and horses. A farmhouse stood on the site of this house, and it was taken over for a sort of officers' club. Gay young blades they were, by all accounts. They liked their rum and their tobacco, and they thought they were doin' enough for King George without payin' duty to him. So—this is how the story goes—they made their own arrangements with the ships that plied this way. Whiles a ship would lie to in the night just outside the harbor, and whiles she'd be visited by a small boat that did not tarry overlong. The wee boat, fair loaded wi' contraband, would tie up below here. Ye won't be forgettin' that the water stretched to the very foot o' the hill in them days? Well, ye see what the game was?"

"You mean they got their rum and tobacco straight off the ship, without its having to go through the customs and their having to pay duty?" Pat asked. "Well, I must say I don't think that was showing much loyalty to King George—and his own officers, too! No wonder we won the war, if that's what they were like. But the Smugglers' Way, Dougal. You haven't told us what it was."

"That was a secret passage through the cliff, and into the cellars of the house, Miss Pat. Dug by enlisted men who were told it was part of the military defenses, I've no doubt. Anyway, that's how the stuff was brought here, safe and secret. 'Twas never found out, so far as I know. But when the British forces were driven from these shores, and the first Driscoll got his home back, there was the Smugglers' Way waitin' for him. Whether he ever made similar use of it I couldn't say."

"A secret passage—oh, Dougal, how exciting!" Pat's eyes were shining. "Why didn't you show it to us when we were down there? I never hoped to see one! Where is it?"

"That's a question I've often asked myself, Miss Pat," he said regretfully.

She stared at him. "You mean it isn't there? Oh, Dougal! Then Ellen's Aunt Jeanie was right —it's only a fairy tale? Not a true story at all?"

"Now I didn't say that, Miss Pat. The story's true enough—ye can find it in all the early histories of Long Island. What Auntie disbelieved was that the passage was still there, after all these years. For ye must recall that the house it led to was not this one, but the old Driscoll farmhouse destroyed in the great fire of 1840. Ye'll

not be forgettin' that this is the new house Captain Jack built for his mother on the ashes of the old one."

Pat's face fell. "I *was* forgetting. This house seems so old I can't imagine its not having been here forever. But then—well, the passage couldn't still be here, could it?"

"And why not, Miss Pat? Earth doesn't burn, and the Way was not in the house, 'twas under the garden. Furthermore, it came up in the cellars, and the cellars," he said impressively, "are the *old* cellars! They didn't burn either, and for why would the Captain tear them up and build new ones? There's no style in cellars like there is in houses. Why wouldn't the old ones serve?"

"*Did* they use the old ones, Dougal?" Anne asked. "I mean, do you know it for a fact, or are you guessing?"

"Don't call it guessin', Miss Anne. It's more deducin', like. Applyin' the principles of logic. I'll admit I have no positive knowledge. But 'tis commonsense to suppose that they did so. And besides, that stone-work looks mortal old to me," he finished obstinately.

Ellen, in the room behind the girls, set down a covered dish with a good-natured thump.

"Now you've got him off on his hobby, Miss

Anne. 'Deducin',' says he! He was on the force when I married him, and he aye hankered after the plain clothes end o' police work. Him that graced a uniform like few men could! 'Twas fortunate the chief never saw it his way, though to hear him tell it there's ne'er a crime he couldn't 'a' cleared up if they'd give him a free hand wi' his deducin'. Your lunch is coolin', Miss Anne."

"Well, thanks, anyway, Dougal." Pat turned regretfully from the window and took her place at table. "I suppose it was too good to be true, a secret passage right under our feet. But after all, we've got a more exciting mystery to clear up, if we ever can. Ellen, do you mind if we keep your aunt's diaries upstairs for awhile? I've not finished with them yet."

"Honey, you'll put your eyes out!" Anne protested. Immediately after luncheon Patricia had gone back to the diaries. "That spidery, faded handwriting is a terrible strain. Can't you leave them alone for today?"

"I suppose I might as well." Patricia looked up wearily. "I've been over and over the whole five years that Doña Ignacia was here, and there's simply nothing to be made of them. I really don't

know a bit more than I did from what Ellen told us."

"Well, what did you expect? Ellen got the story from her aunt. You don't think Aunt Jeanie knew anything about the disappearance she hadn't told Ellen, do you?"

"I did think she might," Pat admitted. "But —no, I don't think so, after reading her diaries. Her surprise seems real enough. I'm not so sure about the old madam, though. She took the news of the disappearance very calmly, I think."

"Well, that's natural. That iron pride of hers would keep her from making any display before a servant, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose it would. She did show some feeling, though, when Jeanie asked her about hanging the tapestry in the nursery. I wonder if she did it, by the way?"

"Oh, I don't think so," Anne answered. "She said she wasn't going to, didn't she? Or that he didn't need such—what was her word—fripperies. It doesn't seem like a very suitable gift for a three-year-old boy. I imagine poor little Doña Ignacia meant it as a sort of keepsake to remember her by."

"She might have known the old lady wouldn't

want him to remember her, poor child. I don't suppose he was told that he ever had a mother. I wonder what he was like when he grew up? It seems odd to think that he was Doctor Dick's father."

"Why, I have a pretty good idea of what he was like, from what Doctor Dick has told us. A shy, scholarly man, wrapped up in his books and his stamp collections. He didn't marry until he was middle-aged—that would be after his grandmother's death. But he seems to have been very happy with his wife. Ellen and Doctor Dick both say she was awfully sweet, though she was so frail. Then of course he had Aunt Jeanie to mother him when he was little. I shouldn't say he had an unhappy life, on the whole."

"With that dreadful old woman? Oh, Sis!"

"She *wasn't* a dreadful old woman, dear," Anne said patiently. "You're hopelessly prejudiced against her because of the way she treated her daughter-in-law. I've admitted she was wrong there, but that doesn't mean she was wrong in everything else she did. She loved little Edward, and though she was strict about his bringing up —well, all the Victorians were. I don't think he found it at all difficult to get along with her

as he grew older. Doctor Dick joked about her, but you can tell he admired her immensely. Well, he could only have gotten that admiration from his father. Mrs. Ephraim succeeded in making a true Brooklyn Driscoll out of her grandson, and I'm sure he and she both were quite well satisfied with her work."

Pat shook her head impatiently, and went back to the diaries. Presently she looked up to say, "She told Jeanie no less than five times that she was making the tapestry for her baby. Why *do* you suppose she wanted him to have such a thing?"

"I don't know. There were lots of things we saw in her trunk that would have done as well for keepsakes. I should think—"

"Oh, Anne, I've thought of something!" Pat interrupted. *"That's* why her things were all slammed in the trunk—the old madam did it herself, 'with her face like a thunder-cloud.' And threw away the key. She didn't want the little boy to find anything that would make him ask questions about his mother. I wonder, though, why she didn't put the tapestry in there?"

Anne had no suggestions on that point, and Pat resumed her reading. Patiently now she

scanned the later diaries, which they had hitherto disregarded.

"Here's where Cousin Julia comes into the picture," she said presently. "The old madam gave a ball for Miss Julia Driscoll, home from a finishing school in Switzerland." She fluttered the pages. "And here's her wedding, to James Kinnott. 'Mistress Julia' seems to have been quite a favorite. Jeanie speaks of her 'receiving' with the old madam on New Year's Day, and helping her on committees—oh, this is dull! Not so many social affairs, and more civic projects—His Honor the Mayor must have hated the sight of her. She was always prodding at him to have the streets better lighted, and to enforce the truancy law. And Cousin Julia right at her elbow helping the good work along."

She ran through several volumes, and then picked up the one lettered "1890." It fell open at a page midway, the neat entries blotched a little as though by tears.

"The old madam's funeral! And what an impressive spectacle it must have been. Listen to the names of the honorary pallbearers." The list she read was awe-inspiring. The names of poets, preachers and statesmen, bright still in

the pages of history. Jeanie's grief had not prevented her setting down, with simple pride, the full account of the last honors paid to her revered mistress.

Patricia turned back a few pages, and then exclaimed in sudden excitement, "Why, this is funny. Sis, listen! This was written while Mrs. Ephraim was very ill, just a few days before her death."

She began to read very slowly.

The mistress sinking fast. Mr. Edward is hastening home from Paris, where the news reached him. 'Tis cruel he should have been abroad at such a time. And to think that she, herself, urged him to go, to read his paper before the foreign gentlemen.

"What do you suppose she means by that?" Pat looked up.

"I don't know. Some international society of stamp collectors, I imagine. Go on, honey."

I thank Providence that Mistress Julia is to hand. Today a queer thing happened. Mistress Julia came out to me from the sick-room and asked if I knew aught of a tapestry. The mistress

was asking for it, she said. I was fair perplexed. But at last I bethought me of the bit fancy-work done so long ago by Mistress Jack.

"You see, Sis?" Pat said eagerly.

Anne came to look over her shoulder. "Hurry!" she urged.

I took it from the back of the linen press, where I had put it when the mistress told me to get it out of her sight.

"I didn't know she'd told her that!" Pat put in. "She didn't say a word about it, back there. Well, never mind."

I brought it out, rolled in tissue paper as it was, and put it into Mistress Julia's hand. I know not if it be the one desired. I doubt the poor lady's mind is wandering. The end is not far.

It was not far indeed, for an entry three days later, the day of Mr. Edward's arrival, recorded her death. There was no further mention of the tapestry. On the night she had asked for it, the old lady had fallen into unconsciousness, passing gradually and painlessly into the deeper sleep from which she was to waken no more.

"Do you think this means anything?" Anne asked doubtfully, when they had satisfied themselves that the tapestry was not mentioned in any later entry. "I mean, is it going to be any help to us at all?"

"That's just what I'm asking myself. She wanted the tapestry when she was dying, and the reason for that seems to be plain enough. She knew Doña Ignacia meant her son to have it. Probably that was in the letter—she wasn't surprised when Jeanie spoke of putting it in the nursery, you know, she was only angry. And she went straight to the frame when she came into the room. Oh, yes, I'm sure the poor girl put her request in that letter, whatever else she may have said."

"But she never gave it to him. She had Jeanie hide it away," Anne supplied. "And then, at the very last, she was sorry, and wanted him to have it. I think she must have been sorry for a good many things by then, Pat."

"I suppose so. Poor old soul," Patricia said reluctantly. "Dying alone, without the grandson she loved, and with her conscience burdened with what she'd done to Doña Ignacia—yes, I suppose she tried to do what she could to make

things right. I—I guess I've been a little too hard on her, Sis. She made mistakes, but who doesn't? And she *meant* well, you have to give her that."

"I think I mentioned something of the sort once or twice before," Anne said gently.

"I think you did!" Pat flashed her a rueful smile. "Well, anyway, to get back to our muttons. She gave the tapestry to Cousin Julia. To give to Edward when he came home, of course. You'll agree that must have been what she wanted? All right, then. *Where is the tapestry?*"

"Goodness, I don't know, darling. Somewhere about, I suppose. How about the room across the hall, the one Doctor Dick's father used as his study? That seems the most likely place. Or maybe in his bedroom."

Pat sprang up. "What are we waiting for? Come *on!*"

It was a couple of hours later that the two girls returned to their room. Nowhere in the house was there a piece of needle-point tapestry such as Jeanie had described. Not hanging upon any wall, not stored in any linen press or attic trunk. They might have spared themselves the search, for Ellen had told them positively that the house

contained no such object, nor had she ever heard her aunt speak of it. No, nor Mr. Edward. There were four pairs of tapestry draperies for the dining-room windows, there were needle-point chair-backs in the drawing-room, there was a wool embroidered footstool which had belonged to Doctor Dick's mother. None of these could conceivably have been made from the square of fabric for which they were searching.

"There's only one thing I can think," Pat said, as she cast herself dejectedly upon the window-seat. "Cousin Julia never gave it to Doctor Dick's father at all."

"But honey!" Anne protested. "The old lady's dying request—why, she couldn't have refused to grant it. I'm sure you're wrong."

"All right, then, where is it? Doctor Dick's father wouldn't have destroyed it, would he? His only keepsake from the mother he never knew? And it wasn't in any sort of use, it couldn't wear out. If Doctor Dick's mother had been a different type, she might have thought it was too old-fashioned, and thrown it away. But she didn't change anything here. There are plenty of old-fashioned things some wives would have gotten rid of. She didn't, so why should she have done

away with the tapestry? No, he never had it. I'm sure he didn't. Maybe Cousin Julia liked it, and kept it for herself."

"She wouldn't do that, dear! Unless—of course, Mrs. Ephraim might have given it to her. For herself, I mean, instead of for her grandson."

"Why?" Pat asked simply.

Anne threw out her hands. "I don't know. I'll admit I can't think of any reason why she should. The only reason for bringing it out at all would be to comply with Doña Ignacia's wish, I should think. It's all a mystery to me."

"And to me. But Anne, at least we've found a ray of light. We know that Ignacia did want her child to have the thing, that she was almost foolishly insistent on that point. And we know, or at least we can guess, that at the end Mrs. Ephraim wanted him to have it. Well, there must have been some reason for all this. Say that the old madam's reason was just a guilty conscience. Then what was Doña Ignacia's reason? The piece of needlework wasn't something from her old home, something that she loved for sentimental reasons, and wanted to pass on to her son. She made it herself, here in this house, worked over it through all her days and nights of

unhappiness. She meant it for him all the time. She told Jeanie that long before it was done. I want to know why! And if you can't tell me that, then I want the next best thing. I want to see that square of tapestry myself. I want to see if I can't figure out why she was so desperately anxious for her baby to have it."

"Well, *I* certainly can't tell you why." Anne laughed a little at her sister's intensity. "And anxious though I am to help, I can't show you the tapestry either. So I don't see what I can do."

"Don't you?" Pat fixed her with a direct glance. "Then I'll tell you, Sis. My knees knock together and my teeth begin to chatter at the very thought, but there's only one thing to do, and you've simply *got* to help me. You promised, Anne! You will—oh, do say you will!"

"Don't get so excited, honey! I told you I'd do anything I could. What do you want me to do?"

"To come with me." Pat gulped. "I'm shaking like a leaf, just thinking about it. I'd rather —oh, a thousand times rather!—stick my head in a lion's mouth. But there isn't any other way. Sis, we're going to Cousin Julia and ask her what she did with the tapestry."

IX

To Pat's surprise, Anne had received her suggestion quite calmly, remarking only that they owed Cousin Julia a call anyway. She did warn her sister that they must be very tactful in making their inquiries, and Pat thankfully agreed to leave the task in Anne's more capable hands.

The next afternoon, carefully dressed in their very best, the girls set off down the street for the Kinnott mansion.

An elderly maid received them. She showed

them into a drawing-room somewhat smaller than the one at Four Chimneys, but similarly furnished. There the girls waited uneasily until the maid returned to say that her mistress was in, and would be down in a few minutes.

Patricia glanced casually about the spacious, stately room, and then suddenly caught her breath. Her fingers sank into Anne's arm.

"Sis! Look, hanging over the mantel there. Is it—oh, do you think that could be *it?*"

Anne followed her glance. With a gilded rod at top and bottom, hung by a tasseled silk cord, was a piece of needlepoint tapestry about a yard square. Its brilliant colors glowed above the snow-white marble of the carved fireplace with an effect of sunlight in the dusky room.

"Oh, how beautiful!" Anne exclaimed. "It looks like an oil painting."

The picture, worked in such tiny stitches that they were invisible at this distance, was divided diagonally by a thin gold line. The lower left-hand corner, in dark grays and browns, showed the figure of a young man standing in a stone-walled cell, dim with shadow. His face was turned upward, toward where, in the opposite corner, an entirely different scene appeared.

Here was a garden, bright with sun-drenched flowers and trees; a bluebird perched upon a bough; butterflies hovered about a trellis of climbing roses. And walking on the emerald-green grass was a lady, her smiling face turned toward the young man of the lower picture.

"I've never seen anything so lovely," Anne went on. "What do you suppose it represents? A religious picture, maybe? The poor mortal in prison, being cheered by a vision of paradise?"

"Who cares?" Pat asked impatiently. "Anne, you don't seem to understand. I'm asking you if that's *it*—Doña Ignacia's tapestry. The one we've come to ask Cousin Julia about. It's the right size, and there's a sort of *Spanish* look about it, though I can't tell why."

"I can. It's the lady's clothes; she's wearing a high comb and mantilla," Anne explained. "But—why, yes, it could be. It could very well be."

"Then she did keep it for herself! Oh, what a mean, horrid thing to do! It's beautiful enough to make anybody want it, but it wasn't given to *her!* It was for Doctor Dick's father, and I do think—"

"Darling, *hush!*"

There was a rustle outside the door, and their hostess entered.

Although it was a sweltering mid-summer day, Mrs. Kinnott was dressed, as they had seen her before, in stiff black taffeta, high-necked and long-sleeved. She greeted them with stately courtesy. Anne was relieved to learn that she had just returned from several weeks in Boston, so their tardiness in returning her call could not be charged against them.

Pat sat by in meek silence while her sister made conversation. Anne had a girlish dignity of her own, softened now by a pretty deference to the older woman. The questions she asked about Boston were quite sincere, and so was her interest in Cousin Julia's answers. But to Pat there was something miraculous in the way those questions and answers melted the ice of their hostess's manner. This was what Anne called "tact," she supposed. For the hundredth time Pat despaired of ever learning the technique of it. She would certainly have put her foot in it long before this if she'd been alone, she reflected now. Her glance strayed toward the glowing tapestry. When, oh when, would Anne get around to the real purpose of their visit?

She came to it by degrees, and very cleverly. First she admired a portrait, on the wall behind Cousin Julia, of a stern-faced old gentleman frowning over his high winged collar. That was dear Papa, Cousin Julia told her, painted at Paris at the time of the 1900 Exposition. Dear Papa had been American commissioner to the Exposition, and had brought home many lovely things. The collection of miniatures in the cabinet there, for instance. And the pair of Sevres vases on the mantelpiece.

With a glance at Patricia, Anne sprang up to admire the Sevres vases at closer range. And after that—

"What a lovely piece of tapestry, Mrs. Kinnott! Is it an heirloom too?"

Patricia held her breath while Cousin Julia nodded complacently.

"That belonged to my father's aunt, Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll. A very great lady, of whom you may have heard."

Then, to Pat's dismay, she embarked upon a detailed account of Mrs. Ephraim's career. Her Abolitionist activities were touched upon, the Sanitary Fair, her share in urging the building of Brooklyn Bridge, her old age divided between

the suffrage movement and the temperance crusade.

Anne, who at first had lingered hopefully before the tapestry, was obliged to return to her chair, listening with a convincing air of attention.

Pat's patience, already strained to the breaking point, threatened to snap at any minute. She looked imploringly at Anne, but the measured tones flowed steadily on over both their heads.

Finally she could endure it no longer. In a voice that by contrast sounded loud and rough, Pat broke out, "We've already heard about her, Mrs. Kinnott. What we're interested in is the tapestry."

"Indeed?" Icicles dripped from the word, as Cousin Julia turned her face toward her. "May I ask the reason for your interest in my aunt's gift to me?"

"My sister loves beautiful needlework, Mrs. Kinnott," Anne put in swiftly. "And we were admiring the tapestry before you came down. Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll must have had wonderful taste. Four Chimneys is just crammed with her lovely things."

"She was famous for her good taste." Somewhat mollified, Cousin Julia turned back to

Anne. "It is largely to her work on the purchasing committee that the Brooklyn Museum owes its exceptionally fine art collection. Many of them were her personal gifts, for she was very generous. To her friends also—she gave me some of my most valued treasures. The tapestry was her last gift to me."

Pat had been wriggling uneasily during this speech. Anne's tact was accomplishing nothing whatever as far as their purpose was concerned. What good was all this chatter? Pat had come here to find out something, and she was being put off with words. Not even true words, either, for didn't she know—

Impetuously, before her sister could stop her, she spoke. "It's no use telling us she gave it to you, Mrs. Kinnott. We know better than that."

Horrified, Anne tried to stammer something, but Cousin Julia waved her to silence. An angry flush rose to her thin cheeks. Majestically she adjusted her lorgnette and surveyed Pat in crushing silence. Then she said glacially, "I am not accustomed to being spoken to in such a manner. I await your apology."

Pat swallowed. "I apologize. I didn't mean to be rude, Mrs. Kinnott. But you said Mrs.

Ephraim gave you the tapestry—you kept on saying it! And we know she didn't. We know Doña Ignacia made it for her baby, and left it for him. His grandmother kept it from him all those years, but when she came to die she was sorry, and she tried to make amends. Edward was in Paris—she couldn't give it to him. She asked you on her death-bed to do it for her. She had Jeanie get the tapestry and bring it to you. That's why we came here," she rushed on. "We couldn't find it any place in the house, and we thought you must know something about it. But we never seriously thought that you'd kept it for yourself! That was a mean, selfish thing to do, and if I were in your place I'd be so ashamed—"

She had no choice but to stop then, for Anne had put both hands firmly over her mouth. The older girl was scarlet with mortification. She could scarcely raise her eyes to the regal figure in the chair opposite.

Julia Driscoll Kinnott sat as though turned to stone, her eyes fixed on a point far over the girls' heads—upon the tapestry, Anne thought, though she dared not turn to see. The flush which Pat's first outburst had called up drained slowly away,

leaving a deathly whiteness. When she spoke it was through scarcely moving lips.

"The persons you name are long dead. What can you know of them, child?"

Pat opened her mouth, faltered, and turned helplessly to Anne. "You tell her, Sis. I guess I've said too much already. You'll have to do it, Anne. I can't!"

As calmly as she could, Anne told of their interest in Doña Ignacia, and of their study of Jeanie's diary. In justice to Pat, she emphasized the fact that the tapestry had undoubtedly been intended for baby Edward, and gave their reasons for believing that Mrs. Ephraim had tried to carry out the trust.

"Of course, that was only what we thought," she went on distressedly. "I can see now that we were wrong. Mrs. Ephraim was in the habit of giving you pretty things, and she thought you'd like the tapestry as a last gift. We're to blame for jumping at conclusions, and I'm so sorry we've upset you. It was unpardonable of my sister to speak as she did."

"No matter." The old lady—and for the first time the girls realized that she was a very old lady—brought her eyes back to the two girls. There was bewilderment in them, and pain. She

sighed deeply, and leaned back in her chair as though suddenly tired.

"This has been a shock to me," she said feebly. "No, children, I am not blaming you. If your extraordinary story is true—but I know that it is true—it explains something—something—" her voice quavered almost into silence. Then, with a visible effort, she pulled herself together. Turning to Pat, she said simply and directly, "I did not wilfully withhold the tapestry from its rightful owner, child. Nor did I knowingly break a promise to the dead. Until this minute, I have believed that my aunt gave it to me, as she gave me so many beautiful things in her lifetime. Will you accept my word for that?"

Pat squirmed miserably. "Of course, Mrs. Kinnott. As Sis says, we jumped at conclusions. Or I did, for it's all my fault. I hope you won't blame her."

"There is no question of blame, my child. I simply want to clear the matter up. And to do that, I am asking you both to listen while I tell you exactly what occurred in my aunt's sick-room."

She hesitated, gathering her thoughts. Pat clutched tightly at her sister's hand.

"On the day of which Jeanie wrote," Mrs. Kin-

nott began slowly, "my aunt was sinking rapidly. Her mind was clear, but she was pitifully weak. All during her illness she had called for Edward, who was hurrying home from Paris. On this day she asked for him again, and I told her as confidently as I could that he would soon be here. The assurance did not comfort her as it had done before. She shook her head, while the tears rolled slowly down her cheeks. Then, with an access of strength which surprised me, she said clearly, 'It will be too late. I cannot wait. You must do it for me, Julia. Tell Jeanie to give you the tapestry.'

"Jeanie brought it, as you know. When I went back to the sick-room with it—" the old voice broke a little. "She had exhausted her waning strength in that last effort. I laid the rolled-up bundle on the bed, and put her hands over it. She pushed it toward me, and she tried her best to speak. I leaned over her, straining my ears, but it was useless. Her voice was only a whisper, a painful, urgent whisper of which I could catch no word. I did as we all do with people who are very ill. I nodded as though I understood, and tried to soothe her. She seemed satisfied. She smiled, and closed her eyes. That was the last

time she ever spoke, although we think she recognized Edward when he arrived just before the end. It has distressed me all these years that I never knew what it was she tried to tell me."

"Edward did come in time to see her?" Anne asked. "Oh, I'm glad of that. But of course she was too weak to tell him about the tapestry then."

"She was conscious for only a few seconds. Afterwards, I did remember that she had spoken of him just before asking for the tapestry. I showed it to him, and asked him whether it had any significance for him. It had none. He had never seen it, or heard of it. He urged me to keep it, saying that that was plainly her wish—he knew how often she had bought some lovely thing for me. I should have questioned Jeanie. I see that now. But I never thought—you must remember that I knew almost nothing of this extraordinary story about Captain Jack's wife. And Jeanie was too much the well-trained servant to volunteer any information."

"You didn't know about Doña Ignacia?" Pat asked.

"Only the barest facts. That Captain Jack had made an unsuitable marriage, and that after his

death his young widow had left Four Chimneys. I had an impression that she was European, but I don't know now what made me think so. I never heard her Christian name until today. The affair happened years before I was born, and we were abroad during my early years. Dear Papa was in the diplomatic service. When I returned to Brooklyn Heights as a young lady, it was an old story, long since hushed up and forgotten. Many of our fine old families have painful chapters into which it is not good manners to pry." The old voice trailed off wearily, and Pat thought with a pang how aged and frail the formidable Cousin Julia looked, now that she had cast aside her armor.

Mrs. Kinnott met her eyes with a wan smile. "I'll have Clorinda take the tapestry down and wrap it up for you, child. It must go back to Four Chimneys, of course. There can be no question about its ownership now. It belongs to Richard, as Edward's heir. Perhaps you will write and explain it all to him? Tell him I feel myself much to blame. I failed to fulfill my aunt's trust. I am bitterly ashamed, and I can only hope that he will forgive me. I shall never forgive myself."

Then Pat did an impulsive thing. Her own eyes swimming in tears, she jumped up and threw her arms around Mrs. Kinnott's neck. "I'll tell you what we'll write Doctor Dick, Cousin Julia. We'll tell him we think you're *swell!*"

X

"HERE it is at last!" Pat bounded up the stairs two steps at a time, and burst into their room. "Doctor Dick's letter, and I must say he's taken his time about it. It's nearly a month since we wrote him—I thought we'd have an answer by return mail."

She threw herself upon the window seat by Anne, who quickly closed her book and leaned to look at the letter Pat was unfolding.

My dear girls, Doctor Dick wrote. *So you've stumbled across the legend of my Spanish grandmother? You seem to know a great deal more about her than I do. All my father ever told me was that she was Spanish, and that she died when he was a baby. I never heard that there was any mystery about her death, or "disappearance," as you put it. Are you sure someone hasn't been "spoofing you," as they say over here? I can't recall Ellen's ever having mentioned her. But then, being a boy, I wouldn't have hounded her for romantic details as you seem to have done. The only family legend that really impressed me was the one about the Smugglers' Way—have you had a try at that? Dougal and I wasted hours over it when I was small. Get him to tell you about it. It's nice that the old house provides some interest during what might have been rather a dull summer for you.*

I'm sorry poor old Cousin Julia was upset about the bit of fancy-work. It doesn't mean anything to me, and wouldn't have to my father, so tell her not to give it another thought. Would you girls like the thing for your room? If so, keep it with my best wishes.

Your mother is well, and will write soon. We're invited to a garden party tomorrow, and—

There were a few lines more, but Pat laid the letter down with a queer feeling of flatness.

"He—well, he just doesn't think it's important!" she said. "And I thought he'd be as excited as we were! Why, he doesn't even care about the tapestry. He says we can have it. I never thought he'd take it like that, did you, Anne?"

"Don't look so tragic, honey!" Anne laughed. "Although she was his own grandmother, Doña Ignacia isn't real to Doctor Dick, as she's come to be to us. He never saw her trunk full of pretty clothes, nor read Jeanie's diary. I can understand why Ellen never told him anything. Her aunt was still living when Doctor Dick was a little boy, and Ellen was too much in awe of her to talk as freely as she does now."

"Yes, that's true, of course. She'd never have told us as much as she did if we hadn't simply pried it out of her. But I can't get over this sort of let-down feeling after Doctor Dick's letter. It makes me feel that we've been making a terrible fuss over nothing, and I *hate* to feel that way!"

Pat squirmed about and pressed her face dis-

contentedly against the windowpane. It was a day of gray slanting rain. Heavy clouds hung low, blotting out the harbor view they loved. Below their window Dougal's flowers drooped disconsolately.

Anne picked up her book again. "It was nice of him to give us the tapestry," she remarked. "Especially as we already have it." She glanced to where the colorful square hung between the two windows.

"Well, Cousin Julia said it must come back to the house, and you agreed yourself that it might as well hang in this room as any other. I like it. I like to wake when it's too early to get up, and lie and study it. When I'm half-asleep I can imagine myself *into* the picture, walking in the garden, picking the flowers. Like we used to do with that snow scene we had at home. Remember?"

"I remember. Those cottages with the lamplight shining out—I've spent hours imagining to myself what they must be like inside. I think all children do that with pictures, if they're the right kind. Mums told me once she used to do it, and that's why she picked landscapes for

our room instead of animals or flowers. So I'm afraid you can't claim much originality there, kiddie."

"Oh, I'm not trying to. This is a good picture to do it with, though, all the details are so clear and distinct. And speaking of Mums, darling," Pat's face brightened, "do you realize that in less than five weeks we'll be seeing her? I don't know where this summer's gone, but the first thing we know it'll be over. She and Doctor Dick will be coming back, and we'll be on our way home again."

"I know," Anne smiled. "When I think about seeing Mother, I don't know how I can wait five weeks. Her letters are awfully skimpy—I want to know *all* about London, the places she's been and the people she's met. I always heard the English were cold and reserved, but she seems to have made an incredible number of friends among them. You can tell she's having a wonderful time."

"Well, bless her, she deserves it, if anyone ever did," Pat answered warmly. "After all her struggles and hard work—oh, I'm so glad Doctor Dick had this idea of marrying her. I do think it was the brightest thing he ever thought of!"

"That seems to be his impression too," Anne laughed. "Yes, it's worked out beautifully, as of course I knew it would. They were simply made for each other. The nicest thing about it, to me, is that Mother can be at home, where she belongs. Just think, there'll be no more office for her ever again. No more dashing off on cold winter mornings, no more hurrying home to scramble dinner on the table. She'll be there, when we come in from school, waiting to hear every little thing that's happened to us—"

"And waiting with a plate of doughnuts, I hope and trust," Pat said earnestly. "Well, maybe not doughnuts every day. I suppose I could get tired of that, though it seems very unlikely. But something good. All the little extras she never had time to make for us. I suppose that sounds selfish, but she loves doing it—and besides, I never saw Mums pass up a doughnut herself. Oh, she's going to be lots happier this way, and so are we. I can't help feeling that Doctor Dick did us rather a favor when he decided to marry into our family."

"Well, he didn't do himself any harm either," Anne pointed out. "Instead of that dreary boarding-house, he'll have a real home, where his

comfort is considered, and—oh, it's going to be splendid for everybody. The only thing is, I wish he didn't have to go back to general practice. If he could just have his clinic for crippled children, the thing he's set his heart on, everything would be perfect. But I suppose there's no use hoping for that. It would cost a fortune, because the treatments would have to be free. Or else the very low fees that poor parents can pay, people like the Fiorellis. He'd have to have his own hospital and nurses, and it could never be self-supporting. If he could only find some generous millionaire to endow it for him!"

"Oh, he'll do that one of these days," Pat said cheerfully. "When the word gets around that he's been working with the great Sir James all summer, people who never thought of calling him before will decide that he's the doctor for them. And maybe one of them will be your millionaire. Doctor Dick saves his life, and in gratitude Old Moneybags will found his clinic for him. That's the way it happens in the movies."

"That sounds nice. I wish I could believe it would come true." Anne sighed, and changed the subject. "Shall you be glad to go home again, honey?"

"Oh, yes, in lots of ways. I'm dying to see the girls, and tell them all about New York. I shan't even mind school, there'll be so much to talk about. Not that I'm getting tired of Four Chimneys, mind. I'm having a lovely time here. I adore Dougal and Ellen, and Smoky. I like Cousin Julia, too, now that I've really got to know her. Do you know she's planning to give a tea for Mother as soon as she lands? She was telling me about it yesterday, while you were in her garden with old Mrs. Mountjoy. Which reminds me, I forgot to ask what you and Mrs. M. were giggling over while you were cutting flowers out there? I must say you seem to have carved out quite a niche for yourself in Cousin Julia's exclusive circle."

"Well, so have you! You're always running over to New York to match knitting wools for some of Cousin Julia's pals. Mrs. Mountjoy was telling me some of her little grandson's bright sayings, and very funny they were, too. But she also told me what a perfect little lady my sister was. Maybe that's when you heard me giggling."

"I shouldn't be surprised. Really, though, Sis," Pat said seriously, "They're *nice,* all these stately old ladies we've met at Cousin Julia's

house. Oh, they're terrifying at first, just as she was. But that's only their manner, the Brooklyn Heights manner, I call it. Underneath they're —why, they're as human as we are. It makes me wonder if even the old madam herself mightn't have had her human side, if Doña Ignacia had known enough to look for it."

"You've thought of that?" Anne asked, interested. "It's funny, but that very same thing has struck me more than once. I could name half a dozen old ladies, starting with Cousin Julia herself, who must be very like the late Mrs. Ephraim. And I think, I really think, that an American girl could have learned to get on with *her* just as we've learned to get on with them. It was Doña Ignacia's misfortune that she wasn't an American girl. Instead of trying to adapt herself, as we do, she was just as narrow and stiff-necked as they were. *Her* way was right, and any other way was wrong. No, of course I'm not blaming her, for that was the common fault of her people. It's why the old Spanish aristocracy died out so quickly when the Americans moved in. Even with all that fertile land, they were never good farmers, and they had absolutely no heads for business as Americans understand it.

They never really understood self-government, or believed in it. They were ignorant and prejudiced and blindly obstinate, and—"

"Why, *Anne!*" Pat interrupted. "Are you talking about your old friends, the Spanish *haciendados?* I can't believe it! For years you've been telling me how wonderful they were."

"But they were wonderful!" Anne laughed. "They were brave, they were loyal, they were fantastically hospitable—all of the things I've ever told you. I don't take back any of them. To me they were the most picturesque, glamorous people that ever lived on this continent. I'd rather read about the days of their glory than about any other period. But—oh, don't you see? Their period came to an end, as all periods must. Really it had ended long before, but they were living in a little cut-off world of their own. When the Americans came they brought the modern world with them, and the *hidalgos* weren't suited to it, and couldn't survive in it. And the reason they weren't, and couldn't, was because they simply refused to adapt themselves to new conditions." She drew a long breath. "That was the cause of poor little Doña Ignacia's troubles," she finished.

"I don't see that you've proved that exactly," Pat objected. "You wouldn't call Mrs. Ephraim a breath of the modern world, would you? In her own way it seems to me she was about as rigid as the Spaniards."

"I know. And of course that made it harder. There should have been some adapting on both sides, and I'm afraid Doña Ignacia would have been called upon to do most of it. But it wouldn't have hurt her to do some. I'm sure that you and I do more adapting to Cousin Julia and her friends than they do to us, and we certainly haven't suffered from it. And we haven't anything to gain from it, as she had."

"Oh, I'll agree with you that she didn't use her head," Pat answered. "At first I was heart and soul on her side, and to me the old madam was simply a dragon that some knight should have slain. But the more I find out about the whole business the more I see that there were faults on both sides. Do you remember I told you once Doña Ignacia was *real* to me, that I felt as if I knew her? Well, now, thanks to Cousin Julia and her set, I begin to feel that I know the old madam too. And what I'd really like to do, Anne, is to get both of them together,

here in this room, and talk sense to them."

Anne laughed, but there was understanding in her glance. "I know, honey. That's how I feel, too. Isn't it odd to think that two months ago we'd never heard of these people? And now—why, they might be our next door neighbors."

"Yes, that's it exactly," Pat agreed. "I'll feel that I'm deserting them when I go back to Middletown. I don't mind about the old madam—she probably wouldn't miss me much. But little Doña Ignacia, I *am* deserting her, Sis. For I promised myself solemnly I'd find out what happened to her, and I've failed completely. In spite of all our talk, we haven't *done* anything. The mystery's as deep as it ever was. Where did she go? How did she go? If I have to leave here in five weeks and never know the answer to those questions—oh, you don't know how I'll hate it, Sis! It makes me simply furious to have to give up."

"There's no use feeling that way, Pat. I'm disappointed too. But what more can we do? We did find the tapestry, you know."

"Yes, and what good did it do?" Patricia's eyes wandered to the brilliant square of fabric. "It didn't tell us a thing. I was so excited that

day we brought it home. I was sure we'd found the clue to the whole mystery. I still think we have. I think the answers are there, in that piece of cloth, if we only had brains enough to read them."

"Well, if they are, they're quite beyond the capacity of *my* brain," Anne said ruefully. "It's a beautiful piece of needlework. Doña Ignacia wanted her baby to have it. He never got it. That's the sum and substance of what I get out of it."

"Me too. And yet—" Pat got up and came to stand, scowling, before the picture. "There's more than that, there *must* be. Listen, Anne," she went on earnestly. "We've said all along that there must have been some reason for her wanting the baby to have it. Besides just for a keepsake, I mean. Haven't we?"

"You have, darling. I only said it was an odd choice for a keepsake. I never said it couldn't be one."

"Oh, *Anne!* Are you going to be helpful, or aren't you?"

"Sorry, pet." Anne smiled at the frowning face. "If it helps any, I'll agree there must have been another reason. But if you're going to ask

me what it was, you might just as well save your breath to cool your porridge, as Ellen says. For I haven't the ghost of an idea."

"All right, Sis." Pat left the picture and returned to the window seat, her face toward the gray murk outside. "Do you mind going on with your book, and not talking to me right now? I'm going to concentrate like mad. If I can once figure out that reason—if I only can!—then I'll know everything. If I can't—well, then I'll give it all up for good. So keep your fingers crossed for me, darling. And don't even breathe at me while I'm trying to figure it out!"

It was very quiet in the girls' room. The rain beat against the windows, the wood fire, which Dougal had kindled "to ward off the damp," snapped and flickered cozily. Anne had taken her book to a deep armchair beside the fireplace. It was rather a dull book, and she looked up with relief when Smoky stalked into the room and jumped into her lap. Anne closed the book and sat gently stroking the soft fur, glancing now and then to where her sister, curled in the window seat, stared unseeingly out toward the water. Pat really must be "concentrating" in earnest,

Anne reflected, for she had not even turned her head at Smoky's entrance. Ellen's cat was a favorite of the girls, and the polite little mew with which she announced her presence seldom went unheard by Pat.

The process of deep thought, Anne observed, was not a very becoming one. Pat's face twisted into curious shapes. Now and then her lips moved, or she shook her head impatiently. At last, watching, Anne saw a startled look come over her little sister's face. Then the whole expression changed. Anne was relieved, but not surprised, when, after a few minutes of intense pondering, Pat got up and came toward her, announcing soberly, "Sis, I've done it."

"That's fine, honey. Sit down on this stool here and tell me all about it."

"Hello, Smoky. Where did you come from?" Pat took the stool at her sister's feet, and shifted the willing cat into her own lap. "I think I have it, Sis, I really do. But I want you to listen and tell me what you think."

"I'm waiting, Pat."

"I started this way," Patricia began. "I tried to put myself into Doña Ignacia's place. You know, to try to feel as she felt and think as she

thought. I said to myself, I *am* Doña Ignacia. I've been terribly unhappy in this house, and now I'm going away. Maybe my mother-in-law is sending me, or maybe I'm going of my own free will. The point is that I'm going, and I'm leaving my baby behind me. I've known I was going for months now, so—"

"Wait a minute, dear," Anne interrupted. "*Did* she know it for months? What makes you think that?"

"Because of the tapestry, Sis. It must have taken months to make. And if she was making it for a special purpose she must have known when she began it."

"I see. You're leaving out the keepsake theory entirely, then? You don't think at the last minute she decided to leave him *something,* and happened to choose the tapestry?"

"I'm not even considering that," Pat said. "It could have happened, of course. But if it did—well, that's just a blind alley. That's all there was to it, and there's no earthly chance of finding out anything more. So I'm just putting that aside, and assuming that she made the tapestry for the special purpose of leaving it to her son. Don't you think I can do that?"

"Of course you can," Anne encouraged her. "You have to have something to start with, and it might as well be that. Like a geometry proposition, where you're given something 'by hypothesis,' and—"

"I wouldn't know about that," Pat said hastily. "Do you want to hear this, darling, or do you want to discuss higher mathematics? Maybe you've forgotten that I'm still struggling with first year algebra, but—"

"Don't be cross, honey. Of course I want to hear. You're Doña Ignacia, and you know you're going away. So you spend months embroidering a tapestry square to leave for your baby son. You must have had something in mind, as the radio announcers say. All right. What is it?"

"I've been waiting for you to ask me that. When I curled up in that window seat, I hadn't the foggiest idea of the answer. But now—" Pat paused impressively. "Here it is, Anne. The tapestry is a *message* to her little boy!"

Anne looked somewhat bewildered. "What kind of a message, Pat? What do you mean?"

"I don't know what kind, yet! But listen, Sis. See how reasonable it is. Say she wanted very

much to tell him something, before she went away. He was only a baby, she couldn't talk to him then. And if she left him a letter to read when he was old enough, she knew perfectly well he'd never get it. The old madam would see to that. But a really beautiful piece of embroidery to hang in his room—she'd not count on the old lady's being vindictive enough to suppress that, I suppose. She was, though—I find it terribly hard to forgive her for that!"

"Never mind about her," Anne answered. "Pat, I believe—I honestly do believe that you've got it at last. It makes me feel perfectly stupid that we didn't think of it long before."

"It sounds like the right answer, then?" Pat asked anxiously. "Oh, Sis, I'm glad you think so! It seemed like it to me, but of course I couldn't be sure."

"Well, we can't be really sure until we've figured out the message," Anne said practically. "The thing to do now is to assume that there *is* one—another 'hypothesis,' but a perfectly reasonable one, and it ought to lead us to the truth."

As though moved by one impulse, the two girls got up and went over to the picture. They stood for a moment, examining it in perplexed silence.

"How about this?" Anne ventured. "We thought when we first saw it that it was a religious picture. Suppose she's telling him that although they're parted here, they'll meet again in heaven, after they're free of this earthly prison? Would that do?"

"Oh, Anne, *no!*" Pat almost shrieked. "For—don't you see what that would mean? It's only the young man who is in prison; the woman is already in paradise. And—and I didn't even let myself think about that, when I was pretending to be Doña Ignacia. I won't believe that she meant to drown herself, I simply won't!"

"I didn't think of that," Anne said quickly. "I'm sure she didn't intend it either, honey; you know I told Ellen so. The Spanish Californians were extremely religious. She'd know that suicide was no right way out of her difficulties. So forget what I just said. There must be some other meaning, if we can only find it." She frowned at the picture. "Oh, I'm sure I was wrong, now. This doesn't look like a devout person's conception of heaven. There'd be angels somewhere about, wouldn't there? And the lady hasn't even a halo—she can't be a saint. Doña Ignacia may have been rather childish, but I don't think even

she would have pictured a saint in paradise as wearing a comb and mantilla. It's a picture of a living woman in an earthly garden, I'm sure of that now."

"I think so too. But if it isn't what you thought, then what does it mean?" Pat bent closer to the tiny silken stitches. *"Think,* Anne! Lady in garden, man in prison—"

"If he is in prison," Anne interrupted. "Don't look so startled, dear. We're only supposing that that dark stone-walled room is a prison cell. It looks just as much like an ordinary cellar."

"But why—*Anne!"* Pat clutched her sister's shoulder. "Darling, you're a genius! It isn't a prison at all, it *is* a cellar! Oh, are you wonderful!"

"Well, thanks, but I'm only guessing, you know. What—"

"But I'm not guessing!" Pat's voice mounted excitedly. "Look, look down here. There's the manhole cover over in the far corner, and there's the rusty chain trailing on the floor. It's exactly like—oh, it simply can't be any place else. You saw it yourself, when Dougal took us down. Don't you recognize it, Anne? It's the cistern room in this very house!"

"But I still can't see. Oh, it's the cistern room, all right. See, she has every detail, even the iron ring where the chain is fastened to the wall. But —but what's the *sense* of it?" Anne asked.

"I don't know, but I'm going to. This is, this really is the key we've been looking for, Sis! And it can't be so impossible to figure out, can it? Because she meant him to guess, and he wouldn't have as much to go on as we have, even. She'd have had to make it easy for him, I should think."

Excitedly at first, and then in growing dejection, the two sisters scanned the picture.

"She certainly didn't make it easy for *us,*" Pat said at last.

"There's only one thing to do." Anne tried to sound very encouraging. "We must look for something out of the way; the very slightest thing. They're hard to find, I know. To think that it's been hanging there for weeks, and we never noticed until now that the man's figure is standing in our own cistern room! There must be something else like that. Something that we haven't noticed, although it must be right under our eyes this minute."

"Such as what?" Pat asked wearily.

"I'll tell you what let's do. Let's go over the whole thing inch by inch. You take the prison corner and I'll take the other. And cheer up. If there's anything here we'll find it."

With infinite pains they set about the task. Anne brought a couple of envelopes. Shutting off with these all but a few square inches at a time, they moved slowly up the picture side by side, sharply scrutinizing every thread.

When they reached the top Anne shook her head.

"Nothing in the least extraordinary on my side. How about yours, dear?"

"I only found one thing that seemed odd," Pat answered. "And I don't suppose it means anything. Look here, Sis. Do you see this big stone the young man is standing on? It's worked in a different colored thread from the rest of the paving."

Anne followed her pointing finger. The stone-flagged cellar floor was faithfully copied; flat longish blocks worked out in brown-gray, their separating lines defined in dark brown. But the one directly under the young man's feet was done in dull gold. Now that Anne's attention was called to it it seemed to stand out quite distinctly,

although she had looked at the picture a hundred times and never noticed it before.

"Perhaps she ran out of the gray floss for that bit?" she offered. "Or she may have thought his feet wouldn't show up against the gray. Or—"

"Or a million things!" Pat flashed. "Any of them could be right, of course. But Anne, what about this? We know that she had something to say to him. Do you suppose—oh, it sounds so wildly improbable I feel silly saying it. But suppose she wanted him to notice that particular slab in the cellar? What if that *is* the message?"

"But Pat, honey, that *is* silly! Why would she want him to do that?"

"Goodness, *I* don't know why!" Pat's words fairly tumbled out. "Never mind why, just say she did. Then don't you see how everything fits in? We were talking awhile ago about that trick children have of imagining themselves into a picture. You said all children do it—remember? Probably Doña Ignacia had done it herself, so she'd know about it. Well, she planned for the tapestry to hang in the nursery. Sooner or later, as he grew older, little Edward would begin playing that game. When he woke up in the mornings, or maybe when he was in bed with—

with the measles, he'd lie and study it, the way we used to do with ours. He'd see himself in the dark dungeon, and the beautiful lady smiling down at him, telling him to come up into the sunshine with her. Oh, don't you see?"

"I can see that well enough," Anne agreed. "And—yes, I suppose a quick-witted boy would discover sometime that that very same dungeon was a cellar in his own house. But then what? I seem to lose the thread here."

"The stone slab, Sis, you're forgetting that. In the picture, one stone in the floor stands out from all the others. It doesn't in the real cistern room; at least, I didn't notice anything peculiar about any particular stone, did you? It certainly wasn't made of gold. But there is something different about it, and Doña Ignacia knew it. That was what she wanted to tell her son."

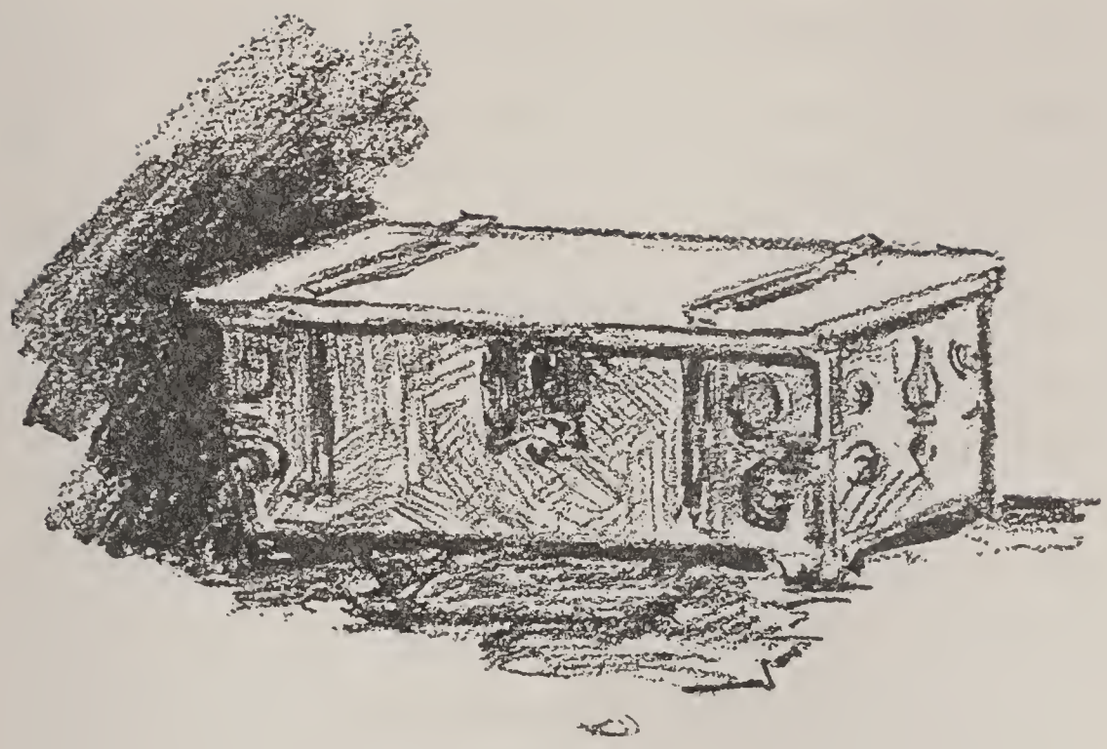
"And she worked this whole enormous tapestry, spent months and months on it, just for that? I'm sorry, Pat, but I can't see any sense in that theory. There's four times as much work on the garden part as there is on the cistern room, which you say is the important part. Why did she bother with the garden at all, if it doesn't mean anything?"

"I'm not saying the garden doesn't mean anything," Pat answered impatiently. "It doesn't mean anything to me now, and the gold stone does. Maybe the garden was just to make the picture attractive, so he'd study it a lot. Maybe it has some other meaning of its own that we can puzzle out later. But right now—and for the very first time since we decided to go to Cousin Julia—there's something we can *do!* And what we're standing around talking for I can't imagine!" Pat drew a deep breath. "Surely the message is clear enough now?"

" 'Go and look at a certain spot in the cellar floor'—that's what you think she meant to say?" Anne asked. "Honey, you're beginning to convince me."

"At last!" Pat pulled her toward the door. "Oh, Anne, this is exciting! After all our work and worry, at last we're beginning to get some place! The cellars are kept locked, aren't they? Darling, hurry. I want Dougal!"

"Wait a minute, dear. We'll need the tapestry," Anne began taking it from the wall, but Pat was already halfway down the stairs. Her own excitement rising, the older girl followed with the picture.



XI

Ellen had put on her raincoat and rubbers and had gone to market, but the girls found Dougal sharpening knives in the kitchen. He looked up in surprise as Pat burst into the room, with Anne close behind her.

"Come and unlock the cellar for us, Dougal," Pat cried. "We've made the most amazing discovery! At least, we think we have. Anyway, we can't wait a minute to see if it means anything!"

"Discovery, Miss Pat?" Dougal laid aside the carving knife and whetstone. With maddening deliberation he rose to his feet. "And what

would you be like to discover on a dull rainy afternoon, now?"

Pat seized the tapestry from her sister and eagerly pointed out the gold-worked stone. Dougal, of course, knew the story of how Cousin Julia had given them the panel several weeks before. They had found in Dougal a sense of the romantic which was lacking in practical, good-natured Ellen. He had sympathized fully with their desire to penetrate the mystery of Doña Ignacia's fate, and had been almost as disappointed as Pat when their quest seemed to have ended in failure.

His blue eyes kindled now at the hint of a new clue.

" 'Tis like ye've got hold of something this time, right enough!" he exclaimed, as he took the bunch of cellar keys from their nail. "What the meanin' of it may be is still to seek, but if the answer lies in the old cistern room—well, let's be gettin' on with it."

It was damp and clammy in the dark cellars on this rainy day. Anne shivered a little as she followed Pat and Dougal through the furnace room, and down the narrow passage. Dougal had not forgotten his electric torch this time, and the

strong beam cut a path before them in the darkness. But the light, instead of making the place more cheerful, only heightened the blackness of the shadows.

On their previous trip to the cellars, Anne remembered, she had felt very grownup and superior when little Pat gave way to fright in the darkness. But now—a hanging cobweb touched her cheek, and she bit back a scream. Tucking the rolled-up tapestry under her arm, she broke into a run that brought her, breathless, beside Dougal and Pat at the entrance to the cistern room.

"Goblins chasing you, my sweet?" Pat asked with a touch of malice. "Surely my courageous sister isn't running from shadows? I'm surprised at you."

"I'm surprised at myself," Anne acknowledged. "I lost the light when you and Dougal turned the corner there, and—oh, you're quite right, Pat. This *is* a spooky place down here. I don't wonder you shrieked when Smoky pounced on you."

"I'm glad to hear that—you were just a little bit critical the day it happened," Pat told her. "Don't let's stand here squabbling, though. We

have work to do. Dougal, will you shine your torch down on the floor? There, that's what I told you, Sis. Not one of the stones looks the least bit different from the others. How can we tell which one she meant?"

"We'll have to count off." Anne unrolled the tapestry. "I only hope she's put in the number of squares the floor really has. If she hasn't—here, hold this end, will you, Dougal?"

"Five one way and seven the other." Pat had been hastily counting the stones under their feet. "How about that, Sis? Does it check with the picture?"

"Just exactly." Anne's end of the tapestry wavered a little as she bent closer, tracing the pictured stones with her finger. "The wall with the door is missing, but we're supposed to be looking from that direction, I think. Yes, the man-hole cover is in the far left-hand corner. That's right. Then the golden stone must be over here, on the opposite side. One, two, three, four—five from the door, Pat, and two from the wall. Have you found it?"

"This must be it." Pat counted carefully, and then dropped to her knees in the dust.

"It looks exactly like the others to me," she

added. "I can't see any difference in the color, or in anything else. It's the right one, though, five from the door and two from the wall. I wish I knew what to do now!"

"Would ye be takin' the torch, Miss Pat?" Dougal hurried forward. "I'll just give it a good goin' over for ye."

He took a penknife from his pocket, and bending low, he began to scrape the surface of the stone. Anne hurriedly rolled the tapestry and came to stand beside Pat. The rays of the torch made a strong steady circle upon the stone before which Dougal knelt.

"Here's a strange thing," he said presently. The blade of his knife, instead of gritting over worn stone, had sunk into some crumbly gray substance.

"Putty!" Dougal lifted his head to smile at them. "I'm thinkin' we've found something out of the way, right enough. The stone at this end is hollowed out, like, and then filled level with putty to deceive the eye. Have patience, Miss Pat, while I just scrape it clear."

The girls waited for what seemed endless minutes, with no sound in their ears but the scrape of knife against the stone. Then, under their eager

gaze, something took shape. A half-circle of rusty iron, its ends fast in the stone slab. The hardened putty, stone-colored and smoothed over it, had concealed it very cleverly.

"But what's it for, Dougal?" Pat demanded, as the last crumb of putty fell away. "Have you any idea?"

"I think so, Miss Pat. Stand clear, and we'll soon see. Would ye both mind steppin' a bit farther off? There, now."

Keeping as far away as possible himself, Dougal bent over, caught the iron ring in both hands, and pulled strongly. As easily as a cigar box opening, the stone slab moved on its concealed hinges and rose straight in the air. Where it had been, black darkness yawned. A breath of chill, musty air puffed out into their faces.

"Glory be!" Dougal exclaimed in awed tones. " 'Twas here, then, just as I always said! Eh, but I wish Master Richard could be with us the day. Wait until I tell Ellen. Ye'll laugh at the sight of her face. A fable, she says, a fairy tale for children! And here it lay, under her feet the whiles."

Pat caught his arm and shook it impatiently. "Dougal, what *are* you talking about? Don't

stand there gibbering about Ellen—tell us! What do you think this hole is?"

"Dinna ye ken, Miss Pat?" Excitement thickened Dougal's Scots burr. "What else can it be? Happen we've hit upon the Smugglers' Way!"

"The air seems pure enough," Dougal admitted cautiously. He had dropped a lighted match into the opening, and they could see the little flame burning steadily a good ten feet beneath them.

"Then we're going down!" Pat fairly danced with excitement. "Oh, Dougal, of course we are! See, there are steps here at the side. Come on, what are we waiting for? Sis, you want to go, don't you?"

"Of course I do," Anne agreed. "But wait a minute until I get my breath. I'm still gasping from seeing the ground open under my feet. I'd forgotten all about the Smugglers' Way. I wasn't even thinking of it. I still don't see what it has to do with Doña Ignacia."

"Don't you?" Pat sounded a little pitying. "Why, Sis, it's as clear as it can be. This is the way she went. This is how she disappeared from the house without leaving a trace. Think, honey!

The Smugglers' Way leads out to the harbor, Dougal said so. There were ships there, plenty of them, bound for California. Bound for Europe and Asia and Africa too, for that matter, for we still don't know whether she went of her own accord or was taken. Oh, if we only knew that! I'm doing my best to think well of the old madam, but—she *could* have done it, Anne. I have a horrible picture of that poor girl being carried down here at dead of night, tied and gagged, maybe—shipped off to some strange land—" Pat's eyes dilated in the torch-light.

Anne, waisting no time, seized her by the shoulders and shook her thoroughly. "That will be just about enough of that, Pat. If you want to be melodramatic, you can come upstairs and do it. Upstairs, where it's warm, and there's—there's daylight!" Anne's teeth chattered, and she drew her sister to her. "I'm sorry I was rough, dear. But this place is so—so weird—and when you began that terrible description—well, it just seemed to me that I couldn't bear to listen to it!"

"Why, Anne, darling!" Patricia patted her shoulder in genuine concern. "I didn't mean to upset you, honestly I didn't! You don't usually pay any attention when I let my imagination

run away with me—maybe that's why I do it," she said candidly. "I can always count on you to jerk me back when I begin to get myself good and frightened. I won't do it again—not down here, anyway. And now come on, we're going to explore. Dougal—why, what have you got there?"

"Something I found on the step in the hole here, while you young leddies were squabblin'." Dougal looked relieved as the sisters turned smiling faces toward him. Like most grownups, he was unable to distinguish between a sisterly argument and a genuine quarrel. Now he quickly accepted the new topic.

" 'Tis a penknife, a mortal old one." He held it out to them. "There's a name scratched on the handle, but my eyes are not too good. Can ye make it out, Miss Pat?"

She took the knife and held it under the rays of the torch. The name was rudely carved on the worn wooden handle. "Denis O'Toole," Pat spelled out. "Anyone you know, Dougal?"

"I don't mind the name," Dougal was beginning, when Anne interrupted him.

"Denis—why, that was the gardener in the old madam's time, Pat. Don't you remember, in

Jeanie's diary? She never mentioned his last name, but—Dougal, listen. Where is the wine cellar? The one where they kept Captain Jack's choicest port?"

Dougal, looking a little startled at the unexpected question, answered promptly, "That would be next door, Miss Anne. The two rooms adjoining this were both filled with wine-bins. But may I ask why—"

"Oh, Sis, how clever of you!" Pat broke in. "Did you find the knife *inside* the hole, Dougal? Then that means Denis did know about the passage! That's what he was doing down here when the butler caught him, and thought he was trying to steal Captain Jack's wine. I wondered how Doña Ignacia came to know the secret of the trap-door, but I can see it all now. Denis told her."

"She was quite friendly with him, Jeanie said," Anne supplied eagerly. *"I've* been wondering, Pat, if you were right about her escaping by the Smugglers' Way—well, who puttied up the ring afterward? But this explains it. It would have been Denis, of course. And that proves she went of her own free will," she reminded her sister emphatically.

"Yes, dear." Pat's tone was unusually meek. "Well, Dougal, we're ready if you are. Let's get going."

"Let me go first, with the light," Dougal warned. "And don't crowd too close to me, please. It may well be that the roof has fallen in, down below, after all these years. I misdoubt but ye'd do well to wait here till I take a look-see on my own."

"And let you make all the discoveries first?" Pat scoffed. "You know there's not a chance, Dougal. But we'll be careful, won't we, Sis? You go on ahead, and if you see a dangerous spot just let out a yell, and we'll stop dead in our tracks."

"Mind ye don't forget, then." Dougal squeezed himself through the narrow opening and stepped cautiously on the first wooden stair. It creaked a little, but bore his weight firmly. The girls waited until he reached the bottom, and then followed one at a time.

The three explorers found themselves standing on a well-paved floor. The tiny empty room was stone-walled on three sides. On the fourth a passage led off into darkness. Giving Dougal

a reasonable start, the two girls followed him through the arched doorway.

The passage, about a yard wide, was high enough for the sisters to walk erect, although tall Dougal was forced to stoop uncomfortably. As he entered the corridor he stumbled, and called back to them, "Mind your ways, there. A bit rubbish is lyin' about." The girls heeded the warning, and stepped over the dusty box which had partly blocked the doorway.

The passage was very damp, with little trickles of moisture oozing down the greenish stone walls. Cobwebs hung thick. Spiders, and beetles of some unknown species scurried up the walls and beneath their feet. Ahead of them Dougal gave a shout, and waved the torch. With a terrified squeaking, two giant rats leaped past into the darkness.

"Good gracious!" Pat clung to Anne's arm. "I always thought secret passages were romantic —nobody ever told me there were *things* in them! Ooh, save me, Sis, I'm sliding!"

The passage had sloped sharply under their feet. So steep did it now become that grooves had been cut in the stone floor. Even with each other's help, the slimy damp made the going

treacherous. The girls clutched each other and moved with the greatest care.

"I don't envy the smugglers rolling heavy casks up this hill," Anne observed presently. "I suppose it has to be steep, though, to get down to the water's edge. Look, Dougal's stopping. Have you found something?" she called out.

He beckoned them to approach. Pushed to one side of the path was a smashed packing-case, straw gaping through its broken sides.

"A relic of the smugglers, I'm thinkin'," Dougal chuckled as they came up. "Some careless lad slipped with his burden here, and came to grief." He prodded at the straw with his toe, and a tinkle of broken glass answered him. "Watch out, Miss Pat," he warned, as she bent over the wreckage. " 'Tis a likely spot for spiders' nests. And rats too, most likely."

Pat hastily drew back. "What do you suppose was in it?" she asked. "Wine?"

"Very likely, Miss Pat, or it may be spirits. Not milk, for sure, but the same proverb still applies. 'No good to cry over it—' ye'll mind that one? Smashed to bits they were, all the dozen bottles or so. But 'tisn't likely them gay young British officers wasted any tears, for I'm thinkin'

there was plenty more where this come from."

"I'm rather glad we saw that," Pat said, as they walked on. "It makes the smugglers more real, don't you think? I know they were actually here, but it all seemed sort of shadowy before. But now—why, I can just see them, toiling up this path with their boxes and barrels, watching their step just as we're doing, and one of them falling down in spite of all his care. I wonder if he was scolded for it? I hope maybe he was the last in line, and nobody noticed—why, where's Dougal got to?" For sudden dimness had fallen on the passage, and the tall figure ahead had disappeared.

"He turned a corner, I think." Anne hurried her sister along. "We must be getting toward the end of the passage, surely. It seems to me we've been traveling this road for *weeks!*"

They rounded the corner and found Dougal a few paces beyond.

"Well, here we are, young ladies," he said wryly, as they came up. "This is where the trail ends, in a stone wall."

"But there's a door, isn't there?" Pat cried. "It can't just *end.* There's a way out to the harbor, Dougal, you said so. Bring the torch closer."

Her keen eyes searched the wall, and then she laughed. "There it is, Dougal, just above my head. Do you see? An iron ring like the one upstairs. Pull it, quick. I'm dying to see where we come out."

Seizing the ring, Dougal gave a mighty tug. Nothing happened at first, and it was not until he had tried several times, exerting all his strength, that the stones began to move. A whole section of the wall-stones had been cemented together to form a door which gradually and grudgingly swung toward them.

Dougal flashed the torch into the opening, and then stepped back.

"Take a look, Miss Pat," he said ruefully. "But I'm afraid ye're in for a disappointment."

He stepped aside, holding the light high. The opened door disclosed no exit from the passage. Instead, blocking the aperture, was a second wall of solid stone.

"Another door?" Pat asked hopefully.

Dougal shook his head. "This here will be the retainin' wall that extends all up and down the street where the warehouses are. Ye recollect, Miss Pat, the drop down from our garden, and the great wall there? 'Twas the city built it, to

keep the soil on the Heights from washin' down into the bay and siltin' up the harbor. They'll have put no trick doors in *their* wall."

"Oh, I remember, Dougal," Anne put in. "You told us about that the first day we came. But this door we've just opened—where does it come from, then?"

"To my thinkin', this is the way of it, Miss Anne. The door is in the old wall, the ones the Driscolls built before the Revolution, to protect their property. When the British lads built their passage, they converted a section of that wall into this door. It wouldn't show from the outside, naturally; otherwise the passage could not have been a secret one."

"I remember, you did tell us the property-owners built their own walls long before the city's," Anne said. "Go on, Dougal."

"Aye, Miss Anne. The old wall served its purpose well enough, but 'twould not be on the massive scale of the municipal one. Well, the city engineers came along, and they saw no need to spend time and money rippin' out the old wall. They laid their fine new one on in front of it, never knowin' they were sealin' up the smuggler door."

"Oh, what difference does all that make?" Pat broke in impatiently. "Anne, I'm so sick about this I could sit right down here on the ground and *howl!* All my beautiful theories, there they go! I had it figured out so perfectly. Old Denis discovered the secret passage, and told Doña Ignacia how she could escape. He helped her get safely away—probably he had a small boat waiting at the foot of the garden, and rowed her out to the ship. Then he came back through the passage, closed the slab and put new putty around the ring, so no one could discover it—oh, it was a *beautiful* theory! And now, just l-look at the thing!" She was not far from tears.

Anne said gently, "Hold on a minute, pet. What's happened to your theory? It sounds perfectly good to me."

"Now?" Pat stared at her. "But it's ruined, Sis! What good would it have done her to get this far? She'd only have had to turn around and go back. The passage ends in a solid wall."

"Dougal, you tell her. You did tell us that day in the garden, but in her excitement Pat has forgotten. When was the city wall built?"

"Ye keep your wits about ye, Miss Anne," Dougal said admiringly. Then, turning to Pat,

" 'Tis true enough, what your sister's gettin' at. The city put up their wall in the late '80's, Miss Pat. Many long years after the little Spanish madam left this house."

"Oh! Oh—why, how utterly *stupid* of me!" Pat laughed. "I knew that as well as either of you, but I get so mixed up over new and old around here. Everything's old, so far as I'm concerned—*I* can't tell the Revolutionary period from the '50's and the '80's, and I keep forgetting. But—then Doña Ignacia could have gone through this door here? The outside wall wasn't even thought of in her time? Oh, that's grand. Then I don't have to give up my theory, after all."

The steep climb back was something of an anticlimax. Dougal, justified in his long-held conviction that the Smugglers' Way really existed, was the most cheerful of the trio. Ellen would have to swallow all those slurs at his "deducin'," now, and he was anxious to carry the news to her.

The two girls were disappointed that the passage had thrown no further light on Doña Ignacia's fate. It was all very well to weave theories, as Pat had done, but it would have been comforting

to find a foundation of fact for those theories. With Denis' help, the Spanish girl could have made her escape this way, but that was all that they could say positively. Whether she actually did so—

"If only *she* had dropped something!" Pat mourned. "Denis lost his knife, so we know he was here. But if only Doña Ignacia had left something—anything, for us to find! A handkerchief, or—oh, I don't care what! But you do believe my theory, don't you, Sis? Even if I've nothing real to prove it by?"

"Why, yes, I think it's the only reasonable one," Anne answered. "There's just one point that bothers me. Why did she leave her baby behind? Why, when she planned her escape, didn't she plan to take him with her?"

"But Anne, she couldn't! She never even saw her baby, except under the nurse's eye. What chance would she have had of getting him to herself for a thing like this? And even if she could, there's something else. Do you think the old madam would ever have let that happen? She didn't try to have Doña Ignacia followed and brought back, but that was because she didn't care. The poor girl was only a nuisance around

the place. But the baby was a different matter entirely. *He* was a Driscoll. She'd have scoured the seven seas to get him back, and she'd have succeeded. She had money, and influence—why, I don't doubt she could have had gunboats chasing any ship that was carrying her grandchild away! Don't you see how it was, Sis?"

"I hadn't thought of that," Anne admitted. "Yes. I suppose you're right. Oh, be careful, Pat—"

Patricia, reaching for her arm on a slippery stretch of floor, accidentally gave her sister a push which sent her sprawling.

"Darling, I'm so sorry!" She bent to help Anne to her feet. "Are you hurt?"

"Not a bit. I forgot to watch out for that old box by the doorway, and when you bumped me I tripped over it."

"Box? But we passed the broken packing-case away back there. Oh, my goodness, we're back where we started from, aren't we? I wasn't noticing."

Pat followed to where Dougal was waiting in the small room with the steps, where they had begun their exploration of the underground passage.

Anne, pausing to rub a spot of mud from her

skirt, asked idly, "What is this box, anyway, Dougal? I nearly fell over it when we went down, and this time I really did bark my shins on it."

"I know nought of it, Miss Anne. Happen it's more of the smugglers' gear. Would ye like to have a look at it?"

Dougal dragged the box to the foot of the steps and turned his torch upon it. Although small, it was remarkably heavy. A cloud of dust rose from the lid as he let the end thump to the floor.

"Looks old," Anne commented. "It isn't broken like the other, anyway. Can you open it, Dougal?"

The chest, of rough unpainted wood, was strongly iron-bound with massive strips and corners. There was no lock, but it was held tightly shut by an iron hasp in which heavy wire had been twisted.

"Just a minute, Miss Anne. If ye'll take the light—" The rusted wire gave little trouble. In a few minutes Dougal had freed the catch. The girls bent forward as he raised the lid—

"I don't believe it," Patricia said flatly, a few minutes later. "Such things simply don't hap-

pen, not outside of books and movies, anyway. And they certainly don't happen to *me!* It's a joke, isn't it, Dougal? Maybe it's one you thought up yourself, just to fool us. Dougal, did you? It's *somebody's* joke, anyway, and I'm not going to be simple enough to be taken in by it. All these little bits and chunks of shiny stuff—they're not real gold! They can't be! You might just as well own up, Dougal. You *are* playing a trick on us, aren't you?"

"Me, Miss Pat?" Dougal's voice sounded a little dazed. "And from where would I be gettin' a chest of solid gold nuggets to play tricks with? I'll tell ye straight, I'm as mystified as a man can well be. It's past my understandin', and that's the truth."

"They *are* solid gold, Dougal?" Anne asked, running her hand through the gleaming mass. There were small bean-sized pebbles and larger cinder-shaped nuggets, all of shining yellow metal. The chest brimmed with them, winking in the torch-light. "They aren't brass, or something like that?" Anne finished doubtfully.

Dougal picked up a good-sized chunk and set his strong teeth in it. The marks showed quite plainly when he held it to the light.

"Ye can't do that with brass, Miss Anne. I'm no expert, mind, but I don't think there's any doubt. This is pure virgin gold, just as it came from the mine—and a rare rich one it must have been! This has not been melted down, nor worked in any way. Ye can put your mind at rest there, Miss Anne. Where it comes from I've no more idea than the man in the moon, but 'tis true gold, make no mistake about it."

"And you *don't* know where it came from, Dougal?" Pat persisted. "No, of course you don't, if it's real gold. I thought at first—well, you know that box of candy Doctor Dick gave me last Christmas, Anne? It was called the 'Treasure Chest.' Every piece was wrapped in gold foil, and it looked exactly like this. It was the first thing I thought of, when Dougal lifted the lid. But—why, then I can begin to get excited now! There's something to get excited about! This is real!" She scooped up a handful of nuggets and examined them delightedly.

"That's what Dougal has just been telling us, honey." Anne tried hard to keep her voice as calm as usual, but she found it difficult. "Where *did* they come from, Dougal? Can't you even guess? The smugglers, do you suppose? But

why would they leave such a treasure here? Why, this must be worth—goodness, I can't imagine how much money! There must be a fortune in this box."

"Ye may well say that, Miss Anne. Gold is sellin' in the market at thirty-five dollars the ounce. If the chest is full, as it seems to be—well, it fair takes my breath away to think of it!"

"What do you mean, if it's full?" Pat demanded. "You don't think they put pebbles on the bottom, like that Arabian Nights story, do you? We'll soon see about that."

She plunged both hands deep into the mass of metal, stirring it vigorously.

No disappointing pebbles disclosed themselves. There had been no Arabian Nights deception here. Right to the bottom the chest was filled with genuine gold nuggets. But under Pat's energetic manipulation something else worked itself into sight, something the sight of which caused her to emit a joyful whoop. Quickly she pounced upon the sharp white corner of an envelope and drew it from the gleaming hoard.

"A letter! Oh, what luck! Look, Anne, it's sealed with a big blob of purple wax—I didn't know anyone used sealing wax nowadays! But

what am I thinking of—this wasn't done 'nowadays,' was it?" While she babbled excitedly she was turning the letter over with shaking hands. It was addressed in faded, violet ink. Pat wrinkled her brows perplexedly. "I can't make it out at all. If it's a name, it's a funny one."

"Let me see." Anne took the envelope from her. "*'A mi hijo pequeño,'*" she read slowly.

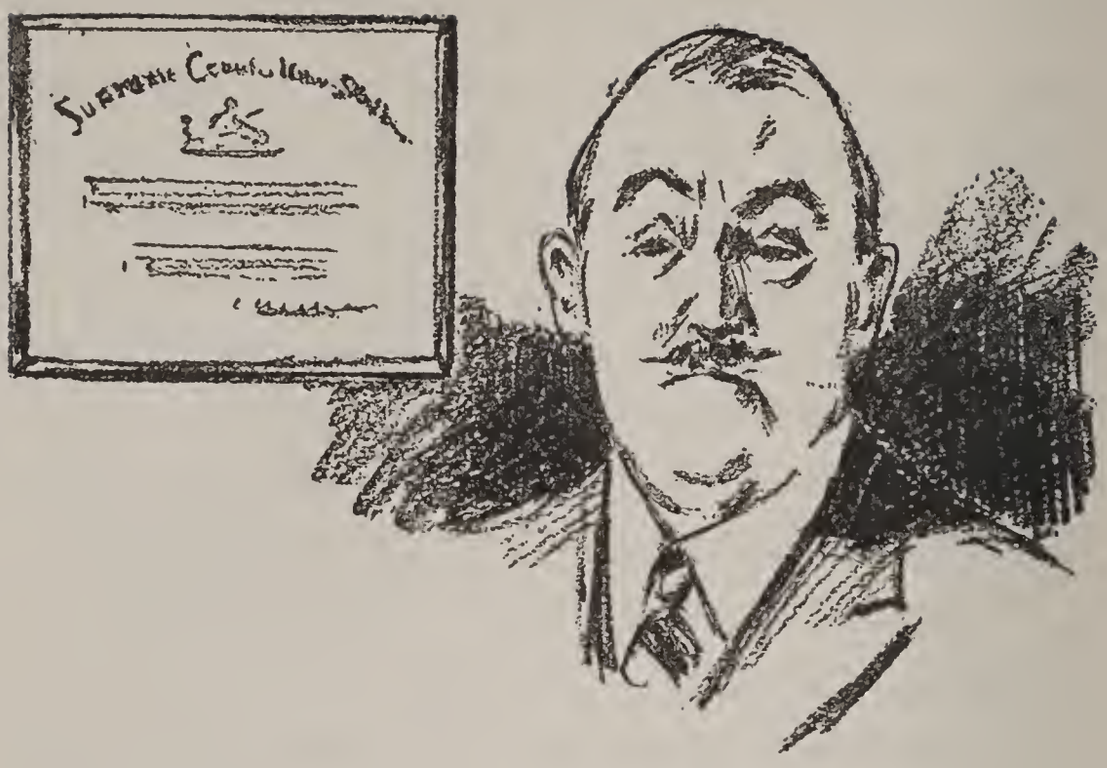
"And who would he be?" Pat demanded. "I never heard of him."

"I think you have, dear. It's Spanish, and it isn't a name."

"Anne, you're *cruel!* You're just keeping me in suspense on purpose! Tell me quick! What does it mean?"

Anne smiled at her, but her own voice trembled with excitement. "It means," she said slowly, "To my infant son."

"Doña Ignacia!" Pat shrieked. She threw her arms about her sister and hugged her rapturously. "*She* left the gold—and there's a letter to tell us all about it! To tell us all about everything! Oh, darling, and to think I was ready to give up. We've done it, Anne—we've done it after all!"



XII

"HERE's the Spanish dictionary!" Patricia burst into the kitchen, raindrops glistening on her dark curls. "I ran all the way to the library, and every step back. How far have you got, Anne? What does she say?"

"I haven't gotten anywhere yet," Anne admitted. She was seated at the kitchen table, the newly-found letter before her, pencil and paper at her right hand. "The writing is terrible, and the spelling is no better. I've always heard that the Spanish Californians cultivated the social graces and neglected the three R's, but I never realized before what a good job they made of it.

Oh, it's from Doña Ignacia, all right. See, here's her signature. But I haven't been able to make out the first paragraph yet."

"Well, my goodness—you took Spanish last year! I thought you knew it."

"I thought so too. But I'm used to reading print, and the words I know are spelled correctly. When they're not, how can I be expected to recognize them? I'm doing the best I can, honey, and the dictionary will be a help. If you'll just sit down, and stop breathing down my neck—"

"All right. But do hurry! I don't see how I can wait another minute."

Fortunately for Anne's peace of mind, Ellen came in just then. Scarcely giving her time to set down her market basket, Pat and Dougal seized upon her with their exciting news.

Dougal had carried the heavy box of gold up from the cellar, so that it was easy to overcome her first incredulity. It was her husband's idea that she should apologize for ever doubting that he had properly "deduced" the existence of the Smugglers' Way, and she did so very handsomely. The sight of the treasure almost overwhelmed her.

"And ye think it belonged to young Mrs.

Jack?" she asked. "But indeed I don't see how that could be, Miss Pat. She had no gold, poor lamb. Her family were land-poor, Auntie always said. They had that great farm—rancho, didn't they call it? And that was all. She brought no dowry to Captain Jack, and after his death she was dependent on the old madam. If she'd had wealth of her own she could have got away, seems like."

"But she did get away," Pat pointed out. "And she did have the gold, because here it is. She left it for her son—or at least, I suppose she did. We found the letter in the chest. We'll know the truth about the whole business when Sis gets the letter translated, if she ever does."

"Then maybe we'd better keep quiet, Miss Pat, and give her every chance. For 'tis a queer tale, and I own I'll be glad if we can get to the bottom of it."

Ellen began to shell the peas she had brought for dinner, and Pat sat down to help her, trying her best not to fidget. Dougal picked up the morning paper, but the glances he stole at Anne from time to time showed his complete lack of interest in the European situation.

Outside the skies slowly lightened, until in a

sudden burst of glory the sinking sun sprang free, its rays touching the harbor waters to gold. Water dripped steadily from the eaves of the old house, but out in the garden the rain-lashed flowers lifted timid heads and sent out a wave of fragrance. A fat robin forsook the shelter of the grape-arbor and hopped busily in the drenched grass.

Although by a superhuman effort she was keeping quiet, Pat's eyes hardly left her sister. She noted now that Anne's frowning intentness had lessened. She was scribbling steadily, referring often to the dictionary, and nodding to herself as some difficult phrase fell into place.

Finally she picked up the paper in her own handwriting and read it through. She struck out a word, changed a sentence, and then gave a little sigh of satisfaction. Looking up, she smiled as she met three pairs of anxious eyes.

"I think I have it at last," she said quietly. "My translation is pretty rough—I've had to do a lot of guessing. But I think I've got the sense of it, anyway. Listen."

The room was very still as she began to read in her soft, pretty voice, which trembled a little in some of the passages.

Dear my son,

This comes to you from the hand of your unhappy mother, and is for no eye but your own. If you think to condemn me, wait, I pray you, until you know all.

I am a Castillero, in whose veins flows the proudest blood of Old Spain. I can no longer endure life among these barbarian Yankees, whose only thought is money, money, money! My Mama warned me that it would be so, but I was a heedless, reckless girl, blinded by love. Had death spared your father I might have won through to happiness, but with his going all hope departed. The woman who is his mother is my enemy. I will speak no evil of her, but it is right that you should know the truth. I cannot breathe under her roof.

I go to my own people. Old Denis, the gardener, has been my good friend. I have rewarded him, but I commend him to your lasting esteem. For he found a seaman to take a letter to my Mama, telling her of my miserable lot. He received the reply and brought it to me, and with his help we have made a most careful plan. It has required many months to work out, but now all is ready. I leave this house tonight.

This is our plan, my son. At midnight tonight a small boat will lie at the water's edge. At its oars will be Juan Bautista Mendez, faithful servant of the Castilleros. He arrived at this port several days ago, bearing from my Mama a chest of the gold newly-discovered upon our rancho. Denis will guide me to Juan's boat, by way of a hidden passage of which he alone knows the secret. She, thy grandmother, would not permit of my departure, and it is vital that she should not know. I shall leave a letter under her door, telling her that she will be troubled with me no more.

My heart bleeds, my son, that I cannot take you with me in my flight. But my Mama, who is very wise, counsels against it. And indeed it is true, what my Mama says. She, the grandmother, would not brook your loss, as I think she will mine, who am of slight consequence to her. The sailing-master also, who is Juan's friend, refuses to take the risk of your presence. With a torn heart I have yielded to their persuasions.

If I were wise, I should say farewell to you forever. But oh, my little one, that poor bleeding heart yearns over you! Already, in your baby innocence, you are being taught to disdain me. It is better, believe me, it is far better that I go

now, leaving not even a memory to mar your peace.

In my despair I have contrived a device which brings me some comfort. My letter to your grandmother will make one last request which I can but hope she will see fit to grant. I ask her to give you—not in memory of me, but merely as a part of the furnishings of your room—the tapestry square I have made. Your poor mother is very cunning, dearest one. I have said that she need not mention my name to you. I ask only that she hang the fabric over your bed. Surely she will not refuse so slight a thing?

If this scrawl come to your eyes, it is because you have read the riddle of the tapestry. But lest there be any doubt, let me make its meaning clear. I am leaving you imprisoned in this dark house, my little one. But by lifting a colored stone in a certain cellar, you may find the way to a land which is a veritable garden of flowers and sunshine—California, where your mother awaits you. The gold which Juan brought I am leaving for you to employ to that end, for well I know that she *will never furnish the means for such a journey.*

My son, you are but an infant now, and help-

less, as I am helpless. But when you are twenty-one you will be a man. She *cannot stop you then from following the dictates of your own heart. If* she *has not taught you to hate me utterly; if you have any feeling of tenderness for the silly weak mother who flees now from what she finds intolerable—will you not take the gold and come to me? You will find me at the Rancho de Refugia, near Monterey, the home of my fathers.*

May our Blessed Lady and all the saints have you in their keeping, my small one, and send you safely to where your wretched mother waits and prays.

Ignacia del Castillero y Driscoll.

The soft voice died into stillness.

Impatiently Pat blinked back the tears. "And she waited, and prayed, and he never came! He never even *knew!* He grew up, and married, and had a son of his own. Right here in this house, pottering around with his stamp collections, never dreaming that out there in California his poor mother was waiting, and hoping! She must have thought he didn't care at all. And then he died, never knowing. Oh, I think it's terrible!"

"It's pretty sad." Anne's own eyes were misty.

"But honestly, Pat—this is another proof that the poor girl simply didn't have ordinary common *sense!* It was a reckless chance to take, pinning all her hopes to the picture. Even if he'd been allowed to have it, she couldn't be sure that he'd ever puzzle it out. Look at the years and years it hung in Cousin Julia's drawing-room, and *she* never suspected there was a secret hidden in it. Maybe Doctor Dick's father would never have suspected it either. And that would be even worse, it seems to me. To have it under his eyes all the time, and not to know."

"Yes, that would have been worst of all," Pat agreed. "In a way it's a comfort to know that he didn't have it. But I can't believe it would have happened that way, Sis. If he'd had the chance he'd have worked it out—oh, I *know* he would! Cousin Julia's too old, you couldn't expect her to imagine herself into a picture. But a little boy, growing up with it—oh, he should have had his chance! I'll never, never forgive his grandmother for that!"

" 'Twas ill done of the old madam, for sure," Ellen said seriously. "I had not thought it of a lady like her. And to let the wicked whispers go around that the poor little thing had done away

with herself—eh, she was at fault there. For was not there the letter to tell her the truth of it? I wonder she did not speak out, for well she must have known the tongues would clack in this place."

"I suppose it was that pride of hers," Anne offered. "*She* was Mrs. Ephraim Driscoll; she didn't have to explain her family affairs to the world. And I suppose she didn't like to admit that her daughter-in-law ran away because she couldn't stand living in the house with her. In a way you have to admire her, Ellen. A weaker woman would have made up some plausible lie that would have smoothed everything over. She had too much regard for truth to do that, so she simply said nothing."

"Eh, there's something in that, Miss Anne. The old madam was a rare rugged one for truth, right enough." Ellen turned to Pat, who was re-reading the letter, her face working painfully.

Ellen laid a work-worn hand on her shoulder. "Ye mustn't take on over it, Miss Pat. 'Tis a pitiful business, for sure. But remember, it's all over and done these many years. Mr. Edward had a happy enough life, in his own quiet way, and I doubt if he grieved after the mother he

never knew. He was well suited to his life here, and if he'd gone there to the far West, among them queer foreigners, happen 'twould have brought little joy to his mother or himself either. 'Tis not for us to question the ways of Providence, is it, now? It may well be that all happened for the best."

"Yes, and look ye, Miss Pat," Dougal put in. "We don't know, now, whether the poor young lady ever reached the home she loved so dear. 'Twas a long and fearful voyage—in the dead of winter, too. Many a good ship left her bones bleachin' on the rocks off Cape Horn in them days. Think how much sadder 'twould ha' been if the poor young man had followed the clue, only to find that the mother he sought had never reached her native shores."

"Well, that's the feeblest piece of consolation I ever heard!" Pat exclaimed indignantly. "The ideas you have, Dougal—oh, but I *wish* you hadn't had that one! If she got home to her 'Mama'—doesn't that sound childish and sweet? —she did have some sort of peace for the rest of her life. Even though her son disappointed her. But if her ship was wrecked—why then she never had *anything!* You can say what you like

about Providence, Ellen, but that isn't fair! Sis, you don't think it happened that way, do you?"

"Oh, no, I'm sure she got home all right," Anne answered quickly. "Dougal only mentioned something that might have happened; he didn't say it did." Anne threw him a warning glance. She knew how Dougal loved an argument, and she did not want him to go further with his well-meant effort at consolation. Since they could not know Doña Ignacia's story to the last chapter, for Pat's peace of mind and her own, Anne was determined upon the happy ending.

"Even though her son never came—and she must have had some happy years waiting for him —there was her mother, and her friends, and her old home to comfort her," Anne hurried on. "Think how glad they must have been to see her back! I expect they gave a big fiesta right away. There'd be feasting, and music—and oh, the dancing! I can just see her, in a brand-new pair of red-heeled slippers, whirling and clicking her castanets, all her troubles behind her—"

"And getting a great big hand this time!" Anne's face brightened. "They'd throw roses at her feet, instead of sitting with frozen faces and tittering behind their hands. Oh, what a

relief it must have been to her, to get back to where she could *breathe!* Her five years in Brooklyn would be like a bad dream to her, wouldn't they? And now she was awake, in her own warm, flowery country—and she'd never, never have to dream that awful dream again!"

"That's the way it was, I'm sure." Anne took the letter from her and tenderly folded it back into its envelope. But to herself she added, "At least, I hope so!"

"Miss Anne," Ellen said presently, "have you thought about all this treasure here? It'll be Master Richard's, I take it, since 'twas left for his father, and him the only heir? That box holds a goodly sum of money, I'm thinkin'."

Anne started. "Why, no, I hadn't thought about it at all, that way. We were talking about how much the gold was worth, down there in the cellar, but we hadn't got around to wondering about whom it belonged to. Because just about then Pat dived in and brought up the letter, and that put everything out of our minds but Doña Ignacia. I suppose—why, yes, of course it would be Doctor Dick's, wouldn't it? He hadn't any brothers or sisters."

"Money!" Pat exclaimed suddenly. "Money for Doctor Dick—why, Anne! It's what he wants, more than anything else in the world. Oh, you needn't snicker, Dougal. Of course I know everyone wants money, but Doctor Dick—well, he *really* wants it! Doesn't he, Sis?"

"What she means, Dougal," Anne explained, "is that Doctor Dick wants money for a special purpose. He'd like to open a clinic for crippled children—that's what you're talking about, isn't it, Pat?"

"Of course. He does the most marvellous things, Dougal—miracles, they are. There was a little boy in Middletown named Johnny Fiorelli, who'd never walked since he was born. His people didn't have any money, but they had him at the city hospital for a long time, and the doctors there did all they could. I don't know the medical side of it, of course. All I know is that they said there wasn't any hope that he'd ever be able to walk. But they had his mother bring him in every week for some sort of treatments, and that's where Doctor Dick saw him first. And he heard about an operation an English surgeon had just done on a case like Johnny's—something new, that had never been tried before."

"That was Sir James Hodson, the man he's working with this summer," Anne put in eagerly. "Doctor Dick wrote to him, and asked him whether he thought the operation would help Johnny. Sir James wrote back and encouraged him to try it, and told him just how it was done. The doctors at the hospital were all against it—they said it was too new, and they were afraid it wouldn't work. At first they even refused to let Doctor Dick use the operating room there—he had quite a battle over it. But the parents were for it, of course—it was the first hope the poor things had ever been given. So Doctor Dick did get permission to operate at last, and—"

"And it *worked!*" Pat carried on triumphantly. "Johnny Fiorelli can walk as well as I can, now! He simply worships Doctor Dick, and so do his people. But that's just one case. There are hundreds of crippled children out there in Middletown, and Doctor Dick is just *aching* for a chance to do something for them. I don't mean that he can cure them all—he's no magician, of course. But there's such a lot he can do, especially after this summer with Sir James. Only, it takes money, and lots of it. It's been just a beautiful dream of his, to have his own clinic. Remember,

Sis, we were talking about it—good heavens, was it only this afternoon? So many things have happened since, it seems like last week. Well, anyway, we were wishing some millionaire would give him a lot of money—remember? And now—" her voice deepened to awe. "Now the money's *here!* His dream can come true! He won't have to wait and hope any longer."

"Indeed, and that's a fair miracle in itself, when ye think of it," Ellen said soberly. "What ye've told us is no surprise to me, Miss Pat. When Master Richard was a wee lad he was always for doctorin' the sufferin'. Many's the broken-legged cat or dog he's brought in off the street to bind up in my kitchen. Aye, even the sparrows —I mind he fixed one once with a wooden peg whittled from a bit twig. The poor creature was flounderin' about in the grass with one leg smashed when he found it, and ye'd laugh to see the little thing hop about on the new one Master Richard gave it. Eh, he was a clever one for contrivin' to do good, that he was. And I'm right thankful the way has been opened for him to do great good now."

"And maybe you think we're not thankful!" Pat breathed. "Oh, I can't wait to tell him!

What's the quickest way, Sis? A cable? Then take your pencil and let's make one up. I suppose we can't put it *all* in a message, but we'll get it off tonight, and then we'll write him the whole story by the first mail."

Doctor Dick's answering cablegram arrived the following day. It simply instructed them to get in touch at once with his lawyer.

Pat's mouth drooped as she read the brief message.

"Why, he's not a bit excited! Do you suppose—Sis!" she exclaimed indignantly. "Do you think he doesn't *believe* us?"

"I shouldn't, in his place," Anne laughed. "After all, it's a most incredible story, Pat. And I don't suppose our cable was very clear—it's pretty hard to get something like that in a few words. Don't worry, honey, he'll believe it all right when he gets our letter, and I think he'll show enough excitement to suit you then. Now let's see, this Mr. Huntingdon—where do we find him, Dougal?"

"His office is in the National Bank Building, Miss Anne," Dougal answered. "An easy walk from here. Ye'll find Mr. Huntingdon a real

nice gentleman. I know him well. I'd walk along with ye, but 'twouldn't do to leave the house with all this gold in it. Be sure ye have him send someone for it right away, Miss Anne. I never closed an eye the night, with my old service revolver close to hand. I'll not draw an easy breath till it's safe in the bank vaults."

"That's funny," Pat chuckled. "That gold has been in the house longer than you have, Dougal, and I never heard that it interfered with your sleep before. Oh, never mind, I know what you mean. I'll be glad to see it safe in the bank too. Come on, Anne, let's go and dig out Mr. Huntingdon."

The lawyer proved to be a ponderous old gentleman of the gold-headed-cane school. He received them courteously, and listened with lifted eyebrows to their story. To their "preposterous story," Anne felt sure he was thinking. Even to herself it sounded far-fetched and unconvincing as she and Pat hurried through it.

Cutting her sister short, Anne leaned forward. "While we're telling you the rest of it, Mr. Huntingdon," she suggested, "would you like to send someone over for the gold? Dougal feels

that it ought to be sent to the bank as soon as possible."

The old gentleman started. "MacDougall is aware of this—this interesting discovery of yours, young lady? Hm. Well, perhaps—yes, on the whole—" He touched a button on his desk. To the clerk who appeared he gave brief instructions. A bank messenger was to be sent to collect a—er, package, at the Driscoll house.

"He's going to be awfully surprised when the man really comes back with a package!" Pat whispered, while this was going on. "Sis, he doesn't believe a word of it."

"I know!" Anne whispered back. "But just wait—"

"You were saying, Miss Patterson?" The old lawyer turned his courtly attention to them again. They took up the recital once more, deliberately putting in every detail now, taking delight in realizing how very much like fiction the whole thing sounded. They spun it out until the bank messenger appeared, looking very much aggrieved at the weight of the box he had been asked to carry.

The sisters were fully rewarded by the expression on the old gentleman's face as he lifted the lid.

"But really—really, upon my word! The most amazing thing—why, really!" he gasped.

"But we *told* you there was a chest of gold, Mr. Huntingdon," Pat said sweetly. "Didn't you believe us?"

"Why, er—certainly, certainly. But really, this is amazing, most amazing! The Smugglers' Way—yes, I heard of that in my boyhood. Pirate gold, no doubt. Dear, dear!"

"I don't think you quite followed our story, Mr. Huntingdon," Anne said, with the utmost politeness. "Would you like us to repeat it?"

The old gentleman looked very sheepish. "Well, to tell you the truth, my dear, I thought you were a pair of romantic young ladies who had got hold of some family yarn. That rascal MacDougall is quite a spinner of tales, and I wasn't sure—I must apologize, I really must. If you will be good enough to relate this amazing story again, I assure you I shall not be lacking in attentiveness this time."

After leaving Mr. Huntingdon's office, the girls dawdled a bit in the afternoon sunshine, slowly strolling homeward. Pat stopped to admire a new car in the window of a motor showroom.

"There's a beauty I'd like to own," she observed. "It's the same make as Doctor Dick's, only his is an old model. I expect he'll be getting a new one now, with all this money. Anne!" she had started to walk on, but suddenly she stopped dead in her tracks.

"What is it, honey? We must be getting home."

"All right, but listen." Pat fell into step with her sister. "I've just had the most marvellous idea—the sight of that car put it into my head. I wonder—oh, I don't see why he wouldn't! Anne, Doctor Dick did promise to drive us to California next year, didn't he? You remember, when we were talking about how you wanted to go, and you said you'd just as soon come here this summer? He did promise."

"Yes, I remember. But what has that to do with this wonderful idea of yours?"

"Everything! Sis, he doesn't have to hurry back to work now. He's *rich,* he wouldn't ever have to work if he didn't want to. When do you think he'll come home? Right away?"

"I don't think so, dear. Even when he hears from Mr. Huntingdon, and knows it's all true, I think he'll want to finish up with Sir James."

"That's what I thought. That's five weeks more, and how I'm ever going to live through it heaven only knows. But if I do live through it—Anne, are you listening?"

"With all my ears, darling. Get on with it."

"Well, we found the gold for him. There's no getting around that," Pat argued. "If it hadn't been for us, he'd have gone on being poor as a church mouse, waiting and hoping for his clinic—that's true, isn't it? All right. Then I think we're entitled to a reward for what we've done."

"Oh, Pat!" Anne looked distressed. "That isn't a nice thing to say. We were glad to do it! We don't want any reward."

"Well, my goodness, I didn't mean to sound greedy! We've had all the fun of the adventure, I wouldn't have missed it for anything. The reward I was thinking about—oh, all right. I won't say any more about it."

"But what was it, Pat? I thought you meant you wanted Doctor Dick to give us some of the gold."

"Gracious, no! Where did you get that idea? This was it, Sis. I thought—well, Doctor Dick did promise to take us to California next year. So

I thought, if he wanted to do something nice for us, we'd ask him to take us *now*. This summer, as soon as he and Mums get back. You'd like that, wouldn't you?"

"Of course. I've always wanted — oh!" Anne looked affectionately at her sister. "You're still thinking about—"

"About Doña Ignacia. Yes, Sis, I am. It seems so heartless to take her gold and spend it—oh, even in a good cause that I'm sure she'd approve of!—and never give another thought to her. I'll be haunted all my life if I don't really know that she reached her home safely, and lived out her days in peace. I—I just *have* to know, Sis! We can find out something if we go to Monterey, surely we can! There'll be somebody there who remembers the family, and knows what happened to her. I don't want to wait a whole year, and I don't see how you can. Don't you think Doctor Dick would take us now, if we asked him?"

"You never give up, do you?" Anne said admiringly. "When you start a trail, you follow it to the very end. You began by wanting to 'find out all about Doña Ignacia,' and you're not satisfied yet."

"Yes, and if I'd given up any place along the

trail, where would we be now? Anne, *do* you think Doctor Dick will—"

"I think he'll have to," Anne told her. "At least, he will if he wants a minute's peace for the next year."

XIII

"If you will wait here," the lay sister said in her prim gentle voice, "the Reverend Mother will come to you shortly."

"Thank you." Doctor Richard Driscoll marshalled his little party into the convent parlor. "Margaret, will you sit here? Girls—"

Rather shyly the sisters perched upon straight-backed chairs and looked about them. The room was very simply furnished, with whitewashed walls and bare scrubbed floor. The only decora-

tion was a magnificent cluster of roses on the marble-topped center table. But the long windows gave on to a patio of riotous bloom, roses and giant geraniums and crimson poppies shading the smooth clipped turf. There were flowering vines too, and great old trees. And—yes, a winding cobbled walk that looked strangely familiar to the girls.

Pat clutched her sister. "The garden in the picture—Anne, it is! Don't you recognize it? We really have stepped into it, just as I imagined doing! There's the path where Doña Ignacia walked, waiting for her son to come to her. And this—" she looked about her, "This is her home. We're actually *in* it!"

"It does seem wonderful, doesn't it? When they told us in Monterey that the old Castillero rancho had been turned into a convent, I was afraid we'd find everything changed. But it's exactly the way I'd always imagined it. Doctor Dick," she turned to her step-father, "don't you think this is the original ranch-house?"

"Oh, yes. They'll have made some changes in the inside rooms, probably, to adapt it to convent use, but the house itself goes back to Mission days, you can see that. I wonder when all this hap-

pened? The young chap at the Chamber of Commerce said it had been the Convent de Refugia ever since he could remember, but—oh!"

He got to his feet, and instinctively Mother and the girls followed his example.

An elderly nun had entered the room. Tall and commanding, quietly dignified in the sweeping black robes of her order, she greeted the newcomers.

"I am Mother Angelica," she told them. "I understand that you desire to see the convent? We do not usually receive tourists here."

Her calm eyes surveyed them unsmilingly, and there was little welcome in the level voice.

"She thinks we're simply curiosity-seekers," Anne told herself. "Ordinary tourists who want to go home and brag, 'Oh, yes, we got inside the studios at Hollywood. And we got into the Convent de Refugia, too, though they don't usually admit the public.' Oh, how dreadful!"

Doctor Dick, with the same realization, spoke quickly.

"We are not tourists, Reverend Mother,—at least, we did not come here for sightseeing. We have made the trip to Monterey especially to visit the convent."

"So? You are not of the faith, I think?"

"That is true, Reverend Mother. We are Protestants. Our purpose in coming was not a religious one, but—well, if you will let me explain?"

"By all means." Mother Angelica seated herself, very erect in the straight chair, and motioned her guests to do likewise. With an uncomfortable sense of being intruders, they complied.

"We've come," Doctor Dick began, "because they told us in town that this was the old Castillero rancho. We came to California expressly to make some inquiries about a member of the Castillero family. They were unable to give us the information we wanted at the Chamber of Commerce in Monterey, but they referred us to you."

The nun's austere gaze did not soften. "I should be glad to help you, sir, but I fear you are wasting your time. The Castillero family is now extinct."

"So we were told in Monterey. But we are very anxious for whatever information you can give us about Doña Ignacia Castillero, who married a Captain Driscoll in 1849. She went East to live, but we understand later returned to Cali-

fornia. Is it possible to find out whether she did return, and anything about her life here?"

For a long time, it seemed to the anxious girls, Mother Angelica was silent. She sat unmoving, her hands folded in her long sleeves, her serene face under the white wimple showing no ripple of emotion. Her eyes moved from one face to the other, and came back to rest on Doctor Dick's.

At last she spoke.

"May I ask the reason for your interest in this lady?"

"I don't believe I told you my name," Doctor Dick answered. "I am Richard Driscoll. Doña Ignacia was my grandmother."

For a moment Pat thought, gleefully, that she was going to see Mother Angelica's magnificent calm shatter into a thousand pieces. She gave a gasp of honest surprise, and her eyes widened. However, long training prevailed, and she said tranquilly enough, "That is strange news, sir. You would be the son of the child she left with her husband's family?"

Doctor Dick nodded. "You do know her story, then? That's good. Then perhaps you wouldn't mind telling us all we want to know? My wife here, and more especially my daughters, are very

much interested in Doña Ignacia. So am I, of course. But it was really the girls who prompted our journey here, and they're very anxious—"

"We're *terribly* anxious, Reverend Mother!" Pat could contain herself no longer. "You see, she isn't *our* ancestress—we're only Doctor Dick's stepdaughters. But he didn't even know about her till we discovered her. I mean, we discovered her trunk first, with all her pretty Spanish clothes, and we wanted to find out all about her. And when we heard that she was supposed to have disappeared, and no one ever knew what happened to her—well, we thought that was a mystery that needed solving. And we did solve it, my sister and I, all by ourselves. Except for the very last part. And we just have to know that, because we've come to feel that she was our *friend,* if you know what I mean. We're not just curious, we—well, we *care* about Doña Ignacia! So—"

Pat faltered a little, but the nun's steadfast eyes on her face no longer seemed discouraging.

"Yes, my child?" she prompted.

Pat gained confidence as she met those eyes. How could she have thought this woman was austere and forbidding? Why, she cared about

Doña Ignacia too. It was written in her face!

"We *knew* she hadn't drowned herself, although Ellen thought so," she rushed on. "And we promised ourselves we'd never rest until we found out what did happen to her. So we found out that she'd left a piece of needlepoint tapestry for her son, and we found the tapestry itself—it had never been given to him at all! And the tapestry was a clue, only for a long time we didn't know it. But at last we figured it out, and it led us to the Smugglers' Way. That was the secret passage she'd used to escape, and she'd hidden the gold her mother sent her in it, and a letter to her son. My sister has the letter in her bag, Reverend Mother, if you'd like to read it. It said she was coming home, and we've wondered and wondered if she ever got here. Of course Doctor Dick was awfully surprised when he heard what we'd found out, and he was pleased, too, because of the gold. He's going to do the most wonderful thing with it! So when he and Mother got back from Europe he said right away—I didn't even have to ask!—that we could name our own reward. And—well, this is it. We asked to come to California, because we can't be really happy, my sister and I,

until we know the end of it all. So, Reverend Mother, if you'll *please* tell us—"

She paused, completely out of breath.

"You may put your mind at rest, my dear child," Mother Angelica answered very gently. "Doña Ignacia Castillero, after a weary and storm-wracked voyage, reached her mother's house in safety."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" Pat breathed. "Did you hear that, Sis? And—and was she happy, Reverend Mother?" she asked timidly. "She'd suffered so much. I do want to know whether she found happiness at last."

A smile illuminated the nun's pale face. "If you will be patient, my child, I shall answer that question very soon. For the moment—" she turned to Doctor Dick.

"I should like you to see the convent, Dr. Driscoll. Since you are in part a Castillero, it was the home of your ancestors. I think your wife and daughters also will find it interesting in its present guise. May I have the pleasure of showing you through it?"

"Thank you, Reverend Mother. We'd enjoy it very much. Margaret?"

"Oh, yes, that will be lovely!" Mother rose quickly. "I was admiring the garden from here."

The buildings, more extensive than they had realized, were low and rambling, with roofs of mellow red tile. They housed an orphanage and school. Bright-eyed little Mexican girls looked up shyly from their books as the visitors entered the school-rooms. They found older girls working in the vegetable garden, and the Mother Superior explained that the convent grew all its own vegetables and fruits. Doctor Dick's professional eye noted that the children seemed well-fed and happy. It was obvious that the place was managed with scientific efficiency as well as with true Christian charity.

When they visited the small peaceful chapel Mother Angelica drew their attention to a large oil painting at the head of the passage. A vase of garden flowers, replaced daily with fresh ones by the children, she explained, bloomed before the portrait.

Mother Angelica drew them closer, one hand resting on Pat's shoulder. "This is Mother Maria Dolorosa, the Founder of our order," she explained.

The portrait showed the face of an old woman, seamed and wrinkled. Head and shoulders were framed in the same religious habit that Mother Angelica wore. A realistically painted crucifix of great beauty glowed against the somber robes.

But all the true beauty of the picture centered in the face. Great dark eyes shone with tender light; the lips curved in a slight smile which spoke of an inner peace too deep for words. Out of that aged face looked Love itself, a deep embracing loving-kindness as wide as the world it encompassed.

Mother moved to Anne's side. "It's the face of a saint," she whispered softly.

The gentle pressure on Pat's shoulder tightened; she looked up to meet the nun's smile.

"You asked me a question, my child, which I have not yet answered. This was painted six months before her death. Should you say that she had found happiness?"

"She?" Pat started. "But you don't mean—what *do* you mean, Reverend Mother? This—this isn't—"

"Yes, my dear. Mother Maria Dolorosa, our sainted Founder, was known to the world as Doña Ignacia Castillero."

Mother Angelica paused, innocently enjoying the stupefaction which had fallen upon her audience.

"Before giving you the information you desired," she went on, "I wanted you to see for yourselves the fruits of her work. And now, if you will return to the parlor with me, I shall be very happy to tell you all that you want to know. It is a pleasure."

"I myself was a Peralta, daughter of a neighboring family," Mother Angelica began, when they were all seated in a friendly semi-circle again. "When I was a child I enjoyed hearing my mother tell of the days long gone, when old California was young. Doña Ignacia, called La Estrella, the Star of Monterey, was my mother's girlhood friend. My mother grieved, as indeed did the entire community, when Monterey's fairest daughter sailed away, the wife of a strange young American. It was an ill-advised match, everyone felt, but La Estrella was accustomed to have her own way in all things. Alas, it was difficult to recognize that wilful young beauty in the heart-broken widow who returned to Monterey a few years later. It was my mother's

privilege to call to her attention the consolations of religion."

Mother Angelica's eyes grew gravely sweet.

"Doña Ignacia was not easily consoled. But old Doña Clara, her own mother, was ailing, and there was no son. Great responsibilities fell upon the young widow's shoulders. There was not merely the administration of the rancho, but the operation of the gold mine which had been opened in her absence, bringing a flow of wealth undreamed of in our simple community. Doña Ignacia threw herself into this work, and as time passed she grew calmer, less resentful toward the Americans. She was buoyed up, too, by a strange hope which she confided to my mother alone. Some day, she felt very certain, the son whom she had been forced to abandon would seek her out. That hope was never fulfilled."

"But I told you why, Reverend Mother!" Pat put in. "He never knew anything about it. His grandmother didn't give him the tapestry, and it was the key to everything. He never saw her letter, or found the gold—oh, it's perfectly tragic! He lived and died in the house with them, and never knew. He'd have come if he'd had the chance, wouldn't he, Doctor Dick?"

"I'm certain of that. My poor father would have been deeply distressed to know that he had failed the mother who waited for him. Have we told you that he is no longer living, Reverend Mother? But I'm afraid we're interrupting your story. Please go on."

"My story approaches its end, Doctor Driscoll. The years went by, with Doña Ignacia growing ever soberer, quieter, taming her proud spirit to bear the cross laid upon it. The worldly distractions which had once been so dear to her interested her no longer. She devoted herself more and more to the administration of the rancho. Finally, in middle life, she took her decision. Her mother had passed away, leaving the family property in her hands. She offered the rancho to the church, endowing it richly from the sale of the mine. The church accepted it as a home for the religious order she desired to found. With a handful of devoted young women she began her work among the children of the Mexican laborers, whose poverty and ignorance had touched her heart. Her labors were blessed, and her life was a long and fruitful one. She entered into repose early in the new century, but her spirit lives eternally in the work she began."

Doctor Dick cleared his throat, but his voice was a little husky still as he said, "Thank you very much, Reverend Mother. I—about all I can say is that I'm very proud of being her grandson."

At Mother Angelica's request they remained for tea at the convent. It was served in the parlor, where they were joined by the pleasant, intelligent Sister in charge of the school, and by Sister Eustacia, a trained nurse. Sister Eustacia, who looked after the health of the orphans, knew of Sir James Hodson's work with crippled children, and was keenly interested in Doctor Dick's proposed clinic.

"And to think that the hand of our sainted Founder is in all this!" she marvelled. "For I understand that it is the gold from de Refugia which will support your work? And it is from that same generous source that our work here is carried on! In two widely separated places the needs of the suffering little ones will be met, because of her great goodness. But surely it seems to me that we have here a miracle." Her eyes sought Mother Angelica, who nodded gravely.

"That is well spoken, Sister. Yet it is only fresh proof of what we know well; that true good-

ness never dies, but constantly multiplies itself to enrich the lives of men unto eternity."

The talk turned to Doctor Dick's further plans, and Pat glanced meaningly at her sister. Unnoticed—or did Mother Angelica's eyes follow them smilingly?—the two sisters slipped from their chairs and stole quietly along the dim corridor to the spot where the picture hung, its serene smile awaiting them.

"You do understand, Sis!" Pat squeezed her hand. "We had to say goodby to her, didn't we? She may be their sainted Founder, but to us she's just poor little Doña Ignacia, that we've cried over and worried about—"

"We'll never have to do that again," Anne smiled. "Isn't it odd how things work out? I'd imagined all sorts of things for her, but never this. And yet—why, I don't know that I could have planned a better ending. Could you?"

"I suppose not," Pat said thoughtfully. "I would have liked her son to come to her, but there's no use wishing that now. If he had come, when he was twenty-one—oh, I don't know. He was pretty much what his grandmother had made

him by that time, and he mightn't have liked it here—"

"And even if he did!" Anne interrupted. "It was a thrilling, glamorous life they lived on the old ranchos, but it was certainly a selfish one. Dances and parties and horse-racing—that was the life Doña Ignacia was brought up to. It's the life she'd have offered to her son, if he wanted it. And if he had—well, I don't believe she'd have looked like *this* in her old age, do you?" Her eyes wandered to the saintly old face.

"No, and all the good she did for the little Mexicans wouldn't have been done—oh, I don't know, Sis. It's no use talking about what might have happened. I'm beginning to believe that there's something in what Ellen says, that whatever *does* happen happens for the best. Even though it's pretty hard to see it sometimes."

"I'm sure there's something in it," Anne answered. "Why, just look at the things that have happened to us! Starting away back with your broken arm. We thought that was a terrible misfortune, and it brought us Doctor Dick, and—well, everything important that's happened since! And going to stay at Four Chimneys—we

couldn't have dreamed of all that that would lead to."

"I know. It makes you feel funny when you try to figure all those things out, doesn't it? I can almost be glad I broke my arm—I could do that better if I could forget how it hurt! And I'm certainly glad we went to Four Chimneys. It's strange to think that it's to be sold, and we'll never see it again."

"That rather saddens me, too, though it shouldn't. Mr. Huntingdon says Doctor Dick was awfully lucky to get that offer for it. The next time we see Brooklyn Heights there'll be an ultra-modern stream-lined apartment house on our corner. How Cousin Julia will hate it!"

"Yes, poor darling, she's terribly indignant about the 'squatters'—that's what she calls the people who put up modern buildings in the neighborhood. It has to come, though. Houses like Four Chimneys and Cousin Julia's simply haven't any place in a modern world. One of these days we'll go back and find everything new."

"Oh, we'll go back a lot of times before that happens," Anne laughed. "We've promised Cousin Julia to visit her next summer, you know.

And the next and the next, I shouldn't wonder. We're pretty popular around there just now, kiddie. Bless her heart, she's a dear old thing, even if she did frighten you half out of your wits to begin with."

"Yes, she's sweet—I was sorry to say goodby to her. Do you think Dougal and Ellen will be homesick for Four Chimneys, Sis? They lived there so long."

"Just a little bit, I expect. But they're going to love it in Middletown when they get settled there. Doctor Dick says he wouldn't have anyone but Ellen for the housekeeper of his new hospital, and Dougal will be a treasure with the little cripples. He's so patient, and so kind—and his own lame knee will help him to know how they feel. It'll be grand having him and Ellen near us, won't it? I'll not miss the old house so much, since we're keeping them. I wonder if they'll tear up the Smugglers' Way when they build the new apartment?"

"I shouldn't wonder. The old cellars won't be any use to them," Anne said absently. "Pat, honey, you don't mind if I give Doña Ignacia's letter to Mother Angelica, do you? She asked me for it, when I let her read it a while ago.

They'd like to have it for the convent library. I told her I'd have to talk to you about it."

"No, of course I don't mind. I can't read it anyway. I'm going to keep your translation, though. And we have the tapestry. We'll keep that always. It'll be useful in convincing our grandchildren that we didn't make it all up, when we sit in the chimney-corner and tell them this whole amazing story. Just think, Sis!" Pat gave a little sigh. "It's all over, the adventures and discoveries. All we have left is a story to tell—and it's awfully hard to get anyone to believe it now. What'll it be when we're old and gray, and all the gold has been spent? No one will believe that it ever happened."

"Well, *we* know it happened, dear. We've followed it from the beginning to the very end. And—and this *is* the end, Pat. They're waiting for us out there. Say your goodby to Mother Maria Dolorosa, honey."

Pat lifted sober eyes to meet the dark ones of the portrait. Tender and sweet, they smiled back at her. With shaking hands, she rearranged the spray of fresh flowers, placed there by some orphan child who owed her health and happiness to the bereft mother of the picture.

"Goodby," Pat whispered. "It's all—everything's all straightened out now. We've tried to do what you wanted done. And—and *she* tried too, at the last. You won't forget that, will you? It all came right in the end. So—so rest in peace, little Doña Ignacia that used to be!"

THE END