

DOROTHY DAINTY'S
TREASURE
CHEST



AMY BROOKS



Class PZ7

Book .B791

D50t

Copyright N^o _____

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

**DOROTHY DAINTY'S
TREASURE CHEST**



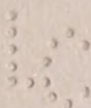
“THEY’RE COMING!” CRIED DOROTHY. “I HEAR THEM!”—Page 15.

DOROTHY DAINTY'S TREASURE CHEST

BY

AMY BROOKS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR



BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

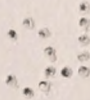
DOROTHY DAINTY
Trade-Mark
Registered in U. S. Patent Office

PZ 7
B791
II 207

Copyright, 1922,
By **LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD Co.**

All rights reserved

DOROTHY DAINTY'S TREASURE CHEST



PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Norwood Press
BERWICK & SMITH CO.
NORWOOD, MASS.

SEP -7 1922

© 1922

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE TREASURE CHEST	9
II ARABELLA	32
III VERA'S WHIMS	53
IV ABDUL HAPHET	74
V UNCLE HARRY MAKES A CALL	94
VI ELFIN'S BARGAIN	111
VII A SAILOR'S VISION	133
VIII THE MYSTERIOUS NOTE	152
IX THE PIRATE	171
X A NEW ARRIVAL	188
XI UNCLE HARRY'S FAIR	207
XII THE CHEST'S CONTENTS	227

ILLUSTRATIONS

“THEY’RE COMING!” CRIED DOROTHY. “I HEAR THEM!”	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
CLASPING HER HANDS ABOUT HER KNEES, SHE BRACED HERSELF	44
HE BENT ONCE MORE OVER THE TRIPOD	90
“DOES HE KNOW <i>anysing</i> ?” ELFIN ASKED	120
DROPPING TO HER KNEES, SHE REACHED FOR THE TINY BOX	160
“DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT <i>could</i> BE PATRICIA?” DOROTHY ASKED	202

DOROTHY DAINTY'S TREASURE CHEST

CHAPTER I

THE TREASURE CHEST

THE living-room at the Stone House looked as if it had been transformed into a museum of rare and costly objects.

Soft silken draperies, filmy laces, fine jade and coral, and many wonderfully carved pieces made a collection which any one would have been proud to possess. Mr. Dainty had described these lovely things that he had purchased, and the entire household had been impatiently waiting for them to arrive.

“Isn’t that soft yellow satin beautiful?” Nancy whispered, and Aunt Charlotte heard, and replied, “That is a Turkish satin, Nancy” she said, “and its luster is almost like metal.”

“And see these lovely strings of beads, coral, and green, such a lovely green!” Nancy said.

“The green jade beads are for Dorothy, and the red coral for you, Nancy,” said Mr. Dainty who had just come in from the porch.

“That very beautiful carved chair, and the feather fan with carved sticks, now lying on the seat of the chair, I chose especially for you, dear,” Mr. Dainty said, turning toward his wife.

“Oh, Rudolph, nothing could better please me,” she said.

“I didn’t forget you, Aunt Charlotte.”

As he spoke, Mr. Dainty laid a soft blue

silk shawl around Aunt Charlotte's shoulders. It was embroidered with roses in natural colors, and edged with fringe fully a half-yard deep.

“And here is the little treasure chest, Dorothy that I tried to describe to you. Do you remember that I said it was beautifully carved and inlaid? Tell me, dear, does it look as you thought it would?”

“Yes, it truly does, only it is much handsomer than I dreamed. You told me of the pretty pattern of its carving, and the quaint old metal clasp, but it is more wonderful than I thought. Father, is it to be mine?”

“Surely, Dorothy. I chose it, believing that you would like to have it for your own.”

“I can't tell you how dear it is,” said Dorothy.

“Come, Nancy, let's get Flossie Barnet, and Molly Merton over here to see it.

Only yesterday I was trying to tell Flossie how fine it was to be, but I'd not seen it then, and I had to try to repeat what Father had said."

"You may surely ask Flossie and Molly over to see the pretty little chest, but wait, dear, until we have arranged some of the lovely things, so that they can all be seen," Mr. Dainty said.

"It is so hard to wait to show my gift," Dorothy said, slowly.

"Could we take the little chest out on the lawn?" Nancy asked, eagerly.

"Oh, yes, and have Molly and Flossie over to see it, instead of waiting?" Dorothy asked, and Mrs. Dainty smiled at the eagerness in her voice.

"Surely you may, if you wish," she said, and Dorothy and Nancy rushed out on the

porch, calling to the gardener who was tramping along the walk, a rake over his shoulder.

“Oh, John, do be dear, and take this out on the lawn for me?” cried Dorothy.

“Sure Oi will, Miss Dorothy, or to South Ameriky, ef yez ax me,” John replied.

“Oh, is it this featherweight trunk yez want token out?” he asked.

“Sure, I t’ought Oi’d hav ter ax the groom ter come over from the other end of the garden ter help me, fer Oi’d niver darest ter ax the butler,” said John.

“Why are you afraid of the butler?” Dorothy asked.

“Because he looks at me thot quare-loike, as if he t’ought me a bug of some kind thot b’longed in the garding, and oughtn’t ter come out’n it,” was the droll reply.

“Oh, but Dorothy thinks you are just kind and good and dear,” said Nancy, “and so do I.”

“Bless yer dear little hearts,” said John, “an’ Oi’d rather hov the love of the childer thon the foine regard of the butler ony day, regardless of his grandeur.”

“The butler is good, too,” Dorothy said quickly.

“An’ ye’d shpake a good word for any one on the place,” said John. “No wonder we all love yez,” and he walked away, a twinkle in his kindly eyes, and a wee bit of moisture, too.

Dorothy and Nancy sat down to admire the lovely inlaid work, and carving.

There were bits of rainbow-tinted pearl, tiny diamond-shaped pieces of silver, and many different kinds of wood, all inlaid in a wonderfully charming design.

Dorothy bent to study it closely, while Nancy leaned forward to examine the quaint lock. A second later Dorothy sprang to her feet.

“Oh, we’ll not have to call for them. Just listen, Nancy! They’re coming!” cried Dorothy. “I hear them!”

Nancy, looking up at Dorothy saw the eager light in her blue eyes.

Dorothy pointed toward the porch, and there, sure enough, stood Molly and Flossie.

“Come on over here,” cried Nancy, and down the steps and over the lawn they raced.

“Oh, the lovely, *lovely* colors!” cried Flossie.

“What will you keep in it?” questioned Molly.

Molly always wished to know the use of any object that she admired.

“I don’t know yet,” Dorothy said, “but

Father says it is an antique treasure chest, and that some great lady owned it and kept her jewels in it, so I think I'll put only things that I care most for in it. I mean those things that I would least like to lose."

"Do you know the first thing that you will put in it?" Flossie asked.

"I *think* I do," Dorothy said, "but I'm not quite sure, yet."

"Wouldn't you like to know about the great lady who owned it?" Flossie asked, adding, "and what her name was and where she lived?"

"And what she kept in it?" Molly added.

"My father knows her name, and all about her, and he said when all the beautiful things had been unpacked, and places chosen for them, he would tell me all about the wonderful little chest," said Dorothy.

“Well, I’m just wild to hear it,” said Flossie.

A few days later Mr. Dainty was sitting on the porch, reading a very old-looking leather-bound book, when around the corner of the house came Dorothy, Nancy, Molly, Flossie, and Katie Dean.

They had been running races, and now were glad to pause for a rest.

“Oh, *such* a run!” cried Molly, “I’m all out of breath.”

“The one least tired ought to tell a story while the others listen,” declared Nancy.

“Then it must be your turn, Father dear,” Dorothy said, leaning lovingly against him, as if to coax.

“You’re a group of breathless little racers,” said Mr. Dainty, “so as I’ve not been running, I’ll agree to tell a story, and

it shall be the story of Lady Mary Anne Augusta, daughter of Lord Lengton, of Lengton Castle, situated in a picturesque part of England. Lord Lengton was a great land-owner, and the possessor of the now famous 'Treasure Chest.'

“Little Lady Mary's mother was frail and did not live to see her lovely baby, having died when it was born, and Lord Lengton's sister, Lady Uffingwell, came at once to the castle to care for the wee baby, that is, more properly speaking to see that others cared for it, for the castle boasted sixty servants, among them two nurses for tiny Lady Mary.

“As soon as she was old enough to study, a number of tutors were engaged. There were languages to be studied, and the little girl thought it very tedious to be obliged to learn to speak and write Italian and

French, to be trained to play the harp, to spend long hours at an embroidery frame, to listen to the dapper little Frenchman, who was a master of the art of dancing of that time, while he described the figures of the stately minuet, and then sharply criticised her least error.

“Thus were her days closely occupied, with but little time for play, for often when the lessons were over for the day, and the books laid aside, her pony was at the door, led by her riding-master, mounted upon one of Lord Lengton’s horses, and behind her he rode, constantly calling to her, to, ‘Sit erect,’ ‘Hold the lines closer to the saddle,’ or, ‘Look out for thy elbows, Lady Mary. Keep them close to the side,’

“It is recorded that one sunny day the little girl snatched the opportunity, when her teacher drew rein that he might watch

the pheasants over in the field, and touching her pony smartly with her riding-crop, she dashed away, looking over her shoulder to laugh, but not even attempting to lessen her speed.

“Of course the riding instructor complained to Lord Lengton that he could not teach the small girl, if instead of listening she rode away laughing, and Lord Lengton sent for his little daughter.

“Quietly she listened while he talked, but he was not at all sure that she intended doing better, until he showed her a little treasure chest. ‘Now, little daughter,’ he said, ‘each day that thy work is praised by thy teachers, thou shalt write, “Good,” on a slip of paper, and drop it into this chest. Also on each day that thou art reprovèd for idleness, or error, “Bad” must thou write on a bit of paper, and drop that, also, in the

chest. At the end of the month we'll take the slips of paper out and see if there be more "good" than "bad" ones.'

"The little girl thought that would be great fun, and resolved to have many 'good' ones for the next month. She remembered that three times she had hidden in a little tower room of the castle, in order that she might avoid her French lesson. She thought of her impatience when her silks had become knotted while she sat at her embroidery frame, and she had twitched them so that the knots had pulled tighter than before. Now that she had the lovely chest, she felt that she must honor it by tossing into it many, *many* papers clearly marked; 'Good.' "

"And did she?" Dorothy asked eagerly, her eyes bright with interest.

"She did, indeed," Mr. Dainty said, "and

she made a finer record than she had ever dreamed of, for she had thought only of careful doing of her daily tasks, and of pleasing her tutors, and her father.

“A few weeks after the day on which her father had talked with her, she was playing in the garden, when two cavaliers rode up to the gateway, and shouted to the man who was trimming the shrubbery:

“‘Go up to the castle, my man, and tell thy master he has visitors!’ cried the foremost of the two riders.

“‘That I cannot do, for my lord is not at the castle,’ the servant replied.

“‘And if not at the castle, where is he? Speak up now, for we are not over patient,’ shouted the cavalier, ‘and do thou open the gates that we may ride up to the castle door.’

“Little Lady Mary knew that her father

was at home, and with her heart beating fast, she ran from behind the high hedge where she had been listening, and up the stairway to the library where she believed that Lord Lengton was reading.

“ ‘Father,’ she cried, as she ran to him, ‘there are two bold soldiers at the gates, and old Adrian did not mean to let them enter, but even now they are riding up to the door. Adrian said, “My lord is not at the castle,” and oh, I believe he knows they are bad men!’

“ ‘I know who they must be, and they are traitors to our king. Take this folded parchment, and hide it among thy toys in the nursery. Soldiers would never look there for anything of value.’

“ ‘But, Father, will they be angry when they find that Adrian lied to them? Will they do thee harm?’

“ ‘Be brave, little daughter, and remember that thou art the child of Lord Lengton. Do not show any terror, but seem to be happily at play with the dolls in the nursery. I shall hide in the secret chamber, and if they find me, which I greatly doubt, they will not find, upon my person, the king’s papers that must be guarded. Hide them well, Lady Mary, and be thou brave!’

“ ‘I will, Father,’ the little girl said, as firmly as an older person might have spoken.

“ ‘Just as Lord Lengton left the nursery, a maid entered.

“ ‘Oh, the ruffians!’ she cried. ‘They be down in my lord’s study even now, and they be pulling down tapestries, never minding if they tear them, so they can find what they’re hunting for, and who knows what that may be?’

“ ‘Hush, Hilda!’ cried the little girl, ‘they must not think us frightened, my father said so. He is in hiding, and this packet I must hide for him. Quick, get me the old cloth bag that I keep dolls’ clothes in. In the bottom of the bag I’ll hide the packet, pile all the dolls’ clothes back into the bag, and stuff a doll on top, for good measure.’

When the cloth bag was refilled, and thrown carelessly upon the nursery floor among a litter of toys, no one would have dreamed of looking there for anything of value.

“ ‘Now get me a frock that belongs to the gardener’s little girl, and oh, be quick, make haste, I beg.’

“When the puzzled maid returned with the coarse little dress, the little Lady Mary lost no time in slipping out of her own

beautiful dress, and into the coarse frock of the gardener's child.

“ ‘Take the ribbon from my hair, and tousle my curls so I may look unkempt.’

“The maid, still wondering, did as she was bid.

“ ‘Lady Mary!’ she gasped, ‘thou lookest, mayhap, like a servant's child!’

“ ‘That's what I wish,’ replied Lady Mary, ‘for if I am thought to be a servant's child, I'll surely be too shy to dare to answer, if they try to question me. Let them think I am thy little girl, Hilda, and if they speak to me, I'll not answer as I should, but look down at my shoes, and drop a courtesy, but utter never a word. My shaking voice would betray my terror, but in this garb, they'll not wonder that I speak not.’

“And now heavy boots were tramping

along the gallery, and in a few moments the portières were rudely pushed aside, and the two cavaliers strode in. They turned to Hilda.

“ ‘By my faith, this is a nursery, and art thou the nurse?’ said one.

“Hilda’s knees were shaking, and well she knew that her voice would shake as well, so she simpered, and courtesied, and twisted the corner of her apron, making no answer.

“ ‘Does this unkempt urchin belong to thee?’ questioned the younger of the two men.

“Hilda made another courtesy, but not a word came from her lips.

“ ‘Know’st thou if it be true that thy master, Lord Lengton, is away from the castle, or if he be in hiding? Speak, lass, unless thou be too simple for speech.’

“ ‘If they think me but a poor fool, all the better,’ thought Hilda, still twisting her apron, and grinning.

“ ‘Try the little one,’ said the man who had been speaking, to his companion.

“ ‘How about thee, little lass? Canst answer better than thy stupid mother?’

“Lady Mary, sitting on the floor, and building houses with some blocks, might have been deaf, for all the heed she paid to her questioner. The soldier stooped and roughly grasped her arm. Lady Mary let him set her upon her feet.

“ ‘Now then, child, hast seen the little Lady Mary hereabouts?’

“She stared at him, but said naught.

“ ‘By my faith! Both the mother and child are but dunderheads, so why waste time on the stupid pair?’

“But the man persisted.

“ ‘If not given to speech, wag thy head, yes or no, when I question thee.

“ ‘Now, hast seen Lady Mary this day, or hast seen her father, Lord Lengton? Wag thy pate, child. Yes or no?’

“Lady Mary peeping through her tangled locks, smiled again, and ducked for a courtesy, as the servant’s own child would have done, but made no answer.

“ ‘Come, come!’ said the other cavalier, ‘I’m not a patient waiter. Have done with trying to work an empty well. These two have not so much as a half a brain between them, and if Lord Lengton hires such dummies for servants, he can’t be bright enough, himself, to have been given charge of papers valued by the king. It’s plain to me that Lord Lengton is not the man, and we’ve been wasting precious time hunting through the wrong castle.’

“ ‘Could it be Castle Tremayne that was meant in the message that was sent to us?’

“ ‘I know not,’ replied the other ‘but this I know. We’ve searched thoroughly here, and neither the papers nor the lord of the castle are here, so let’s be off, and on our way to Castle Tremayne, and may we have better luck,’ and with that the two men strode out into the hall, and soon they were cantering down the avenue, their hoof-beats making merry music for Lady Mary’s ears. Lord Lengton, from a loophole in the secret tower chamber, saw them depart, and watched until he saw that they were well on their way to Tremayne Castle, before he left his hiding-place. Then he ordered his own horse to be saddled and bridled, and calling upon two of his faithful retainers to act as a body-guard, he rode forth, in an opposite

direction, to carry the precious parchment to his king.

“Lord Lengton was praised, after being richly rewarded by the king for the safe delivery of the precious papers, and was ordered to bring the little Lady Mary to the palace, ‘I would know the little Lady Mary, for never have I heard of so clever, so brave a little lass,’ said the king.

“ ‘She shall be the wee guest of her king and queen, there shall be a festival in her honor, and in the midst of the festivities, her father shall learn of a greater reward for priceless service than mere words of his grateful king.’ ”

CHAPTER II

ARABELLA

FOR a long time the little friends sat talking of the little girl who had been so brave, for the story of Lady Mary had greatly pleased them.

Mr. Dainty had told them that later, when she had grown to be a tall young girl, she kept her jewels in the Treasure Chest.

From talking of Lady Mary, they began to talk of schoolmates, and to wonder which would have been so brave, or so quick-witted to think of posing as a bashful child.

“I know who would be least likely, and that is Arabella,” said Molly.

“She might be brave,” said Katie “but she’s slow to think.”

“And slow to speak,” Molly said.

“Maybe she’s quick at something,” Flossie Barnet said. Flossie always tried to say something good of every one.

While they were talking of her, Arabella was showing her slow wit, and Jack Tiverton was amused.

“Say it again, Jack,” she was saying; “It may be I know what you mean, but I’m not sure.”

Jack looked over his shoulder as he ran along the avenue, and laughed as he repeated what he had said.

“I said that any one could find Mayflowers over in Faston’s woods, by just walking over there, and staying long enough.”

“But it’s only March,” objected Arabella,

“they don’t blossom as early as *that*, Jack Tiverton!” Jack turned again, laughing as before.

“It’s true,” he said, with an impish grin, “It’s really true.” Arabella stood looking after him, and long after he was out of sight she still stood there thinking of what he had said.

“What was he laughing at?” she said, softly. “He said it was true, so why did he grin?”

There was no one near to answer and after a moment, she turned and walked toward home. She was thinking of a number of things that she wished to do, when Aunt Matilda’s sharp eyes would not be watching her. Not one of the things of which she was thinking was naughty, but Aunt Matilda had a habit of objecting to whatever Arabella

thought of doing, whether it was naughty or not, so Arabella had to be cautious. When she reached the side porch, she met Aunt Matilda, who was going out.

“I’m going over to Mrs. Walden’s,” she said, “and I’ve been waiting for you to come, so you could go with me if you want to.”

“Well, I’m sure I *don’t* want to,” Arabella said stoutly.

“Good land! Why do you talk like that? The last time I took you there you were wild over the cat and kittens you saw there.”

“I know it,” Arabella said, “but all the time I was playing with them, I couldn’t help hearing her tell about so many aches and pains, that before I knew it I began to ache, too.”

“What nonsense! You couldn’t ache

just from *hearing* what she said," Aunt Matilda said as she took a firm hold on Arabella's arm, and peered into her face.

"Well, I *did* ache, and I wonder you didn't ache, too, for she told about a bunion on her foot, and a pain in her nose, and she said her back was lame, and she thought she had 'rheumatiz' in her elbow, and she said she had earache all night, and then she said her mouth was so sore that she couldn't talk, and she said it after telling all that, too."

"Mercy sakes, Arabella! How did you remember all that?"

Aunt Matilda looked amazed.

"She told it over as much as twenty times," Arabella drawled, "and I thought then I'd *never* go there again."

"Does sound sort of dull," said Aunt Matilda, "I guess you needn't go, if you don't want to."

Arabella knew that that call would be a long one, so she would have plenty of time to do what she had planned.

She took a warm cloak, and a small hat from the closet in the hall, and then went through the house to the woodshed, where she found a basket.

She paused for a moment before putting on the cloak.

“Jack said any one could find them by walking over there and staying long enough. I *might* get hungry. I’m some hungry now, so I’ll just take a bit of lunch along.”

A moment later she was wondering where Aunt Matilda had put food, so hidden that it could not be found.

Some cookies, a doughnut, and an apple went into her basket.

She knew that there must be cake somewhere in the closet, but the moments were

flying, and she thought best to be on the way to Faston's woods. She had been there once at a picnic party, and she remembered vaguely that she left the road, and crossed a field, climbed over a low wall, went across another field and she was not quite sure whether she would then have reached the woodland, or if, instead, there were more fields to cross.

She set out alone, because she wished to be the first to find the Mayflowers.

It proved to be a longer walk than she had thought, and after crossing two small fields, and clambering over two low stone walls, crossing a tiny brook that she surely did not remember having seen on the day of the picnic, she came to a little grove that seemed too small to be called a wood.

Arabella stopped and looked doubtfully at the trees.

“Seems to me that’s a skimpy-looking piece of woodland,” she drawled, but there was no one there to accept or dispute what she said, and she walked over to the nearest tree, and seating herself on the dry moss, she ate her lunch.

“Funny where Aunt Matilda hid the cake,” she muttered, when she had eaten the last bit, and had shaken the crumbs from her basket.

“That lunch seemed even smaller than I thought it was,” she said, as she rose, and looked about her.

It was evident, at a glance, that no May-flowers had been so bold as to open any of their fragrant blossoms in so uninviting a place.

“I’d know better than even to look for them here,” said Arabella, and she tramped on through the grove, coming out into a little

open spot where the sun lay and there beyond was actual woodland.

“There! That must be Faston’s woods!” she cried, and hastened forward, entering the bit of forest, convinced that she had reached the place where Mayflowers were to be found. Now the search began.

Down on her knees she quickly dropped, and began pushing aside dry leaves, and dryer moss, working her way along upon her knees, as she continued to hunt for the pink blossoms.

So intent was she upon finding them, that she took no heed, as to direction in which she was going, nor did it occur to her to wonder how far she had progressed, until after long searching, she realized that her shoulders were aching, and her knees decidedly tired.

She rose, stiffly, and looked about her, and

she was astonished to find that she had been travelling in such a direction that there were unfamiliar things all about her.

That immense tree, with such a great hole in its trunk,—surely she had not noticed that. A big stump, cut almost to the ground, and nearly covered with queer, shell-like fungus,—that was something that she had not seen, and as she turned a great ledge confronted her. She stared at it.

“Well, I never saw that ledge before, and as big as it is, I don’t see how I could help seeing it!” she cried.

She did not realize that she had not once looked up, since she had dropped to her knees and commenced her search for the sweet flowers that Jack Tiverton had said might be found there.

She looked about her and for the first

time felt the loneliness of the forest. She wondered why it seemed darker than when she had first entered the woods.

She did not dream how long she had been there, and one thing she did not know, was that the sky that had been blue was now overcast, and heavy clouds were rolling up. Now and then a big raindrop fell, and it looked as if at any moment a downpour might be expected.

“I’m going home, and I’ll come over another day, and I’ll make Leander come with me,” she thought.

She had no idea of which way to turn, in order that she might be sure that she was going toward home.

The ledge had many crevices and projections and half-way toward the top a shell-like piece of stone looked as if designed for a cosy little seat.

Arabella was just thinking that the next time that she came to the place, she would climb up there, and sit on that little shelving bit of rock, when down came the rain, and without stopping to think, she clambered to that little seat. Drawing her cloak about her, she cowered there, the overhanging top of the ledge acting as a very small umbrella. It kept off *some* of the downpour. She had climbed up there by getting a foothold wherever a bit of stone projected, and she now perched there, wondering when the shower would be over, but wondering still more how she would get down.

Arabella was always ready to climb to any height, but she never liked getting down.

A terrific crash of thunder made her cry out in terror, and clasping her hands around her knees, she braced herself, as if she feared the thunder might unseat her. Her small

hat-brim was fringed with the pouring rain, and a hollow at the base of the ledge was full of water. She wondered why Leander didn't come for her. She thought he really might. She thought Aunt Matilda ought to have sent him for her long ago. She told herself that she was being neglected.

Never once did it occur to Arabella that no one at home had the least idea where she had gone. At the very time that she was thinking that Leander ought to come for her, he was searching all over the town for her.

And when later he did find her, it was just a happening. He had gone over a roundabout course, and finally arrived at the big tract of woodland.

He had left home and gone quite around the town, and he now stood at that part of the woodland that was farthest from his home.



CLASPING HER HANDS ABOUT HER KNEES, SHE BRACED HERSELF.

Page 43.

“It’ll be nice and wet in the woods,” he said half aloud, “but the shortest way home is to cut right through them, and that’s what I’ll do!”

He plunged in under dripping branches, and had walked but a short distance when, hearing his name called, he stopped in the middle of the path and gazed about him.

“Here, Leander! Right over here!” cried a voice that he well knew.

“Well, *where?*” he shouted, none too tenderly, for he was wholly tired of hunting for his cousin, whenever she was out longer than Aunt Matilda thought right, or helping her out of scrapes that she foolishly got into.

“Over here!” drawled Arabella, but the rising wind was whistling through the tree-tops, and carried her cries in any direction so that Leander could do nothing but stand

on the spot where he had stopped, and turn around and about, while peering intently with his near-sighted eyes.

“Say! Holler again!” he shouted.

“Here! Right *here!*” wailed Arabella.

Happening to look upward, he suddenly spied Arabella crouching in the little niche.

“What in the world are you doing up there?” said Leander, as he made his way toward her.

“Why didn’t you come along over to the path to meet me instead of sitting there and shouting?” he said, now completely disgusted.

“You just help me down from this horrid place, and you’ll *see* why. I climbed up here, easily, but I couldn’t get down. The rocks are wet, and slippery, so I had to wait until some one came for me.

“Well, I don’t see anything to laugh at. I guess you wouldn’t think it was funny to sit, for just *hours* and *hours* on a ledge that was only just barely big enough to sit on.”

Leander continued to laugh.

“You certainly looked comical, roosting up there!” he said, with a chuckle.

“Why did you climb up there? You must have known that you couldn’t climb down.”

“I wasn’t thinking about getting *down*,” grumbled Arabella, “I was only planning to climb *up*.”

Leander said something, under his breath, about “just like a girl,” and Arabella did not ask him what he said. She knew that she would rather not hear it.

For a time they walked in silence, tramp-

ing along over the wet leaves, Arabella doing her best to keep up with Leander's long strides. After a time he spoke.

“Say, Arabella! Why *did* you ever climb up onto that funny roost? Tell a fellow, can't you? I'm simply wild to know.”

“Why, Leander Correyville! I'd think you'd *know* that! I climbed up there to get out of the rain, so I could keep dry. Well, what are you laughing at *now*?”

“Oh, oh—Arabella!” he roared. “To keep out of the rain, and you're *wet* to the *skin*! My, O my!”

“Well, I still don't see why you laugh,” said Arabella, “for how could I know that the rain could reach me there? I thought that overhanging rock just above where I sat would act like an umbrella, and keep the rain *off* me, and instead of that, the water

just poured off from it, and right down into my lap.

“Well, I guess you can’t help laughing. You’re started, and you can’t stop, that’s all.”

No one had ever known Arabella to show the least bit of spunk before.

Leander was astonished.

“Well, I declare! Who ever dreamed that you had vim enough to speak right out like that! Honestly, I’d rather you’d be mad with me, and sputter like that, than see you act as if you were about half awake.”

Arabella made no reply. She was thinking deeply.

She had heard all that Leander had said, and she was wondering if she would dare to answer Aunt Matilda in the same way in which she had answered him. She hoped that, when Aunt Matilda began to ask ques-

tions as to *where* she had been, *why* she had gone, and *why* she had not returned sooner, Leander would stand near her. She thought she could answer braver if he were there.

Aunt Matilda's eagle eyes espied the two dripping figures as they came up the path, and she rushed to the door to meet them.

Arabella was so eager to prove her spunk to Leander, that, without waiting for Aunt Matilda to ask a single question, she poured forth all that she had been planning to say.

"I went *because* I went, and I'm wet *because* I'm wet, and I couldn't climb down till Leander helped me!"

A chair stood in the hallway, and Aunt Matilda, in her astonishment, stepped back against it, and sat down so suddenly upon it that she gasped for breath.

"Why, Arabella Dorinda Correyville! I

never knew you to talk like that," she cried, "I do believe you're out of your head. You never talked nor looked like that. If I thought you were well, you'd certainly be shut up in your room to think over your naughtiness and repent, but you're surely sick. You look sort o' crazy, and so I'll not punish you, but instead, I'll put you to bed, with plenty of blankets over you, and I'll make a cup of ginger tea with a little red pepper in it. It's almost dinner time but no one in your condition ought to eat."

"Oh, Aunt Matilda! I'm so hungry," wailed Arabella.

"I don't doubt it, but it isn't a natural hunger. It's a sure sign you need that cup of ginger tea, but I guess you'd better take a bowlful of it. Come! Don't stand there whispering to Leander. I must get you into bed at once."

Arabella dared not refuse.

She wished she knew what Leander was trying to say to her, but at that moment, Aunt Matilda took her firmly by the arm, and hurried her up-stairs.

Later, Leander went up to see her, and finding half a bowlful of the hated ginger tea that Aunt Matilda had left for Arabella to finish drinking, he emptied it out of the window, produced a piece of cold chicken, a biscuit, and a sauce-dish full of her favorite pudding. Arabella ate ravenously, and told Leander he was certainly the best boy in Merrivale, but she did not tell him about searching for Mayflowers. She did not care to be laughed at again.

CHAPTER III

VERA'S WHIMS

“**W**E'RE going to the shore! We're going to the shore!” sang Dorothy.

“We'll have a lovely time,” Nancy said. “We always do at the shore, or *anywhere*,” she added, laughing.

“Yes, *anywhere*,” agreed Dorothy, “but truly I do love the shore, and this place that we're going to joins Foam Ridge, and it is just a little village called Kelpmore. Its beach is called the finest along that part of the coast, and there will be new things to see, and——”

“And a pleasant surprise for you both,” Mrs. Dainty said, “for here, is a letter

that I have just received from Mrs. Vane, telling me that she is going into the country for rest and quiet, and that Vera is begging for permission to accept an invitation which I sent a few days ago. I knew that Mrs. Vane intended going to the country, and believed that Vera preferred the shore."

"Oh, she does, I *know* she does!" cried Dorothy and Nancy, as if with one breath.

"Then I'll send for Vera, asking Mrs. Vane to let her come here to the Stone House, and we'll start together for the shore."

Three day later, Vera arrived, and what a welcome they gave her, and on the following day a happy party sailed toward Kelpmore.

Mr. and Mrs. Dainty, and Aunt Charlotte, Uncle Harry and his wife, with Flossie, and Elfin, Dorothy, Nancy, and Vera.

“We’ll not be lonesome,” said Uncle Harry, “because our party is so large and so jolly.”

Two charming cottages had been leased, and the two families at once felt “at home,” and very glad that they had chosen Kelpmore for their “vacation home.”

Mrs. Barnet was abroad, and dear little Flossie was staying with her Uncle Harry until her mother’s return.

One morning, about a week after their arrival at Kelpmore, Vera sat in a reed chair in the living-room, a big book on her lap, and her finger between its pages, as if she had been intently reading, and had paused to think.

The book was a learned treatise on conchology, but Vera had not been reading. She had enjoyed the fine pictures of many

beautiful shells, and her finger marked the place where she had found the one that she thought the finest shell of all.

Vera spent little time thinking. Usually she did the first thing that occurred to her, and—thought it over afterward. This time there happened to be a choice of two things, or rather of two ways of spending the sunny forenoon.

Dorothy paused on her way through the hall, and looked in at Vera, so unusually quiet.

“Oh, Vera, you don’t mind that we are going up to the city, do you? We’ll not be gone long,” she said.

“Why, Dorothy, I wasn’t thinking of that,” Vera said, quickly. “I was just wondering which would be the most fun, to go with Antony, or with Geraldine. Antony is going out fishing, and he said I could

go with him, and Geraldine is going off for a long ride on her bicycle, she didn't say where, and she knows a girl that will lend me her bicycle if I want to go.

“If I knew where she was going it would be easier for me to choose.”

“I can help you, Vera,” Mrs. Dainty said, as she came in from the piazza, and crossed the room to where Vera was sitting.

Gently she laid her hand on Vera's shoulder as she said, “I am sorry that we have to be away a part of to-day, but I have to do some shopping for Dorothy and Nancy, and we shall return as soon as possible.

“I think the little trip with Antony would be fine, and I should feel that you were safe with him, but I would not consent to *any* sort of trip, *anywhere*, with Geraldine.

“Vera, while you are visiting us, I feel that I am really responsible for your safety

and your mother, I am sure, trusts me to judge wisely for you.

“Geraldine is rightly called ‘Madcap Geraldine.’ She cares little what she does, so long as it proves to be exciting.”

“Then I’ll go with Antony,” Vera said with a sunny smile, “and that’s so much easier than choosing for myself.”

She drew a long breath, as if a weighty matter had been disposed of, and Mrs. Dainty felt greatly relieved that Vera, bright, fickle Vera, would be in the care of Antony Marx, for surely with sturdy Antony she could not be flighty, or careless.

Vera stood on the wide porch, and swung her sailor hat to Dorothy and Nancy, as with Mrs. Dainty they entered the phaëton. that would take them to the wharf.

She continued to wave as long as they were in sight, and then crowding the hat

down firmly on her head, she took her sweater on her arm, and ran down the beach to join Antony.

Antony had said that he should start on the fishing trip, promptly at ten o'clock, and he had told Vera, if she wished to go with him, she must be on hand at that time.

Antony had beached his boat in a little cove, and Vera started in the direction of the cove, but when half-way there she happened to espy something that made her stop and stare.

“Now, *that's* something new!” she said, “and I'd just like to know how long it has been there. I've never seen that before, and I don't believe Dorothy or Nancy has, either.”

With her hand shading her eyes she stood for a few moments looking fixedly at the odd little building, with its gayly colored

roof. and then she started to run toward it.

Antony, and the fishing trip she had entirely forgotten.

Antony waited until his patience gave out, and then seating himself in the boat he took the oars, saying, under his breath:

“That shows how much use it is to promise to take that girl anywhere. She either changes her mind, or forgets all about the trip, and whichever it is, it isn't much of a compliment for the chap who invites her.”

Meanwhile, as Vera neared the tiny building, she noticed that the many colors used in painting it were even gayer than they had appeared at a distance. The tiny building boasted a dome-like roof, and rising from the center of the dome was a graceful minaret. The building was painted to imitate stone, the dome was bright green, while

the minaret was gaudily gilded. The cornice was scarlet.

The arched doorway had no door, but heavy, many-hued curtains kept curious eyes from looking in. Now Vera was always very curious, and a closed door would always set her wondering what was on the other side.

As she stood before those heavy hangings, she was wild to know what sort of persons lived there, and what they looked like.

"I'd like to peep," she whispered, her cheeks flushed and her eyes bright and eager.

Now it happened that a pair of shrewd eyes were at that very moment closely watching Vera. Those eyes watched every passer, to learn if he were a possible customer, or only one of the many curious ones that daily paused to look at the droll little house. Those eyes lighted the crafty face

of an old man, who had come to the shore to gather up as many dollars as possible during the summer months.

Vera moved a few steps nearer and paused, then again advanced, this time until she stood before those heavy woolen hangings, quite close enough to touch them if only she had dared.

Vera usually did whatever she chose to do, but this time, she was afraid to touch those hangings because she had no idea who might be standing behind them.

Once she stretched her hand out toward them, but she quickly drew it back.

She was indeed afraid!

She had a terrified notion that if she attempted to push those dark red folds apart, a long, lean hand would reach out and snatch her by the wrist and draw her in, and she was not at all sure that she would like to go.

For a time she stood watching the hangings hoping that some one would come out, but no one appeared, and she turned to go.

“I know what I’ll do,” she said softly. “I’ll tell Dorothy and Nancy about that queer little house, and I’ll tell them all about its bright colors, and its funny doorway, and I’ll make them so wild to see it that they’ll be glad to come over here with me, and maybe we’ll see who is in there. I do so wonder if the people in there are as queer as the little house is.”

It happened that Mrs. Dainty was able to do all the shopping that she had planned doing in much less time than she had thought possible, and with Dorothy and Nancy, reached the house two hours earlier than the time that she had set for her return.

She knew that Antony’s fishing trips were

of varying length, so that she was not surprised that Vera did not run out to meet them, and she felt that she was safe with Antony, but Dorothy seemed uneasy, and constantly roved from the porch to the window, then back again to the porch, pausing there to shade her eyes with her hand and gaze out across the waves.

And where was Vera?

When she had turned from the droll little house, she had walked but a little way when she remembered that she was to have gone with Antony on the fishing trip, and instead of being sorry that she had so easily forgotten it, she actually laughed.

“Wonder how long he waited,” she said.

“Oh, well! What’s the difference? I’ve found that funny little house, and I can go with Antony *any* day.”

That was Vera’s way.

Never a thought of having caused inconvenience.

She was charming, and she knew it, and she always expected cheerfully to be forgiven for any delay or annoyance that she carelessly caused. Her mother was much the same, but her father once said:

“Have a care, Vera. *Sometime*, some one of your friends will get tired of your pranks, and then, and not till then, you'll begin to mend your ways. I don't mean to be severe,” he added, “but really, little daughter, you must try never *needlessly*, nor *heedlessly* to disappoint any one.”

She listened, and for a second nestled closer, then off she flew, to find a favorite record for the Victrola.

Now Antony had been out but a short time when he remembered a letter a neighbor had given him to mail.

With the chance that it might be important, he turned about, and rowed swiftly back to the shore, and there found Vera.

“Oh, o-o! I’m to go on the fishing trip after all, and you’ve come back after me? Oh, you’re just *dear!*” she cried. Antony laughed, but not very gayly.

“I didn’t come back for you, Vera,” he said, “but if you’ll wait, until I’ve posted this letter, I’ll start out, again, and I’ll take you along. Say!—Don’t try to get into the boat until I come back,” he cried.

She laughed slyly, but did not reply.

“I say, ‘Keep out of that boat!’ ” he repeated, but not sure that she would obey, he ran, as he turned toward the main road that ran parallel with the shore.

He dropped the letter into the nearest letter-box, and, turning, saw what made his cheek turn pale.

Vera had not tried to enter the boat, but she could not keep from meddling.

Antony, having beached the boat, had dropped the oars, and one had chanced barely to be balanced, so that it overhung the side of the boat.

Vera could not have told what prompted her to catch at it, and she never knew what hit her, but Antony saw the heavy oar roll over and out, striking Vera a blow on her head.

“Vera, Vera!” he cried, as he bent over her, but she lay white, and still just where the oar had so cruelly felled her.

He looked up and down the beach, but the only persons on the level stretch of glistening sand, were too far away to notice him, or hear if he called.

He snatched off his cap, and filled it with water, and raced back to bathe her temples,

but he could not revive her. It was a most unusual thing for his father and mother both to be away, but they had gone on a day's cruise.

There was but one thing to do.

Vera was very slender, Antony was large of his age, and sturdy. Lifting her gently he strode down the beach toward the cottage.

It was quite a distance to cover, and Vera seemed to grow heavier with every step.

She did not rouse, nor stir, and the anxious boy wondered if she were actually breathing.

It was most unusual that the beach should be deserted.

Not so much as an ordinary wagon passed while he toiled on with his burden.

He looked down at the white face that lay against his shoulder, and, then, as if

with renewed strength, strode bravely on.

Dorothy saw him, just as he had nearly reached the porch, and her wild, frightened cries brought Mrs. Dainty and Aunt Charlotte running to learn the cause of her terror.

“Antony! Oh, Antony!” she wailed, “What has happened to Vera?”

The maids had heard her cries, and ran out on the porch, followed by the butler, who although as curious as they, would not so forget his dignity as to *run*.

It happened that a physician had taken the next cottage for the summer and Antony, espying him at an upper window, hailed him, with more haste, than deference.

“Say, doctor! Lend a hand, will you?” he shouted, to which came the bluff reply:

“Sure I will,” and the physician was

bending over Vera, almost as soon as Antony had laid her on the long cushioned seat in the living-room.

So white she lay upon the cushion, she looked like a little marble figure, and Mrs. Dainty's heart stood still with fear.

She looked toward Aunt Charlotte, and each saw fear in the other's eyes but neither spoke.

"What happened?" the doctor asked as he held the small wrist in one strong hand, and his watch in the other.

Antony told him what he had seen.

"I saw her snatch at the oar, and then, somehow she lost her balance, and she and the oar came down together, and the oar struck her head."

After carefully examining her, the doctor turned to Mrs. Dainty.

"The little girl is not badly hurt, only

stunned by the blow, and when she revives, she will suffer because of a severe headache, and will complain of feeling very tired. You will have no difficulty keeping her quiet. She will be only too glad to keep still to-day, but keep her quiet to-morrow, if you can," he said, "because, if she has practically two days of real rest, she will be all right on the third."

Then the doctor, taking a glass half-filled with water, which a maid had brought, added a few drops from a tiny flask, and with a spoon, poured a bit of the liquid between Vera's parted lips.

She swallowed, but did not open her eyes.

After a third teaspoonful, she sighed heavily, and a moment later, looked up at the doctor.

Her lips moved in an effort to speak, and Dorothy knelt beside her.

“What do you want to say?” she asked.

“What is it, Vera?”

“The little house,” Vera whispered, “the little house where I stood listening.—Who came out of that little house and hit me on my head, and made it ache so?”

Dorothy looked frightened, as she shook her head, but Antony said:

“She’s forgotten. It was the oar that hit her.”

Vera was fast recovering now, and she looked at Antony with a knowing smile, for although too ill to arise, she now clearly remembered.

“Yes, it *was* the oar,” she agreed, “but the funny house,—why I’ll tell you all about *that* later,” and not another word would she say about it.

She was very glad to lie still all day, and much of the time she slept, but on the follow-

ing day, it required a deal of coaxing to keep her quiet.

Dorothy and Nancy took turns telling fairy tales, and when they had told every story that they could remember, Aunt Charlotte told them of happenings in which she took part when she was a little girl. The three little friends were greatly interested, and Vera, usually so restless, held her breath as she listened.

CHAPTER IV

ABDUL HAPHET

ON the third day after the accident, Vera was quite her joyous self, as eager for fun, as full of life as ever.

Not once had she been over to the droll little house, but she had not forgotten it.

She did not care to go alone to see it, and Mrs. Dainty had watched her so closely lest she overdo, that there had been no chance to tell Dorothy or Nancy about it.

She wondered to whom it belonged, and what sort of person the tenant might be. One morning she sat on the rocks, watching a vessel that floated over the waves, dipping and swaying as the breeze filled its sails.

Three boys were lounging on the sand at the base of the rocks, and Vera did not at first notice what they were saying, but after a time she began to catch a word here and there, and she at once became so curious that she leaned forward to listen.

“ ’Tis his house, I say, and he had it painted all those funny colors so it would look like the place he lived in when he was at home in India.”

“*India!*” the youngest boy cried, in evident disgust, “Do you b’lieve he really came from India?”

“Sure I do!” said the first speaker.

“*I’ll* bet he came from,—from, oh any ol’ place ’round here,” was the contemptuous remark of the boy whom the others called Dan, “an’ those ol’ duds he wears he could hire at a costumer’s.”

“I’d hate to be like you, and not be-

lieve anything!" cried the big boy angrily.

"And I'd hate to be a big ninny and believe whatever was told me," the small boy boldly said, "and, anyhow, who said he came from India?"

"Oh, a fellow I know," came the ready response, "and say! Inside the little house he has all sorts of curious things, and this morning, when I passed there, a crowd was standing in front of the house, waiting to get a peep at him, the moment he came out."

"No doubt he's some one great!" cried the saucy small boy.

"Didn't you see his turban, and his great, long, red what-you-call-it 'way down to his feet?"

"Sure I did, but how do his funny ol' duds prove that he really came from India?"

"You don't b'lieve anything," the big boy responded, "but he came from Bombay, or

Calcutta, or Ceylon, or Burmah, and he can do—”

“Say! Pick out the name of one place, and stick to it,” said the third boy, “because ’t isn’t likely he came from all of them.”

“Well, I don’t remember which one he came from, but I know one thing—he can do magic, and folks say that men that come from India can work charms, and do magic better than other folks can, and a chap I know went over there and put a silver coin in his hand, and the man from India told that boy that he would surely be President some day.”

“My gracious!” cried the small boy, “that chap was just like you. I s’pose he believed it?”

“Sure he did. Didn’t I tell you that Abdul Haphet came from India?” was the angry retort.

“Is that his name?” cried the other two.

“Abdul Haphet is his name,” the big boy declared.

“Sure it isn't ‘Jim Jones,’ or ‘Sol Smith,’ are you?” shouted a teasing voice. The big boy glared at the small scoffer.

“His name *is* ‘Abdul Haphet,’ and you can take a walk over there, and see it painted on a sign over his door, and then p'haps you'll b'lieve it.”

“Wasn't any sign over the doorway yesterday,” persisted the little tease.

“This isn't *yesterday*. It's *to-day!*” shouted the big boy; and Vera waited to hear no more. She ran across the level top of the big rock, skipped over several smaller stones, jumped from the last one, and ran along the beach.

Such speed did she make that she soon

was standing before the curtained doorway, her hands clasped behind her, her eyes uplifted to study the sign.

Yes, there it was:

ABDUL HAPHET
MAGICIAN

There were odd-looking signs and foreign letters on the border of the sign, but the name itself stood forth plainly for all to read.

The longer she stood looking at the sign, the greater became her longing for a glimpse of Abdul Haphet.

Now it happened that the shrewd old fellow, watching as usual for a customer, had seen Vera approaching and he knew that she was the same little girl that, a few days before, had stood curiously before his door.

“I guess it would pay to interest her,” he whispered in English that bore no foreign accent, and he moved a small tripod closer to the portières.

He found a match, and set fire to a mass of finely cut shavings that lay in the bowl of the tripod. Immediately a thin spiral of blue smoke curled upward, and the curtains parted a few inches as if blown apart by the breeze. At a nod from Abdul Haphet, a small boy had pulled a string, and the string, not the breeze, had parted the curtains. The old fellow made a striking figure, as he stood clothed in a long, crimson robe, his turbaned head bent over the burning contents of the tripod.

Vera held her breath, afraid to remain, afraid to turn and run away.

It seemed to her that he would think her wholly uninterested in his magic if she ran

away, and yet if she remained there watching him, would he think her prying?

A moment later the old faker turned, as if just aware that she were there.

“Little Miss, pretty Miss, would you like to know the power of the Black Art of India?”

“Yes, sir,—no—I—oh, I don’t quite know what it is,” she said in a voice so evidently frightened that he leaned toward her, and smiled to re-assure her.

“You’ve naught to fear, little Miss, but do try not to be careless.

“Only a few days ago you met with an accident, caused wholly by your heedlessness. Is it not so, little Miss?”

“Oh—oo! Isn’t it *won-derful* for you to know that?” cried Vera, never stopping to think that he might easily have seen what happened from a side window of his house,

which was really just what "Abdul" had done.

"You are a daughter of Mercury,—and—"

"Why, you got that wrong!" cried Vera, "for my father's name is Robert. It is, truly."

The old fellow frowned darkly, although inside he was chuckling.

"Place a silver coin, a quarter will do, if you haven't a half-dollar, and I will tell you much; for a dollar I could tell you more."

"I didn't bring any money with me," Vera said, "but I'll come again and, maybe, I'll bring some of my little friends."

"You must bring silver, if you would enjoy the magic."

"Yes, oh, yes!" she said, as she turned and raced along the beach toward home.

Before she reached the house, she paused

for a moment, as if a sudden thought had occurred to her.

Standing very still, and looking out across the waves, she tried to think how best to tell Mrs. Dainty about Abdul Haphet, so that she would give her consent to the call that Vera wished to make at the little gayly painted house.

She was so curious about any tricks that were called "Magic," that she could hardly wait to call upon Abdul Haphet, but she did not like to go alone. She was a little afraid of the shrewd-eyed old man.

Would Mrs. Dainty approve, or would she firmly say that the three little friends must not listen to the words of old Abdul Haphet?

Vera was not sure about that.

She reached the cottage just as lunch was being served.

“We’ve hunted everywhere for you,” said Dorothy, “but we couldn’t find you.”

“Where have you been?” Nancy asked, and Mrs. Dainty looked up to learn what Vera would say. Vera decided to tell one place where she had been, but not to mention the other.

“I sat on the rocks for a long time waiting for you two to come out, and when I was tired of waiting, I took a long walk on the beach. It was dull, just sitting alone on the rocks.” She did not say where else she had been.

Vera was never actually untruthful. If Mrs. Dainty had questioned her closely, she would have told her all about the tenant of the little house. As she was not questioned, Vera kept very still, and it was an odd happening that during the evening, Mr. Dainty,

and Uncle Harry told some droll stories of different magicians that they had seen.

“I remember when I was a student at college, an old faker at a small theater did some ‘stunts’ that we fellows thought exceedingly clever. I was mystified then by tricks that I now know were very simple.

“Some of those old fellows, especially those who have learned their ‘Black Art,’ as they call it, in India, are really clever, and could almost persuade you that black was white,” Mr. Dainty said.

Vera whispered softly to herself.

“I guess there isn’t any harm in listening to what that funny old man says, if Mr. Dainty says people of that sort are clever.”

“What are you whispering?” Nancy asked, and she laughed at the droll little frown on Vera’s usually sunny face.

The next morning the three little friends raced along the beach, Vera ahead, and Dorothy and Nancy laughing as they tried to overtake her.

“I thought we were going to take a dip,” Dorothy said.

Vera looked over her shoulder, laughing as she said;

“We are, but not until I show you a surprise.”

“Where?” called Nancy.

“Oh, just a bit farther along the beach,” Vera answered, at the same time increasing her speed.

Once she paused to tramp through the shallow pools that the last wave had left behind it, and then just as the other two were about to overtake her, she ran on again.

She ran, and ran until she stood before the curtained doorway of the little house,

and there she waited for Dorothy and Nancy.

“Why-ee!” exclaimed Dorothy, softly.

Vera put her finger on her lips, and whispered, “Hush-sh!” Then aloud she called:

“Halloo! Halloo! I’ve come.”

After a second the curtains parted and the old man in turban, and long red flowing robes stood before them. His long white beard made him look to be much older than he really was, and his eyes, peeping out from under heavy brows, scanned the three eager faces so seriously that no one of them dared to speak.

Vera was first to regain her courage.

“Please, we’d like to see some magic,” she said, “and we’d like to have you tell us wonderful things, and I’ve brought some money, too, Mr. Ab-something Haph-what-you-call-it, oh—I’ve forgotten your funny old name.”

Dorothy looked quickly at the shrewd face, believing that he would be angry.

He made no reply, appearing not to have noticed what Vera had said, so she spoke again:

“Oh, I remembered to bring some money, so here’s three quarters, and I should think you might tell us each something for that.”

The lean, brown hand snatched the quarters, and then, as if he felt that that much were assured, he drew a little tripod from behind one of the curtains, and touched a match to a mass of what looked to be cotton waste, and like a flash it soon was slowly burning, a thin spiral of smoke ascending from its midst.

Bending over the tripod he began chanting, in a low sing-song manner.

The chant was absolute jargon, but his

appearance and manner were so strange, his voice so weird, that the three who watched him, fairly held their breath.

“Abra, dabra, mogul, mosque,
Magra, Nadja, sub kiosk,
Infra—enfra—”

Chancing to look up, he saw a number of boys and girls, followed by several “grown-ups,” approaching, and with a hasty, “That’s all little ladies,” he snatched up the tripod, and put it behind a curtain.

Dorothy and Nancy hesitated, but Vera loudly whispered, “Come *on!*” and seizing Dorothy’s hand, rushed in behind the parted red hangings, Nancy closely following. Abdul Haphet smiled as the curtains closed behind them.

“Those people think to see some magic for nothing. Well, they don’t see it, that’s all!”

Then he bent once more over the tripod, and again let it smoke.

For a few moments he muttered, then turning to Vera, he took her hand.

“I see here in your hand that you are risky, and heedless. Have a care!”

Then he reached for Nancy's hand.

“You love her dearly. You would do anything for her,” and Nancy looking down whispered, “Yes, anything.” He had pointed at Dorothy.

“And you, little lady,” he said, taking Dorothy's hand, “you are loving and gentle, and you are soon to have a fine gift, a wonderful present.”

She nodded and smiled, and stepped back to where she had been standing, next to Nancy, Vera, wondering what else he would tell next.



HE BENT ONCE MORE OVER THE TRIPOD.—Page 90.



To their surprise, he pushed the hangings aside, saying, "That's all for this time. Other people are waiting."

They had no choice but to leave, but they were not greatly pleased. They felt he had done little for the money that Vera had given him.

"Why, the stingy old thing!" Vera said. "I honestly believe he has watched us enough to tell the 'teenty' bit that he told us.

"Maybe he was peeping from his little window when the oar fell and hit me, and if that's true, that's how he could safely call me heedless, and now I think of it, it was only yesterday that Dorothy slipped on some wet seaweed that lay on the rocks, and you caught hold of her, Nancy, and kept her from falling. I just know he was somewhere where he saw that, and he could easily

see that you couldn't bear to have Dorothy fall, and Dorothy clung to you. That's why he said she was loving and gentle."

"He said I was to have a fine gift," Dorothy said.

"Well, I guess he just risked saying that!" declared Vera, "and he hustled us out to let other people in, and I just hope they didn't go in, after the way he treated us, and oh, look!"

She was looking back toward the little house.

Dorothy and Nancy turned. There stood the "Magician" angrily haranguing the little crowd that stood opposite his door.

"You think I was naughty to say I hoped they wouldn't go in, but he cheated us, yes he *did*, he *cheated* us, and I just can't stand being cheated," Vera said.

“He didn’t tell us much, and he didn’t show us any ‘Magic,’ ” said Nancy.

“Come on!” cried Vera, “Let’s tell Uncle Harry. Your father went to the city this morning, but I’m sure Uncle Harry is here.”

CHAPTER V

UNCLE HARRY MAKES A CALL

IT happened that Uncle Harry was the only member of his family that was at home and when Dorothy, Nancy, and Vera raced along the plank walk, and up on the piazza where he sat reading the paper, he pretended to be greatly startled.

“Oh, you are the very one we want to see!” cried Dorothy.

“Yes, and we’ve something to tell you,” Nancy said.

“And we’re so angry!” declared Vera.

“Have mercy, young ladies, for you are frightening a solitary individual.”

Vera thought the last word highly uncomplimentary.

“Oh, you’re not a ‘*dividule*’ at all. You’re Flossie Barnet’s uncle, and we just love you,” Vera said.

“I’m sure I’m blushing,” said Uncle Harry, “but hasten, I beg, and tell me how I happened to be honored by this call.”

“We’ve been cheated!” declared Vera, “and we couldn’t do a single thing about it.”

“Well, well!” said Uncle Harry, “Tell me, who dared to cheat three charming little ladies?”

“Old Abdul what-you-call-’im,” said Vera, “and I think he was mean, for I gave him three quarters, and that was one for each of us, and what did he tell us? Just nothing at all, and he didn’t do any magic, either!”

“I think I’ll make a call at that queer little house. I am sure I shall be amused,” Uncle Harry said.

“When will you call there?” Dorothy asked.

“If you go right off now, he’ll think we complained of him and sent you,” Nancy said.

“Oh, I’m not going just yet,” Uncle Harry said, with a jolly laugh. “I’ll not tell you when I go, but go I must. I feel that I must see Abdul, and test the power of his magic.”

“He looked wise, but all the time I thought his eyes were laughing,” said Vera later, when the three little friends were sitting in the hammock that swung on the piazza.

Uncle Harry had said that he must “see a man for something,” and jauntily he

walked along the beach, swinging his light walking-stick, and looking as if hugely amused by a most excellent joke.

He was a handsome young man, a fine singer, a great joker, and quite as fond of the children as they were of him.

He strolled along, stopping to purchase some cigars at one place, to get a bit of target practice at another booth near by, and then he stopped, and looked up and down the beach.

“There it is, I believe,” he said, as he noticed the gaudy coloring of a little shed-like building. “I guess that shanty must be the so-called palace of Abdul Haphet. At all events, it will not take long to learn if that is the home of magic.”

He had been walking in the wrong direction.

Not wishing to seem in haste, he strolled

slowly toward the little building, and when he reached its door, he stopped, not even attempting to knock, for he believed that the man was eagerly watching for customers.

He was right, for hardly a second had he waited when the hanging over the door was pushed aside, and a turbaned head looked out.

“I wish to peep into the future, oh, great Oriental one,” said Uncle Harry so seriously that no one would have dreamed that he was almost holding his breath in his effort not to laugh.

“Come in,” said the man, and Uncle Harry followed him into the room where Dorothy, Nancy and Vera had waited for an exhibition of magic, but the man had shown no magic to them.

“Can you tell why I have come, and what

it is that I wish to learn?" Uncle Harry asked. How eager he looked.

"I think you want to know if you are to get rich, very rich?" ventured Abdul.

"Oh, that *surely* would be interesting," said the seeker after knowledge.

Now Uncle Harry had inherited a fortune from his father, and he had won success in his profession, so Abdul's prediction was rather amusing.

"I think if you can wait patiently about twenty-five years, you *may*, if you are lucky, be earning good money by that time."

"*Twenty-five years!* Why, Jumping Jupiter! I should hope I would after all that waiting. Have a little mercy!"

"You shouldn't be impatient," murmured Abdul, as he set the incense in the tripod burning.

“You’ll marry about ten years from now,” continued Abdul, “and the woman will be an Indian.”

“Horrors!” shouted Uncle Harry, “Think again, man! Couldn’t you shorten up the time I have to wait for that money? And isn’t it possible for me to marry something else than an Indian? I sort of hate to distress my relatives by doing anything like that!”

“What I see in this smoke is just what I’ve told you,” muttered the man.

“Oh, you see it in that smoke from the tripod? Well, if that’s it, I’d say that that smoke looks more like a Chinaman’s queue than like an Indian squaw’s hair, but of course that’s a mere trifle.”

The man turned, and his small bright eyes looked sharply at his customer, but Uncle Harry, who was wild to laugh, did

not so much as smile, while he pretended to be intently thinking.

“I guess that’s ’bout all. Pay me a dollar, please,” said the man extending his hand.

“Not much,” said Uncle Harry, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and leaning back on the divan, as if he intended making a lengthy call. The man looked anxious. He was wondering if this fine-looking young man were serious, or if he had come as a spy.

Abdul Haphet, as he called himself, was an impostor, and he was always afraid of being found out.

Meanwhile Uncle Harry was trying to decide what next to ask, when glancing toward the doorway, he saw that the hanging had blown a bit aside, and there, at anchor, was his handsome yacht, that he so

enjoyed sailing. He was an expert swimmer, so his next question, and the answer that he received, were droll indeed.

“I say, Abdul, old chap, would it be safe for me to take a sail to-day? I mean, if the weather continues fine?”

“No, no!” cried Abdul. “I see in the smoke that you should never venture out on the ocean. You know nothing about a boat, and you can’t swim, so you take a chance, a good chance of being drowned.”

“O dear! I’ve been eagerly promising myself a fine sail this afternoon,” said Uncle Harry, “but of course, if you feel like that about it, I’d be wise to stay on land.”

“Stay on dry land,” muttered Abdul.

“Oh, *dry* land!” exclaimed Uncle Harry, “Well, that doesn’t mean damp sand, so I’ll have to go back to the city.”

“No, no!” cried Abdul, in quick alarm.

“Stay here, and come over this afternoon for ’nother call on me, an’ pay me ’*nother* dollar!”

“I haven’t paid you anything yet, but I will. I’ll pay the dollar you ask for because I’ve found out what I wanted to know, and quite a bit beside.”

Abdul drew back, and put forth his hands as if to ward off the words that he feared Uncle Harry might say. He appeared shrunken, as if by terror, and he continued backing away from the man whose fine eyes were looking straight into his.

“Stand right where you are!” said Uncle Harry. “I’ve listened long enough to you. Now listen to me.

“First, let me tell you that these rugs, *jugs*, and hangings, instead of being Oriental, as you have said in this, your pamphlet that’s spread broadcast up and down

the length of the beach, were made, each and every piece, in New York.

“The costume that you wear is not genuine, for that you hire of a costumer, and even that beard—”

With a quick spring forward, Uncle Harry caught at the long, white whiskers, and snatched them off before the man could dodge.

His turban rolled off, when he sprang away from Uncle Harry, and lo, the hair on his closely shaven head was—red!

“You pretend to have been born in India, but you were really born in Indiana, so this glorious country could boast, if it cared to do such a thing, of having produced you, you impostor!

“You foolishly attempt to prophesy, relying upon making an impression upon your customers with your smoking tripod, your

wand, and the rest of your duds that are strewn about here.

“As I am wealthy in my own right, and successful in my profession, I’m hardly out hunting for a position, much less waiting twenty-five years for *anything*.

“As I am happily married to a beautiful woman, there’s not much chance of my marrying a squaw, and as to the dangers of the sea, you would make me laugh, if I were not so disgusted. Why man, I’ve always had a yacht, and I swim and dive like a fish.”

“Enough! Enough! Go!” cried the cringing figure, as he snatched at the folds of drapery.

Down came the dirty hangings covering the frightened man completely with clouds of dust.

“Come out from there!” cried Uncle

Harry, "and come quickly for I'm nearly choking with the dust, and dirt that you have set flying."

A staring face peeped forth from the dusty folds.

"Go!" it cried, "Go!"

"Just as soon as I've told you one thing more, and that is that instead of 'Abdul Hap-het,' your own name is 'Abner Hanan.'" "If you are not packed up, and off to-morrow at this time, I'll ask the police to help you!"

Uncle Harry took off his coat and shook it, stamped to remove at least a portion of the dust upon his shoes, and then he tossed a dollar toward the man who still cowered in the pile of drapery that lay where it had fallen.

"You don't deserve a cent, but it may hasten your departure, so I contribute one dollar toward that happy event, and I advise

you to go to work at some honest labor.”

The man made no reply, but as soon as Uncle Harry left the place, he crept forth, and began at once to pack his belongings.

He knew that one man knew him to be a cheat and a sham, and he feared every foot-step that approached his door, for how could he know but that some of those whom he had cheated were coming, not only to accuse him, but worse yet, actually to demand a return of money that they had paid him, and for which they had received nothing.

A little old Italian who had a small store near by had once been a peddler, and he still possessed a small push-cart, much weather-beaten, surely, but still boasting two wheels and a stout handle.

To him Abdul went, and because the fruitman had no further use for the push-cart, he sold it cheaply.

Into the push-cart Abdul packed all his possessions, and when twilight came, he set out on his travels, not feeling any choice as to where next he should "set up in business," so long as it was far enough away from the man who had seen through his silly shamming, and had so successfully scared him.

Of course Uncle Harry told of his call on the man who had called himself "Abdul," and the comments of his audience greatly amused him.

"Now wasn't that the bravest thing you ever heard of?" Flossie asked, as she looked around at the group who had listened.

"Nonsense!" said Uncle Harry, "It didn't require much bravery. I took no foolish chance. I told a policeman that I believed the man was obtaining money from

children, and from many 'grown-ups' whom he was able to impress, and that his whole scheme was an imposition that I intended to stop. He was standing just outside the door, and heard all that Mr. Hanan of Indiana told me, and my replies to his silly predictions."

"But you were in there alone, and facing him," persisted Flossie.

"I couldn't be sure that I was facing him at all times, because every time that I stirred on my seat, he ducked down into the dingy pile of drapery, and I had all I could do to keep from laughing.

"Really, he looked and acted like a frightened ape."

Flossie insisted that her dear Uncle Harry was a hero, and her little friends thought so, too, and Vera Vane, who had been so angry at being cheated by the sham Oriental, soon

forgot all about him, while enjoying the pleasure that Uncle Harry planned for Flossie and her friends.

A week after Abdul Haphet so hastily packed his belongings, and set out to find another location in which to practise his so-called "Magic," a fine yachting trip was planned, and all the young guests were up early to learn if the day was to be fair.

They were to start on a "voyage of discovery" Uncle Harry said, but when questioned as to what was to be discovered he laughed.

"What a question!" he cried, when the children tried to coax him to tell them.

"Who ever heard of discoverers who knew exactly what they were going to find when they set out?"

CHAPTER VI

ELFIN'S BARGAIN

LIGHT, sunlit clouds made the blue sky look bluer, and the yacht floated out from the little bay, as gracefully as might a snowy gull, and over the bright brass railing, the happy children looked down, down into the green depths, and tried to "make believe" that they caught glimpses of sea nymphs.

Dorothy and Nancy, Vera and Flossie, vied with each other in telling fairy tales of the ocean, and when the sun was higher, they sat under the gay-colored awning, and enjoyed the fresh breeze, while Uncle Harry sang for them, strumming an accompaniment on his guitar.

“And, now, where do you think you are going?” he asked as he rose, and stood looking off across the waves.

“Oh, we *know*,” cried Flossie, “because this morning I heard you telling Auntie that you knew of a lovely little bay, called Scallop Bay, and you told her you knew we’d so enjoy going there.”

“And Flossie has been telling us all she heard you say of Scallop Bay,” said Vera as if that made Flossie’s speech complete.

“Well, I declare! Did you hear me say that?” said Uncle Harry.

“We *might* go there some day, but I’d planned quite a different trip,—and now I’m wondering if after all—”

“Now, Uncle Harry, don’t you change your plans,” cried Flossie, “because we’ll all agree to like wherever you take us.”

“Now, I call that a fine promise, so I’ll

take you to the place I first thought of," said Uncle Harry.

"He's almost laughing," whispered Dorothy.

"He surely is," agreed Nancy.

"Uncle Harry! *Do* you know now just where we're going?" Flossie asked.

"I know, but I'll not tell," Uncle Harry replied, "because you are out on a voyage of discovery, so I'll let you *discover* the name of our landing-place!"

"How can we, by just looking at it?" Vera asked.

"Oh, we'll more than '*look* at it,' " Uncle Harry replied, "and in the meantime, I give you all permission to try to discover something nice, tucked away for you to find here on the *Dolphin*."

Over the deck they scurried, rushing this way and that, until they opened a hamper,

and there they found boxes of bonbons, one for each little friend, and one for each of the grown-ups.

The hamper had been tucked away so carefully that it was a wonder that the children found it.

“What a sweet discovery!” said Dorothy.

“And there’s no end of things to be found yet on this jolly voyage,” said Uncle Harry.

What would Dorothy have thought if she could have known what was, at that very moment, happening on a sunny spot near the cottage!

Little Elfin had begged to remain at home, because she said she felt “so wiggly on the *Dolpin*.”

The wee girl had been a trifle seasick when

the sea was rough, and although that was several weeks before, she had not forgotten it.

“I rather tay at home,” she said, so with many directions given the maid to watch carefully that the little girl get into no mischief the party set sail, and Elfin danced with delight that she had been permitted to “tay at home,” as she had said.

“Dis sand don’t wiggle,” she told the maid, “and the boat *does*.”

For a time the maid watched her closely, and the little girl played upon the sand beside her, never once thinking of straying away.

Down on the beach, a boy stood watching the maid and the baby.

He was dark, black-eyed, wiry, and rag-

ged, and any one would have known, at a glance, that he was planning some sort of mischief.

His shrewd, black eyes were fairly twinkling with excitement, yet he did not move from the spot on which he stood, and even when he appeared to be looking down at his feet, he was peeping through his lashes, that he might, unnoticed, continue to watch the nurse and her little charge.

The cottage where Uncle Harry was staying was next to the one leased by Mr. Dainty. Each cottage boasted a low, picket fence, and now little Fluff raced down to the fence, and peeping through, whined for Elfin to come and talk to him.

Dorothy had intended taking Fluff on the trip, but Mrs. Dainty persuaded her to leave him at home.

“He really doesn’t enjoy sailing,” she had

said, and Dorothy had left him curled up on a silk cushion sound asleep.

She had paused in the doorway, and looked at him.

“He’s such a little pet,” she said softly, “I don’t quite like to leave him, and be away all day.”

She turned, and went out to join the party.

Once on the yacht, she said to Nancy:

“I keep thinking and thinking of Fluff. I hope he’s all right.”

“Of course he is,” Nancy said, to comfort her, but something in Dorothy’s eyes, and in her voice when she spoke, had set Nancy thinking, and Nancy began to wonder if little Fluff were all right.

What would Dorothy and Nancy have thought if they could have caught a glimpse of a group that now stood in front of the cottage?

The boy who had stood at a distance watching, was very earnestly talking to little Elfin, and now, laying a hand upon her shoulder, he seemed coaxing her to do something that she appeared unwilling to do.

“Now, Sissy,” he was saying, “Ye like Dorothy Dainty, don’t ye?”

“I *love* her,” said Elfin.

“Then I’d think ye’d like to do *suthin’* nice fer her,” was the prompt reply.

“But to div away her dog, isn’t nice ’tall!” cried Elfin.

“I ain’t askin’ yer ter *give* away the little dog,” the boy said quickly, “I’m askin’ yer ter *swap* him for suthin’ nough sight bigger. Don’t ye reelize that?”

“I know dat,” Elfin said stoutly, “but you don’t tell me *what* you swaps for.”

“Oh, ye’re a smart one!” cried the boy, “but I will show ye. Come over ter that

sunny place where they's a little bush atop of a little hill, an' I'll show ye, an' I guess when you see it, you'll be glad ter swap!"

"See *what?*" insisted Elfin.

"What I'm a-goin' ter show ye," the boy replied, and the little girl looked trustingly up at him, and tucking her hand in his, she skipped along beside him.

Just around the hillock they were out of sight, so far as the servants in either cottage were concerned, and there, tied to a low bush was a goat.

"Why that's a *doat!*" said Elfin.

"Well, I didn't say it was a el'phant," the boy retorted, "but ye sure see he's a *norful* sight bigger'n the little dog."

"Yes, he's *bigger,*" agreed Elfin, "but I guess Dorothy would like little Fluff best, 'cause he's *littler.* She holds Fluff on her lap, but that *doat!* Why he—"

“Now let me tell ye suthin’,” the boy said quickly. “Sometimes size counts. Which do you like best? yer teenty little dolls, er yer big dolls?”

“Oh, I love the biggest one best,” Elfin said quickly.

“*Zackly*,” said the boy, “an’ I know what I sez is right. Dorothy would think she owned a good deal bigger pet if she had this big goat, than if she only has the little dog.”

“Are you *sure*?” questioned Elfin, “’cause I’m ’most sure, an if you are, I’ll go get Fluff and we’ll swap, you’n’ me!”

“Of course I’m sure,” he replied.

“Does he know *anysing*?” Elfin asked.

“He knows a heap,” said the boy sharply. “Now get the little dog.”

Elfin trotted away, and soon returned with Fluff.



“DOES HE KNOW ANYSING?” ELFIN ASKED.—Page 120.

The boy had been afraid that some one would come to drive him away.

He knew that the two families were away on the yacht, but he also knew that a number of servants were at home.

It happened that Fluff had squeezed his plump little body through a space between the pickets of the low fence, and had followed the sound of the two children's voices, and it was an easy matter for Elfin to coax him the rest of the way.

“Now, will you wait here a few minutes for me, while I take the goat over for you, and tie him to the fence so he can't get away.”

“Oh, that's fine!” cried Elfin, clapping her hands. “He might run away from me!”

“That's just it!” cried the boy, “But I can manage him, 'cause I'm a boy, 'sides

bein' bigger'n you." "Hold onter the dog!" he said as he went off with the goat.

He soon returned, and picking up Fluff he urged Elfin to hurry home.

"Goats is awful lonesome critters," he said, "and he might bite the string in two, an' run off, if he's left alone too long, so you run along and keep him company, an' say! Get him suthin' to eat, so he won't make a mistake an' go ter chewin' the rope he's tied with."

In a panic lest the goat might run away, Elfin turned and ran back to the cottage.

Fortune favored her, for when she ran in at the open gate, she saw the two maids talking with the grocer's boy, and they did not see her.

They were at the far end of the garden.

The goat looked mildly satisfied with his new home. He had eaten quite a lunch,

consisting of an old newspaper, a piece of hemp matting, an old apple that some one had dropped, and nearly all the leaves from the bush to which he was tied.

Elfin ran into the kitchen, saw a fresh loaf of cake, and judging that nothing was too good for the new pet, seized it and rushed off to give it to the goat.

The goat made two mouthfuls of the loaf of cake, and looked over his shoulder to learn if there were another loaf coming.

“You eats awful fast,” Elfin said, in reproof to which the goat blinked, and remarked, “Bla-a!”

“You makes a horrid noise, and you doesn’t smell like you has on any ’fumery. Now, Fluff always has ’fumery on the bow on his collar. I’ll put some on you, so Dorothy’ll think you’re sweet as well as big.”

She ran over to the steps, and had nearly

reached them when a yellow butterfly came hovering near her, and away she ran, hoping to capture him, and that was the last thought that entered her curly head regarding the goat.

She chased the gay butterfly from her own steps to the steps of the Dainty cottage, and sat down on the lawn to wonder why he was not willing to stay.

A maid espied her, and ran out to talk to her.

She took the wee girl indoors and found so many cookies for her that before she knew it, Elfin felt sleepy.

“Sure, she’s sleepy,” said another maid who had joined them.

“Let’s let her lie in the hammock and have a nap.”

So Elfin slept.

In the meantime, the goat had looked the place over, and espying a tiny shed, gnawed at the rope that held him captive, and when free, he started to explore the shed.

In he rushed, and the door swung to behind him, the lock snapped, and he was once more a prisoner.

At the far end of the beach the small boy was arguing with an old woman, as dark and swarthy as himself.

“I tells you, boy, ye must sell him ter the fust pusson thet wants him, an, see thet ye git as much as ye kin fer him. D’ye hear?”

“I hears, an I axes how much ye’ll give me fer myself?” the boy said sharply.

“Oh, how ye do *argify!*” exclaimed the old woman. “Wot I give you depends on how much money ye git fer him, so look

out ye drive a sharp bargain. Now, be off with the little rascal, fer I'm sure he'd best be sold afore his folks gits back.

“Try that big, fat woman with the little fat girl. She said the child of her'n wanted a pet.”

“All right!” said the boy, “I'll tell ye one thing, tho—'f I git a *good* price fer him, I'll have ter have 'nough fer a bat, an' a ball, a catcher's mask, an' a few other things. D'ye hear?”

“I hear ye, Zack?” said the woman.

A long way Zack tramped, with Fluff under his arm.

The fat lady was on the beach, but when Fluff was offered for sale, she showed the boy that she was no customer.

“Of course Mary Ann wants a pet, but that don't mean she's likely to get it. She'd like the moon fer that matter, but I can't

buy everything she takes a notion to. Can I?"

Zack didn't know, and he didn't try to think.

Instead he turned from the fat lady, and continued his search for a customer.

On board the *Dolphin* all was gayety. They had "discovered" Scallop Bay, had wandered about the quaint little place, had enjoyed a wonderful dinner at the "Mermaid Inn," and now, once more on board the yacht, Uncle Harry set them searching for lovely souvenirs of the trip, and they went to work with a will.

What shouts of delight they gave when they found them.

Satin boxes in the form of large, full blown roses, filled with raisins, nuts, and small bonbons.

It was when, after they had left the yacht at the little pier, and had reached the cottage gate, that Dorothy turned to Nancy, a startled look in her blue eyes.

“Where do you suppose Fluff is? He always runs to meet me?”

Nancy felt the fear that she saw in Dorothy's eyes, and could not think how to answer.

As they reached the porch, little Elfin ran to meet them, her eyes bright with the thought that she had planned a fine surprise for Dorothy.

“Does you like the big doat?” she asked, eagerly.

“The *goat*? What *do* you mean?”

“The one I buyed, no—swapped—for little Fluff?”

Before Dorothy could question her further, a maid rushed up to Uncle Harry.

“Oh, I ax yer parding, sir, but if yez could jist do somethin’ ter subdue the goat, sir. Sure he do be buttin’ the little shed all ter pieces, an’ not wan of us dare let him out!”

“What’s all this, Katie?” asked Uncle Harry.

“Och! Come quick, sir, or the horrid goat will walk off, carryin’ the shed wid him, that he will.”

“I don’t care where the goat is, or what he’s doing,” cried Dorothy, “for I’m so eager to know where little Fluff is.”

“An’ I *tell’d* you,” declared Elfin. “I swapped him for the doat so you could have a bigger pet. Oh, you aren’t p’ovoked wiv me, is you?” she pleaded, and then dropping upon the grass she sobbed as if her heart would break.

The goat was set free to go where he

willed, and he lost no time in disappearing.

Gently but firmly Uncle Harry questioned his wee daughter until all understood that some boy, whose name she did not know, had gotten possession of little Fluff!

Dorothy turned so pale that Mr. Dainty clasped her closely to him, fearing that she might faint.

“I’m all right,” she said, in hardly more than a whisper, “but oh, I want little Fluff!”

It was two long weeks before they saw him, and Dorothy was almost ill with worry.

Uncle Harry had been told of a dark, ragged boy that had been seen hanging around the two cottages, on the day of the yachting trip, and both Uncle Harry and Mr. Dainty had been looking for a lad who would answer that description.

At last they came upon Zack, and they questioned him so closely that he became

frightened. He declared that he knew nothing about the missing dog, but neither Mr. Dainty nor Uncle Harry believed that he was telling the truth.

Zack persisted in his statement that he did not live at the shore, and that he was only there for the day, but his manner plainly showed that he was badly frightened, and that he was not telling the truth.

The boy edged away from the two men, and watching for a moment when they were earnestly talking together, he drew a grimy handkerchief from his pocket, and waved it.

“What are you signaling for, or rather, to whom are you waving?”

“Friend o’ mine,” said the boy, and that was all he would say. Ten minutes later, Dorothy ran to meet them, Fluff, a very dirty, but very happy little Fluff in her arms.

Her eyes were shining through her tears.

“Only think! Just *think!*” she cried, “A few minutes ago, I heard him barking and scratching at the door, and I raced to let him in. His handsome collar and bow are gone, but I have him once more. Oh, Father! We can buy another collar, but there’s only one Fluff in the world!”

The boy had planned to wave to the old woman, if the owner of the dog should corner him. As soon as she saw the signal, the old woman lost no time in letting the little dog out, and he had raced for home.

CHAPTER VII

A SAILOR'S VISION

CAPTAIN MARX sat mending a net, and beside him was Antony.

Dorothy, Nancy, and Vera were closely watching him, as he passed his great wooden shuttle in and out of the hempen meshes.

“Tell us a ‘sea story,’ will you, *please?*” coaxed Dorothy.

“Tell them all about the night when the young sailor saw the sea-fairies on the old wreck,” said Antony.

“Oh, tell that one!” cried Dorothy and Nancy, and Vera echoed, “Tell that one, *please* do.”

“All right,” said the genial captain, as,

shading his eyes with his hand, he looked out across the waves, and then up the beach where in the glare of sunlight was the old wreck.

“The young sailor what all this happened to said it *reelly* happened,” said the captain, “an’ we’ll have ter take his word for it. It all happened between the time his watch said ‘twelve,’ and two o’clock, an’ it was some happening.

“He told me the story of that two hours so often that I do believe I could tell it backwards.

“I always insisted that the whole thing was a dream, but he wouldn’t have it so. Said he was as wide-awake as he ever was in his life, and that I needn’t believe the tale if I didn’t want to, so I’ll say the same to you, little friends. I didn’t *see* it, and I don’t *believe* it, but it’s a pretty tale, and

you can listen, and then do as you like, so here's the story. The young sailor called it, 'The Pearl Ship.'

“When the good ship, *Hindu Princess*, set out on a voyage to India, the crowd that had gathered on the wharf gave her a great send-off, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and shouting 'Good luck,' and a young girl in the crowd went so far as to fling an old shoe at her, the said shoe floating after her as she sailed out of the bay.

“She reached India safely, and a cargo that was hugely valuable was taken on board, and securely stowed away.

“It has been said that she carried the most costly collection of gems that had ever up to that time, been brought from India to America.

“Wonderful ropes of pearls, perfectly matched, rubies worth a king's ransom, em-

eralds as costly as diamonds, and diamonds as pure and white as the dewdrop, with fires of every color blazing in their wondrous depths.

“And it is said that yonder lies what was left of the *Hindu Princess*, after a terrific storm had torn away her masts and sails, driven her, onto that ledge where now the fine new lighthouse stands, and there let the waves wash what was left of her up on the beach there where she has lain for years.

“We came here to this place to live before Antony was born, and the old wreck was there then, and had been there, since time out of mind.

“One warm night in spring, when Antony was a baby, a young sailor landed here, intending to spend a week or ten days here, resting a bit before going to sea again. He was a fine lad, and I took a fancy to him.

He couldn't afford to stop at the Hotel, and those who had rooms to let, had not a single room that was not already occupied, so we told him to come with us, and we'd do our best to make him comfortable.

“The first day he was here he asked about the wreck, and I told him what I've been telling you, and this beside, that the crew and the wonderful cargo were at the bottom of the bay. He talked all afternoon about it, and he couldn't seem to stop talking about it.

“That night I woke out of a sound sleep. The sailor was at the door of my room, shouting, and trying to wake me. ‘Come out!’ he cried. ‘The wreck is no longer a wreck. She floats on the waves near the beach, in all her old beauty, her figurehead shining in the moonlight, and mermaids with lovely faces, and glistening hair, are

floating around her! Come! It's a wonderful sight. Why do you wait? Ropes of pearls hang in long festoons along her sides, and in the water, the beautiful sea-fairies, the mermaids, are making sweet music on their conch-shells, pink and white.'

" 'Man alive, you're crazy, or dreaming,' I said. 'Go back to bed before you wake the wife and baby with your raving.'

" 'I'm not crazy,' he said quietly, 'and I'm not dreaming. Come out here, now! Come! And you'll see a sight that'll convince you that both vessel and crew have come to life!'

" 'Nonsense, lad!' I said. 'Go back to bed and sleep, and let me sleep!'

" 'Captain Marx!' he cried, 'There's a little mermaid sitting close by the big gold figurehead, and she has one arm around the figure's neck, and with the other she's dan-

gling a long rope of pearls over the waves, and laughing when it clinks against the side of the ship! Why, Captain, there's sails on that ship all colored like oriental draperies, and the entire rigging is studded with jewels. The waves all around the ship are full of rainbow colors, and the little mermaids are swimming around, their bright hair flying in the breeze, and their scales shining like green metal. They have strings of coral, pink and white, and their lovely eyes! Oh, but they look as if they had lamps behind them!

“Well, I found the boy so wildly excited that he couldn't be stilled by any words that I could say. I could hear Mrs. Marx calling, and asking what was the matter, and the baby, Antony, had 'woke and was beginning to cry, so I saw that there was but one thing I could do.

“I called to my wife, ‘It’s all right! I’ll be there in a minute,’ and with that I turned to the boy.

“ ‘You’ve succeeded in waking the whole family with this wild nonsense!’ I said none too pleasantly.

“ ‘Now, to quiet you, I’ll take a look at the wonders outside.’

“I threw my big coat around me, drew an old cloth cap down over my ears, and pushing the boy before me, I stepped out onto the beach, closing the door softly behind me. I saw just what I expected to see—the night as dark as a pocket, and I could only tell where the sea was, by the sound of the waves lapping on the beach.

“ ‘Well,’ I said, ‘this is truly a great sight! I might even say, a wonderful sight! In fact it is really the darkest night I ever saw, but I don’t think, if I’d not been

called out, I would have left my comfortable bed, just to see how dark it was.'

“ ‘Oh, sir, you'll never believe I saw the fairy scene that I did *truly* see,' said the boy.

“ ‘I *don't* believe you saw it,' I said, 'but I *do* believe that you are sincere, and that you actually *think* you saw all that you described.'

“ ‘We turned and went in, the young sailor hanging his head, abashed that after insisting that I come out, that there was nothing at all unusual in sight.

“ ‘He went back to his bunk, and I locked the door, and by the light of the candle that I'd left on the table, I made my way back to my room. I threw coat and cap on a chair, and as I was closing the door, I could hear the sailor, Ned, heavily breathing.

“ ‘Almost asleep,' I said, and I went back

to bed. My wife and the baby were sound asleep, and I soon was dreaming, but sleeping lightly.

“Twice I woke, with a curious feeling that some one had called me, then dropped asleep again.

“A third time, I woke with an uneasy feeling that something was happening, and that it was my duty to see about it. I slipped into my coat, took my cap in my hand, and closing my chamber door, went out through the dining-room, the candle's flickering light enabling me to avoid running against furniture, as I went straight toward Ned's room.

“At his door I paused, for if he was asleep, I did not care to wake him. For a few seconds all was still, and then,—I bent closer to the door that stood ajar, and listened, for surely he was talking in his sleep.

“ ‘Who are you, wonderful water fairy? What is your name? “Nadine”? You are called Nadine, lovely one? I will remember, and oh, I wish that I had millions and millions of jewels, for if I had, they should all be yours to add to those that you already have to play with.

“ ‘But Nadine, lovely Nadine, I’m only a young sailor, with no fine gifts to offer. What could a sailor offer Queen Nadine, that she would care for? What’s that? *Myself*? You ask for my heart? Oh Nadine, lovely water queen. I come! I come!’

“He had thrown himself down to sleep with his clothes on, and quickly he sprang out upon the floor, across the room, and out the door directly into my arms.

“ ‘Let me go!’ he cried, ‘Nadine is calling me! Why do you hold me, when joy awaits me on the Pearl Ship?’

“ ‘Come, come! Wake up Ned!’ I cried, and I shook him, to rouse him.

“ ‘I’m not asleep!’ he cried, ‘I’m as wide-awake as you are, and I’m going out, and no one shall stop me.’

“ ‘We’ll both go out,’ I said, quietly, and opening the door, we went out onto the sand.

“ ‘He caught his breath sharply, almost like a sob, and turning, leaned up against the house.

“ ‘Well, what did you think you saw *this* time?’ I asked sharply.

“ ‘I saw winged sea-fairies climbing hand-over-hand on the jewelled ropes, and sliding down to the deck with sweet, silvery laughter.

“ ‘I saw Queen Nadine, sitting as before, close to the golden figurehead, and she waved

her wand as she cried, "Sailor boy, sailor boy, come to me, come!"

"'You kept me until it is too late. The bright lights are still there, but they are less and less bright, and the water-fairies are gone. Nadine, and Neonetta, Natalie, and Nixie, all have vanished while you held me back.'

"Again he went back to his bunk, and I threw myself on the old bench in the dining-room, to be on hand and ready for business the next time he shouted.

"I didn't go to sleep again, but I probably dozed, for it seemed to me that I had hardly lain down when I heard him stirring in his bunk, and a moment after he shouted: 'I come! I come!' and there was the sound as of things falling.

"I rushed to his room. The window was

wide open, and the flower-box had been knocked from the window sill, when he had rushed wildly out, and off into the night. A faint light was beginning to show on the horizon, but nowhere could I catch so much as a glimpse of the sailor lad, so strangely charmed away.

“I called and shouted to him, but there was no reply.”

The captain paused, pretending to examine one of the knots that he had been tying in the net, but the children noticed that he drew the back of his rough hand across his eyes.

“Father liked Ned,” Antony said, “and he would have liked to have him stay, instead of rushing off like that. Wouldn’t you, Father?”

“Indeed, yes,” the captain said.

“You see, little friends, he was a fine-

looking lad, and a good lad, too, I was sure of that, and I liked his company.

“For weeks, I looked, day and night for his return.”

“Did you ever see him again?” Dorothy asked, looking up into his face, her blue eyes wide, and eager.

“It was three years before I saw him. Antony was almost five, when Ned came back to me,” said the captain.

“I remember that first time that he came,” said Antony.

“And well you may, for he was like a big brother to you, and like a son to me. It was a surprise to see Ned looking bronzed and strong, for when we had last seen him he was the frailest-looking chap for a sailor that I had ever seen.

“He was with us some days before that night, so long ago, was spoken of, and it

was Ned, himself that spoke of the wonderful vision, for vision it was, and naught else."

"Oh, tell us what he said!" Dorothy said, eagerly, "and tell us if he ever saw those lovely water-fairies again."

"No, he never saw them after that strange night, for when he thought he saw the water queen beckoning to him, it was only the wild fancy of a sick boy.

"He had sailed through the tropics, and he had been tossing and turning in his little bunk for weeks while the fever raged. Then, weak and thin he had reached our port, and finding it impossible to stop at the Hotel, he had spent a few days with me. His mind was not quite clear, and he was still very weak, but *that*, he did not tell me at the time.

“Guess sick folks don’t usually remember dreams like that, after they’re able to be out, but Ned did. He told me that he clearly remembered how beautiful that old wreck looked when its sails were of brilliant-colored silks, its ropes encrusted with gems, and Queen Nadine sat with her white arms around the neck of the gilded figure-head.

“He had grown well and strong, and he loved the sea with the sunlight dancing on the waves, but he told me that on cloudy nights, he had only to half-close his eyes and look out across the water, and he could so clearly recall the lovely scene that all its radiant beauty seemed to live again.

“He told me that on the nearer waves he could almost see Neonetta, Natalie, and Nixie at play in the foam. That every

great wave which broke upon the sand seemed to be scattering myraids of jewels broadcast."

The captain paused, and his big net lay loosely across his knees as he looked out across the sea.

"You don't think he really saw those wonderful things, do you, Father?" Antony asked, his dark eyes twinkling.

"I *know* that he did not see them," the captain said, firmly, "but I have heard that visions so clearly seen during illness, often make such a strong impression that the one who saw them, retains so clear a memory of them as to make them seem very real."

"Let's half-shut our eyes," said Vera, "and see what we can see."

"Pooh! I didn't see any thing but that Antony's cap is on askew."

How the captain laughed at that.

“Oh—oo! It looks lovely 'way off there over the water when I squint,” said Nancy.

“It looks pretty good with my eyes wide open,” said Dorothy, and the captain laughed harder than before.

He loved the children.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MYSTERIOUS NOTE

THE little friends had been greatly impressed with the captain's story, and Nancy, out on the beach, the next morning looked out over the waves and thought of Queen Nadine, and the sailor lad, Ned. She sang:

“Nadine, Neonetta, Natalie, Nixie,
“Nadine, Neonetta, Natalie, Nixie!”

Then she dropped upon the sand, and drawing up her knees, she clasped her arms about them.

“Those four names begin with N, and you just can't help chanting them, just 'sing-songing' them, I mean,” she said to

herself. "My name begins with N, too. If I could choose I'd not know which I'd rather be: 'Nancy, Nadine, Neonetta, Natalie, Nixie,—Oh-oo! Yes I *do*, I'd choose to be 'Nancy,' because Mother was Nancy. I never saw her but oh, they say that she was lovely, and when she was on the stage, they called her 'Madame Nannette.'

A long time she sat thinking of all that she had heard of her lovely young mother, of her grace, of her beauty, of the pure, good life that she had led.

Then her thoughts went back to the time when she had just begun to feel at home at the beautiful stone house, and her wicked, old Uncle Steve had stolen her. She thought of those dreadful weeks when the teacher, Bonfanti, had so sternly forced her to dance.

She thought of the nights when ill and

tired, she had been dressed in her costume, and given a smart push out into the "wings" and made to "go on" and dance. She remembered the night when having dropped in a swoon on the stage, she had been taken home because a doctor who had been in the theatre, and had gone behind the scenes, and ordered it.

After weeks had passed, and Mrs. Dainty had learned where she was, Nancy had been found and taken home to the Stone House. Uncle Steve was not living now, so she no longer feared him, but twice she had seen "Bonfanti," and he had tried to steal her. Several times, since then, she had seen some one that resembled him, but on each occasion, the man that she had seen had proved to be a very different person, and she now felt safe, and happy.

Mr. Dainty had told Bonfanti that Nancy

was now a valued member of the family, that The Stone House was her home, and that if he (Bonfanti) ever again attempted to kidnap her, or in any way to annoy her, the police would see to it that he was severely punished.

Nancy was sitting on the sand, busily engaged in trying to braid three long strands of sea-weed that the receding tide had left, and singing an old song that Aunt Charlotte had taught her.

It was a merry song:

“Oh, what’s the use of sighing,
Since time is on the wing?
Can we prevent its flying?
Then cheerily, merrily sing.”

“Run along Nancy. I’ll overtake you,” Dorothy had said, and Nancy was beginning to wonder why she had not yet appeared. What detained her? It was early morning.

Vera had not come down to breakfast, and as she had been very tired the day before, Mrs. Dainty had told Dorothy and Nancy to dress and go down-stairs quietly and let Vera sleep a while longer. Nancy was tempted to run back to the cottage for Dorothy, but she thought of Vera.

“I might wake her,” she said, softly. She tossed the seaweed from her, and went a bit farther along the beach to examine the barnacles clinging to a rock that at high tide, was washed by the waves.

An old boat was beached near the rock, and Nancy stood for a time leaning against it.

In her hands she held some bits that she had broken from the mass of barnacles, and she was softly singing to herself, as she tossed them from hand to hand.

She heard no footsteps approaching, so

when a roughly dressed man slouched along on the sand, a little distance from where she stood, she looked up quickly, and then terror shone in her eyes. Her breath came quickly.

The huge man with his flushed face and dark kinky hair was either Bonfanti himself, or some one who looked fearfully like him!

He had been too far down toward the water to notice the little girl who stood in such a position as nearly to be hidden by the bulk of the boat.

She dared not start to run toward the cottage, because then he would surely see her, and he could easily overtake her.

Holding her breath, Nancy dropped to the sand, and crouching behind the boat, watched the man from there.

He continued walking along the beach

until he came to a little cave, a natural cavern worn by the waves.

Into that little cave the incoming tide would rush with crashing waves, but the tide was now going out and it would be a long time before it would be high tide again.

When the big man reached the cave, he turned, and looked up and down the beach to see if any one might see what he was about to do. Then, not seeing Nancy, he seemed satisfied and taking a folded bit of paper from one pocket, and a small pasteboard box from another, he placed the paper in the box, and tied a string around it.

For a moment he stood looking up and down the beach, his eyes shaded by his hand.

“Nobody in sight,” he muttered.

“I reckon this is 'bout as good a chance as I'll git!”

He dropped to his knees, and, after peep-

ing cautiously over his shoulder tossed the tiny box to a spot just inside the cave.

“That’s safe,” he said to himself, and then walked slowly away, turning often how-however, as if he feared that some one might happen along who would meddle with it. What could it be?

Nancy dared not leave her snug hiding-place until the man whom she believed to be Bonfanti, was well out of sight.

He was slouching along down the beach at a fair rate of speed, yet to Nancy, in her cramped position behind the old boat, it seemed as if he would never be far enough away for her to come out safely from hiding, so she lay still, waiting. Closely she watched him as he turned again and again to make sure that no one was so much as peeping into the cave, and then, to her great relief, she saw him leave the beach, and

turn toward the main street of the little village.

She remained in hiding until she felt sure that he was not planning to return, and then she ran swiftly to the cave. Dropping to her knees, she reached for the tiny box. Then up and off at top speed she ran to the cottage, not once looking back until she stood on the porch.

Then she looked down the beach but the man was not in sight. Dorothy and Vera were in the hall when she ran in at the open door, he eyes wide with terror.

“Did you think we’d never come?” Dorothy said, but Nancy raced past her and up the stairway, saying something as she went that Dorothy could not understand.

“Aunt Charlotte! Oh, where *are* you, Aunt Charlotte?” they heard her cry.

They heard Aunt Charlotte answer and



DROPPING TO HER KNEES, SHE REACHED FOR THE TINY BOX.
Page 160.

then a door closed softly. Dorothy and Vera looked into each other's eyes.

“Nancy looked frightened, and I *knew* she *was* frightened, too, for she never rushes off like that. Oh, I wonder what it was. You don't suppose—?”

“Don't s'pose *what?*” Vera asked.

Dorothy shook her head. She was thinking of Nancy's old Uncle Steve, and of Bonfanti, but Vera would not understand why Dorothy should be at all anxious in regard to them, or worried for Nancy's sake.

Vera was too care-free to be anxious for the safety of any one, however dear to her.

She lived in the happy thought that wherever her dear friends were, they doubtless were all right, and then she danced along her happy way.

Dorothy was as bright, as happy, as full

of life as Vera, but to be absolutely happy, she had to *know* that her dear ones were safe and well, and she was every bit as anxious for Nancy's safety, as Nancy was for herself.

Vera chased little Fluff, who, having snatched the end of a long blue ribbon, was racing from one room to the other with it. Out on the beach he ran, Vera closely following, but Dorothy stood at the foot of the stairway, waiting, waiting for Nancy to appear.

Up in Aunt Charlotte's room Nancy sat clinging to Aunt Charlotte, who had drawn her down beside her, and with an arm about her, held her closely, until she should regain her breath, and be calm enough to speak.

“I know that something, or some one has

frightened you," she said, gently, "and I want you to try always to remember that you are absolutely safe now. You were right in fearing your old Uncle Steve, but he is not living now, so that fear is surely gone forever."

"Oh, I *know* that," Nancy said, "but Bonfanti, is alive, and he—"

"Bonfanti would never dare to trouble you again, after the genuine 'scare' that Mr. Dainty gave him. He was very glad to leave, and he wasted no time in departing, because a stalwart policeman gladly *helped* him to hurry. Don't you remember that, dear?"

"Aunt Charlotte, I've *seen* Bonfanti, this morning! I dropped behind that old boat that has been lying on the sand ever since we've been here, and I watched him from

there. Oh, he's surely planning *something*, for he took this little box from his pocket, and threw it just inside that little cave, and then I saw him look up and down the beach.

"I don't know whether he was looking for me, or for some one for whom the note was intended. I *think* he must have been looking for some man, but oh, I'm *so* afraid to learn what that little note in the box says, for I do believe it is something about me!"

Her hands were tightly clasped, and her eyes were wide with fear.

"Nancy, dear, I'll admit that this happening doesn't look pleasant, so I believe I am justified in opening the little box. It is not mine, and I do not like to open it, but if you feel *sure* that the man was Bonfanti, then I'll certainly open the little box,

and learn what evil he is planning. Are you *sure, dear?*”

“Aunt Charlotte, I *know* it was Bonfanti,” Nancy said.

Aunt Charlotte opened the little box, and her hands trembled as she smoothed the crumpled note.

A moment she read the worst attempt at spelling that she had ever seen, and then she laughed, laughed at the droll note, but far more because of the great load that had rolled away.

“Nancy, dear, do you remember two sturdy fishermen who work together, the one sandy-haired, and the other dark, and kinky-haired, like Bonfanti?”

“Oh, yes, Aunt Charlotte. Why did you ask that?” Nancy asked.

“Because I think this note was written by the dark man, and intended for his mate.

Read it, dear," and this is what Nancy read:

Too Tim Hilmer -
 I GOT A ORDER FER 10 POUNDS
 OV HADDUK, AN 15 POUNDS
 OV CODD, AN YU CAN TAK
 IT OVUR TER MISTUR
 WOT-CHEER-COL-IM IN
 OWER WHEEL-BARRER
 AT NOON-TIME. I
 DRAPPED THIS BOX WARE I SED
 I WOOD YOR FREN, JOSH.

"Oh, Aunt Charlotte, I'm so sorry that I frightened you, but so many times it has been planned to capture me, and twice it really did happen, that, I felt sure that Bonfanti was planning something again. That man does truly look like him."

"He certainly does," Aunt Charlotte

agreed, "and now this little box with its note must be returned to the cave, because the men are very hard-working men, and they are eager to fill all the orders that they get, and receive in return the payment for their fish."

"I'll take it down to the cave, if you can keep Dorothy and Vera here at the house while I do it. Sometime, when I see Dorothy alone, I'll tell her, but Vera will think my fear silly, and sometimes her laughter hurts."

"I understand, dear," Aunt Charlotte said, and stepping out into the upper hall, she spoke to Vera.

"I can show you those quaint old bead bags that I described to you, yesterday.

"Do you remember, Vera, you said you would like to see them?"

“Indeed I *do* remember!” Vera cried eagerly, “and I’ll come right up now to see them.”

She ran up the stairs, Nancy passing her on the way down.

“Where you going now, Nancy?” Dorothy asked, to which Nancy called back, as she looked over her shoulder:

“Oh, just out to do a little errand.”

It was quite a distance to the cave, so that it was some time before she returned to the cottage, but Vera was examining several very old bead bags, and she did not think to ask where Nancy was.

As Nancy approached the cave, she looked eagerly up and down the beach, but neither of the two fishermen was in sight, nor was there any small boy who might be curious, and tempted to meddle with the little box.

Quickly she dropped it into the cave, and

then she ran swiftly back to the cottage.

She did not care to have either of those men see her, for how could she explain why she had taken the box? They were strangers to her, and nothing that she could have said would have seemed reasonable to them. They were two rough, honest fishermen, intent upon catching and selling their fish, and they would have thought any one crazy who undertook to steal a little girl, who surely could not be sold.

When she reached the cottage, she stood for a time on the porch, shading her eyes with her hand, and looking toward the cave.

Evidently no one had noticed her. She hoped that the man for whom the note was intended, had not been to the cave while she was at the cottage, holding the box in her hand, and talking to Aunt Charlotte.

Ah, there was a big man, off there in the

distance, coming directly toward the cave.

How long it took him to amble up the beach.

Now he was almost to the cave. Would he stop? Yes, yes, he not only stopped, but dropped to his knees, and reaching in, picked up the box, opened it, and read the note. Then he put the little box in his pocket, and slapping his thigh with his brawny hand, he ejaculated, "Good fer old Josh. That's a good order. It wa'n't funny he couldn't spell that man's name, fer I couldn't spell it myself, but he'd oughter know how to spell better'n ter put a h where it don't b'long.

"'Barrer' is all right, but the fust part of that word oughter be spelled ter rime with 'heel,' *weel*,—double-yer double-e-l-*'weel-barrer.'* That's c'rect, I sez."

CHAPTER IX

THE PIRATES

NANCY now felt secure.

The man whom she had believed to be Bonfanti, was only an honest, hard-working fisherman, who had not the least idea of harming any one.

The little village at the shore seemed all peace and sunlight, its red roofs gleaming in the warm morning light, and the blue waves, white-capped, rolling in to lapse on the sand, yet on that sunny morning, something was being planned, that would most surely disturb its serene happiness, and set tongues wagging at a terrific rate of speed.

The first hint that any sort of mischief

was brewing, came from Mack Dorrington's wife whose sharp tongue was feared by all her neighbors, the wives of other staunch fishermen.

"I tell ye, Mack," she shouted to her husband, as loudly as if he were deaf, "them young rascals as was hangin' 'round all day yesterday, was plannin' somethin' ter torment ye. I know, fer I watched 'em, an' I'd like ter know why they're mad at ye? D'ye have any notion, Mack?"

"Why,—yes,—that is, sorter," her husband replied, slowly.

"They was out on the wharf one day, a while ago, an' one of 'em got to foolin' with the *Marthy Ann*, such as firin' stuff down onter her deck wot was jist cleaned, an' one o' them threw a dead fish down there, 'long with a big bag o' peanut shells, what bust as soon as it struck the deck, an' flew in every

d'rection. I up an' told 'em, good an' proper, ter quit foolin' with the boat, er I'd settle with 'em in a way they sure wouldn't enjoy."

"You'd better look out fer 'em, Mack," his wife advised, but Mack only laughed.

"Them critters wont do nothin'," he drawled. "They was just boastin'."

He strolled up toward the main street, but when he had reached the rising land, he turned, as was his custom, to look back, and wave his cap to his wife who always looked for the little token of regard. She waved her apron, and then turned toward the house, where the morning's tasks awaited her. There was always enough to do. Mack made his purchases at the store, stood for some time talking with a group of men who were telling each other exactly how the nation should be run, made a call

at the hardware store, and while there, got into an argument with the proprietor.

It was nearly three hours before he reached home, but he could always plan his little trips up town so as surely to be home on time for the noon meal.

The hearty meal was nearly finished when Marthy Dorrington looked up at her husband's shrewd face.

"Mack, I know ye do hate ter have me say the same thing over, but them boys *is* plannin' mischief."

"What boys?" Mack asked, as well as he could around a huge mouthful of potato.

"Why, Mack! The ones I spoke of before ye went up-town."

"Oh, *them!*" ejaculated Mack, with an air of relief. "I didn't know but they was some new recruits. Don't ye fret none, fer I'll take keer of 'em."

“Well, I wouldn’t be too easy, ’f I was you,” his wife replied and then the two finished the meal in silence.

“I thought it looked a bit like a storm this mornin’,” Mack said when he had left the table, “an’ I think it looks even more so now, so I guess I’ll go down ter the wharf, an’ make the *Marthy Ann* safe, and snug for the night, an’ ter-morrer, when the storm has blowed over, me’n’ my mates will set out on a fishin’ trip.”

The woman glanced at the sky.

“I must say I’m glad you’re here at home with me, instead of out on the water with a sky over ye the like o’ *that!*”

She drew the coarse curtain aside, and pointed to the banks of dark clouds rolling up from the horizon.

“I ain’t peeved at all ter stay home with ye, an’—, fer the Land’s sake! Has Madge

Gray gone clean out'n her mind," cried Mack. "She's running this way an' she's wavin' her hands an' shoutin'."

Mack opened the door, and the girl ran in, and dropped upon a chair, her breath about spent.

"Sure ye look calm, but don't ye know? Haven't neither one of ye heard of them rough youngsters makin' off with the *Marthy Ann*?" she said, as soon as she could speak.

"What's that ye say?" gasped Mack.

"I say yer boat, yer fishin'-smack, the *Marthy Ann* is out ter sea with only them wild young lads aboard."

Mack Dorrington waited to hear no more. Snatching his cap from its hook, he pulled it well down on his head, lest the stiff breeze snatch it off, and down the beach to the wharf he sped.

Long before he reached the wharf he had heard the whole story. The boys that had pelted the deck with all sorts of refuse, had been angry at the well-deserved rebuke that he had given them, and had vowed that they would plan revenge.

They had taken an older fellow with them, who had a fair knowledge of sailing a boat, a village loafer who agreed to sail the *Marthy Ann* if they would promise to give him a good lunch aboard.

Beside what food was already aboard, the young scamps had managed to buy some, and to steal more, so that when they left the wharf they were well supplied with rations.

Mack Dorrington raved as he strode up and down the beach, his hands clenched, and a frown on his face so black that he looked like a demon.

“Why didn’t some of ye stop them before they made off?” he shouted.

“Why did ye let the young rascals get away with my boat, an’ then, when it’s too late to catch ’em, come an’ tell me about it as gayly as if it was good news?”

“Look at that sky! Is that the sky for little clowns ter sail under, when seasoned sailors decide to stay on land?”

“Were ye all dreamin’, or did ye think it a kind act ter let me lose my vessel?”

“Quit yer ravin’, Mack!” cried a man who knew him well.

“The lads stole the *Marthy Ann* before any of us was out’n our beds, and a feller just told me that it’s bein’ told up an’ down the beach that they kidnapped that young ‘sissy’ over at the hotel, name’s ‘St. Clair,’ I think, an’ his ma’s ’bout crazy fer fear they’ll handle him rough.”

The words were hardly uttered when racing toward them came a thin woman whose staring eyes showed that she was wild with terror.

“How can you call yourselves ‘men,’ and yet stand on land and let those wicked lads run off with my precious Archie?” she shrieked, to which an old sailor said, dryly:

“Stand on dry land, do we? Well, now, ma’m, ye should try ter show reason. With the *Marthy Ann* already out of sight, could any of us, I’ll ask ye, *wade* out ter him?”

She looked at the speaker in disgust for a second, and then, quickly as she had come, she made her way back to the main street, screaming as she went, that she would search for men that were worthy of the name who would rescue her darling Archie.

And while Mack Dorrington, trod the beach,

vainly trying to think of some way to pay the young scamps for their mischief, he found no one who could, or would offer comfort.

Some few vessels that had left the wharf on the day before, had made into a little harbor when the sky had threatened storm.

The owners of vessels that were still at the wharf had no idea of setting sail when the sky looked so threatening, and they said so frankly.

“Even if we were willing to go, Mack, how could we agree ter bring yer vessel back, when we are not very sure that we could get back with our own vessels?”

“What’ll become of those wild youngsters?” some one asked, but Mack was so angry, that he could not feel much pity for those who had caused all the mischief.

“Some one said that they’ve been talkin’

for weeks of being pirates, but nobody took any notice, thinkin' it was jist boys' talk. Now, I guess they're headin' fer the high seas," said Dan Bently, with as broad a grin as if he were telling a bit of good news.

And while on shore the brawny fishermen were talking of the runaway voyagers, what was happening on board the smack, *Marthy Ann*?

On the night before, a note had been given to a maid at the hotel, the bearer insisting that she be sure to deliver it into the boy's own hands.

Archie had read and re-read the note, and decided to do as he was bidden.

"Be down at the wharf at daybreak, if you want to run away and seek adventure.

"If you haven't spunk enough to run away, then stay at home, and be mama's baby like you are now, and a big sissy, too.

“We’re reg’lar fellows, and we now give you the chance to git you freedom.

“Say, have you any spunk?

“If you *have*, joined us, and think yourself lucky to be invited to join our ‘Freedom for All Club.’ ”

The note was signed in such a manner that no one could have told what name was inscribed, and that was just what the writer had intended. Archie was a puny chap, with a will as weak as his weak frame.

He never played games,—they were too tiring.

He said that football was too rough, baseball he did not care for, rowing was stupid, and it always made arms and back lame, and—well, one could not mention anything in which Archie took interest.

His mother encouraged his idle ways, and often said, in his presence, that her dear

Archie was quite above those very common games that amused other boys.

She said that he was frail, but that he had a wonderful mind.

No other person had ever noticed that!

The boys had shunned him, and so he was immensely flattered by the note that invited him to join them on a trip that offered adventure.

He wished that they had set the time less early, and yet, when he thought of it, he knew he could elude his mother's watchful eyes, at dawn, when she was sleepy, better than at any other time. He was wakeful all night, trying to decide whether to meet the boys or not, but when the first rays of gray dawn appeared he rose and, hastily dressing, sneaked from the room and crept softly down the stairs.

The boys were watching for him, and the moment he set foot on the wharf, his legs and arms were bound, and he was warned not to make any outcry, untold torture being threatened if he uttered a sound.

Poor Archie was a coward at all times, and never had he been so fearfully frightened as now.

They took him aboard, laying him on the deck as if he were an ordinary parcel.

When they were well out to sea they unbound him, told him that they were pirates, and that the *Marthy Ann* was to be a pirate ship, and to prove the statement, they ran up a pirate flag!

The white cotton flag, with the rudely drawn "skull and crossbones," nearly threw Archie into a fit.

"I don't want to be a pirate," he wailed.

“Want us fellers ter pitch yer overboard?” questioned a rough-looking chap.

“No! No!” screamed Archie.

“Then ye’ll have ter be a pirate like we are,” said the boy, and Archie agreed, because he dared not oppose them.

Poor coward! Every time that either one of the boys stirred a foot or hand, Archie jumped, as if he had stepped on a pin. He trembled, and his teeth chattered.

The boys made Archie do all sorts of stunts.

They had just blindfolded him, when from the sullen sky came a fearful clap of thunder.

It was now their turn to be scared, and quite forgetting Archie, they rushed to the fellow who acted as skipper.

“Will it be a big storm?” asked one.

“Well, you’ve always ’lowed you’d enjoy a storm at sea. Here’s yer chance, an’ ’norful good chance it is too.”

Chain lightning rent the heavy clouds, and the thunder was almost continuous.

“Kin ye git us home?” another asked anxiously.

“How do I know?” was the blunt answer. “Ye ’lowed ye was goin’ ter sea, and now that the wind is blowin’ ye out ter sea, ’thout much help from me, ye want ter know if I kin git ye home. Seems like Archie that ye make fun of so freely.”

“Aw, quit!” snarled a short, sturdy fellow. “Do yer best ter git us back ter the wharf.”

“Don’t be too partic’lar where ye land,” shouted the doughty skipper, “fer while I do’ ’no’s I kin control her at all, I do know that if she hits the shore at all, it

may be at the wharf, an' it may be she'll run up onto the beach, *and*—she may *capsize!*”

The boys turned white, and a loud wail from Archie told them that he had heard the skipper's words.

CHAPTER X

A NEW ARRIVAL

AFTER tossing about on the waves like an egg-shell, until the would-be pirates were sick with terror, the wind shifted, and the *Marthy Ann* turned in her course, and began to speed toward home.

The storm was over now, and from little rifts in the clouds the sunlight sifted, touching the rigging, and dancing on the wet deck with dazzling glare.

The boys had had enough, more than enough of sea life. In the two hours of storm that tossed them at will, they had decided that home was the best place, after all.

As for Archie, he had vowed a dozen times that if he ever again stood on dry land, he would stay there.

“Who wants to sail on the nasty sea, anyway?” he muttered. “I sure didn’t get aboard of this old boat because I wanted to; they *made* me, actually lugged me!”

The skipper was nervous. Thus far, what knowledge he had, had served him very well in steering for the open sea, but now, with a wind that veered from one point to the other, he lost all control of the *Marthy Ann*, and forgot all he had ever known. She danced toward the shore for a time, and then bounded over the waves toward the high sea.

The bold pirates, were now, with the choppy sea, not only homesick, but seasick, while Archie was the sickest of the crowd, and the stillest, as well.

He sat on a coil of rope, refusing to speak to any one.

At last they were seen from the shore, and their predicament was understood.

In a short time a motor-boat went out from shore, and soon it came racing in dragging the *Marthy Ann*, as if she had been a naughty child.

As soon as the motor-boat left the wharf. Mack raced off, and returned with a burly policeman.

“Scare 'em!” he cried. “Scare 'em so they'll let other folks' prop'ty alone!”

When they were at last safe on shore, the big policeman looked sternly at their white faces.

“Had enough?” he asked.

“Yes, sir,” was the prompt reply.

“Well, I guess ye had quite a dose this

time, so I'll let ye off, but the *next* time ye make off with what don't belong ter ye, whether it's a boat, or some other thing, I'll be waiting for ye with handcuffs an' off ter the jail ye'll go. All except this chap. He was lugged off, I guess, an' by his looks, he didn't enjoy the lugging."

The big boys, with slinking tread, left the wharf, and Archie, after learning in what direction they were going took a roundabout route to the hotel.

The excitement was over. People found other things to talk of.

Dorothy and Nancy were glad that they had been snug at home during the storm, with Mrs. Dainty and Aunt Charlotte to tell them charming stories while the wind and the rain were exceedingly busy out of doors. Vera thought it would have been

great fun to have been on the *Marthy Ann*.

At Merrivale, those boys and girls who remained at home during the summer, often talked of their playmates who were at the shore, and wondered how long would be their stay.

They had as much fun as ever with Arabella, with the usual result, that Arabella was so slow that she never dreamed that they were laughing at her, while Patricia was vexed that Reginald nicknamed her, "the wasp." She was quick-tempered.

One morning on her way to the post-office, Patricia met Jack Tiverton, and the moment that she saw him, she drew a lorgnette from her pocket, and deliberately stared at him through the lenses.

She had found the lorgnette lying on a seat in the park, and, as might have been

expected of Patricia, she made no effort to find the owner.

“Why do you peep at me through that thing?” Jack asked, with a saucy grin.

“It’s very stylish to use a *log-net*,” declared Patricia.

“You can’t catch any logs with that thing, can you?” Jack asked, as innocently as if he were holding his breath while he waited for her answer.

“I do think you are just too *ignorump* for anything!” snapped Patricia.

“Now let me tell you that a log-net is to stare through at people that you think are *very* common.”

“Oh, is that so!” Jack said, coolly, “Well, I hope I’m not ‘common,’ but I also hope I have common sense. Not so many people have that!” and he walked away, leaving Patricia staring after him.

Patricia could not decide whether to be offended or not, and while she stood thinking, Arabella came along.

“Have you asked your aunt if you can go to the shore, and are you going?” drawled Arabella.

“I’ve *asked* her, and I’m *going!*” declared Patricia.

“My goodness, Patricia! I didn’t think she’d let you,” said Arabella staring through her spectacles.

“*Let me! Let me!*” shrieked Patricia. “She didn’t say she’d let me. She said she wouldn’t, but, all the same I *am* going to the shore, same’s Dorothy Dainty, is, and nobody could stop me.”

“My! But it will cost something, and who’d you stay with, and where’s your money?”

“Well, I declare! I never saw any one who could ask so many questions, all in a string,” said Patricia, “but if you *must* know, I wrote to Ma and told her that all the nicest girls in Merrivale were at the shore, and I kept writing that, and teasing, and yesterday she wrote and sent the money to my aunt to take me to the shore.

“She wrote, ‘For the land’s sake, do try to stop Patricia’s teasing.’ ”

“And will you stop?” drawled Arabella, staring, this time, over her goggles.

“I’ll stop now, but I’ll begin again as soon as I think of some other thing that I want to do,” Patricia replied.

Truly, Patricia was an unlovely child!

“We start to-morrow morning, and by three o’clock we’ll be there,” Patricia said, “so I’ll say I’ll see you next when we come

home from the beach, and then, if you want me to, I'll tell you all about the time I was there."

"I guess you needn't bother, Patricia. 'Tisn't much fun hearing about the lively times you had, while I stay here," said Arabella, "for with nearly every one away it surely will be dull enough."

"Well, you aren't exactly gay," Patricia said.

"I could stand lively folks around me," Arabella drawled, but Patricia did not hear that. She was hastening to get away.

A few days later Mrs. Carrolton with Geraldine were walking on the beach, when they met Nancy, and they stopped to speak.

"Tell Mrs. Dainty that I am eager to have you and Dorothy come over to the hotel and spend the day with Geraldine," Mrs.

Carrolton said, and Nancy promised to repeat the message.

“Say, there’s a special friend of yours who has just arrived here, and she looks like a rainbow. Just all sorts of colors!” Geraldine said, with a giggle.

“Do you think you can come?” Mrs. Carrolton asked, and Nancy looking down at the sand, said, “I’ll tell Mrs. Dainty what you say.”

“Just telephone what day we may expect you,” called Geraldine, as they walked away, and Nancy promised.

“I wonder whom Geraldine meant by a ‘special friend,’” she thought.

As she neared the cottage, Dorothy ran to meet her.

Little Fluff bounded along close at her heels, barking with wild delight because Nancy had returned. Fluff had always

been a great pet, but it seemed as if he clung closer to Dorothy than ever before.

Now, as Dorothy and Nancy sat down on the long seat by the window, he crowded in between them, and as they talked, he peeped up into first one face and then the other, as if wondering what they were saying.

Mrs. Dainty, coming in from a walk, paused, and smiled as she noticed how very serious and thoughtful the two little girls appeared.

Even little Fluff looked as if he were studying a big problem.

Dorothy ran to her.

“Mother, do we have to visit people who invite us, whether we’d like to or not?” she asked.

“That often depends upon what sort of person invites us,” Mrs. Dainty said, “but I can give a better answer, if you tell me

who has given you an invitation that you, evidently, are not eager to accept.”

“We surely aren’t eager,” Dorothy said, “but you like Mrs. Carrolton, so I,—O dear, we may have to spend a day with Geraldine.”

“And oh, how long that day will be!” said Nancy.

Mrs. Dainty laughed at their solemn faces, as she said.

“Don’t look so sober. I think there’s a way out of it. I happen to know that Mrs. Carrolton is not intending to remain here more than ten days, and during the next ten days there is not one entire day that you could give to her.

“You have several invitations for the afternoons, and I have just received a letter from Vera’s mother asking her to return home next week.

“You and Nancy must give all your time to Vera during the remainder of her stay with us.”

“Oh, Mother, of course we will, but it is easy to stay with Vera, and so hard to stay with Geraldine,” Dorothy said.

“I know, dear,” Mrs. Dainty replied, “and there will always be acquaintances who will be delightful, and others that are very unpleasant, and hard to please, and the only right way to do is fully to enjoy the sweet ones, and try to be patient with the others.”

When the day for Vera's departure arrived, the three little friends found it hard to say good-bye.

Twice Vera ran back to kiss Dorothy and Nancy, and then she clasped little Fluff in her arms, bending over him that her tears might not be seen.

“Don’t forget me, Fluff!” she said, and Fluff replied, “Wow!” and clung to her.

Quickly she placed him in Dorothy’s arms, and turning, ran to the *Dolphin* without once pausing to look back.

She loved Dorothy and Nancy more than ever before, so of course it was hard to leave them. She had already said, “Good-bye,” and she would not let them see her tears.

Vera was flighty, changeable it is true, but in one thing she never changed. Those whom she loved, she loved very dearly, and to them she was a loyal little friend.

It was a week since Vera had left the cottage.

Mrs. Carrolton had left on the day before, and Dorothy and Nancy were walking on

the beach, wondering why it was that they missed Vera so dreadfully, yet missed Geraldine not at all.

They were some distance from the cottage when a gay-colored object made them stop and look.

There on the beach was a huge Japanese parasol, decorated with the brightest colors. Out from behind it fluttered some gayly colored ribbons, and scarlet sandals with pink stockings peeped from its lower edge.

“Do you suppose that *could* be Patricia?”

Dorothy said.

“If it is, that is what Geraldine meant. She said the ‘special friend’ looked like a rainbow. Don’t you remember?” Nancy replied.

“That is just what Geraldine said, and if it is Patricia, Geraldine called her a ‘special friend’ of ours because she lives in



“DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT *COULD* BE PATRICIA?” DOROTHY ASKED.
Page 202.

the same town that we do. That wouldn't prove that she was a 'special friend,' but that was just like Geraldine to say so," Nancy concluded.

"I don't want to go over there and walk around that parasol," said Dorothy, "because it may be some one we never saw, and we'd look bold."

"Let's stay right here for a while," Nancy said, "for if it truly is Patricia, she'll be peeping out to see if any one is looking at her fine, big parasol. She couldn't keep out of sight more than a few minutes at a time."

So they waited.

For a time they stood watching, and the ribbons rippled in the breeze, and the foot with its pink silk stocking, and scarlet sandal remained in the same position.

A few minutes later, a head topped with

a pink satin bathing-cap peeped out from behind the umbrella.

It was Patricia.

“Oo-hoo!” she called. “Come over and sit under my big umbrella.”

“All right,” replied Dorothy, and to Nancy she said, “We can’t refuse, but we needn’t stay very long.”

So they ran to the gay-colored parasol, and Dorothy actually gasped, when she saw Patricia’s bathing-suit.

Patricia often said that she liked showy things, and surely her suit was “showy!”

“Knickers” of brightest pink, a little one-piece blouse and skirt of red satin, a gayly flowered girdle, a bracelet on one arm, and a glittering bangle on one ankle made her look as if she belonged to a circus troupe.

“How do you like my suit?” she asked. “I have to ask because you don’t seem to

want to speak of it, but I'm sure you think it showy."

"Why, of course it is showy. We never saw a suit so showy as that," Dorothy said, thankful that she could say what Patricia wished her to say, and at the same time, be truthful.

She was the same boasting Patricia.

"I hired it for two weeks, of a costumer," continued Patricia, "and so as to be sure that it would look gay, I hired two suits. One was red satin, and one was pink, and I used parts of each."

There was a pause, and then Nancy spoke.

"Where are you staying?" she asked kindly.

"At the 'Rosebud Cottage,'" Patricia said, grandly, but she did not say where it was.

Nancy was about to ask her, when in

between them strode a tall, thin woman. A calico wrapper clung to her scrawny figure, a pair of old slippers flapped at her heels her hair was gathered in a small knot at the back of her head, but loose ends blew about her face, giving her an unkempt appearance.

“Now, look a-here, Patricia! You promised ter help me with the work, if only I’d come ter the shore with you. Now, on the morning I want ye most, ye’re all rigged up, an’ out on parade.”

“Who’s parading?” Patricia asked pertly.

“You’ll be in a minute, fer you’ll parade home, take off that monkey rig, and do a bit of housework for a change. Come!”

Patricia, without a word of complaint, followed her aunt, not daring to do otherwise.

CHAPTER XI

UNCLE HARRY'S FAIR

DOROTHY and Nancy had missed Antony Marx, and it seemed odd to see him rarely, and then only for a few moments.

His father, Captain Marx, had been away on long fishing trips, and Antony had worked faithfully with him. They had been out in the storm that had threatened to capsize the *Marthy Ann*, and how they laughed, on their return, when they heard of the cruise of the bold young "pirates."

"Well, Antony, I'm glad to see you," Uncle Harry said one morning, "and tell me, are you to be on shore this week?"

“Oh, yes,” Antony replied. “Is there anything I can do for you? You know if there is, I’ll gladly do it.”

“I know that, Antony, and what I’d like you to do, I’m sure you’ll enjoy. I’m planning a little fun for the girls and boys, and I’d greatly value your help.”

“I’ll be with you, to help in any way that you wish,” Antony said heartily.

“I propose to erect a big tent next to our cottage, and to have a grand time in the tent. The invitations are already out, and the boys and girls are very curious. You’ll find an invitation waiting for you when you reach home.”

Small wonder that the children were puzzled.

The invitation was thus inscribed:

“Fair, furnishing fun for flighty fledg-

lings. All boys and girls are 'Fledglings,' so please accept this invitation and fare forth to help fill the Fair with flitting, fantastic footsteps, and fairly frantic fun. Further features furnished at the Fair. The only Fair on earth where you can freely find all you fancy most without furnishing a farthing.

"FAITHFUL FRIEND,

"UNCLE HARRY"

P. S.

Funny how funny fun is, when it is featured at a Fair!

Preparations were under way in the tent, and the boys and girls were wild to take just a wee peep, but Antony was at the door, and firmly refused admission to even the tip of a nose, nor would he permit one eye to take a peep.

How they did guess and wonder!

On the afternoon of the Fair, the guests arrived early, and when Uncle Harry opened the door of the tent, they greeted him with shouts of delight.

“We’re all here!” cried one of the boys, and Uncle Harry laughed as he said: “I believe you, and I’m glad to see you.”

Then he stepped aside to let them enter.

The decorators had transformed the tent into the appearance of a huge bower. Vines clambered from the base of the canvas to the top of the big center pole, making it a roof of greenery.

Palms stood at the entrance of each booth, and flowers everywhere made the air heavy with sweetest perfume.

What wonderful things were in those booths displayed!

There were strings of beautiful beads for

the girls, and silver girdles, and wonderful bangles, oh, so many lovely things!

Soft music blended with the sweet perfume of blossoms, and the boys called the girls to see the wonders of the booths that displayed gifts for the boys.

“See those roller skates, the finest we ever saw!”

“Oh, yes, and see those ice skates over there! Wouldn't any fellow be proud to own a pair?”

A floor had been laid in the center of the tent, and after the children had marveled at the beauty of the gifts that were to be distributed later, the musicians played for dancing, and soon little couples were flitting over the floor, laughing and chatting as they went. They seemed tireless, and Uncle Harry and his lovely wife were close beside Mr. and Mrs. Dainty, and Aunt Charlotte,

all good friends and neighbors in a group, watching the lively little dancers.

The girls in pretty muslins, and the boys in their linen suits, made gay-colored groups when they stood chatting between the dances.

"I tell you, he's the best fellow in this place!" declared one of the boys.

"Or any *other* place," cried another boy who stood near by.

"Yes, or any other place," agreed the first speaker.

"And he knows just what boys and girls like," said another, "and oh, look! What is he doing now?"

All eyes turned toward the center of the room, where two servants had deposited a huge box, made to resemble a great trunk. It was so full that its cover did not remain closed, yet it seemed very light, if one could guess by the way that the two maids

carried it. Its slightly raised cover, revealed beautiful bits of color, and the children were wild to know what the bright-hued articles were.

Uncle Harry stepped forward, and lifted his hand for silence, then he said:

“To-night I try my hand at magic. I propose to change these boys and girls into people of the sea, so I’ve fine mermaid’s costumes for the girls, and mermen’s costumes for the boys, and let me say that your Uncle Harry and Aunt Vera will be King Neptune and his Queen.”

“Three cheers for King Neptune, and his Queen,” cried Jack Tiverton, who had come down for the party.

The cheers were given with a will, and received with much dignity. Then the king spoke:

“Now form in two lines, please, the boys

in one, and the girls in the other, and march up to our magic trunk, and obtain a fine costume, that each child can draw on over the costume that he is wearing.”

How they laughed and chattered when they saw the lovely paper costumes!

Each child, when he received a costume, was permitted to leave the line, and at once put on the apparel that transformed him, for the time-being, into a dweller beneath the sea.

For the boys there were caps that shone as if made of mother-of-pearl, and flesh-colored coats that met paper knee-pants which looked as if made of wet, glittering fish-scales, and a long flat fish-tail dragging along the floor at the back.

Each girl had a wreath of paper representing seaweed, the waist of each garment was flesh-colored, the skirt of green scales

ending in a little fish-tail train the joining of the waist and skirt hidden by a paper sash.

The sashes were pink, blue, green, yellow, orange, lavender, all colors, and all shades of every color, so that it was a gay company, indeed, that turned toward the great curtain behind which Uncle Harry and his lovely wife had disappeared.

A few moments passed, when they reappeared, the one as King Neptune, the other as Queen Amphitrite.

The queen's train was carried by Elfin, an elf indeed, in pearl armor, and carrying a bow and arrows slung over her shoulder.

The orchestra, stationed behind a group of palms, was softly playing the wonderful melody of "The Lorelei," that beautiful water-fairy, who charmed all the sailors so irresistibly.

Hark! Uncle Harry and his wife were

singing the song, the orchestra playing softer now, so that the voices of the singers might be clearly heard.

Wild applause followed their singing, and to please their little guests they sang more songs of the sea, finishing with the "Mermaid's" song from the old opera of "Oberon."

Next the little guests were seated, and wonderful pictures of the sea, views from many countries were shown, and the orchestra played continuously, wonderful music to enhance the enjoyment of the pictures on the screen.

Then the little mermen, with their mermaids, marched out from the tent, following their king and queen, to a second tent, and what a treat awaited them!

Oysters, lobster, salads, plainly made

that the children might safely enjoy them, rolls, odd little crackers, then such wonderful ices, in lovely forms, fruit, and nuts, and bonbons.

Throughout the evening, Antony was helping each and every one wholly to enjoy the Fair. He was a great aid to Uncle Harry, and Antony, himself, was very happy, because he was helping others to be happy, the *surest road* to gain happiness, and a light heart for one's self.

The hours spent at the Fair had sped on wings, and when the spread had been so enjoyed that evidences that there really had been a spread had all but disappeared, there was a loud clash of cymbals, to arrest attention.

“We'll return to the big tent,” announced Uncle Harry, “because there's an amount

of goods there to be disposed of. I expect you to 'buy' every article, but not with money.

"This is the place where you can purchase any article that you would like to have, by making me a fine promise.

"Flossie Barnet may choose her gift, and if she makes me a promise to do something gentle or kind with it, it shall be hers. Come, Flossie, what do you choose?"

Flossie looked from one fine gift to the other, then she spoke, and she said just what you might know that dear little Flossie would say. Her blue eyes were eager.

"I'd like the big red book of fairy tales," she said, "and if you let me have it, I promise to let every boy and girl I know borrow and read it, until all my little friends have enjoyed it."

“That’s a good promise, Flossie. You have the book now for your own.”

“Your turn, Molly Merton,” called Uncle Harry.

“I’d like one of those lovely bangles,” Molly said, and for a moment she was puzzled what promise to give. Then her face brightened.

“I know what to promise! I know!” she cried.

“I’ve *such* a hasty temper, you all know that, but I’ll promise, for a month to guard it so carefully that no one shall hear a hasty word. If I forget, and speak sharply,—I’ll bring the pretty bangle back to you,—but—I don’t mean to forget.”

“You’re all right, Molly!” cried one of the boys, and Molly blushed.

“I agree with your boy friend, Molly,”

Uncle Harry said, "That was a fine promise, Molly, and after a month like that, you'll find the hasty words taking care of themselves. Come and see the bangle on your wrist, dear.

"Nancy, come and choose. What will you purchase, and what will you promise?"

"I'd like to have that green-and-gold book of poems," she said, "and Dorothy doesn't like to read aloud, but she enjoys being read to, so I ask for the book because I'd like to own it, but even more because Dorothy will enjoy it, too, and I'll read all the poems aloud to her."

"Dear Nancy! Who'd ask a better reason than that for giving you the book?" Uncle Harry placed the handsome book in her eager hands, and Nancy's dark eyes were bright with delight as she thanked him.

“Dorothy, come and tell what you have seen that you would like to have,” Uncle Harry said.

“I’ve been thinking, ever since I came, of the first thing that I noticed in this big tent. It was a pretty china chocolate set, with pink moss rosebuds on every piece. Mother has lovely china, but that would be my own little set,” Dorothy said, eagerly.

“And your promise?” Aunt Vera said.

“I promise to set one afternoon each week, when I’ll make my friends and playmates welcome, and they shall enjoy my gift, with me,” Dorothy said, “and beside my own friends, any boy or girl in Merrivale who loves pictures, shall come to have tea,—No, chocolate,—and then enjoy the pictures in Father’s gallery.”

“Meaning the boys and girls that you already know?” Uncle Harry asked.

“I have just asked Mother, and she says that I may welcome *any* boys or girls of this town.”

“A sweet and generous wish, dear,” Uncle Harry said, “The pretty china is yours, and I’ll be one of your first guests.”

He knew that by including “any girl or boy in Merrivale,” Dorothy might often have to entertain little guests that would not be very interesting to her, so that she was indeed generous, because she was not for a moment thinking of herself, but instead, thinking of the pleasure that she could give.

“Sweet Dorothy Dainty!” said Aunt Vera, “Surely, Harry, the gift that she has chosen, *should* be hers.”

How the boys and girls cheered for Dorothy!

Dorothy blushed, and her eyes were wet with happy tears.

“Reginald, dear!” called Uncle Harry, “Tell us your choice.”

“I guess it’s a funny choice,” said Reginald, “and a funny promise, too.”

He was the youngest of the boys, and his usually jolly face was sober enough for a judge.

“I’d like to have that silver bugle, because it’s the noisiest gift I’ve seen!” he said.

“And the promise?” Uncle Harry said.

“Well, that’s what *hurts!*” declared Reginald, “for what I wanted it for, *especially*, was to scare the life out of Carlo with, but I won’t be outdone by the girls, so I’ll promise not once to blow it in Carlo’s ear!”

“Now, any one who has ever had acquaintance with a small boy knows what that

promise costs! Reginald, the bugle is yours, and may you be able to keep your promise faithfully!"

"Oh, he will Uncle Harry!" cried Flossie, "I know he will, because Reginald never once broke a promise he'd made me."

"Fine little champion!" said Uncle Harry, with a laugh.

"Jack Tiverton, what is your heart's desire?"

"I'd like to own a pair of those wonderful skates, ice skates, I mean, and I'd like to skate as well as Antony Marx can," Jack said promptly, "and I'll purchase, as the others have, with a promise. My promise is the only one that I can think of just now. I promise to defend any boy or girl who needs a defender, and to defend any animal from abuse. I'll even help Reginald to keep his bugle away from Carlo's ears," he

concluded, joining in the laugh that his last remark awoke.

Antony chose a compass, and quietly looking up at Uncle Harry he paused for a second, then softly spoke:

“My father has always been my pattern, my guide, my idea of a truly good man. Once when I was a little chap he showed me his compass and explained its use to me.

“ ‘Antony,’ he said, ‘The needle may seem flighty, but it’s true as steel and no matter how wildly it spins about, it always returns to point to the North.’

“I promise that no matter if at times I’m tempted to waver, I mean to be true, and keep my course headed toward *right*.”

The last few words were spoken so earnestly that his eyes flashed and his cheeks reddened, and he stood as straight as a pine-tree.

“The best promise a boy or girl ever made,” said Uncle Harry. “Keep your promise, every one of you, and I shall feel that my Fair was a glorious success.”

CHAPTER XII

THE CHEST'S CONTENTS

“**W**E haven't seen Patricia Levine since that day that we saw her on the beach with the big parasol,” Dorothy said, as with Nancy she was walking toward a cliff on which they often sat and watched the spray. Nancy stopped, and looked closely at Dorothy, as if to read her thoughts.

“Didn't she say that she was to be here all summer?” she asked.

“I don't remember just what she said,” Dorothy replied, “but I know I surely thought she meant to stay.”

“Hello, girls! Say, I'm going over to the

lighthouse. Will you let me take you along?"

They knew Antony's voice, and scrambling down from the cliff on which they had just seated themselves, they sped along to the pier which was near, calling to Antony as they ran:

"Oh, Antony! Surely we'll come!" Once safely seated in *The Shell*, Antony plied the oars, and the boat flew over the waves as if it had wings.

"I saw you two walking on the beach, but you didn't see me, and when you had reached the cliff I rowed along below it, and shouted my invitation. I wasn't sure you would hear."

"We heard, and we're glad to be out on the water," Dorothy said, "but where are your parcels for the lighthouse keeper?"

"This isn't 'parcel time,' " Antony said,

“This is ‘order time.’ I wouldn’t have asked girls to huddle in a boat half full of bundles.”

“Oh, we would have squeezed in somewhere,” Nancy said with a laugh.

“The Levine girl didn’t stay long, did she?” was Antony’s next remark.

“Has she *gone*?” Dorothy asked, in such evident relief that Antony laughed.

“As sure as I am sitting here, Miss Patricia Levine, her ‘*ant*,’ as she called her, and her two dogs Lionel, and Algernon, have left for parts unknown,” Antony said.

“For ‘parts *unknown!*’ ” gasped Nancy. “Why, Antony Marx, how very awful!”

“Well, no, not actually *awful*,” Antony said, laughing.

“I only said that in fun, because Patricia was so,—well—comical, on the day that she left here. Something had vexed her, and

she couldn't wait a second for any one, or anything.

“Her aunt looked as if she felt hot and tired, but Patricia kept urging her to hurry.

“‘I'm hurrying just all I can with this heavy bag in one hand, while my other is busy holding onto my hat!’ the aunt replied.

“‘Oh, hurry up! What's that?’

“‘Well, I've a bag in one hand, a hat to hold onto with the other, and two dogs beside. I guess you'd feel busy if you was me!’ shrieked Patricia, and just at that moment, Algernon decided to go one way, while Lionel sat down between Patricia's feet, tripping her, and making her angrier than before.”

“I wonder where she really did go?” Nancy said.

“She said she was going back to Merri-

vale, but her aunt spoke up rather loudly. She said:

“ ‘You’ll go to New York, and live at home with your ma for a while, if I have my way!’

“ ‘Well, then, you won’t have your way, because I’m going to *stay* in Merrivale!’ Patricia said.”

We have said that Patricia was an unlovely child. Her disposition was willful. Her mother, a vain, weak-willed woman had never controlled her, and her aunt had even less ability to manage her. Patricia, surely was growing up like a noxious weed. She was pretty, and graceful, but wholly untrained.

Who could love a child who was vain, boastful, and extremely rude?

They reached the neck of land that led to

the point on which the lighthouse stood, and Antony called to the keeper who happened to be standing close to the water's edge.

“Any order for me?” he shouted.

“Aye, quite a list of things I need,” was the reply, “and say, lad! Are ye good at ketchin' things? Ef ye be, I'll fire this box to ye. The list is inside. I see ye comin' an' I thought I'd pitch it to ye. One, two, *three!*”

Out flew the round paper box. Antony laughed and caught it.

“In a hurry for the things?” Antony asked, “for if you are I'll bring them over this afternoon.”

“I sure would like to have them that soon.”

“Then I'll try to get them over here,” Antony said, and turning about, he rowed toward home.

For a time the three were silent, and then softly Dorothy began singing "Santa Lucia," Antony keeping time with his flashing oars.

When they had finished singing the old song, Antony looked at them for a moment, then he said:

"You two are ever so still about the 'Treasure Chest.' You told me all about it, Dorothy, when you first came here, and you said that later you'd tell me what was in it, but not a word have I heard of your list of treasures. I'm curious to know what they are."

"Dorothy hasn't yet told me," Nancy said, "but she will when we're back at the Stone House."

"I'll tell you what *some* of the treasures are," Dorothy said, "but I can't tell you all, because they're not all in it yet."

She laughed gayly as she thought of the treasures yet to be added.

“In my ‘Treasure Chest’ *now*, there’s a lovely little gauze fan, the first I ever owned, and I carried it at my first party. Mother chose it for me, and I prize it. There’s a valentine that Nancy bought for me. On the day that she chose my valentine, she was stolen from us, and it was a long time before she was found and brought back to us. Through all those horrid weeks when she did not know if she’d ever be with us again, she clung fast to the pretty valentine, and when she came back to the Stone House, she gave it to me.

“There’s a beautiful bangle in the Chest. It came from India, and is set with tiny precious stones. That was Father’s gift.

“There’s something lovely among the

'Treasures,' something that is to be Nancy's, and I can't tell what that is, because it's to be a surprise."

Dorothy was laughing now.

"Little tease!" said Antony, "Can't we coax you to tell?"

"No, but there's just two things more I'll tell you. One is that there's to be one thing more in the 'Treasure Chest' that I've not yet seen, and the other thing I'll tell you is that I'll let you see what's in it, when you come up to Merrivale."

They had reached the pier now, and Antony helped them to land safely.

"I'll hold you to your promise to show me the 'Treasures'!" he said as he rowed away.

"And I'll truly keep it!" cried Dorothy, snatching off her hat, and waving it to him.

Antony watched the soft Panama hat with its long ribbons fluttering, as Dorothy stood on the pier, waving it.

“The dearest girls in the world are Dorothy and Nancy,” Antony said, softly, as he tramped along the beach a half-hour later.

“Antony is one of the best boys we know,” Nancy was saying at that moment to Dorothy, as the two sat swinging in the hammock, and talking of their trip to the lighthouse.

The next morning Mr. Dainty and Uncle Harry went off bright and early on the yacht, declaring that they were going on a cruise in search of knowledge.

“O dear!” sighed Dorothy, “You’re both *wonderful* just as you are now! I do so hope you’ll not grow so wise that you’ll be—well, *solemn*.”

“Worry not, sweet maid!” Uncle Harry

quoted, his eyes twinkling. "Speaking for myself, I couldn't acquire enough knowledge in a lifetime, to make me solemn."

"We have only a day for the task, Dorothy," Mr. Dainty said, "so I don't think there will be any striking difference between our appearance now, and when we arrive to-night."

Mr. Dainty was returning to the Stone House to learn if costly repairs and improvements for which he had agreed to pay a high price, were actually being done. Uncle Harry was taking him half-way on the yacht for the pleasure of the trip, and continuing with him to Merrivale to look over his home, and see if a rumor that he had heard, were true.

Upon their arrival Mr. Dainty found that the gang of workmen that he had hoped were diligently working, were doing any-

thing but work, while the man supposed to have charge of them, had gone off for a holiday.

It was amazing to see them set to work, the minute that Mr. Dainty appeared.

Uncle Harry had received a letter from a friend who wrote that there had been a number of small burglaries about town, and that a story was being circulated that the Barnet house had been entered, and valuables stolen.

He found that only an attempt to enter had been made, the thieves probably having been frightened by a person approaching, who they feared might be a policeman.

The sail, on the return trip, was a delightful one. The bay was as smooth and calm as a mill pond when they sailed up to the pier.

At dinner, Mr. Dainty told how slowly the

work at the Stone House was progressing.

“Why, Rudolph! If the workmen are acting like that, it surely is because there’s no one in the house but a few servants. We were to leave here next week. Why not return to Merrivale *this* week. Then you can see how repairs are being made.”

“Oh, let’s go back to the Stone House so I’ll not have to wait any longer to see my ‘Treasure Chest!’” Dorothy said.

“We’ve had a lovely time here,” Nancy said, “but the Stone House is home!”

Oddly enough, Uncle Harry, coming out on his piazza was just singing, “There’s no place like home.”

“We have fine times everywhere,” Dorothy said, “none dearer than when we are at the Stone House.”

“It’s home, and oh, such a *wonderful* home,” Nancy said, softly.

Aunt Charlotte, looking at her serious eyes, knew that a faint vision of the old home from which these loving friends had taken her, was making her think very gratefully of the home that she now enjoyed.

Just here, little Fluff realized the fact that no one, for the moment, was noticing him. He felt that that would never do, so he rushed out into the middle of the floor and looking around to be sure that he had their attention, he took a few little steps on his hind legs, moving toward Nancy, because it was Nancy who first praised him for doing it.

Every one laughed, and Mr. Dainty applauded, whereupon, wee Fluff repeated the performance.

A few days later found them all at the Stone House, and Dorothy and Nancy, as

soon as dinner was over, rushed to peep into the Treasure Chest.

“This is a surprise for you, and I’ve known about it all the time we’ve been at the shore. My! But it was hard not to tell you!” Dorothy said, as she offered a quaint oriental box to Nancy.

“Oh, the loveliest amber beads!” cried Nancy. “Why didn’t I see them before we went?”

“Because they weren’t in the Chest before we left, but I heard Father tell Aunt Charlotte that he was going to get them for you, and he did, and on one of his trips to the house he put them here for you to find.”

“How I wish I could do something fine for him,” Nancy said.

“You do,” said Dorothy, throwing her arms around Nancy, and holding her tight.

“My father said, one day when I was telling

him how I loved you, 'Nancy is a dear little member of my family, and a great comfort to us all.'

"Now when I tell you that, you'll know you're doing for him by just being here."

"Did you find a gift for yourself, Dorothy?" Aunt Charlotte asked, as she appeared in the doorway.

"A gift for me? Oh, I didn't look!" said Dorothy as she bent over the chest.

"Oo-oo! Here's a box almost like yours!" she cried and opened it. There lay a string of pearls as white as the satin upon which they lay.

"What a beautiful gift!" said Dorothy. "I do believe Father was so eager for us to have these gifts that that is part of the reason that we started a bit earlier for home."

Together they ran to peep into the long mirror, to note the effect of the little necklaces that they were wearing.

“I mean to try to be still more of a comfort,” Nancy said softly.

“So do I,” said Dorothy.

The next morning, there was such a chattering out in the great garden that Dorothy looked out from her chamber window, and there on the lawn was Molly, Flossie, Katie, Reginald, and Jack, who had arrived to give them a grand welcome, for having returned a whole week earlier than the date set.

Dorothy and Nancy raced down-stairs to see them, and such an exciting time they had for Jack Tiverton declared that there were “barrels” of news, and with Reginald’s help he proceeded to tell it. Already there

were plans for fun and frolic, some of which they told, and some they withheld for surprises later.

Of the good times at the Stone House, of the mystery that puzzled every one, of what happened to Arabella and Patricia, one may read in

“Dorothy Dainty’s Castle.”

TOP-OF-THE-WORLD STORIES

Translated from the Scandinavian Languages

By EMILIE POULSSON and LAURA POULSSON

Illustrated in two colors by Florence Liley Young



THESE stories of magic and adventure come from the countries at the "top of the world," and will transport thither in fancy the children who read this unusual book. They tell of Lapps and reindeer (even a golden-horned reindeer!), of prince and herd-boy, of knights and wolves and trolls, of a boy who could be hungry and merry at the same time—

of all these and more besides! Miss Poulsson's numerous and long visits to Norway, her father's land, and the fact that she is an experienced writer for children are doubtless the reasons why her translations are sympathetic and skilful, and yet entirely adapted to give wholesome pleasure to the young public that she knows so well.

"In these stories are the elements of wonder and magic and adventure that furnish the thrill so much appreciated by boys and girls ten or twelve years of age. An aristocratic book—one that every young person will be perpetually proud of."—*Lookout, Cincinnati, O.*

"In this book the children are transported to the land they love best, the land of magic, of the fairies and all kinds of wonderful happenings. It is one of the best fairy story books ever published."—*Argus-Leader, Sioux Falls, S. D.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt
of price by the publishers

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

Boston

YULE-TIDE IN MANY LANDS

By MARY P. PRINGLE and CLARA A. URANN

Fully illustrated and decorated

12mo Cloth Price, \$1.50



THE varying forms of Christmas observance at different times and in different lands are entertainingly shown by one trained in choosing and presenting the best to younger readers. The symbolism, good cheer, and sentiment of the grandest of holidays are shown as they appeal in similar fashion to those whose lives seem so widely diverse. The first chapter tells of the Yule-Tide of the Ancients, and the eight succeeding chapters deal respectively with the observance of Christmas and New Year's, making up the time of "Yule," or the turning of the sun, in England, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, France, Italy, Spain, and America. The space devoted to each country has at least one good illustration.

"The descriptions as presented in this well-prepared volume make interesting reading for all who love to come in loving contact with others in their high and pure enjoyments."—*Herald-Presbyter, Cincinnati.*

"The way Yule-Tide was and is celebrated is told in a simple and instructive way, and the narrative is enriched by appropriate poems and excellent illustrations."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

"It is written for young people and is bound to interest them for the subject is a universal one."—*American Church Sunday School Magazine.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt
of price by the publishers

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

Boston

The Children on the Top Floor

By NINA RHOADES Large 12mo
Cloth Illustrated by Bertha
Davidson

IN this book little Winifred Hamilton, the child heroine of "Winifred's Neighbors," reappears, living in the second of the four stories of a New York apartment house. On the top floor are two very interesting children, Betty, a little older than Winifred, who is now ten, and Jack, a brave little cripple, who is a year younger. In the end comes a glad reunion, and also other good fortune for crippled Jack, and Winifred's kind little heart has once more indirectly caused great happiness to others.



How Barbara Kept Her Promise

By NINA RHOADES Large 12mo Cloth Illustrated
by Bertha Davidson

TWO orphan sisters, Barbara, aged twelve, and little Hazel, who is "only eight," are sent from their early home in London to their mother's family in New York. Faithful Barbara has promised her father that she will take care of pretty, petted, mischievous Hazel, and how she tries to do this, even in the face of great difficulties, forms the story which has the happy ending which Miss Rhoades wisely gives to all her stories.

Little Miss Rosamond



By NINA RHOADES Illus-
trated by Bertha G. Davidson
Large 12mo

ROSAMOND lives in Richmond, Va., with her big brother, who cannot give her all the comfort that she needs in the trying hot weather, and she goes to the seaside cottage of an uncle whose home is in New York. Here she meets Gladys and Joy, so well known in a previous book, "The Little Girl Next Door," and after some complications are straightened out, bringing Rosamond's honesty and

kindness of heart into prominence, all are made very happy.

*For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt
of price by the publishers*

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

Only Dollie

By NINA RHOADES Illustrated by Bertha Davidson
Square 12mo Cloth

THIS is a brightly written story of a girl of twelve, who, when the mystery of her birth is solved, like Cinderella, passes from drudgery to better circumstances. There is nothing strained or unnatural at any point. All descriptions or portrayals of character are life-like, and the book has an indescribable appealing quality which wins sympathy and secures success.

"It is delightful reading at all times." — *Cedar Rapids (Ia.) Republican.*

"It is well written, the story runs smoothly, the idea is good, and it is handled with ability." — *Chicago Journal.*



The Little Girl Next Door

By NINA RHOADES. Large 12mo Cloth Illustrated by Bertha Davidson

A DELIGHTFUL story of true and genuine friendship between an impulsive little girl in a fine New York home and a little blind girl in an apartment next door. The little girl's determination to cultivate the acquaintance, begun out of the window during a rainy day, triumphs over the barriers of caste, and the little blind girl proves to be in every way a worthy companion. Later a mystery of birth is cleared up, and the little blind girl proves to be of gentle birth as well as of gentle manners.



Winfred's Neighbors

By NINA RHOADES Illustrated by Bertha G. Davidson Large 12mo Cloth

LITTLE Winfred's efforts to find some children of whom she reads in a book lead to the acquaintance of a neighbor of the same name, and this acquaintance proves of the greatest importance to Winfred's own family. Through it all she is just such a little girl as other girls ought to know, and the story will hold the interest of all ages.

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers,

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

"Brick House Books"

By NINA RHOADES

Cloth 12mo Illustrated

Priscilla of the Doll Shop

THE "Brick House Books," as they are called from their well-known cover designs, are eagerly sought by children all over the country. There are three good stories in this book, instead of one, and it is hard to say which little girls, and boys, too, for that matter, will like the best.



Brave Little Peggy

PEGGY comes from California to New Jersey to live with a brother and sister whom she has not known since very early childhood. She is so democratic in her social ideas that many amusing scenes occur, and it is hard for her to understand many things that she must learn. But her good heart carries her through, and her conscientiousness and moral courage win affection and happiness.



The Other Sylvia

EIGHT-year-old Sylvia learns that girls who are "Kings' Daughters" pledge themselves to some kind act or service, and that one little girl named Mary has taken it upon herself to be helpful to all the Marys of her acquaintance. This is such an interesting way of doing good that she adopts it in spite of her unusual name, and really finds not only "the other Sylvia," but great happiness.

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

HOME ENTERTAINING

What to Do, and How to Do It

Edited by WILLIAM E. CHENERY

12mo Cloth



THIS book is the product of years of study and the practical trying-out of every conceivable form of indoor entertainment. All the games, tricks, puzzles, and rainy-day and social-evening diversions have been practised by the editor; many are original with him, and many that are of course not original have been greatly improved by his intelligence. All are told in the plainest possible way, and with excellent taste. The book is well arranged and finely printed. At a low price it places within the reach of all the very best of bright and jolly means of making

home what it ought to be—the best place for a good time by those of all ages.

“The book is bright and up to date, full of cheer and sunshine. A good holiday book.”—*Religious Telescope, Dayton, Ohio.*

“For those who want new games for the home this book supplies the very best—good, clean, hearty games, full of fun and the spirit of laughter.”—*N. Y. Times.*

“Altogether the book is a perfect treasure-house for the young people's rainy day or social evening.”—*New Bedford Standard.*

“The arrangement is excellent and the instructions so simple that a child may follow them. A book like this is just the thing for social evenings.”—*Christian Endeavor World.*

“A book giving the best, cleanest and brightest games and tricks for home entertaining.”—*Syracuse Herald.*

“The book is clearly written and should prove of value to every young man who aspires to be the life of the party.”—*Baltimore Sun.*

“Only good, bright, clean games and tricks appeal to Mr. Chenery, and he has told in the simplest and most comprehensive manner how to get up ‘amusements for every one.’”—*Hartford Courant.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent on receipt of postpaid price by the publishers

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

New Editions of Two Favorite Books

THE LANCE OF KANANA

A STORY OF ARABIA

By HARRY W. FRENCH ("Abd el Ardavan")

Two-color illustrations by Garrett Net, \$1.25

KANANA, a Bedouin youth, though excelling in athletic prowess, is branded, even by his father, as a coward because he prefers the humble lot of a shepherd to the warrior's career that he, the son of a sheik known as the "Terror of the Desert," was expected to follow. "Only for Allah and Arabia will I lift a lance and take a life," he maintained. Opportunity to prove his worth soon comes, and the supposed coward, understood too late, becomes in memory a national hero.

"The stirring story of the loyalty and self-sacrifice of a Bedouin boy is well worth the attractive new edition in which it now presents its rare picture of fervid patriotism."—*Continent, Chicago.*



THE ADVENTURES OF MILTIADES PETERKIN PAUL

By JOHN BROWNJOHN

Frontispiece by John Goss Illustrated by "Boz"



HERE is a child classic reissued in a finer and handsomer form, in response to the persistent demand of those who know the mirth-provoking quality of the exploits of the ingenious small boy named Miltiades Peterkin Paul and spoken of as "a great traveler, although he was small." Whoever has once enjoyed the story of the restless little lad who imitated Don Quixote, and did many other things, is permanently charmed by it.

"This youthful Don Quixote, with his travels and exploits, drives 'dull care' away from the elders and delights the juniors."—*Watchman, N. Y.*

For sale by all booksellers or sent postpaid on receipt of price by the publishers

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

Boston

WHEN GRANDMAMMA WAS FOURTEEN

By MARION HARLAND

WITH FOUR FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS AND NUMEROUS PICTURES
IN THE TEXT

Later adventures of the heroine of
"WHEN GRANDMAMMA WAS NEW."

THOSE who recall this noted author's delightful story, "When Grandmamma was New," will be glad to hear that in this book are the adventures of the heroine at a later period. Through the eyes of fourteen-year-old Molly Burwell, the reader sees much that is quaint, amusing and pathetic in ante-bellum Richmond, and the story has all the charm of manner and rich humanity which are characteristic of Marion Harland. All healthy-hearted children will delight in the story, and so will their parents.

WHEN GRANDMAMMA WAS NEW

The Story of a Virginia Girlhood in the Forties
By MARION HARLAND 12MO Illustrated

The BOSTON JOURNAL says:

"If only one might read it first with the trained enjoyment of the 'grown-up' mind that is 'at leisure from itself,' and then if one might withdraw into ten-year-old-dom once more and seek the shadow of the friendly apple-tree, and revel in it all over again, taste it all just as the child tastes, and find it luscious! For this book has charm and piquancy. And it is in just this vivid remembrance of a child's mental workings, in just the avoidance of all 'writing down' to the supposed level of a child's mind, that this story has its rare attractiveness. It is bright, winsome, and magnetic."

The INTERIOR, Chicago, says:

"'Grandmamma' may have charmed other folks, — has charmed them all, incontrovertibly, — but she has never tried harder to be vivid and dramatic and entertaining, and to leave a sweet kernal of application, withal, than in these memory-tales of a sunny childhood on a big Virginia plantation. It is a book which will delight, not children alone, but all such as have the child heart and a tender memory of when they were 'new.'"

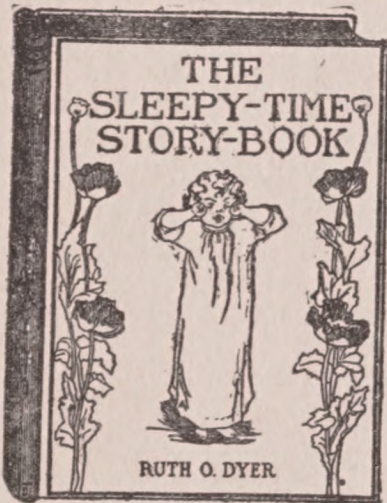
AT ALL BOOKSELLERS, OR SENT POSTPAID ON RECEIPT
OF PRICE BY THE PUBLISHERS

LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO., BOSTON

THE SLEEPY-TIME STORY-BOOK

By RUTH O. DYER

With Frontispiece by ALICE BARBER STEPHENS and Fifty
four Pen-and-ink Illustrations by BERTHA DAVIDSON
HOXIE Decorative End-leaves and Title-page



INTELLIGENT mothers have learned better than to spoil the restful sleep of a child, and probably exert an unfortunate influence upon his disposition and character, by tales of ogres, dark woods, and savage beasts. They know he cannot rest well with his mind excited and his blood quickened by tales of adventure, but are at a loss to answer the natural plea for a bedtime story in a way that shall interest and yet soothe. The simple nature-stories in this attractive book are the prescription of an expert for all such cases. Using familiar objects, they, with words adapted to a lulling tone of voice, will hold the attention of a child until refreshing drowsiness comes to bring healthful rest.

“A unique and delightful volume of restful stories by which the mother may put her little child to bed. They meet not only the need of the mother who thinks she does not know how to tell stories, but their slow cadences must be almost magical in the way of lulling a child to refreshing drowsiness.”—*Bulletin of the American Institute of Child Life.*

“In the fashion of prose lullabies, Ruth Dyer has put together a little volume of twenty-five short stories. Each deals with the things of every-day child experiences, and aside from the standpoint of nap-time stories, forms a pleasant lesson for the child consciousness in making it aware of its surroundings.”—*The Churchman.*

“Pretty little bedside tales of the tranquilizing order are grouped in this neat little book for the pleasure of little people and the relief of mothers.”—*Detroit Free Press.*

For sale by all booksellers, or sent postpaid on receipt
of price by the publishers

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

Boston

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021207202