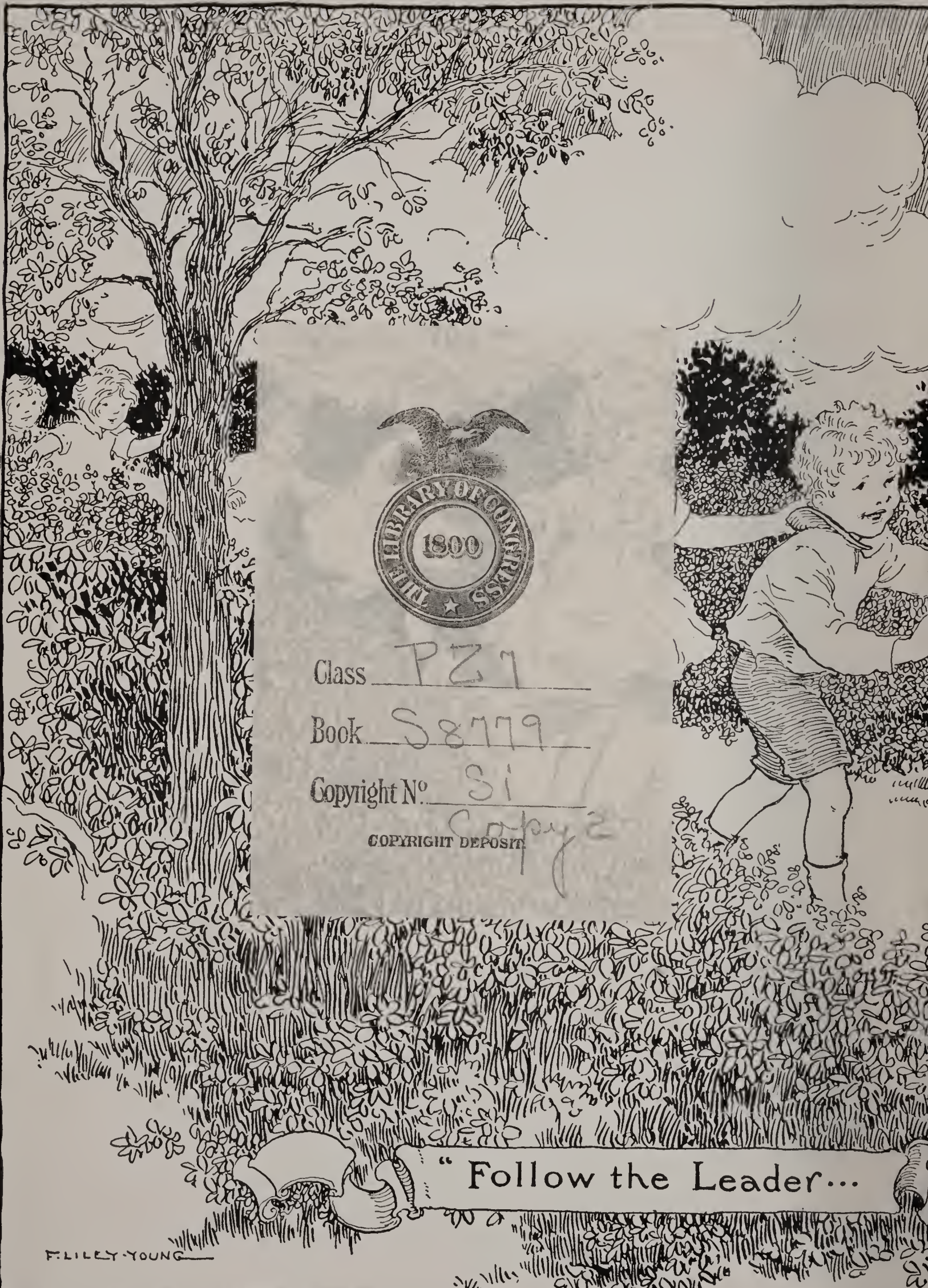


# THE SIX-YEAR-OLD'S STORY-BOOK

KATHLEEN P. STONE





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THE SIX-YEAR-OLD'S  
STORY-BOOK







“OH, MY PLAYHOUSE THAT DADDY PROMISED ME!”—Page 122.



# THE SIX-YEAR-OLD'S STORY-BOOK

by  
KATHLEEN P. STONE



Illustrated by Florence Liley Young

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.  
BOSTON

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The Six-Year-Old's Story-Book

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SEP 18 1929

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# THE SIX-YEAR-OLD'S STORY-BOOK

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## CHAPTER I

### LULU AND HER KITTENS

A pretty white farm-house stood back of a big garden, behind two elm-trees. The garden was a lovely place for play. There was a hammock under the trees, and a swinging chair near it. Cinnamon roses and lilacs grew thickly together on one side, like a hedge, and there were red ramblers against the house.

The little girl who lived in that white farm-house was named Louise. She had short brown hair, blue eyes, and very rosy cheeks. She was eight years old, and was as happy as a child could be, except that sometimes she longed for a playmate. Of

course, she saw her little friends at school every day, but none of them lived near her, so after school and on holidays she was sometimes lonely. But she talked to Mother and sometimes helped her, too; she played with Madge, the big collie dog; she hunted for eggs in the barns and henhouses; she walked with her Daddy, down the long pasture road and sometimes across the brook, to drive home the cows every evening. Sometimes she rode on Prince's back, when he and the other horses were taken to the watering-trough. Oh, she had many pleasant things to do, but sometimes she wished for a playmate!

The big garden was a fine place for the dolls. Louise often put them in the hammock or the swinging chair, and played with them there for many happy hours. Sometimes she and the dolls had a little



tea-party by the rose-bushes. Her Daddy had promised to build her a little play-house, big enough for her to get in. Louise hoped he would do it soon. She felt very pleased and happy when she thought about it.

At the back of the house was a big yard, with barns and chicken-runs opening from it, and back of the barns was the orchard. The upper barn, nearest the house, was the one Louise especially liked. It had big double doors that stood open all day. Inside, the sunlight streamed across the floor. The hens scratched in the chaff and straw. On each side were big mows of hay, piled to the roof in the fall. But, all winter, horses and cattle were fed from these mows, and by the time spring came, the hay was nearly gone. Louise liked it best of all, then. She could climb up a ladder

to the hayloft, and jump from there down into the soft hay. It was such fun!

In spring, the barn-swallows came back. They had nests inside the barn, at the very top. There was a little opening cut for them, just above the big double doors. It was always open, during spring and summer, so they might fly back and forth at will.

Louise often came in the barn to play. She loved to sit there, and watch the swallows above her. Sometimes she found, in the hay, bits of egg-shell from their nests, dropped when the little birds hatched. Once she found an egg, unbroken—such a tiny pretty speckled thing. She kept a little three-legged stool in the barn for her own use. On this she sat, one lovely spring morning. The sunlight shone across the floor, warm and bright. Louise held Hor-

tense, her doll, in her lap, but had forgotten dolly at that moment. She was watching the big gray cat. Her Daddy had told Louise there were kittens hidden somewhere in the hay. Louise knew that the mother-cat would go to her babies soon. Just now she lay curled up in the sun on some hay.

“Dear me!” thought Louise, “I believe she has gone to sleep.” A hen came in the barn. She inspected Louise, with her head turned to one side, then she strutted past her, to fly up into the haymow with a loud squawk.

“She must have a nest up there,” thought Louise. “I believe I know where it is, too. I shall go up there and look for it, by and by.” The hen had disturbed the gray cat that arose now to stretch herself. Then she, too, walked across the

floor, past Louise, to the back of the barn.

“Pussy moves along as smoothly as my big rubber ball,” thought Louise. She watched the old cat eagerly, saw her jump up on a projection at the side of the hay-mow, and disappear.

“Now, where did she go?” murmured Louise. She arose, laid Hortense on the stool, and ran to the back of the barn. She looked where pussy had disappeared. There, under a big timber, where the hay had not been pressed down tightly, was a dark-looking hole. Louise wondered if she could push her way into it. It was like a tiny tunnel, one side made by the barn wall, the other by hay. She found she could squeeze in, and pushed her way farther and farther. It was dark in there. Louise herself filled the opening so that no light could get past her. But she crept onward

in the dusty darkness, feeling before her with one hand. It was a long tunnel, for it led right to the back of the haymow. Louise had nearly reached its end when her hand touched something soft and warm. She could tell that this was Lulu, the gray pussy. But her hands found more than Lulu. She counted, as well as she could, for she could not see at all. But her hands told her—one, two, three, four, five tiny soft kittens. “Oh, the darling things! I wish I could see them,” she said. She cuddled one in her hand against her face, then tried to turn around, but the tunnel was too small for that. Since she couldn’t turn, she must crawl out, backwards. It wasn’t a very easy journey, especially as she held the wee kitten now, and the hay tangled continually about her feet. But she finally came out into the sunlight, and sat down

to look at the bit of soft fur in her hand. It said "mew-w-w," in a very tiny voice, as if it were crying. It was a little gray kitten, exactly like its mother. Louise wished to take it in the house, to show her mother.

"But it is crying," she thought. "Perhaps it is too little to leave that warm nest." She set it down in the hay.

"Can you walk back yourself, little puss?" she asked. "Gracious! No, of course you can't. Why, your little bits of eyes are tight shut. You can't see a thing. I'll have to take you back."

But she didn't. Lulu came out of the hole, just then. She was anxious about her baby. There it lay, right at its mother's feet, crying "mew-w-w" in its baby-kitten voice, over and over. Lulu caught her kitten in her mouth, holding it by the soft

loose skin at the back of its neck. She held the wee thing very gently, and disappeared with it into the tunnel in the hay. Louise sighed, with pleasure, and relief, too.

“Thank you, Lulu,” she said, “I am so glad you came after your baby. I hated to crawl into that tight hole again.” She pulled some bits of hay from her hair, picked up Hortense from the stool where she lay, and ran into the house to tell her mother all about it.

“I won’t go in after them again, Mother, till their eyes are opened,” said Louise.

So she waited several days before creeping in again. It seemed easier this time, as though the hole were larger. “I guess I’m making it more my size by creeping through it,” she told herself.

She found the kittens, no mother-cat be-

ing around just then. "I'll count them more easily with Lulu away," she said, but her hands found only two little kittens.

"My! That is queer," she murmured. She felt all about in the hay, but found no more.

"I expect I counted Lulu's tail, and two of her paws, before," she thought, with a little laugh.

This time Louise managed to turn around. She crept out, with both the kittens, and then she had a great surprise, for both the tiny soft things were black.

Louise sat on the barn floor for some time, holding the little black kittens. She was thinking. Last summer, George, the hired man, had brought Lulu and a little gray kitten into the house, and given the wee kitten to Louise. To Mrs. Allen, Louise's mother, he had said: "I saved the





SHE HELD THE WEE THING VERY GENTLY.—Page 17.



prettiest." Her eyes fell now on George, outside in the yard, leading Prince to the watering-trough.

"It is just what I might have expected," she murmured mournfully. "Anyhow, I am glad he saved two, this time. And they are such pretty ones."

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

The little country school that Louise attended was about a quarter of a mile from her home. She loved school. She was a clever little girl, and so did not find her school-work difficult. Spelling was fun, and she enjoyed the reading lessons. Her first studies in geography were proving to be very interesting. Nature study was better than a story book. Arithmetic was hard work, but her mother helped her with it at home, and, after a time, it gave Louise a thrill of pleasure to find that her own efforts could conquer the hard problems. She usually came home from school bursting with some funny, or pleasant, or exciting news to tell her mother.

Therefore, it surprised Mrs. Allen very

much when her little girl came home one afternoon in tears, out of breath from running, her face hot and discolored. She cried in her mother's lap for several minutes before she could find her voice.

"Nobody hurt me, Mother," she said, in answer to questions. "No, I didn't fall down. Teacher didn't scold me. I was afraid of a—of a—" sobs carried the words away for a moment "—of a big dog."

"Whose dog, dear?" asked Mrs. Allen. "One you met on the road, I suppose." She was thinking no big dogs lived at any of the houses Louise must pass.

"No," said Louise, "this dog belongs to those new people on Pierce's farm. It is a big yellow one, such a BIG dog. It ran down over the bank at me, and barked and growled. I couldn't get by, at first, and then I tried to run, and it tore my dress.

See?" Her tears flowed again as she exhibited the jagged tear in her skirt.

"And their cows," she went on, "were in that field across the road, and the fence is down, and some of them were on the roadside, and some right on the road. I had to come past them, all alone."

"Where was Lucy?" asked Mrs. Allen. "She comes this way."

"She wasn't at school, and she won't be there for two or three weeks. She has gone in town to stay with her Aunt Kathie while her uncle is away. And I am afraid to go to school any more."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Allen, "don't be afraid, dear. I'll walk up the road, as far as Pierce's farm, with you to-morrow."

"Oh, Mother! Will you? And will you come to meet me, after school?"

"Yes, I shall watch for you. Perhaps,

after a few days, you will make the dog your friend. You usually like dogs, don't you?"

"Yes, but not this one," said Louise sadly. "He is too big. And he growls. And he tore my dress. He looks as if he frowned at me."

Mrs. Allen smiled, "You have a way of changing frowns to smiles, little girl," she said, kissing her daughter.

Louise soon forgot her troubles. She ran off to the barn to get eggs; then down to the pasture to watch Mr. Allen repair a fence. And after supper, there were lessons to study.

But, on the following morning, Louise looked very sober. That dog! And the cows! She dreaded the walk to school. So when she saw Mrs. Allen preparing to go out, Louise rejoiced, for this meant pro-

tection. Besides, it was a pleasure to have Mother walk to school with her.

Down at the foot of the long hill, they passed Pierce's gate. There was a rumble, and a deep heavy "Woof, woof," and out the gate rushed the big yellow dog. Louise pressed close to her mother, trembling. Mrs. Allen walked calmly on, paying no attention to the dog. He leaped in front of them, and around them, barking that loud deep bark. Mrs. Allen smiled at Louise and said: "He seems noisy, but I don't believe he is frowning this morning." Louise said nothing. She felt very frightened. And when the dog left them, and ran back through the gateway, she breathed a deep sigh of relief. As they passed the broken fence, the cows could be seen some distance away, up in the field, peacefully grazing. So all was safe, now.



Her mother kissed her good-by, and Louise went on to school alone.

Mrs. Allen hurried toward home, as this time taken from her busy morning could hardly be spared. Just before she reached home, a voice hailed her from the house across the road.

“Good morning, Mrs. Allen,” said the voice.

She turned to call a good morning to her neighbor, Mrs. Shaw.

“Have you been down the hill to call on our new neighbors?” laughed Mrs. Shaw.

“No,” said Mrs. Allen, “I’ve been taking Louise part way to school. She was afraid of their dog. I don’t wonder at it a bit.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Shaw, “Teddy said they have a big fierce-looking dog. So poor

little Louise is afraid of him? You must send her over here to-morrow, to go to school with Teddy.”

“I shall be much obliged to Teddy, if he will look after her,” said Mrs. Allen. “I really haven’t time to go with her myself, every morning.”

“Of course not,” said Mrs. Shaw. “And Teddy will be glad to look after her.”

So that is how it was arranged.

Teddy Shaw was a big boy, twelve years old, and both sturdy and kind-hearted. When Mrs. Allen told Louise, that evening, that Teddy would take her to school the next morning, she felt greatly relieved. Teddy seemed almost like a man to her. He was big and strong, and not afraid of dogs or cows. She crossed the road, the next morning, feeling rather shy, and waited at Shaw’s gate.

In the house, his mother said to Teddy, "There is Louise at the gate. I told Mrs. Allen to let her walk to school with you to-day. She is afraid of the dog and the cows, too, at Pierce's farm."

"The new people are named Owens," said Teddy. "They have a big fierce-looking dog, but why is she afraid of their cows?"

"She is a very little girl, Teddy. It is different with a big boy like you."

"Well, I'll be a hero, and protect her," said Teddy, laughing, "but I hope none of the other boys see me."

"Now Teddy!" reproved Mrs. Shaw. "What difference would that make?"

"Not any," said Teddy. "If they try to get funny, I'll hammer it out of them."

"Teddy!" cried his mother, in shocked tones, "you wouldn't do that?"

“Now, Mother, what difference would that make?” laughed Teddy, in his turn, as he went out the door.

At the gate, he called out: “Hello, Louise! You waiting for me?”

“Yes,” said Louise, a bit bashfully. Teddy seemed so big.

“Well, let’s go,” said he, and off they went.

Louise told him about the fright she had had, and Teddy said kindly, “The way to do is not to let him see you’re frightened. Walk right ahead, and if he doesn’t get out of your way, tell him to. And the cows won’t hurt you. They’re all quiet. They will never notice you. You are not afraid of your dad’s cows, are you?”

“No,” said Louise, “but—”

A loud fierce barking interrupted her, and the great yellow dog came crashing

out the gate. She stopped, her heart beating furiously.

“Don’t let him see you’re afraid,” admonished Teddy. He stooped and picked up a stick.

“Oh, don’t hit him, Teddy!” cried Louise fearfully. “He will bite you, I’m sure.”

Teddy laughed. “Here, Sport,” he shouted. “Go get it,” and he threw the stick.

The big dog stopped barking. He raced after the stick and, seizing it in his mouth, brought it back and dropped it at Teddy’s feet. “Wuff, wuff, wuff,” he rumbled loudly, and, to Louise’s fascinated eyes, it almost seemed as if he smiled. She told her mother afterwards that he did.

“Good Sport,” said Teddy. He caught the dog by the neck, shook his head gently

from side to side, rumped his ears, and patted him. The big yellow dog seemed to like it. Louise was speechless with admiration over Teddy's bravery.

"I made friends with this fellow last night," explained Teddy. "That's why he lets me do it." The children walked on, while the dog barked a loud and rumbling "Good-by."

Some of the dreaded cows were grazing at the roadside. "I suppose," said Louise, with a little laugh, "you'll shake one by the ears, and call her 'good Bossie,' and have her run to fetch a stick."

Teddy laughed, too. "Don't notice them, and they won't notice you," he said. The children walked past, unmolested. "And Mr. Owens' hired man is going to fix the fence to-day. This is the last day the cows will be on the road."

“How do you know?” asked Louise in surprise.

“I heard them say so last night. They were looking over that break in the fence, when I came home from school. I’ll wait for you right here, to-night,” he went on. “Here comes Annie to meet you.”

Annie was running toward them with her skipping rope. So Teddy hurried ahead, and left the two little girls to skip along to school together.

## CHAPTER III

### MAY-FLOWERS

Mr. Williams, a neighbor of the Allens, and his daughter Carrie, came one Friday evening to Mr. Allen's house. Mr. Williams had business to talk over with his neighbor, and sixteen-year-old Carrie had come to chat with Mrs. Allen and Louise. She was a happy, jolly girl, and Louise was very fond of her.

The two men soon finished their business talk, and joined in the general conversation.

"Well, Louise, I thought you'd be up in my back pasture with Carrie, long before this, for may-flowers," said Mr. Williams.

"May-flowers?" Louise sat up excitedly. "Are there any up there?"



“I saw some pretty bunches of buds, day before yesterday, when I was up that way,” came the reply.

“Where, Dad?” asked Carrie.

“They were in that little gully up near the northeast corner of the pasture,” her father told her.

“Let’s go, to-morrow, and look for them, Louise,” said Carrie.

“Oh! I’d love to. May I go, Mother?”

“Of course,” answered Mrs. Allen. “You may, if Carrie goes. I’d like a nice bouquet of may-flowers. Why don’t you get Teddy to go with you? He knows where the nicest ones grow.”

“Mother, I’ll go over to Shaws’ right now, and ask him to go,” cried Louise, excitedly.

“No, dear. It is dark now. Wait till to-morrow.”

“I’ll go with you, Louise. Come along,” said Carrie. “We aren’t afraid of the dark, Mrs. Allen.”

“Run along, then,” laughed Mrs. Allen, and they ran.

Mrs. Shaw admitted them to her bright warm sitting-room in some surprise. Teddy, when he heard their errand, was enthusiastic over the idea.

“Of course I’ll go,” he said. “That is, if Mother doesn’t need me.”

“You may go after you finish your chores, Teddy,” said Mrs. Shaw, kindly.

“I have a few things I must attend to in the morning, too,” admitted Carrie. “Let’s go in the afternoon!”

So, early the next afternoon, the three young people trudged off, across Mr. Williams’ meadow land, for the pasture. But,

first, they must cross the brook. It was a big brook, nearly a small river in the spring, deep and swift in places, wide and shallow in others, with waterfalls, and slow, quiet pools. It was a lovely brook. But the water was too cold for wading, and too deep, also, after the spring thaws and rains.

“The bridge Dad put across the brook last fall is still here,” said Carrie, “but it doesn’t look safe, although he crosses on it himself.” Carrie’s voice had a worried sound.

The bridge was made of two poles, dropped, side by side, across the water, with steps nailed on at short intervals. “It is like a ladder,” said Louise.

Teddy tested the bridge by stepping on it, and stamping gently, till he started it swaying slightly. Suddenly he ran across

like a deer, leaving the girls gasping in startled fashion. Then he came back, more slowly.

“It seems safe,” he said. “Come along, Louise. I’ll help you over. If it holds us together, it will hold Carrie.”

Louise didn’t need help, however. She followed bravely in Teddy’s footsteps, and both children crossed safely.

“Hurry, Carrie,” called Teddy, and Carrie stepped nervously onto the frail bridge.

“Come on! It isn’t deep. What if you *do* fall in,” urged Teddy.

“Oh no! It isn’t deep,” said Carrie with sarcasm. “It is up to my waist, and flowing along like a mill-race, and cold as ice, and it gets deeper farther on. I don’t care to fall in, thank you.”

“Mr. Williams crosses on it,” protested

Louise. "Try it, Carrie. It must be safe, or he would have warned us."

Carrie stepped along fearfully, with a little scream and a lurch at every step.

"I am not afraid it won't HOLD me—oooo—" she gasped, "I'm afraid I may—oooo—fall! Oh! What a relief to be over," for over she was. "How are we ever to get back?"

"Don't worry, yet," laughed Teddy. "The water will probably fall a foot or two before we get the may-flowers all picked."

"Then we can *wade* back," cried Louise.

They found may-flowers on the sides of the little gully, growing in profusion. There were patches of the thick, light-green leaves, and the children, parting these, found the clusters of lovely pink-and-white flowers.

“Aren’t these gorgeous?” cried Carrie. “Oh! look at this cluster! Did you ever see such pink ones?”

“See this one,” said Louise, showing another beautiful stem of pink flowers.

“They are all shades, here, aren’t they?” exclaimed Carrie. “I’ve found white ones, and pale pink ones, and so on, up to the deepest shades of pink.”

“I guess no wild flower smells as sweet as these,” said Teddy.

“Mmm!” murmured both girls, burying their noses in the fragrance for a moment.

They gathered all the well-opened blooms on the little hillside, leaving plenty of buds untouched.

“Let’s go on to Allen’s pasture,” said Teddy. “I found a fine bunch of may-flowers in there last year.”

The girls agreed eagerly to this, so Teddy, acting as guide, led them along over fences, and through a wooded section, where a ridge of snow, very old and pitted, still lay under the trees. The may-flowers in Allen's pasture-land proved to be more scattered. The children searched diligently all about them, finding flowers and buds, till Louise declared her hands could hold no more.

"There is one more place I'd like to visit, while we are on this side of the brook," Carrie suggested, "up by Alden's Hill. I haven't been up there for years, but there were lovely may-flowers there, then."

"Let's go and see," said Teddy.

It was a long walk, over rough pasture land, wet and bushy, following the course of the brook. Louise and Carrie were both tired when they came to the foot of the

hill. The search here proved disappointing. They found a few blooms, but some one had visited this place before them.

“It wasn’t may-flowers I wanted up here, anyhow,” confessed Carrie. “I wanted to get up here so we could recross the brook on Alden’s Bridge. It is so big and wide, I’ll feel safe on it. Mr. Alden drives horses across it, doesn’t he, Teddy?”

Teddy grinned. “Not any more, Carrie,” he said. “Come and have a look at it.”

“Why, Teddy!” cried the girl. “Isn’t it safe?”

They broke through clumps of bushes to come out on the steep bank of the brook, just before the bridge. Carrie’s question did not require an answer from Teddy; her eyes told her all about it. This bridge consisted of three large and heavy timbers, laid across from shore to shore, spaced a



yard or more from one another. The board flooring had rotted and broken away since Carrie had last seen the bridge. She stared at it in dismay.

“We’ll have to go back,” she cried. “We can’t cross here. Oh dear! I am tired. I dread that long walk back through the pasture-land. It is so rough and wet. Teddy! Don’t dare! Oh, come back.”

But Teddy had ventured out on one of the timbers and, almost before Carrie finished speaking, he was over. Then he came back saying, “Try it, Louise, I’ll help you.”

Louise was quite willing, but Carrie cried out against it.

“Oh no! She will fall in, Teddy. The water looks so dangerous there. Louise! Let’s go back.”

But Louise had started across. She held Teddy’s hand in a startled grip. It was

worse than she had suspected. The timber she walked upon was almost round. She gasped with relief when she was over, then turned to call cheerfully to Carrie.

“It doesn’t seem dangerous, Carrie. You try it, too.”

Teddy left his may-flowers with Louise and went back for Carrie, who was almost in tears.

She was frankly afraid of it.

“This is different, Teddy,” she mourned. “I was a little nervous over Dad’s bridge, but I am petrified with fear, now.”

But she took off her coat and her shoes, and, leaving them with her may-flowers behind her, she crept out on the narrow plank on her hands and knees. Teddy went just before her, like a cat, sure and easy. Louise watched in intense anxiety.

“Don’t touch me, Teddy,” Carrie



SHE HELD TEDDY'S HAND IN A STARTLED GRIP.—Page 41.



screamed, "if you do, I'll flop in." She dared not look up. "Am I half way over?" she cried, her eyes glued to the timber. She wasn't. She crawled along with painful caution: "Am I half way over yet?"

"Just about," answered Teddy.

"This is where it will happen then," she quavered, "I feel just like Lucy Gray. It seems to be miles."

"You're doing fine," urged Teddy, frightened lest she fall.

Carrie was white with fear, but she crept on. And then she was over, and she sat on the grass, laughing and crying. Louise hovered over her, sympathetically.

"You'd not have minded it so much, on your feet," she ventured.

"'Oft have I heard of Lucy Gray,'" quoted Carrie. "Ooo! how I hate that nasty poem."

Teddy went back for her belongings. "You're a terrible 'fraid cat, Carrie," he told her in great relief. "You almost scared me, too. I was sure you'd roll off."

"So was I," gasped poor Carrie. "Just because you are either a goat or a cat, Teddy Shaw, doesn't mean that I am, too."

"You're more like a baby-calf," laughed Teddy.

They all laughed then. Louise helped Carrie to put on her shoes. She donned her coat. Teddy put her may-flowers in her hands, and they went on home.

"Mother," said Teddy, "the next time I go out picking flowers with Carrie, we'll pick pansies in the garden. That will be safe enough for her."

"Father Williams," said Carrie, "next spring you won't induce me to go may-flowering, until you build a much better

bridge. Teddy Shaw almost drowned me twice to-day."

"If I had had any idea the bridge was dangerous, I'd never have allowed you to go, Louise," said her mother, to whom Carrie had reported.

"But, Mother," protested Louise, to whom Teddy was now a hero, as well as the wisest of boys, "Teddy crossed all right. So I knew the bridges were safe. I wasn't afraid, after I saw him go over."

## CHAPTER IV

### RAINY-DAY GAMES

Louise spent many happy hours indoors, when it rained, with her dolls, or books, or paints and crayons. Sometimes she helped Mother, and pretended to keep house herself. The evenings, spent with her father and mother, or perhaps a friend who had come for an evening's visit, were always pleasant for Louise. Perhaps there were lessons to be studied or a new picture to color, a doll's dress to sew on or a story to read. But her favorite evening game, and one she could play so nicely all by herself, was one her mother had taught her, a game Mrs. Allen had played when she was a child.

“Here is my button-box, Louise. Find a



handful of pretty buttons, and set them here on the table in rows. Pretend they are your school, and have this large button for the teacher.”

Louise began the game, because her mother suggested it. She wasn't sure she would like it. In fact, it sounded rather dull to her. But she became interested, first, in selecting the buttons. Here was a fat, pink button—it reminded her of Ida, who was certainly fat and pink. This little yellow button must be named Greta, for Greta was small with yellow hair. She chose two white buttons, exactly alike, for the little Parker twins; a brown button for Alan, who had dark hair and brown eyes, and dark skin. Annie wore a blue coat to school, just the color of this blue button—and so it went on, until Louise had selected a button for every child at school. She ar-

ranged these in rows, just as they sat in school,—John, Helen, Bessie, Robert, Eva in the back seats—and so on, down to the front row. The button she chose for herself was a silver color.

“It doesn’t look like me, and I don’t wear any clothes that are silver-color, but I like it for me, so I thought it would do,” she told Mrs. Allen.

Presently she had her school complete. A beautiful green button with gold spots on it was chosen for the teacher.

Selecting a button to be called Teddy was her most difficult choice. Which one should it be? Deep in her heart Louise felt it must be a very nice one. There were a number of odd pretty buttons to choose from, but, to Louise’s mind, they all looked like girls.

“Boys don’t seem to be pretty, exactly,” she thought.

Then she found a black button with a gold star on it, and she named it “Teddy” at once.

She called the roll loudly and clearly in the teacher’s voice, and answered “present” for each pupil. She assigned work to the different grades, and called the first grade to stand in a row by the teacher’s desk. She moved the pink button, the two white buttons, a blue one, and a red-and-black one forward in line. This was Grade One. Lizzie, in red-and-black, fell out of line. She turned, as if facing the pupils behind her, so Louise made her stand in the corner. The other pupils in Grade One recited very well, and were allowed to take their seats. But, here, one of the Parker

twins disgraced herself. She rolled against her sister, pushing her from her seat. For this misconduct, she was obliged to occupy a second corner.

Grade Two next took position before the teacher's desk. They read in turn from the Second Reader (which Louise held in her hand and read for them) the story of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," in prose. Louise liked this story very much. She had the second-grade pupils read it through. They did it very nicely, except for Harry who made dreadful mistakes and had to remain by the teacher's desk to read again, while the others in the class took their seats. And so it continued, Louise having no trouble with her fifth and sixth grade pupils. She let them read from her own Third Reader, and pretended it was the Fifth.

When recess-time came, she dismissed her pupils by sweeping them out in groups with her finger-tips. She let them play in a tin plate, which her mother allowed her to use for this occasion. So none of the buttons rolled away and got lost. Instead, they slid and rattled and rolled gayly about on the plate.

The time for dismissing school was very interesting. Teddy and two other boys, Lucy, and Louise, turned south from the school-house. Four more "children" went east, across a large stretch of table that represented Cochran's meadow. The others all turned to the north. When they had traveled a convenient distance from school, they were swept into a box Louise had decided to use for her button-box.

"That is a fine game, Mother," she cried, as she arose to kiss her mother "good

night," "I shall play it again to-morrow night."

Rainy days at school brought new games. The children played tit-tat-toe, and had conundrums and all sorts of puzzles. The boys did stunts with lengths of twine, freeing themselves from impossible-looking knots, and untying loops with one knowing pull on the right string.

Teddy introduced a new game, one day, that puzzled every one. "Take a number. Choose any number you like, but I advise you to choose a small one. Double it. Add eight. Divide it by two. Take away the number you thought of first, and your answer's *four*."

"Oh! How did you know, Teddy?"

"Isn't that queer? My answer is four, too."

"Let me try again, Teddy."

“Take a number,” repeated Teddy. “Double it. Add four. Divide it by two. Take away the number you thought of first, and your answer is two.”

It was a long time before some one discovered that the answer was always half the number Teddy asked them to add. When they set it down on paper, it was easy to see why.

Out of doors, skipping and marbles were followed by different kinds of ball games: “Haley Over,” “Tickety-Up,” “Scrub,” and others. The favorite game with the girls was played against the side of the school-building. A girl threw the ball against the wall, and caught it as it came back. “Throw it up and catch it,” she said. The next act was, “Throw it up, clap once, and catch it. Throw it up, clap twice, and catch it. Throw it up, clap three

times and catch it. Toss it up, kneel, arise, and catch it. Toss it up, clap hands behind your back and catch it. Toss it up, turn around and catch it." If one missed, another player tried. Of course, if a player became too expert, it wasn't much fun.

There was always one day, in the late spring, when it seemed suddenly to be warm enough for Louise to go barefoot for perhaps an hour. She didn't like going barefoot, as a rule, but on this one day it seemed a forecast of summer. It followed closely after the finding of the first violet. A later day, perhaps a week later, would come, when Louise was allowed to dip her bare feet in the little Cross-Road Brook, which flowed through Christie's farm, and under the Cross-Road Bridge, then down over the hill to join the big brook in the valley.



The average depth of water in the Cross-Road Brook was just above one's ankles. But it had a "deep hole" where the water spread into a tiny pool, about four feet in diameter. Here the water came up to one's knees. Louise dipped her bare feet into the water at the Cross-Road Bridge, and waded down to the "deep hole," where the cold water made her gasp. Then she ran home, dressed her feet, and had no further desire to wade in the deep hole until next spring. The little brook was a darling little brook in the spring-time. Louise went to sleep at night hearing its musical tinkle through her open bedroom window, and she loved it with all her heart. In the daytime, she sailed "boats" on it, smooth white chips with a pebble or two placed on them for passengers. As her boat sailed down stream,

Louise followed it, with a long stick in her hand, to rescue her boat when it became stranded on a rock, or caught on a bit of grass near shore. It was fun to watch her boat disappear under the Cross-Road Bridge, then come out at the other end, sailing sedately along with its cargo of pebbles. The little brook dried up, and disappeared in summer. Its bed filled with long grass. One forgot all about it, then.

## CHAPTER V

### CHUMMY

Madge, the big collie, lay stretched out in the sun on the wood-shed floor, one morning. The wide roller door, just before her, was opened to its fullest extent, and the sunlight flooded in, making a large, bright square across the floor. Madge's box, at one end of the shed, was a big, comfortable, warm place in winter, packed with straw on the bottom, and with a roof on top. In summer, Madge didn't use it much. Mrs. Allen said, "She sleeps in the sun all day, and barks under my window all night, so she doesn't need her box."

Perhaps the big black hen in the yard heard Mrs. Allen's remark: Louise declared she did. She hopped up on the bot-

tom step, while Louise was in the woodshed wondering if Madge's box wouldn't make a fine doll-house for the summer. From the bottom step, Biddie arched her neck, and peered into the shed. Then she hopped up a second step. Now she could see inside easily, and she uttered a startled "ca-daw-cut," at sight of Madge. Madge lay asleep, and paid no attention. Black Biddie hopped up to the door-sill now, stopped to survey Madge, and squawked "ca-daw-cut" again, in very nervous tones. Madge opened one eye. Louise laughed a little, the black hen was so funny.

Now, it was one of Madge's duties to chase the black hen from the woodshed, also any other hens that came in. But this one seemed so frightened, and at the same time so full of some idea, that Louise laid a hand on Madge's head to keep her quiet.

She wished to watch the invader, but found it difficult to keep quiet herself, for she laughed and laughed, as the hen crossed the floor. Biddie took a few steps, put her head on one side, peered at Madge, and squawked, "Ca-daw-cut! Ca-daw-cut," several times in her loudest tones. She was the picture of nervous alarm and determination.

"If the silly thing only knew enough to keep quiet, and slip by without waking Madge—" murmured Louise, between chuckles. Once the hen lost several yards she had gained, when Madge lifted her head, for it frightened poor Biddie so that she fled to the door. But she paused in the opening, saw that Madge still lay quiet on the floor, and it gave her confidence. She uttered one more loud series of squawks, and, at the same time, took a dozen minc-

ing steps across the floor, jerking her head sidewise to keep a watchful eye on the dog. She paused then, to consider. All was well! She saw that the dog and Louise were not going to molest her; so she walked in a dignified fashion to Madge's box, peered into it, stepped inside and disappeared. Madge arose then, alert and eager, but Louise threw her arms around the collie's neck. "No, Madge, you mustn't touch her," she cried. "Biddie wants to make a nest in there, I am sure. You don't need the box now, and I must do without it, too. Mrs. Black Hen seems to want it."

Louise peeped into the box after dinner, but Mrs. Black Hen was gone. And, at the back of the box, lay a large white egg.

Louise soon shortened the hen's name to Mrs. Black. One day Mrs. Black went in, settled herself in the usual spot, and

refused to come out again. Mr. Allen reported to Louise that afternoon, after school.

“Your pet hen has gone ‘broody,’ Louise. I put a setting of eggs under her.”

Louise was delighted. This meant that in three weeks’ time there would be a family of little chicks. There were other families of little chicks about the hen-yard, but this one seemed to promise more interest to Louise, because she had watched the brave hen make her nest in the face of danger. She marked on a calendar the date when the chicks must hatch, and waited impatiently. Mrs. Black came off her nest every morning for food and water.

Now Madge was annoyed to think one of those noisy troublesome hens had stolen her box. Worse still, the hen was upheld in her wickedness by the people in the house.

Madge knew it must be all right, but she felt very much disturbed about it, just the same. The first few times Mrs. Black left her nest, Madge declined to allow her to come back, until the hen's loud angry squawks brought Mrs. Allen from the house, to her rescue.

"Madge," exclaimed her mistress, "shame on you! The eggs will get cold if you keep the hen too long off her nest."

Madge knew she had done wrong, but for several days she did it, again and again, until finally Mrs. Allen gave her such a severe scolding that she hung her head in shame.

But, one day, Madge did even worse than this. When Mrs. Black went off the nest for her daily ration, Madge went into the box, and lay down. Poor doggie! She felt aggrieved somehow, over that box.



She had not wanted it until Biddie Black took possession of it. Nevertheless, it was her box, and she felt it should be left vacant for her until such time as she should need it. The hen, to Madge's mind, was distinctly an intruder; so she lay in her box, nervous and uneasy, for she knew she was doing wrong. Then the black hen came back, poked her head in the box, and instantly withdrew it, calling for Mrs. Allen at the top of her lungs. At least, this seemed to be so. And Mrs. Allen in the kitchen heard her and ran out to the shed.

She soon discovered Madge in the box, and hustled her out of there at once, and looked inside, expecting to find the eggs a broken mess. But the nest was at the back of the box. Madge, uneasy of conscience, and knowing she should not be there, had lain down just inside the door. Two eggs

at the edge of the nest were broken; the others were all safe. The black hen never missed the two which Mrs. Allen removed at once from the nest. A relieved and happy hen settled herself once more in her nest on eleven eggs, and thought triumphant thoughts about the dog, no doubt.

Madge concluded, after this episode, to let the black intruder alone. She did not like the situation, but she decided she must make the best of it.

So the little chicks hatched without more trouble,—darling little fluffy balls of yellow. Louise loved them, every one. She often fed them herself. When they were large enough, they were moved from Madge's box to a coop in the hen-yard. Louise spent a busy hour, thinking up eleven names to bestow upon them, but it

was a useless endeavor, after all. For once named, they still looked exactly alike. Louise could not tell Fluffy from Teeny, nor Trixie from Mother's Pet. Chummy, she declared she knew, because he was always the first to run to her, when she came into the hen-yard to feed them.

One was drowned in the pan of water one morning, but there were no other casualties. "Fortunately, it wasn't Chummy," said Louise. "I think it was Pansy."

The little chicks, as they grew, continued to be very tame and seemed to know Louise. They often followed her about the hen-yard, one or two, or more of them. Once she let them all out, through the gate, to see if they would follow her. This proved to be a mistake, for they followed her at first in a straggling line, then, one

by one, they dropped away, and most of them found their way into Mrs. Allen's garden before Louise missed them.

Chummy followed her faithfully, however, and so, although they were all restored to the hen-yard, he alone was allowed to get out, once in a while. Louise grew very fond of him. She even held him in her lap. She invited him into the kitchen once, but he declined this invitation. He grew bigger, and pin feathers began to give place to real feathers.

One day, Louise, unaware of her follower this time, ran over to Mrs. Shaw's, with Chummy trailing after her. She ran through the gate and into the house. Chummy, close behind, entered the gateway just as Teddy's dog came around the house to investigate the visitors. He smelled chicken, spied Chummy, and

made a swift jump. Chummy was frightened, and squawked his alarm. His half-grown wings flapped wildly, as his long yellow legs carried him across the ground to an apple-tree. He flopped desperately to the lowest bough, and a second effort carried him higher, to safety.

Louise, coming from the house a little later, found a badly scared chicken, chirping and squawking in the apple-tree, and an excited dog, barking underneath. After that, Chummy was confined to the hen-yard. "He is getting too venturesome," said Louise.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROSE HAS THE MEASLES

Away in a far-off city, a little girl, who had been very ill with measles, lay back in a big armchair, while Mother talked to the doctor. Her mother's voice sounded worried. "She is so thin and pale and listless," said Mother.

"Fresh air and sunshine is what she needs. Keep her out doors all you can. Why not take her to the country somewhere? The change would be very beneficial," said the doctor.

So Mother talked about the matter with Rose's father, later on. "Rose seems to gain so slowly," said Mother. "The doctor advises a change. Do you think we might send her to visit her Aunt Grace for a month?"

“A good idea!” agreed Rose’s father. “We’ll have her stay all summer. It will do her a world of good, I know.”

“I’ll write to her Aunt Grace at once,” said Mother, with relief in her voice.

Louise lived on “Rural Route Number Three.” The postman left the mail in a box at the gate. Sometimes Mrs. Allen forgot to look for the mail, and Louise found it in the box after school. So it happened that, one afternoon, she carried a letter triumphantly into the house.

“Here, it is for you, Mother,” she said. “And I am sure it is from Aunt Helen.”

Mrs. Allen opened it, and read it out loud, with Louise standing by her. The little girl’s expression changed as her mother read. She looked first sympathetic, then sorrowful, then tense and eager, and lastly full of delight.

“Oh, Mother!” she cried. “Darling little Rose. May she really come? I haven’t seen her since she was a baby. Oh! I hope—” and here Louise burst into tears.

“My dear child,” soothed Mrs. Allen. “Of course, she is coming. There! Don’t cry. I never saw you so excited before.”

“Mummy, she is five years old now, isn’t she?”

“Nearly six. This is May. She has a birthday in July.”

“Will you write at once, Mother?”

“My dear! This very minute,” laughed Mrs. Allen, and she did.

Louise watched for the postman on his return trip, and gave him the letter. It went off on the early train next morning, bound for the city.

And so a frail little girl went aboard the train at the big city station, a few days



later, a very excited little girl, who waved "Good-by" to Mother and Dad and little Laddie, tears mixed through her smiles. A kind friend, traveling in the same direction, was to look after Rose. It was a night-train, and Rose was to sleep on it. What a wonderful experience! The kind lady soon coaxed her to happiness, asked all sorts of gay questions about the farm, and Louise, and Aunt Grace.

"Louise is my cousin," explained Rose. "I haven't seen her since I was a baby, and I don't remember that. She is three years older'n I am. I am going to be six in two more months, and she will be nine in one more month. It is almost the same month for our birthdays."

The porter came to prepare Rose's bed. She watched with great interest while this was going on. The seats where she and her

motherly friend had been sitting were pulled together and covered with a mattress, sheets, pillows, and covers. Rose's eyes were very wide with surprise and interest. When curtains were hung up before it to make it into a tiny room, Rose was delighted. She asked to be allowed to go to bed at once. The kind lady helped her prepare for the night, and tucked Rose in under the covers, with a good-night kiss. She put Peggy, the doll, in beside Rose, for Peggy, it seems, had had measles when Rose did, and must go to the country with her. So Rose lay there and admired the cunning electric lights, one at the foot and one at the head of her bed. It seemed very exciting and pleasant to feel the train rolling on and on through the night, getting farther and farther from Mother—here Rose blinked several times, and de-

cided not to think of that—getting nearer and nearer to the farm. There were Louise and Aunt Grace, and Uncle Don—Oh, and Uncle Jim. Her thoughts grew very confused and dreamy.

Later on, the kind lady poked her head in between Rose's curtains, and found the little girl fast asleep. She tucked the covers in around her, and turned off the lights, and Rose did not waken until it was nearly breakfast time. That was such fun. They had breakfast in the dining-car, to Rose's great delight. Everything was new and interesting to her. "The water in my glass is dancing," she cried. What fun to watch the changing landscape, as she breakfasted! They had to hurry, though, the Junction was so near. Here they must leave their train, and the lady must go one way, the little girl another. Rose began to feel

lonely, and her face became very sober. But the kind lady smiled, as they stepped off the train. She knew there was a pleasant surprise for a little girl, here at the Junction. A young man hurried up to them, as they descended the steps, and said with such a glad smile:

“Mrs. Crandall, isn’t this fine—” but Rose interrupted here. She didn’t intend to be rude. She was just too surprised and delighted to think.

“Uncle Jim!” she screamed, and threw herself into his arms, almost crying with happiness. So she boarded the next train with Uncle Jim. He did not seem quite so happy as Rose. Indeed, he looked at her with astonishment and sorrow, for this was not the plump, rosy child he had seen on his last visit to her city home. This was a pale, thin little girl, and the little hand he

took in his was frail and white. He held it tightly, smiled down at her happy little face, and talked to her about the farm. He told her how happy Louise was over her coming, and told her about Aunt Grace and Uncle Don. Rose heard about the pet chickens and Chummy, about Lulu, the cat, and Madge, the pretty collie. It seemed a very short time before Uncle Jim said, "And here we are at the station." Rose peered out the window eagerly, as the train slowed.

"Do you see Louise, Uncle Jim?" she asked.

But before he had time to look for Louise, the train had stopped, and they were getting off. Almost in front of them, Rose saw a brown-haired rosy little girl, with a tall lady, who looked like Mother, holding her hand. The brown-haired little

girl ran up to them and put her arms around Rose.

“Here she is, Louise,” cried Uncle Jim. “Rose with her roses all gone.”

Rose, excited and eager, but a little shy, was kissed and hugged and exclaimed over, and led away from the station to where the horse and buggy waited.

“Rose, darling,” cried Louise, in ecstasy over this dear, thin, pale, little cousin. “We couldn’t come for you in the car, because Mother is afraid to drive it while the roads are so muddy. And we thought you might enjoy the buggy ride, because you have never had one, have you?”

Rose never had. She liked it very much. She said, “It is more exciting than driving in a car. I never was so close to a horse before. Isn’t Uncle Jim coming?”

“Not now, Rosy posy,” he said. “Good-

by! I shall perhaps come out to see you, this evening. Why, you have found some roses already!" For there was a little spot of pink on each pale cheek.

On the way to the farm, Rose held Louise by the hand, and watched Aunt Grace a little shyly. When Louise said, "There is our house, Rose," she looked eagerly ahead.

"Oh! It is a beautiful house, isn't it?" she gasped.

It *was* beautiful, thought Louise proudly, in the morning sunlight, with its tall elms in front, its pretty stretch of lawn, roses in a hedge at the foot of the garden, the smooth driveway around the side, the big barns at the back. Louise felt very glad that Rose liked it.

As they drove into the farmyard, Madge rushed to meet them, wagging her tail

and leaping up as though she meant to get in the buggy. Rose was a little afraid of her, so Mr. Allen lifted her down and carried her to the door, bidding Madge to keep quiet.

“What a light-weight you are,” said Mr. Allen, who was her Uncle Don. “We must feed you a steady stream of milk and cream, and see if we cannot make you fat and big and rosy,” and he carried Rose into the house. What an immense place it seemed to her! The rooms were so large, the fireplace so big, the veranda a great wide one. Rose liked it all very much. She wanted to be shown all over the house at once.

She and Louise went up-stairs to remove hats and coats, and Aunt Grace followed with Rose's suitcase and bag. She took from the suitcase a plain, cool little dress



for Rose to wear, and Louise dressed her little cousin in it.

“Now you are ready for play, darling,” said Louise.

“She must not play much, to-day, Louise,” warned Mrs. Allen. “Let her rest all that she can.”

“I shall see to that, Mother,” nodded Louise, whose heart was set on doing everything that was best for Rose, to make her well again.

So the two little girls went off, hand in hand, to inspect the big house, every room, up-stairs and down, the long hallways and entries, and, finally, the kitchen, where Mrs. Allen, and a big girl she called Sadie, were busy preparing the noon dinner. Louise wisely left attic and basement to be explored later, and put Rose in the big kitchen rocker to rest.

Rose was not too tired to talk. As her shyness wore off, she chattered like a little magpie, and whenever she stopped for breath, Louise took *her* turn. Mrs. Allen laughed at them, and Sadie declared it made her dizzy to listen to them.

Dinner found Rose with little appetite. She was still too excited to feel hungry. So a little while after, Mrs. Allen said Rose must lie down and rest for a while. Rose did not like this idea at all. She wished to go out doors, and also to see the barns.

“But you will have all summer for the barns, Rose dear,” said Louise kindly. “Come up-stairs with me, and we’ll both lie down, and rest a while.”

Half an hour later, Louise came tip-toeing down-stairs alone. Rose had fallen fast asleep.

## CHAPTER VII

### NEW IMPRESSIONS FOR ROSE

Mrs. Allen decided that Louise must stay home from school for the rest of the week, to be with Rose until the little newcomer's shyness quite wore off, and until she learned her way about, and felt at home. Usually Louise disliked to miss a day from school, but this time she was pleased with Mrs. Allen's decision. So was Rose, for she had proceeded at once to love her Cousin Louise with all her heart. So, on the morning after her arrival, she and Louise went off to inspect the barns, and other points of interest.

They stopped first in the wood-shed, such a big wide place, almost empty now.

"We fill that part with wood every fall," said Louise.

“Why?” Rose asked, puzzled.

“To burn in the kitchen stove,” Louise told her.

“Oh!” Rose inspected the wood that was left. “There is such a big pile there now,” she said.

But Louise laughed, and did not seem to think so.

They looked inside Madge’s box, where Mrs. Black had hatched her chickens, then Rose asked to go to the hen-yard to see them all. But Lulu, the big cat, came in the door, and, after Rose had admired her enough, Louise told of the little kittens she had found in the barn.

“They are gone now,” she finished, “I gave one to a boy named Teddy, and one to a girl at school.”

“Is the hole still in the haymow?” asked Rose. “Let us see it. Shall we?”

So they went out to the barn. Rose was charmed with this place. It was as nice as the wood-shed, and both sunny and warm.

“And it smells so good,” she said. “Isn’t it fun to jump in the hay? Do the cows really eat this hay? I should think the sharp ends might poke in their tongues. I couldn’t eat it. Where is Lulu’s nest?”

Louise found herself laughing often at Rose’s funny little speeches. She took Rose up in the haymow to see a hen’s nest, too. They jumped down into the soft hay, and lay there for a few minutes, looking upward, so it happened that Rose discovered another strange thing. “Birds live up there at the top of the barn,” she cried to Louise. “They have nests up there. I see them.”

“It is a fine place for a nest,” said Louise. “Better than a tree, for the rain and wind cannot reach them, and Mrs. Pussycat

cannot get at them. They are barn swallows. Sometimes I find a little speckled piece of shell off one of their eggs, when the little birds hatch. The eggs are tiny little white ones, with some 'speckles' of brown on them."

"Isn't that lovely!" breathed Rose.

"Come and see where the kittens lived," cried Louise, jumping up again.

They found the long tunnel in the hay, but Rose was afraid to creep into it.

Next, they visited the cow-stable, empty now, and they peeped into the horse-barn, too. Then Rose asked to see the chickens, so they went to the hen-yard. Here Rose became acquainted with over one hundred new friends. Mrs. Black proved very interesting. She had left her family, some time before this, and they had become independent young birds, able to take care

of themselves. Only one was Louise able to point out. "That one is Chummy," she said. "The others mix among the other chickens, and I can't tell them apart. Here! Chummy, Chummy."

He came, running, and ate a bit of bread-crust from Louise's hand. He balanced himself on her knee, and Rose admired him greatly. Louise gave her a wee bit of bread to feed him, and she held it out to him on the palm of her hand, but dropped it hastily when he stretched out his neck to take it.

"I was afraid he might bite me," she explained to Louise.

When they left the hen-yard, they went to see the pigs, but Rose vowed she did not care for pigs. Louise felt sorry for the poor things, because they had not won Rose's regard.

"They can't help being homely," she explained.

The orchard was a beautiful sight, just now; the apple-trees were breaking into bloom, the cherries almost through blooming, and the plums were lovely. Both little girls admired them for a long time.

"This tree in the middle is a big crab-apple-tree. It has snows on it, too," said Louise.

"Snows?" questioned Rose.

"Apples, dear. Snow apples. They are nice sweet apples."

"Do they grow with the crabs?"

"Yes."

"Two kinds of apples on one tree?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I didn't know they could!"

"These trees are Wealthies," went on Louise. "And this one is mine."



But Rose had made a new discovery.

“What are those little houses,” she asked, “just like a doll-house?” She started forward “—but no windows. Aren’t they funny?”

Louise sprang after her. “They’re beehives, Rose. Don’t go close. We just keep a few. They make honey for us.”

“Oh! Tame bees. Do they sting?”

“My! I guess they do,” cried Louise, “BAD stings. I have been stung twice. Don’t go near the hives. It hurts, dreadfully.”

Rose backed away. She did not wish to get a bit closer. Beyond the orchard the children stopped, hand in hand. Here were meadows sloping gently downward to the pasture-lands.

“And there is water down there,” exclaimed Rose. “Is it a river?”

“It is a big brook, nearly as big as a

river, in the spring," said Louise. "In the summer, it gets much smaller, and we can wade across it, then. When you feel a little stronger, some day I must take you down there to see it."

Beyond the brook, a wooded section stretched upward. It was very pretty. Near the brook, on the other side in a clearing, were two pretty trees standing alone, side by side.

"Do you see them, Rose?" Louise pointed to them. "Aren't they pretty? See how white their trunks look. They are birch-trees. The larger one is Hiawatha, and the other Minnehaha. I named them from a story in my school reader. I will read it to you sometime, if you like."

However lovely the Big Brook looked, Rose liked the little Cross-Road Brook better. It was such a little streamlet, she could

stand with a foot on either bank, and catch the boats Louise sailed down to her. She and Louise inspected all the near points of interest along its course. Rose sailed a boat under the bridge, and down across the deep hole, and here she came to grief. She reached for her boat, eager to take it back to the bridge, to let it sail under again.

“Be careful, Rose,” cried Louise. “You will lose your balance.”

“What is my balance?” asked Rose, looking up. Her foot slipped, and splash! She promptly fell in. She screamed with fright, on her knees in the water. Louise instantly popped in after her, in great fear lest the ducking injure her frail little cousin. And two very wet children rushed home to Mrs. Allen, Rose in tears, and Louise pale with fright. But Rose, made

warm and dry in a few moments, suffered no ill effects from her ducking. "And I know now what my balance means," she said, with a little giggle. "I suppose it is still back there in the deep hole."

## CHAPTER VIII

### A NEW GAME

When the day came for Louise to go to school, and leave Rose at home with Mrs. Allen, both little girls felt very much inclined to cry. Louise feared Rose would be lonely without her, and poor Rose had very much the same idea. She stood on the veranda and watched Louise and Teddy as they went on and on, until they disappeared over the brow of the hill.

“If I watched long enough,” murmured Rose, “I s’pose I’d see them come up that other hill, after a while, but I don’t care to watch. They would be such little specks, then.”

She wandered around to the back yard, then in through the wood-shed to the

kitchen, a very lonesome-looking little girl. Her Aunt Grace came from the pantry, and smiled a little at the sight of Rose's doleful face.

"You are just the girl I wished to see," she remarked cheerfully. "Would you like to make me some cookies?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Rose. "I should *love* to."

She followed Mrs. Allen into the pantry.

"But you have them all done, haven't you?" she said, surveying the pans of nicely-cut cookies, ready for the oven.

"Not all," said Mrs. Allen. "See! I have left two bits of dough on the board, and I want you to make me two nice little cooky men, for two nice little girls I know. Here is the rolling-pin. Use this little cutter to make their heads. Here are currants for

eyes, and cinnamon bark for noses and mouths.”

So Rose had a fine time there. She rolled out the dough, with Mrs. Allen's help, cut the heads, used a larger cutter for the bodies, and rolled strips of dough for arms and legs and necks. Then it was such fun decorating them. Rose made currant eyes, and cinnamon noses and mouths. She put rows of currant buttons on their coats, made pockets of the cinnamon bark, put a currant rosette on each of the four slippers, and sprinkled sugar over the cooky men. Mrs. Allen placed them in a pan, and put it in the oven, where they stayed for ten minutes, while Rose stood on one foot and then on the other before the oven door, waiting for them. When they came out, nicely browned and puffed up, she was delighted with them.

“We’ll have them for supper, Aunt Grace, shall we? ’Cause Louise will be home then.”

So they were put away on the pantry shelf until supper-time.

Then Rose ran errands for Mrs. Allen. She went down in the cellar to get potatoes. Then down again for a big turnip. She ran out to the mail box, when the postman came, and brought in a paper and two letters. She went over to Mrs. Shaw’s, with a plate of hot cookies, and over there she was introduced to the dearest family of puppies ever seen. As she admired them, she told Mrs. Shaw all about her own dog, Rufus, and so a half hour flew by before she knew it. When she returned home, it was dinner-time.

After dinner she had a short nap, and when she awoke she dressed Peggy, and





SO ROSE HAD A FINE TIME.—Page 93.



took her with Hortense in the doll buggy for a ride up and down the veranda.

Carrie Williams came in to see Mrs. Allen, and Rose was deeply interested in her. Carrie admired Rose's pretty curls, and thought her a very sweet little girl. She begged permission to take Rose home with her.

"Just for an hour," said Aunt Grace. So Rose ran off happily with Carrie. She liked to visit, and Carrie knew how to amuse small girls. She showed Rose the turkeys, and her canary bird, and the pet rabbits. Rose fed the rabbits each a bit of carrot, and laughed to see them wrinkle their funny noses.

The hour seemed to pass very quickly, and Carrie walked part way home with her. Rose ran the rest of the way. She wished to reach home before Louise came

from school. Then she sat on the veranda with Madge, for she and Madge were quite friendly now, and in a very short time she spied Louise coming over the hill.

“Good!” cried Rose, and rushed off to meet her.

So the time had passed quickly after all, and Rose was busy until supper-time telling Louise all about her happy day. They ate their cooky men for supper, although Louise said she considered them much too handsome to be eaten.

After supper they thought of a new game. Louise came up the veranda steps with her arm over her face, pretending that she was crying. She knocked at the door and Rose opened it at once.

“I’m a poor little girl,” said Louise, weeping.

“What do you want, here?” asked Rose.

“I want something to eat. I am so-o-o hungry,” sobbed Louise.

“Why don’t you go home to your mother, then?” Rose asked.

“I can’t find my mother. I’ve lost her,” replied Louise, with fresh sobs.

“Why, I’M your mother,” cried Rose, in such a warm, glad, welcoming way, and then she and Louise threw their arms around each other, and hugged and kissed, in great delight over their happy reunion.

Rose liked this game so much that she decided they must play it every afternoon as Louise came in the door from school. Teddy heard them, on several occasions, and thought it very funny. So one afternoon when they were on the veranda he teased the little girls, standing before the house.

“I’m a poo-o-or little girl,” he shouted,

and then he sobbed immense sobs, and mopped quantities of imaginary tears off his face with his cap, and apparently the cap became so wet he must wring it out. He annoyed Rose so much that she shouted at him, "Go home, Teddy Shaw! You should be ashamed of yourself. I will make Madge bite you."

Teddy, pretending to be in terror, raced home, and slammed the gate, then leaned over it to call: "Hi! Rose. I'm a poo-oo-or little girl," and he wept, loudly.

Rose rushed across the road, and reaching the gate shook it violently, while Teddy ran for the house, pretending to be in fear of his life. He paused on the steps to shout, "Why, I'M your mother," and dashed in the house.

So, after that, the game was discontin-

ued except when the little girls knew Teddy was not in sight.

Now Rose liked Teddy very much, but he had annoyed her dreadfully, by making fun of her game. Louise didn't mind Teddy's teasing. She was used to it, and thought him rather funny, but Rose did not consider him funny at all. Teddy kept up his teasing. It was no use trying to tease Louise; she only laughed and enjoyed it. But to slip up behind Rose, and whisper, "I'm a poor little girl, A-hoo—!" was great fun, for Rose usually turned on him like a little tiger. This gave Teddy much amusement. So one morning, on the way to school, Louise scolded him very severely for it. She told him he was a naughty boy to tease and annoy little Rose so much.

Teddy felt really ashamed. He was one

of the most kind-hearted of boys, and hadn't realized how much he plagued Rose. So, although he laughed at Louise, and pretended to think her scolding was a joke, yet he decided he must stop teasing the little cousin. He even concluded to do something to please her, by way of making amends. The very next day he appeared at Louise's house with a half-dozen wild-strawberry stalks, each one bearing two or three ripe berries, the first of the season. He gave this little offering to Rose, who took them from him doubtfully. She looked at him with suspicion.

"What are they?" she asked.

"Strawberries," he said, in surprise. Had this child never seen strawberries?

"You are telling fibs, Teddy Shaw," she said severely. "They are much too small to be strawberries."



“But they really are, Rose,” said Louise. “Wild ones. She has never seen wild strawberries before,” she explained to Teddy. “Where did you find them? They’re lovely ones. Taste one, Rose.”

Rose did. She tasted several. She gave some to Louise, and offered a stalk to Teddy, but he refused them.

“I must save some for Aunt Grace, too,” Rose said with decision, eating two or three more.

“Will you tell us where they grow, Teddy?” begged Louise.

“Along the railroad track, just this side of the culvert,” said Teddy. “There’ll be lots in your hayfield soon, along your lane fence. I saw them, but they are green yet. Next week you may get plenty of them.”

It was difficult for Rose to believe that they grew wild. She ate them all, and then

felt mournful because she hadn't saved one for Aunt Grace.

“Never mind, Rose,” said Teddy, stifling his desire to say funny things to her, “you shall pick your Auntie a whole cupful, next week.”

## CHAPTER IX

### UNCLE JIM'S VISIT

Uncle Jim had been out to the farm several times since Rose arrived, but only for a few hours at a time. It was nearly three weeks after her arrival when he came out for a longer visit. Then he drove out to the farm one Friday evening, and announced that he was going to stay until Monday morning. Everybody was delighted. Rose shrieked, "Good! Two whole days? What shall we do?"

"Shall we go to the Park, Rose?" asked Uncle Jim teasingly, "or the Beach?" Because he knew there was no Park and no Beach near enough to visit.

But Rose took him seriously. "We must go to the Beach," she cried. "Louise prom-

ised to take me there. It will be so awf'ly nice, if you are there, too."

"Explain this, Louise," begged Uncle Jim. "Did you promise to take this skinny little girl to any Beach? Don't you know that even the tiniest of breakers would wash her away?"

"No, it wouldn't," declared Rose. "I'm bushels fatter than I was. And I am getting some roses, too."

"You are, for a fact," laughed Uncle Jim. "But where is this Beach?"

"She means the brook," Louise began, and Rose interrupted to say, "Not the brook where I lost my balance, but the *big* brook."

"Then we shall inspect it to-morrow, and see if it has a Beach," promised Uncle Jim.

Saturday morning Louise awoke early

to find Rose sitting up in bed, determinedly rubbing the sleepiness from her eyes. Louise pulled her back on the pillow.

“Why are you up, Rose?” she asked.

“I am thinking about my bathing-suit. I wonder if Mother packed it,” said Rose. She slid out from her warm covers to the floor. Louise followed, yawning.

“You don't need a bathing-suit to-day, dear,” she said. “We shall wade. It is still too cold for swimming, I think. But you may wear my suit, if you like. I don't think Aunt Helen packed yours, for I didn't see it when Mother unpacked your things.”

The little girls dressed quickly, for Rose was anxious about her bathing-suit. “It isn't too cold to swim now, Louise,” she said. “Teddy swam. He told us so.”

“He always does, early, before the water

gets warm. Mother will tell you it is too cold yet, for you and me.”

When they went down-stairs, however, Rose at once spoke to Aunt Grace about her bathing-suit. Had there been one in her suitcase or bag?

“Not a sign of one,” declared Aunt Grace, “but if there were a dozen, you shouldn’t go in the water to-day, dear. It is far too cold. You and Louise may dip your feet in the water, but no swimming for two weeks, yet.”

So Rose reluctantly gave up the idea of bathing, for a time, but begged Aunt Grace to write Mother, asking for the bathing-suit, “because I shall need it, when the days get warmer.”

The expedition to the brook took place after the noon dinner. Teddy was included, at Rose’s request.

"He might find us some more strawberries," she said.

They walked down the long slope from the house, across pasture-land, through brush and groves of young trees, and came to the brookside, where the bank was bordered with great lichen-covered rocks, that sloped down gently till their sides went under water. Here, the brook fell over a ledge, some four feet high, in a tiny Niagara. Rose was delighted, and admired the Falls with enthusiasm. She sat on a large rock, and pulled off her shoes and stockings, thrusting her toes in the water. "Ow!" she said, and drew them out.

"It's a little chilly, Rose, isn't it?" grinned Teddy.

"Did you really swim in it, Teddy?" asked Rose.

"Yes, but not for long," Teddy admit-

ted. "Five minutes was enough for me."

Louise undressed her feet now, and stepped into the water. It felt like ice, but she stood still, where it was ankle deep. Rose promptly stepped in, too, nearly to her knees, then out again as promptly, with a gasp.

"I like to warm my feet on these nice smooth rocks," she said. "The rocks feel hot, Louise."

"The sun heats them," replied Louise. "Come here, and see the fishes around my feet."

Rose saw, and tried to catch one, but only succeeded in scaring them away. Then Louise led them to a quiet, sunny little bay, between two rocky capes, and showed her a number of water-spiders darting over the surface of the water. The girls next saw that Teddy and Uncle Jim



were busy with knives and freshly cut pieces of alder bushes.

“I believe they’re making whistles,” Louise said. “Let’s dress our feet.”

So stockings and shoes were pulled on, and the little girls went to inspect the whistles. Uncle Jim was busy on two at once, and Teddy was making a third.

“The bark is fine now, for whistles,” said Teddy, as he and Uncle Jim worked on. They pounded the whistles with the backs of their knives.

“Why do you do that?” asked Rose.

“To loosen the bark,” Louise told her.

“It doesn’t loosen very well,” growled Teddy. “Now we know why people say, ‘As tight as the bark to a tree.’ ”

Uncle Jim laughed. “I have this one out,” he said, as he drew the bark carefully off the stick inside. He cut a small strip off

this stick, which was about four inches long, and after cutting a diamond-shaped opening in the back, near the top, he pushed the stick inside it again, then tried to blow it. It produced a thin high note, and Rose thought it simply wonderful. Uncle Jim went to work on the other, but it was not a success. And Teddy tore the bark on his, and spoiled it.

“I made good ones earlier in the spring,” he said. “The bark was looser, then, with the sap beginning to circulate.”

So the whistles were given up. Uncle Jim gave the one he had made to Louise, and she passed it promptly to Rose.

“I have had some nice ones, every spring,” she explained, “and Rose has never had any.”

So Rose blew it, till she tired of it and lost it.

"Let's go up the brook to Jimmie's Rock," suggested Teddy.

"Where is it? Why do you call it that?" asked Rose.

"It isn't far from here," said Louise, as they started off. "Mr. Jimmie Cochran's meadow slopes down to the brook on the other side, and the rock is on his bank. So the boys always call it Jimmie's Rock. The water is deep there. Sometimes the boys dive off the rock."

They walked along the brookside for some time, and almost at the same instant Uncle Jim and Teddy cried "Jack-in-the-Pulpits."

"Oh, hurry, Rose!" coaxed Louise. "Let's see them."

Rose hurried. "Jack-in-the-Pulpits!" It sounded like something queer. It *was* queer. Louise showed her, bending over

one in delight, a straight thick stem, bearing the deep brown and black striped flower, green outside, and the sturdy little "Jack" inside. Rose thought it very funny, but didn't consider it a pretty blossom at all. Louise picked one, carefully.

"I must take it home to show to Mother," she said. "Oh! It's come up, root and all."

"Tell your mother here is an Indian Turnip for her supper," suggested Uncle Jim, touching the root. "Indian Turnip is another name for it, Louise."

"Is it?" asked the children together. "Why?"

"Don't you see the root is a bulb?"

"Taste it, Louise," said Teddy, with a grin.

But Louise objected. "It is too dirty," she said.

Teddy scraped a bit of the bulb clean, and cut off a thin slice, which Louise popped into her mouth.

"Don't swallow it, Louise," warned Uncle Jim.

"I want a taste, too," cried Rose.

"No, no! Rose," said Louise, hastily dropping it from her mouth. "No, it burns. Teddy, you ARE a mean thing. It isn't a bit like turnip, Uncle Jim."

They went on then to the swimming hole, and Louise showed Rose the big rock from which the boys dived.

"Shall we bathe here, when the water gets warmer?" asked Rose doubtfully. It looked very deep, and not at all inviting, she thought.

"No indeed! Not here," cried Louise. "I am sure, not. We'd drown. We shall go in down below the Falls. There are nice,

sandy places there." Rose felt relieved to hear this.

Then Teddy showed them all a kingfisher's nest. He had found it on the day he went in swimming. It was in a hole in a steep part of the bank by the brook, a deep hole, and they peered over the top of the bank very carefully, lest they roll pebbles down, or frighten the mother bird.

"You mustn't tell anybody it is there," cautioned Teddy, as they started for home. "Some of the fellows might poke it out of there." So Uncle Jim and the girls promised not to tell a single person, "except Mother and Dad," said Louise.

When they reached home, it was nearly supper time, and, after supper, they all went for a ride in Uncle Jim's car. Louise liked it, sitting in back with Mr. Allen

and Rose and Teddy. Coming home, Rose went to sleep, and was carried out of the car and up to bed without being awakened. She explained to Louise, the next morning:

“First, I was car-riding, and then it was night. Next, I found myself in bed, and it was morning-time.”

On Sunday morning they all went to church in town, then had another long ride. In the afternoon the grown-ups sat in the front garden and talked. Uncle Jim had a camera, but he did not tell the children about it. He wanted to get pictures of them when they were playing, not posing. That explains why there was such a fine collection of snap-shots. The three best were as follows: one of Louise and Rose, sitting on the steps dressing a doll; one of Mr. Allen lying in the hammock

with Louise sitting beside him, carefully packing tobacco into his pipe; and one of Rose coming around the corner of the house, carrying in her arms Hortense, Peggy, and Lulu, the gray cat.



## CHAPTER X

### LOUISE'S BIRTHDAY

Louise was to celebrate her birthday in less than a week. She awoke to the fact quite suddenly, and smiled with pleasure over the thoughts it brought. Mrs. Allen always had a party for her on her birthday. It was time to begin planning for it. There were the invitations to be written, and distributed among her friends at school. Louise thought of little Rose, who would be there to enjoy the party, too. "Her birthday isn't very much farther away than mine," thought Louise. "Perhaps Mother will have another party for her. Oh! But that would be too much to ask of Mother. Parties make her heaps of work." And then Louise was lost in thought for some time.

After school, on that same day, Louise slipped into the house, leaving Rose busily arranging the dolls and Lulu in comfort in the hammock. She wished to have a private talk with her mother. Mrs. Allen was in the big armchair in the sitting-room, with her mending-basket, and a magazine.

“Are you mending or reading, Mother?” asked Louise.

“I am not quite sure yet,” laughed Mrs. Allen. “Which shall I do?”

“Perhaps you should mend for a few minutes, then read afterwards,” advised the little girl, gravely.

Her mother promptly selected a damaged stocking, and prepared to darn it. She suspected Louise wished to tell her something. The child looked a wee bit embarrassed, she thought.

And then—"Mother, I suppose you didn't forget about—about my birthday. It is nearly here now."

"My dear," cried Mrs. Allen, glancing at a calendar, "so it is. I hadn't forgotten, but I didn't realize it was quite so near. Who is to come to the party, this year?"

"I want to make some new plans, if you will agree, Mummy," said Louise slowly.

"What are they, dear?"

"You know Rose's birthday comes just a little after mine. I think I shall give her my party—let her have it on her birthday instead of mine. We can both enjoy it, just the same."

Mrs. Allen put her arm around her little daughter and kissed her. It pleased her to think what a thoughtful, unselfish child this one was.

"I think that is a good plan," she agreed.

“You must talk it over with Rose, and make a list of the names of all the children you wish to invite. It will give me more time to make plans.”

Louise was delighted. “Shall I tell Rose, now?” she asked, and, as Mrs. Allen nodded, she ran off in great glee to find Rose. The two little girls talked long and eagerly over this matter, seated among the dolls, in the hammock. Lulu jumped out, and wandered away unnoticed. Rose was delighted over it. Parties were so exciting, and to come on her birthday, too!

So it happened that when Louise awoke, on the morning of her birthday, she treated it quite as any other day, dressed herself, prepared for school, and gave no thought to the usual birthday happenings. She felt she had given her birthday to Rose, along with the party, and she intended to

get her own pleasure from seeing her little cousin happy. Mrs. Allen gave her nine special kisses, and Mr. Allen tweaked her ear nine times, very gently. Rose gave her nine violent squeezes and a birthday kiss, too.

When Louise came home from school that afternoon, she met Mrs Allen and Rose at the top of the hill. They had walked there to meet her. Rose seemed bubbling over with excitement.

“Oh, Louise!” she cried, “such a—! such a surprise! But I shan’t tell.”

Mrs. Allen laughed, and Louise’s cheeks grew pinker than ever with excitement. A surprise? It was her birthday! Of course she had given her party to Rose, but it seemed there was something else for her.

“It must be a birthday cake, Rose,” she

said, but Rose only cried: "I aren't going to tell," and danced on ahead.

So they reached home, and turned into the walk that led across the garden to the front door. And there, back in a corner under the big elm—"See, Louise, see! Isn't it lovely?" shrieked Rose.

Louise was just as excited, and showed it by the deep pink color in her cheeks. "Oh, my playhouse that Daddy promised me!" she gasped. "I thought he had forgotten," and she ran forward to examine it.

"Uncle Jim has been here 'most all day," said Rose. "Uncle Donnie said he needed help to get it ready for you, Louise. I helped, too. So did Aunt Grace. We all worked, hard as hard."

And now Louise was inside the playhouse, wrapped in admiration, and Rose

followed her in. There were a tiny bedroom, a living room, and a kitchen. The living room and the bedroom were each about as large as the top of a kitchen table, and the kitchen was half as big again. There was real glass in the windows, and cunning curtains hung there. Linoleum was on the floors, and a wee rug in the bedroom, too.

Mr. Allen had made the house in sections, days before; also he had made some of its furnishings. All Louise's doll-furniture was there,—her bed, baby-doll's cradle, a little toy dresser, two tables, and her doll-dishes. There was her own little rocker. Mr. Allen had made the kitchen cabinet, a kitchen table, and a chair. There were a new bed and a chair in the bedroom, a padded chair and a sofa in the sitting-room. Mrs. Allen had padded these

herself. There were cushions on the sofa, too. A little plant in a flower-pot sat on one window-sill. There was a kitchen sink. "You can pour water in it, too," said Rose. But the crowning feature was the kitchen stove.

"It is your present from Uncle Jim," said Mrs. Allen. Louise could not leave it. "A real stove!" she gasped. There was a fire laid in it, and, Mrs. Allen having assured her it was safe for her to light it, Louise, with trembling fingers, struck the match and dropped it in. She replaced the stove-lids, and smiled happily at Rose, then called through the open window to Mrs. Allen, outside.

"Mother, Rose and I could almost live in this little house."

"I expect you will; too," laughed Mrs. Allen. "Probably you will come in my



house to sleep at night, as I fear those little beds aren't large enough for you."

The fire in the stove crackled and burned. The little teakettle (it held nearly two cups of water) was set on to boil.

"Let's cook something, Louise," cried Rose.

"I can't now," said Louise. "I haven't seen everything yet."

She examined the kitchen cabinet. There were her doll-dishes, neatly stowed away, a new collection of pans and spoons, and a little rolling-pin. There were various little packages of groceries. A cunning pat of butter filled Louise with admiration. She found her milk pitcher and cream jug filled. There were two nice little loaves of fresh bread. She almost burst with delight when she found a dozen tiny bantam eggs on a lower shelf.

“Carrie brought them for you,” said Rose. “She has bantam hens, you know.”

“I could make a cake, Mother,” suggested Louise, hesitating a little.

“Of course,” replied her mother. “You must make yourself a birthday cake. But before you begin, won’t you go into your sitting-room, for a minute. There is a parcel in there, on the table for you. It came this morning.”

Louise was there in a twinkling, with Rose at her heels. She stepped outdoors with her parcel.

“It is from Aunt Helen,” said Mrs. Allen, as Louise pulled off the wrappings. Within were a little pink-flowered house dress, and two darling little kitchen aprons, with caps to match: one in blue and white, and one pink, with a design stitched on the front,—a lady cook, wield-

ing a rolling-pin. There was a card inside, too. "To be worn in the new kitchen," it said.

"They are so pretty!" sighed Louise. "Isn't Aunt Helen the darlingest!"

Then Teddy came to admire the new house. Rather awkwardly he produced a parcel, and extended it toward Louise. More excitement! Louise unwrapped it to disclose two smaller parcels—"One from Mother, and one from me," explained Teddy. The one bearing Teddy's name proved to be a neat little cook-book, with a yellow cover.

"Oh, Teddy! Isn't it a darling present?" cried Louise. "Thank you so much! Now I can cook everything."

The other parcel contained a little tin cake box, about six inches square, with a top and bottom compartment. In the top

was a nice little chocolate cake, and on the brown icing, in white letters, was printed the name "Louise." In the bottom were some tiny cookies.

"She said to tell you this isn't the birthday cake, Louise," grunted Teddy.

"Isn't it beautiful!" breathed that young lady.

"Isn't your mother an awf'ly nice girl, Teddy," commented Rose.

When Teddy had admired the house, "real shingles on it," and had exclaimed, "I suppose it will turn the rain like a daisy," he departed. Mrs. Allen took the children in the house, as Louise wished to try on her new dress. She found it fitted nicely, and then she donned a new apron and cap—the pink one. The blue went on Rose, and then they both ran back to the playhouse. But they did no cooking. The

fire had gone out, anyhow. They were kept busy examining and exclaiming, and admiring. And before they expected it, Mrs. Allen called them to supper.

The latter end of this meal brought a birthday cake, a real one with nine candles on it.

“I was afraid you wouldn’t find time to make one, in the playhouse,” explained Mrs. Allen.

It was a lovely cake. Mrs. Allen took them all out to the veranda, and cut the cake there. Carrie came up, on purpose to taste it, she said. Teddy came over to have some of it, too. There were, explained Mrs. Allen, some pieces of money, a button, a ring, and a thimble hidden away in the cake.

“If you get money, it means riches; a button is for the old bachelor; and the

thimble for the old maid. The ring is for the first one to be married.”

Strange to relate, Rose, Louise, and Teddy each bit into a dime. Carrie received the button. She laughed very much over it. “Since I can’t *be* the old bachelor,” she said, “perhaps I am going to get one.” Then she got the ring, too, in a second slice of cake.

“That settles it,” she exclaimed. “Tell all the old bachelors to beware.”

Just then Mr. Allen nearly swallowed a dime, and Mrs. Allen discovered the thimble, all of which amused the young people very much. Birthday cakes are such fun.

“It has been the loveliest birthday possible,” said Louise at bed-time. “I am glad to-morrow is Saturday. We must bake lots of things, Rose.”

## CHAPTER XI

### A BUSY MORNING

Louise awoke in the night, and lay in the darkness listening. There was the patter of rain-drops, little gusts of wind driving them against the window-pane. Usually Louise liked the sound of the rain-drops. It was pleasant to be snug and warm indoors, while the rain took charge of the outside world. But to-night the rain filled her with uneasiness. She couldn't quite understand why, at first. Then, suddenly, she remembered.

“My house! It is out there in the rain. Oh, dear!”

She jumped up, hurriedly, and her bare feet pattered almost as fast as the rain-drops, taking her to her mother's room. Mrs. Allen awoke in a moment.

“Louise!” she gasped. “My dear! Are you ill?”

“Mother!” wept the child, “My house! It is raining so hard. Will Daddy go out and cover it, do you think?”

“Oh!” said Mrs. Allen, “The play-house! My dear, I was afraid you were ill. The house is safe, little girl. It is as dry inside now, as this one. Daddy made it quite rain-proof. Don’t worry about it. It is a real out-door house.”

And all the time Mrs. Allen was hurrying her little daughter back to her bed, where she tucked her in, and kissed her good night. So Louise went off to sleep, quite happy again.

When she and Rose awoke in the morning, it was still raining hard, and Rose began to scold about the weather, but



Louise was able to cheer her at once.

“Never mind, Rose. We don’t care if it rains. We are going to be busy in the playhouse, all day. I am glad it is raining. That makes the weather cooler, and you remember our little kitchen gets fairly hot when the fire is burning.”

Louise was busy dressing, as she spoke. Then she helped Rose, and they ran downstairs together. Breakfast over, Louise at once busied herself, “helping Mother,” while Rose, all impatience, stepped about in every one’s way.

“Leave the rest of your work till after lunch, Louise, if you like,” said Mrs. Allen.

“Run along,” cried Sadie kindly, “and play. I’ll do your chores for you, this morning.”

“Put on your rubbers and take my big umbrella,” Mrs. Allen called after them, as they ran.

The children spent the happiest morning you can possibly imagine. They each put on one of the pretty new aprons. Then they inspected the little house carefully, to see if all was well. No rain had leaked in. Louise then laid a fire in the stove with paper and chips, and set a match to it. Then she sat down with the new cook-book, and said, “What shall we bake first, Rose?”

“A cake!” cried Rose.

So Louise read aloud several cake recipes, while Rose listened gravely, although they all sounded very much the same to her. When she grew tired listening (about the fourth recipe), she decided.

“I think that is a good one.”

Louise agreed, so they began to mix the cake. It was a spice cake, and such fun. Louise measured butter and sugar in her doll's cups, put them in a bowl, and began to mix them. She directed Rose to measure flour, and to put it in the little sieve with a pinch of salt. Then Rose used a doll's spoon to add spices and baking powder. She wanted to sift this into Louise's bowl at once, but Louise stopped her.

"There must be eggs, first. I wonder if these eggs are the right size for our cake. I must ask Mother."

She was gone five minutes, during which time Rose tasted the mixture in Louise's bowl, then dipped her little forefinger into the sieve full of spices and flour. She did not like that very well. Louise came back, to say, "Mother thinks one egg will be about right. I shall break it in the other

bowl. There! Now here is the egg-beater. You may beat it, Rose.”

Rose did so, gladly; nearly upsetting the bowl. Louise had to rescue it and finish the beating herself, while Rose sifted and resifted the flour and spices. Lastly, Louise cut up into tiny bits enough raisins to fill her doll's cup twice. And so the cake was finally finished. Louise put it into her two new cake pans, a round one and a square one, and just managed to get both pans in her oven at once. While the cakes baked, the little girls gathered up the used dishes and spoons and washed them at the little sink.

“Let's make cookies, after our cakes are done,” Louise suggested. “Now I must look in the oven.” She cautiously opened the oven-door, and peeped in.

“Oh! Aren't they cunning? See, Rose!”

Louise closed the door again. "Mother must come and see. I do not know if they have baked enough," and she ran off to the big house, with Rose, under the umbrella.

Mrs. Allen was busy, but she took time to run out to the playhouse to inspect the cakes. The house was pretty small for a grown person to get into, but Mrs. Allen managed to inspect the cakes. They were burnt just a little, by this time, "but not enough to spoil them," said Louise cheerfully.

"I think they are beautiful," said Mrs. Allen admiringly. "Really! You have done well, my dears."

The little girls thrilled with pride at this.

"We must ice them, as soon as they cool," said Louise.

Rose wished to begin at once to mix the cookies. So they consulted the cook-book

again, put a few bits of coal on the fire, and began to mix cookies. Louise really did most of the work. She measured and mixed to her heart's content. Rose liked to sift the flour, and every now and then to dip her finger-tip into the mixture to taste it.

“It is the goodest I ever tasted,” she declared.

But when it was time to roll the dough, Rose was eager to try. She and Louise took turns, dividing their dough into two parts. And, very soon, they filled the little pans with cookies, about the size of a twenty-five-cent piece. There were twelve in one pan, and eleven in the other, “and enough left to fill each pan again,” said Louise proudly, putting a little sugar and cinnamon on top of each. The cookies went into

the oven, and, while they baked, there were more dishes for the children to wash, at the little sink. Louise kept a watchful eye on her treasures, and when they became the least bit brown, she drew them from the oven. As she proudly lifted each one carefully from the pan, a head appeared at the open window.

“Hello!” said Teddy. “I saw a big smoke coming out your chimney, so I knew you must be baking. M-m! Something smells good.”

“Come in, Teddy,” cried Rose. “We are having a lovely time.” But Teddy declined.

“I am too wet,” he declared, “and too big to feel comfy in there, but I’ll take a cooky, if you ask me.”

Louise held out three of the new cookies

to him. He opened his mouth, and she popped them all in at once, while Rose shouted with laughter.

“Yum yum!” Teddy smacked his lips. “There is a sweet taste in one of my teeth. Did I really eat a cooky?”

“You ate three, you greedy little boy,” cried Rose, and then the three children all laughed merrily.

Then Teddy was obliged to go, and the girls went back to their cooky-making.

At noon Mrs. Allen gave them permission to prepare a lunch for themselves in the playhouse. Rose set the table, while Louise ran to the big house to bring back two bowls of soup. Then she went off again, for milk and some rolls. One of the cakes, now nicely iced, adorned the table. There was a tiny plate of the new cookies, and some of those Mrs. Shaw had sent



over. It was a very happy little party. Hortense and Peggy both had seats at the table, and every one was happy.

“Next Saturday, Rose, we must make our own soup out here. And we must have Mother teach us how to make a tiny loaf of bread.”

“I wish we had a little cow, all our own, so we needn’t go to the house for milk,” said Rose.

Louise laughed at the funny idea. “Perhaps we should get a goat,” she said.

“And some little banty hens to lay us some eggs,” giggled Rose. “Do you s’pose Carrie will give us some more eggs? Let’s each cook an egg to eat now. I don’t really want one, but I could eat it. I want to see it cook in the dear little frying-pan.”

So two tiny eggs were fried, without but-

ter, and added to the feast in a tumbled heap, for they stuck fast to the pan.

“It is a funny dinner, isn’t it,” laughed Louise, “but it tastes good, don’t you think so?”

“It is awf’ly good,” said Rose.

“I like to listen to the rain pattering on our roof,” went on Louise. “It seems very near to us, doesn’t it? I’m glad it cannot get in.”

“I wish we had beds in here, Louise,” said Rose, “so we could sleep here at night.”

“Oh no, dear!” said Louise. “S’posing we woke in the night, and wanted Mother. Anyhow, a bed big enough for us would fill our bedroom full. I don’t really believe we could get a big bed in there.”

“And we could never get it out again, either,” Rose said thoughtfully.

So the little party presently ended. The girls washed their dishes, and put everything carefully away, then ran in to see Mrs. Allen, and tell her about it.

“I must stay in for a while, Rose,” said Louise. “I haven’t helped Mother and Sadie a bit, and they are so busy on Saturdays.”

“I will help, too, as hard as I can,” declared Rose.

## CHAPTER XII

### ADVENTURES

One afternoon, when Louise reached home after school, Mrs. Allen called to her.

“Louise, as soon as you change your dress, run out to the barn, and look for a new hen’s-nest. I heard a hen cackling in there to-day.”

“And so did I,” cried Rose, who was hanging onto Louise’s arm. “I shall go out and look now, while you change your dress. And if I hide, will you find me?”

“I’ll find you so soon you will think perhaps you didn’t hide at all,” laughed Louise.

“Don’t go yet, children, after all,” cried Mrs. Allen suddenly. “Here is Uncle Jim’s car coming up the hill, and he has

a lady with him. I do believe it is Mrs. Snaith. Yes, and her husband, too.”

Mrs. Snaith was a dear friend, and Mrs. Allen ran to the door to welcome her. Louise and Rose both shook hands with her, and behaved very nicely until Mrs. Allen gave them permission to run off. They went like little Indians then, with a rush and a shout, to find Uncle Jim. He was talking to Mr. Allen and Mr. Snaith, in the back yard by the car. The two little girls hugged him delightedly, and laughed at his funny greeting, and Rose began to peep in his pockets to see if she might find a candy surprise. She found one, too, a neat little package containing chocolate, and she divided it with Louise.

Mrs. Snaith could not stay late. She and her husband and Uncle Jim soon departed, Uncle Jim promising to come back on

Sunday to take the girls in town to church, and afterwards to have lunch with Mrs. Snaith. This afternoon visit was the cause of a funny happening, "a real adventure for Rose," so Louise declared.

"Now, what were we doing when those people inter—inter—came and stopped us," said Rose.

"Interrupted," said Louise kindly. "You were going to hide from me, in the barn."

"Oh yes, and I know such a good place," cried Rose. She ran gayly off, and Louise followed at a walk, to give her plenty of time to hide.

Rose had certainly chosen a fine hiding-place, for Louise could not seem to find her. Rose had run into the empty cow-barn, and crept into a manger under some loose hay. She heard Louise looking

for her, and stifled her giggles, lest they tell where she lay hiding.

The cow-barn and upper barn were really one, with a long partition dividing them. The cows' stalls were in a row along this partition, which had openings cut in it like windows, looking into the upper barn.

Rose raised her head from the hay to peep at Louise presently, through one of these openings; and seeing her very near, in the act of climbing the ladder into the hayloft, Rose ducked her head under the hay again. She did not at first heed a certain amount of noise and clatter she heard outside. Nor when this clatter came nearer her did she realize what it meant. Her mind was busy, tracing Louise's movements, and listening to her calls. When

suddenly the clatter of hoofs sounded on the cow-barn floor, Rose sat up in sudden alarm, only to see a great head almost over her.

She tried to scream but only made a queer little gurgling sound. A cow! George, the hired man, had just returned from the pasture, driving the cows to the barn for the night. The cow standing over Rose looked immense and frightful to the little girl, crouched there in the manger. To say Rose was alarmed is putting it mildly; she was nearly frightened to death. But so was the cow. She wasn't used to having little girls pop up in front of her from her manger. She backed hastily out of her stall, just as George, behind her, stepped forward to tie her. And then Rose managed to set her poor little terror-bound voice free. She screamed so loudly that





A GREAT HEAD ALMOST OVER HER. — *Page 148.*



George declared afterwards she almost "scart" him out of his senses. One doesn't expect to find little girls in a cow's stall, so perhaps it isn't strange that George was startled. Also, Rose leaped to her feet, as she screamed, and threw her arms around him, and held on so tightly that the surprised George couldn't move for about a minute.

In that time the frightened cow turned, and ran out of the barn, and Louise's startled face appeared in the opening over the manger.

"George!" she cried. "What happened to Rose?"

"Nothing to *her*," said George. "Why don't you ask what happened to me? She almost scart me out of my senses."

He loosened Rose's arms, and then held her back from him. "What were you do-

ing in that cow's feed-box?" he demanded.

"She was hiding from me," explained Louise, for Rose was too full of sobs and gasps and tears for any words to answer him.

Louise helped her little cousin through the opening, and into the hay-barn, where they sat on a pile of hay, while Rose cried heartily and Louise lovingly comforted her, and George went off to find the frightened cow, and drive her back to her stall.

"I didn't know it was time for the cows to come from the pasture," sobbed Rose, presently. "You were just home from school. I thought it was too early for cows."

"You forgot about Mrs. Snaith being here and keeping us late," said Louise.

"I was afraid of the cow, and she was 'fraid of me," went on Rose. "I aren't

afraid of cows when I'm outdoors, and standing up. But I was lying down, and she put her head right over me, and she looked *very* different."

Louise could understand this. She hugged Rose in silence. Just then George's head appeared in the opening.

"Look, Rose!" he called.

Rose looked. He put his arm around Bossie's neck and his head against her, and said teasingly:

"How do you like my little pet?"

Rose puckered her nose at him and looked haughty, and George laughed at her.

"Let's go in the house, Louise," said Rose, so they left the barn, Louise smiling a little.

George called after them, "Bring your supper out, and have a tea-party in Bossie's

feed-box, Rose," but that young lady did not deign to answer him.

The children told Mrs. Allen all about it, and she said Rose had had quite an adventure.

"Adventure! What is it?" asked Rose. "Being afraid?"

"No," replied Louise. "It is when something strange and different, and perhaps dangerous, too, happens to you."

"Did you ever have an adventure?" asked Rose.

"I don't think so," began Louise, but Mrs. Allen answered for her.

"She has had plenty of funny happenings that we might call adventures. Once when she was a very little girl, she was sailing her boat in the horse-trough. It was a little chip of wood, and she had two or three pebbles on it. It sailed away from

her, and, when she reached out for it, she fell in the trough, head first. She couldn't get out, and, if her daddy hadn't happened to see it all, she might have drowned. He ran to pull her out, and brought her in the house, and it wasn't long before she was all right again. But it was quite an adventure for such a little girl. Don't you think so?"

Rose looked startled. She clung tightly to Louise's hand, as if she were in imagination pulling the little tot from the big horse-trough.

"I nearly lost my dear little cousin then, didn't I?" she said gravely, and Louise couldn't help laughing.

"Tell me another, Aunt Grace," demanded Rose.

"Once," said Aunt Grace, "when she was a baby lying in her buggy, a naughty

boy pushed it, at the top of a hill. There was a brake on the buggy, and it was set to check the wheels, but he moved the brake, and pushed. The buggy carried her at a great rate of speed part-way down the hill, then it ran off into the grass, and spilled her on a lawn. It didn't hurt her a bit, but it frightened me dreadfully. That was before we lived on the farm.

“But the worst time of all was when she was about two-and-a-half years old, and she began to follow her daddy about, everywhere. One day she saw him going down towards the pasture, and she toddled after him. He did not see her, and he went so fast he left her far behind. She lost sight of him, and very soon lost herself. We looked everywhere for her, all through the house, in all the closets and cupboards, everywhere in the barns, down cellar, over at



Mrs. Shaw's. It was a long time before we found her, for we never thought to look so far from home. She had wandered away down by the railroad, and sat crying in the middle of the track. Her father scooped her up in his arms about five minutes before the evening train was due. A freight train had passed just before then, when she was toddling along beside the track."

Mrs. Allen paused. "Go on!" begged Rose. "I'm holding her safe."

"Mother," said Louise, with a little smile, "tell Rose about Uncle Jim and the puppy."

"When Uncle Jim was a little bit of a boy, before he could walk," began Mrs. Allen, "he used to creep about in the grass, on his hands and knees. My father bought us a new puppy. It was for me and my sister Helen (your mother, Rose), and

for little baby Jim. He loved the puppy at once. We kept it tied to a post, near the house, at first, as it liked to run away. One day Baby Jim crept across the grass to play with his puppy. He sat down beside the post, and the puppy frolicked around him, and licked his face, and tried to coax him to get up, and run about. In his play, the puppy managed to wind his rope around the post and the baby's neck, two or three times. It made the rope much shorter, and the puppy pulled hard to get more freedom, so he made the rope choke the baby. When my mother found them, baby's face was blue."

"Oh! Was he dead?" cried Rose, her eyes full of tears.

Mrs. Allen laughed gayly. "Do you think he could have been? It was Uncle Jim, you know."

“He’s quite well now, anyhow,” murmured Rose, in great relief. “What did my Grammy do?”

“She unwound the rope, and carried him in the house. He was soon well and happy again. Now Louise, set the table; and Rose, run and call Uncle Donnie and George. It is supper-time.” —

## CHAPTER XIII

### ROSE'S BIRTHDAY

School closed just two days before the end of June.

"I am so glad," cried Rose. "Two nice things happen at once. Louise stopped going to school; that is one. And my birthday is coming; that's the other. Let's have our party at the brook. May we, Aunt Grace? I want to take my bathing-suit." (Rose's mother had sent her bathing-suit just a few days before that.)

"Oh! It would be fun, Mother," exclaimed Louise. "We can have a picnic-party, if you think it is a good plan."

"I like the idea very much," said Mrs. Allen. "You shall have a picnic-party, Rose. Now tell me who is to come?"

"I want Harry, and Dorothy, and

Teddy, and Carrie—and who else?” began Rose.

“Let’s go out to the hammock, and write a list of names,” suggested Louise. So off they ran.

The list, duly presented for Mrs. Allen’s approval, omitted Carrie and Teddy.

“They’re too big for her little party, Mumsy, don’t you think so?” asked Louise, but she felt a little uncertain about it.

There were nine names on the list, when it was finished, “and Rose and I make eleven. It will mean a *very* big picnic basket, won’t it?” asked Louise, a trifle anxiously.

“I will look after the basket,” laughed Mrs. Allen, “if you will write the invitations.”

“Oh, yes! That is fun, for me,” Louise agreed, in great relief.

The invitations were all written by evening, and the next morning the postman took six of them. George, who was going to town, carried another, to deliver on the way, and Louise and Rose took the other two to near-by homes.

On her birthday morning Rose received a parcel from Mother and Daddy; inside it was a darling doll, dressed in pink silk, with a "really" straw hat with pink ribbons. Aunt Grace gave Rose a work-box with thimble, needles, and thread, for Rose liked to sew for her dolls. Louise gave her an album for snap-shots and photographs. Why? Well, you see, Uncle Jim gave her a cunning little camera. Rose was so happy she could not find words to tell of it.

It was a fine sunny morning, and the children were delighted. They helped Mrs. Allen, all morning, in her preparation of

the picnic-lunch. George promised to deliver it for them at the brookside, all but the birthday cake, which Louise was to carry herself, in a special basket. It was a big cake, and very pretty, thought Louise proudly, for she had decorated it herself, spelling with tiny red candies on the white icing: *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ROSE*. There were a row of the red candies around the edge, and six red candles were in the basket ready to be put on the cake.

At one o'clock the picnickers began to arrive. There were mysterious parcels kept carefully from Rose's eyes. Rose had not thought of parcels, so was not expecting to see any; therefore it was easy to keep them hidden. The children's names were Stella, Dorothy, Harry, James, Hazel, Jean, Fred, May, and Edna. They were an excited and happy little flock, and raced

ahead of Mrs. Allen, down through the meadow, across pasture-land, and into the woods. There was a crooked little path through the bushes and trees, and it brought them by a winding way right to the Falls.

“Oh, there are the lovely Niag’ra Falls,” screamed Rose. “May we go in swimming?”

Every child had been told to bring a bathing-suit. Rose’s was brown, with a bright yellow band around it. Louise’s was a fawn color with blue bands. There were red bathing-suits, and blue, and green ones. Harry’s was gray with three red stripes around it. When all the children were at last in the water, below the falls, it was a bright and lively scene. Mrs. Allen, from the shore, took several pictures of them for Rose, with the new cam-



era. Harry and James could both swim a little, and they showed off their accomplishment as much as possible. Louise was learning to swim, too, and managed to win admiring comments from some of the other girls.

Presently Mrs. Allen called to them all to come out. It was not good, she said, to stay in the water too long. So they all came out, and, in a short time, eleven bright-colored bathing-suits lay in a row on a gentle slope of rock, to dry in the sun. The children did not dress their feet. It was too much fun to paddle in the water at intervals, and dig bare toes in the sand, or to climb about on the smooth hot rocks. The boys helped Mrs. Allen gather sticks for a fire, on the gravel bed at the brookside. There were sizzling and boiling sounds in the air soon, "and such a nice, mixed

sort of smell," murmured one of the boys.

And then, along the pathway, who should come into sight but Carrie and Teddy. Louise was astonished. She looked quickly at Mrs. Allen, who was smiling and waving at the newcomers. Each one carried a basket.

"More provisions, Louise," said Carrie.

"My dear!" protested Mrs. Allen. "We have enough now to feed an army."

"You will need it all," said Teddy, "judging by the way I feel."

Mrs. Allen whispered to Louise, "Rose wanted to ask them, so I let her do so. I forgot to tell you before."

Louise was delighted. Carrie and Teddy were both so full of fun. Carrie became the life of the party at once, organizing games, running and laughing, and keeping every one happy and gay. Teddy

found more fire-wood for Mrs. Allen, and busied himself helping her for a while, till she sent him off to play. There was a great game of tag in an open space. Such fun it was, and how every one laughed when little Rose ran so fast she caught Teddy, after Carrie, who was tall and swift, failed! Then Louise and Edna chased Fred all over the little glade, but could not catch him, while Rose caught him in a trice.

After "Tag," they played "London Bridge," "The Farmer in the Dell," and "Drop the Handkerchief." In the midst of this last game, Louise and Carrie vanished, to help Mrs. Allen lay the table-cloth, in a beautiful spot near the brookside, where pine-needles made a lovely carpet, and the tall trees afforded cool shade.

"There are fourteen of us, Mother,"

said Louise, laying plates, "that makes five at each side, and two at each end."

"This is Rose's place," said Carrie. "Put all the parcels in this basket, and, after this dinner-party is over, we will set the basket before her, and let her open them."

"Call the children now; we are ready for the fray," laughed Mrs. Allen.

Carrie ran to do this. "Follow the Leader," she cried, "and I am Leader."

They followed her in a merry line, and she led them to where the cloth was spread on the ground. Every one was soon seated, and "ready for action," as Fred remarked. There was plenty of laughter when Teddy declared Rose and Louise had been cooking for a week, in the new playhouse at home, preparing for this party.

"We never, Teddy Shaw," cried Rose. "We ate up all our own cooking. Only,

you ate some of it, too. Once, he ate three cookies in one mouthful," she told the others.

"And *then* I didn't have enough for one good bite," laughed Teddy.

"Here is a riddle," said Carrie. "Why is Louise's playhouse like Teddy?"

"Because both are full of cookies," shouted Harry, and every one laughed.

"It's because Louise likes them both," guessed Rose. More laughter.

"It is because they're both shingled in red," said Carrie, who liked to tease Teddy by telling him his hair was red.

"Just for that, Miss Carrie," cried Teddy, "I will take you may-flowering next spring, and push you off the bridge."

When the birthday cake came out of its basket, the six candles had been inserted, and Mrs. Allen now carefully lighted

them, one after the other. But a very light breeze that was blowing put the candles out almost as fast as she lit them. So she decided to do without the lights. Everybody admired the cake, Rose especially, who was filled with delight over her birthday and all the surprises it held. After the cake, appetites lagged.

Then Carrie brought forward a basket, and set it before Rose.

“For your birthday, Rose,” she said, “from all of us.”

Rose was greatly astonished for a moment, then, with an eager cry, she caught up a parcel from the basket. Carrie had a peep at it, and said, “That is from Jean.” Rose opened it, and found a bright-covered story-book. “The King of the Golden River,” read Carrie. Everybody admired this. The next parcel had a card

on it—"from May," and it proved to be a pretty little cup and saucer "to use in the new playhouse," said May. The third parcel, from Fred, was a game,—a new one Rose had never played before. The fourth, from Edna, was a tiny baby-doll, dressed in long white clothes. Rose was greatly pleased with this, and had to admire it for several minutes. Then followed a set of doll's dishes, from Carrie; a little toy watch from James (it wouldn't really go), a pretty little white china teapot, with pink roses on it, from Harry; another book from Dorothy; a bottle of beautiful green perfume from Hazel (Rose admired this very much), and a skipping-rope from Teddy. Everything pleased Rose, and she thanked them all as nicely as she could.

After the lunch, every one sat on the grass, talking and telling stories and rid-

dles. Rose examined all her presents again. Dorothy read aloud a story to her. She tried the new skipping-rope. She filled the new teapot with brook water, and poured it out again, a dozen times. The wrist watch was fastened on her little brown wrist. She carried the baby-doll in her arms.

All too soon it was time to go home.

Much later, Rose and Louise had a few moments in the hammock, just before bedtime.

Rose said, "I thought the swimming was such fun. It must be the best fun there is, but the games were even more fun, and the 'dinner' was even *mo-o-ore* fun. And the presents were better still. It kept getting better and better. It was a lovely party."

Louise smiled and hugged her dear little cousin. She thought it had been a lovely party, too.



## CHAPTER XIV

### MIDSUMMER FUN

Haying-time on the farm meant new interests for the children. It was cherry-time, too. The two big cherry-trees, one on either side of the chicken-house, were red with fruit. There was a small ladder in the barn. The little girls often carried it to the chicken-house, climbed up to the roof, and sat there with the cherry-trees on either hand. The roof was low and nearly flat. It sloped just a little. It was fine, up there. One felt quite lofty and altogether delightful. It was high enough to give the children a good view of the fields that stretched away below them.

On the first day that the big mowing-machine was brought out to the yard, and oiled, and generally put in order, Louise

and Rose stayed near at hand to watch with great interest. When Mr. Allen hitched the two big horses to it, and rode off to the hay-field, they followed eagerly. George and the new hired man (there were always new men for haying) came behind, with scythes. They must cut the hay in the corners, where the mowing-machine could not reach. The children loved to watch the thick heavy hay fall in long swaths, as Mr. Allen drove along. Once they found an empty bird's nest on the ground.

“I am so glad the baby birds have gone,” said Louise. “They might have been killed if they were in the nest.”

There were a few very late wild strawberries, too, brought to light by the cutting of the long grass that hid them.

When the children tired of running about in the hot sun in the hay-field, they

went up the hillside, and into the farm-yard.

“Let’s go up on the henhouse, and watch Daddy mowing,” suggested Louise. The cherry-trees gave them a little shade up there. There were ripe cherries to be eaten. Lunch time came before they knew it.

“I want to come back to this beautiful place, and stay all afternoon,” said Rose as they went down the ladder.

But afternoon brought new interests. The hay-rake went into action in the field of freshly cut hay. The hay was raked into long even rows, and George and the other man, with hay-forks, made it into the most beautiful piles. The children never left the field, hot as it was. They watched the men work, ran after the hay-rake, tumbled in the hay, and hid behind the haycocks.

Louise found some lovely black-eyed Susans growing in a corner, across the fence. It was a very exciting and happy day.

“Dad says,” related Louise, “that the hay isn’t dry enough to be put in the barn to-day, but they will put it in to-morrow.”

After supper the big hay-rack was brought into the farmyard, ready for the next morning’s work. The children climbed into it, and had a splendid time there, playing with their dolls. They pretended the hay-rack was a boat, and they sailed off on a long journey to the strange lands Louise sometimes read about in her story-books. Bedtime came all too soon, but two tired little girls slept so soundly that morning came as a surprise.

Rose intended to spend this day, as she had the preceding day, watching the work

going on in the fields, and playing in the hay. But it was a difficult matter to watch everything. There were two extra men to-day. One was cutting a second field of hay with the mowing-machine, and the other was busy with a scythe. The rest of the men were putting hay in the barn. By noontime, Rose had thoroughly exhausted herself, running about, and Mr. Allen told her she might ride home beside George on top of the great load of hay. There was a breath-taking moment as she reached up from Mr. Allen's arms to George's outstretched hands, but George pulled her up safely, and Louise after her, and they cuddled down in the middle of the hay. George sat in front, driving the horses. Rose crawled up beside him, and discovered that the horses' backs were below her. It frightened her a little. She

crept back beside Louise, and they lay there, warm and lazy, looking up at the sky, for they couldn't see much else, the hay billowed up around them so. The rack jolted and swayed, sometimes, but the children pretended it was a great ocean liner, rocked by immense waves.

In the early afternoon, the children climbed up to the roof of the chicken-house, taking with them the dolls and some sewing. Louise was helping Rose to make a pink gingham dress for Peggy. It did not progress very fast.

"I feel too warm to sew," Rose decided.

"You are tired, I know," said Louise. "You must have run miles this morning, back and forth across the hay-field. Look at the big load of hay coming up the hill!"

It came nearer and nearer, the horses

pulling steadily, George sitting on the load, driving. It passed the henhouse so closely that the sides of the load brushed the building, and the top seemed level with the roof. Then it went on, into the barn, but riding gayly on top were two little girls. It had taken just one jump to carry them from the edge of the roof safely onto the load of hay. George was astonished when, inside the barn, he turned to find he had two passengers.

“How did you get here, I’d like to know?” he inquired.

“We jumped off the hen-house roof,” cried Rose laughing. “We s’prised you, George, didn’t we?”

George turned to Louise. “Is that so? Did you really jump? You shouldn’t do such a trick as that. You might have gone

down between the rack and the chicken-house, and broken a few bones, maybe your necks, too."

"O George!" Louise almost cried. "I didn't stop to consider. The hay was so near, and Rose and I stood there, hand in hand, and it just seemed as if I must jump."

George felt sorry at once. "I know you won't try it again, Louise," he said kindly, "and you'll keep Miss Fly-away here from doing it, so it's all right, isn't it?"

He climbed down from the hay-rack, in front, over the horses' backs, went around to the back, and held up his arms. Rose slipped off first, and then Louise.

They watched the big fork in the barn, that worked on pulleys, swinging the hay from the rack into the haymow. The rack was soon empty, and off to the field for another load.





IT HAD TAKEN JUST ONE JUMP.—Page 177.



“Let’s climb up the ladder into the mow, and jump in the hay,” said Rose. “It will be so soft and nice now.” Up they went to a loft above the haymow, to jump down into the new sweet hay. Oh! It was such fun. They climbed up and jumped down, then did it all over again, until two of the men came back with another big load of hay. The children from the loft watched this load being lifted into the mow. When the men departed with the hay-rack, they jumped again. But they were tired. They found it nicer to lie still on the hay, and to talk and rest at the same time.

Presently a voice, far off, called, “Louise!”

“It is Mother,” said Louise, sitting up. “I must go and see what she wants.”

“It’s so hot here,” said Rose. “I’ll wait for you in the hammock.”

Louise went down the ladder first and ran off to the house. Mrs. Allen was putting ice in a cool drink she had prepared for the men in the hay-field. She wanted Louise to carry it to those thirsty workers.

"I won't call Rose, Mother," said Louise. "She was tired, and it is so hot. If she comes in the house, tell her I'll be right back." She went away, carrying her burden very carefully, lest it spill.

When she came back, she ran in the house, hot and tired, and dropped into a big chair in the cool living room, where Mrs. Allen sat talking with a neighbor. After a few minutes, Louise asked, "Mother, was Rose cross because I left without her?"

Mrs. Allen looked up, rather surprised. "I don't think she missed you, Louise. She

hasn't been in the house yet, to inquire for you."

Louise was glad to hear this. She was afraid Rose might have felt cross at being left behind. She went out to the hammock to look for Rose, and, not finding her there, looked all about the garden, and farmyard. Rose didn't seem to be anywhere about. Louise climbed into the haymow, but there was no sign of Rose. She went in the house to tell Mrs. Allen about it. She ran over to Shaw's, then down in the hay-field. Mrs. Allen and the neighbors joined in the search. The men, coming up from the hay-field with another load of hay, left it standing in the yard, and began to look for Rose. Mr. Allen came up from the field. His questions led Louise to say, "Daddy, I left her in the haymow, but she

isn't there now. She said she was going to wait for me in the hammock, where it was cooler."

"Maybe she buried herself in the hay," said one of the men.

They all trooped up to the haymow. Another load of hay had been left there since Louise and Rose had been there. This last load was lifted carefully off, a forkful at a time, and thrown to one side. There, against the wall, in a deep, dark little nook, covered with hay, lay Rose fast asleep. Enough air had remained between the hay and the wall for her use. She was quite comfortable, and not too pleased at being awakened. She couldn't understand why Louise cried, nor why everybody made such a fuss over her. Mrs. Allen held her in her arms, and cried, too, for a moment.

“If Old Bossie had been in the barn, I suppose we’d have had her cut open by this time, looking for Rose in her insides. Rose says cows eat little girls.” This from George.

Every one laughed then, and felt better, but Rose was badly spoiled for the rest of the day.

## CHAPTER XV

### GOING HOME

Rose had followed well the directions given by the city doctor, long ago, when she had had measles, for she nearly lived outdoors. She was plump and rosy now, tanned, and freckled a little, too.

“Mother will like to see my roses back again, and I s’pose she’ll be glad I am fatter,” she said to Louise, “but I don’t b’lieve she’ll care much for my freckles.” Rose studied her little nose anxiously in the mirror.

“Don’t worry about your freckles, darling,” said Louise. “They’re so little your mammy-o must get a magnifying glass in order to see them.”

“There are seven sure-nuff freckles on



my nose alone," mourned Rose, "and several spots that look as if they might grow into freckles."

"They are nice little freckles," said Louise, laughing, "they're sun-kisses, don't you know that? Aunt Helen will think you are the nicest girl in all the land. You'll see."

The two little girls were preparing to go to the station with Mr. Allen to meet Aunt Helen. She was coming to take Rose home. Louise felt heart-sick over it, but, like the dear thoughtful child she was, she carefully hid her distress, lest Rose become unhappy, too. As it was, Rose was in a fever of delight, and hadn't a care in the world, except for the freckles. She forgot those, too, when she and Louise were in the car with Mr. Allen, driving to the station. Mrs. Allen stayed at home, to pre-

pare a special dinner in honor of the coming visitor.

So, when Rose's mother stepped off the train with little Laddie, it was her little girl she saw first, no longer thin and pale and listless, but a riotous, eager, pink-cheeked Rose, who could not seem to let go of Mother and wee Laddie.

Louise felt dreadfully shy for a moment, but, when Mr. Allen advanced to greet her Auntie, she went with him, and held out her hand shyly. Aunt Helen hugged and kissed her little niece, and then Laddie came in for his share of attention. Rose felt a tiny bit jealous when she saw how Mr. Allen and Louise laughed over her little brother and his funny little speeches.

They drove out to the farm, and how glad Mrs. Allen was to see her sister, and the baby boy. She had never seen Laddie

before, and now she couldn't have enough of him.

"Isn't he a darling baby?" every one cried.

"But he isn't really a baby," laughed his mother. "He is past two, nearly three."

"How do you like your made-over daughter?" asked Mrs. Allen, her hand on Rose's shoulder.

"Isn't she the picture of health?" cried Rose's mother. "I have never seen her look so well. She has grown inches, I am sure, and tanned—and rosy—and glad to see her mummy?"

"Oh yes, Mother," breathed Rose, arms around Mother's neck. "So glad! I've missed you every day."

"You haven't pined away for me," laughed her mother. "It has made you fat."

After his nap, Laddie was taken out to the farmyard, to see all the pets. He was afraid of Madge, she was such a big doggie. When she tried, in eager friendliness, to lick his face, he cried.

"She just wanted to kiss you, Sonny-boy," said Louise soothingly, but Laddie insisted, "I don' want he does it again," so Louise sent Madge away.

Laddie liked Lulu, the cat, and admired the hens very much. He patted Lulu's soft coat, then said to Louise: "I wish I want to patter a hen."

"Let him try," laughed his mother, who stood near. So he ran toward the nearest hen, but she moved off. He approached a second, and she ran. He ran after a third, but she outdistanced him in a moment. He ran into a group of hens, and they fled squawking. He stood and looked

after them, murmuring, "I can't want to patter those hens to-day," and returned to Louise's side.

Laddie made friends with Teddy at once. Riding on Teddy's back was the best of sport to the little fellow. Teddy carried him so much that Mrs. Shaw declared he didn't look natural any longer without Laddie on his shoulders. The tiny boy grew fond of Madge, too, pulled her about, abused her and hugged her, tried to climb on her back, sat down on her when she lay asleep, and the strange part of it was that Madge seemed to enjoy it all. She followed the little boy about, wherever he went.

The day set for the departure came very quickly. Every one felt sad. Teddy had a very long face, a very solemn one. Mr. Allen declared he could not part with the children—he pretended to bargain with

Rose's mother for them both. Mrs. Allen had to try very hard to smile and to keep back a few tears that seemed determined to fall. Poor Louise could not manage a smile at all. Her Aunt Helen cried, and Rose cried, too, hugging Louise with all her might. Uncle Jim, who had come to drive them to the station, laughed at them all, but inwardly he felt very sorry, too. Laddie was the only happy person, and he was delighted at the prospect of a ride on the "tootie-train."

"Don' c'y, Wose," he said, trying to comfort her, "I bring you back to-morrow."

Her mother whispered to her of Daddy in the city, and of her little friends there, especially Ned, who lived across the street, and of Rufus, the little red-haired terrier. So Rose was soon in a more cheerful

frame of mind, and, as the train pulled out, was able to smile through her tears, and wave her hand to the little group left behind.

But there seemed no solace at first for poor Louise. She missed Rose dreadfully, till she ached with the feeling of loss. She missed her Auntie and little Laddie, too, but Rose the most.

“Mother,” she said, “I don’t seem to know what to do. Everything I did before was with Rose.”

School finally opened, and that helped Louise. And she clung hopefully to a promise Uncle Jim had whispered to her:—“I will have Rose here for a visit next summer, even if I have to go all the way to the city to steal her.” Louise believed in Uncle Jim—he would keep his promise. He was the kind of uncle that always did.









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