CHILD LIFE IN LABRADOR

BY

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AND OTHER STORIES BY FAMOUS AUTHORS

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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A GLIMPSE OF CHILD-LIFE IN LABRADOR.

JOE and Jim and Sarah Ann Deprix live away up in Labrador.

Of course all the "Wide Awake" readers know that Labrador is a very cold country.

So cold is it that even the salt sea freezes over, and icebergs are as common as granite boulders in New England.

Bears and wolves, foxes, wild cats, and many other wild animals live there, and roam at large over the bleak hills.

There are no towns in Labrador; the largest settlements being only villages and very small villages at that.

But even in that desolate place there are children and white children, too; for besides the Esquimaux and Indians who make their home in Labrador, there are white fishermen who live there both summer and

winter, and their little children are born and grow up there.

The father of Joe, Jim and Sarah Ann was a fisherman.

In the summer time they all lived in a funny little house on an island in the sea. The house was made out of a cabin of a ship which had been wrecked on the island some years ago. The inside was arched like the cabin of a ship, and looked very funny. There were two little bedrooms off the kitchen and living room, and in them were bunks instead of bedsteads, just like those of a ship.

The larger of these belonged to the father and mother and had but one bunk in it, but the smaller room was used by Joe and Jim and their big brother Tom. In this room there were two bunks, one above another, and Joe and Jim slept in the lower one while Tom climbed away up to the top one.

Sarah Ann slept in a crib by her mother's bed.

The boys always had great fun in their little room. They used to make believe that they were really in a big ship out at sea, and when the sea spray dashed against their little window (which it often did when the wind and tide were high), they would shout:

"There she goes. Three cheers for our good ship Seagull!"

Outside, the house did not look like a ship's cabin at all, for it was covered with earth and sods to keep out the wind and weather, the windows only being left uncovered.

The porch was made of an old whale boat cut in two, and it served nicely to protect the door from the fierce sou'west winds which so often howled and moaned around the little home.

The summers in Labrador are very short, but the children always enjoyed them very much.

Tom, the eldest boy, was eighteen and used to go out fishing with his father; but Jim and Joe and Sarah Ann were too young yet, so they stayed at home and helped to salt and cure the fish the father caught, and attended to their own trout net, and picked berries on the hills when they were ripe, and helped the mother about the house. So they passed the pleasant summer time; but as Winter drew near there were great changes in the household. The furniture was all put into a boat, the house and storehouses were locked up, and then they all, father, mother, Tom, Joe, Jim, Sarah Ann and the dogs, with the furniture and provisions, sailed away from the little cabin home.

They went to the mainland and up a wide river to the edge of a great forest of fir and spruce trees.

At this place their winter house was built. It was made of logs and was larger than their summer house, but still had only three rooms and a loft above which was reached by a ladder.

As soon as they had got comfortably settled in their winter home Mrs. Deprix baked a great many loaves of bread; and then Mr. Deprix and Tom put it into a birch bark canoe with some pork, flour matches, guns, powder and shot, and many other little things they would need while away in the woods, and then they started away up the river to the little cabin which stood miles away in the woods.

Here, all alone they lived, hunting the mink, marten, otter, bear, and other animals which are valuable on account of their fur.

They had plenty of fresh meat, for rabbits and partridges were very plentiful, besides larger game, such as deer, bears, etc.

They stayed up in the cabin in the woods until they were able to walk home on the ice.

Then they took home the furs they had caught, besides a quantity of rabbits and partridges, venison and bears' meat for those left at home.

You may be sure that Joe and Jim and Sarah Ann were delighted to have their father at home again and enjoyed the nice fresh meat very much.

One day the father said to Joe and Jim:

"Boys, I think that you ought to haul all the wood for your mother this winter. Tom and I must be off to the woods again very soon, for there were signs of our having a good hunting season this winter and we cannot afford to lose any time, even in hauling wood; so you may go with Tom to-day into the woods to where the cut wood is lying. You can take the kammutic and dogs and learn to drive them, so that when Tom and I go into the woods to hunt you will be able to drive the dogs alone, and fetch all the wood home."

The little boys were delighted with the proposition, and immediately instituted a search for caps, wraps and mittens. Of course Jim's mittens were not to be found, and Joe's cap was minus an ear lappet, and they would have been very unhappy children, indeed if their mother had not helped them out of their difficulties.

O, these mothers! how is it that they can find the missing shoes and caps, and always have a needle and thread handy to sew on buttons and strings? I am afraid that children would lose a great deal of happiness and fun if there was not a mother all ready provided for each little child as it comes into this beautiful, bright, tantalizing world of ours.

By the time that the lappet had been found and fastened in its place again, Sarah Ann came in from a coasting frolic, and seeing her brothers preparing to go out she demanded where they were going.

"We're going to take the dogs and kammutic after a load of wood," said Joe with an important air.

"Now, Joe Deprix, that ain't true. You know that father would never allow you to *touch* the kammutic," said Sarah Ann in a reproving tone.

"You are mistaken this time, Miss, for father told us to go. Me'n Jim will have to get in all the wood this winter for we're getting to be big boys." And Joe, with the air of a conqueror, marched past Sarah Ann and out of doors to see the dogs harnessed.

A brilliant idea flashed into Sarah Ann's head. She would go too. If Joe and Jim were old enough to go after wood, she was old enough to go with them for a ride!

So she ran out to where her father and brothers were harnessing dogs, and declared her intention of going too.

"You can't go, Sarah Ann," said Jim. "Girls never go after wood, that is boy's work," he continued, totally forgetting sundry times when he had coaxed Sarah Ann into carrying wood from the wood-pile by the door into the house.

"No indeed! you can't go at all," chimed in Joe. "Why you would freeze in ten minutes, child."

"Indeed I wouldn't, Joe; I'll keep myself just as warm as warm," said the little girl pleadingly.

"What is that?" said Tom, coming out of the storehouse with an armful of dogs' harnesses.

"Oh, Tom! mayn't I go with Joe and Jim to get the wood. I'll wrap up warm and I won't bother one bit."

"Certainly you may if mother is willing. We boys always want to make our little sister happy. It is a boy's duty to be kind to his sister, is it not, Joe?"

Joe muttered something about Sarah Ann's being cold, but did not offer any more objections, and Sarah Ann trotted into the house for her mother's permission and extra wraps.

Now, while the boys are harnessing the dogs, I will describe the kammutic or sled which they are going to use, and the dogs' harnesses; also the method of driving in Labrador.

The dogs take the place of horses, and are used by the Labrador people as we use the latter.

There are no horses in Labrador.

Hundreds of children, yes, and men and women too, never saw one of those noble animals.

The dog's harness is very simple, consisting only of

two rings of salted and dried sealskin called oxnoe.

This sealskin leather, or oxnoe, is exceedingly strong, and is therefore used for dogs' harnesses because the dogs pull and jerk so much.

These two rings I have mentioned are fastened together by two bands of the same leather. The larger ring goes just behind the fore legs of the dog, and the smaller one goes around the neck. Consequently one of the connecting bands passes between the fore legs and up to the collar ring, and the other lies on the back. Attached to this back strap is a long string or trace of oxnoe with a loop at the end, the use of which will be explained shortly.

The kammutic, or sled, is made of two pieces of board for runners, which are shod with whalebone. The front ends of the runners are curved upwards a little, something like a boy's sled. Across these runners strips, or "bars" of wood, are securely *sewed* on. Actually *sewed* on with strong string. The reason for this is, that the kammutic has to go over very rough uneven ice where nails, if they were used to fasten the sled together would certainly start out of place.

These bars are about four inches wide, and are placed close together from the extreme back end of the sled to where the front curve begins.

From the front bar to the point of the runners is called the "Nose" of the kammutic; and running from one runner to another is another strap of oxnoe which is knotted firmly in the middle, leaving two ends loosely dangling therefrom, one of which is furnished with a large whalebone button, and the other with a loop. When all the dogs are harnessed, the loops at the ends of the traces are strung on these loose ends, and, when all are on, the two ends of the "bithook," as the strap is called are buttoned together, so the dogs are fastened to the kammutic and yet are not tied close together; for each dog's trace is very long, the head dog being about forty feet from the sled and the hind dog ten or twelve feet, the others varying in length according to position.

And yet each dog can go from side to side as he chooses, or run straight ahead.

The whip is made with a very short wooden handle, but with a very long oxnoe lash, which is very thick near the handle but tapers to a point. The whip lash must be a little longer than the head dog's trace. The dogs are driven entirely by voice and whip. When the dogs are required to turn to the right hand the driver shouts "*Ouk! Ouk! Ouk!*" as loud as he can, and the head dog will turn at once. When the driver wishes to turn to the left he shouts "*Rarrah!*

Rarrah!" and the head dog obeys, the others following. If the dogs do not turn at once the driver uses his long whip, and they soon obey that.

By the time that Sarah Ann was ready the dogs were harnessed, and were howling, and barking, and impatient to start. Indeed, they would have done so if Tom had not twisted the traces round a post.

"Hurry, Sarah Ann," shouted Jim. "We're all ready and waiting!"

A moment more and Sarah Ann was seated on the sled with Tom's arm around her, and they were all ready to start. Then the dogs were set free and off they started.

There was no need to urge them. Away they went as fast as their legs could carry them, for it was the first time that they had been harnessed that winter and they enjoyed the fun.

"Hold on tight, boys!" cried Tom.

"All right!" shouted the boys, and on they dashed.

Their course lay up the river so there was no danger of meeting with any obstacle in the shape of trees or bushes, and for a mile or two they travelled as fast as dogs' legs could carry them.

But when they turned off the river to go to the woodpile it was a different matter. The dogs were

so full of fun that they would not keep the narrow road but dashed hither and thither, getting their long traces twisted around the trunks of trees in such an intricate way that they were brought to a standstill in very short order, and Tom had a great deal of trouble to get them all right again; for as fast as one got clear another got tangled. But at last all were put straight, and the boys jumped on to the sled again and off they started. By this time they had got the first excitement worn off and they proceeded more quietly, and all were enjoying the ride through the woods immensely, when one of the dogs slackened his pace and got into the way of another one. This last dog gave the lazy one a bite which was returned with interest, and the two stopped to fight. The others instantly joined in, and in a minute more the whole team of eight dogs were fighting in a most ferocious manner; for Labrador dogs are always ready to fight upon the least provocation.

Tom ran right into the fight and dealt hearty blows right and left with the thick wooden handle of his whip, and after a great deal of trouble succeeded in parting the growling animals. Joe and Jim comforted poor Sarah Ann, who was very much afraid that her dear brother would be eaten up and called the dogs all sorts of dreadful names to make them

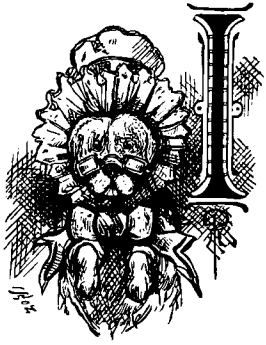
stop fighting, but they paid no attention to her. When once the dogs started again it only took a few minutes more to reach the woodpile, and when the order was given to stop the dogs were as friendly as if they had no idea of ever fighting, and while the sled was being loaded with wood they rolled themselves in the snow and had great fun together.

The boys worked hard to load the sled while Sarah Ann played with some moss she found on the wood.

When the sled was loaded the boys placed her on top of all, and they all three walked by the side.

The dogs could not cut up any capers when they had to pull such a heavy load, they could only trot quietly along. So the party reached home without further adventures, very much pleased with their kammutic ride.

A POODLE'S PARTY.



IT was a gloomy house in a dismal terrace in London, and they were a miserable family. Indeed, the only thing that redeemed the house from utter gloom was the pets, for all the flowers that had ever been planted in the garden hung down their heads as much as to say, "It's no use! we can't live here — we would rather die in peace."

The pets were nice, though some of them were anything but amiable. There was a white French

poodle, and a little black and tan terrier, and a lark, and a cuckoo clock, two tabby cats, and a Persian.

Now the poodle was such a dear, well-behaved little dog. She had so much heart; and when she loved people she cared about them a very great deal; and as for the little black and tan terrier, who was called Toodles, Lisette, the poodle, had been quite a mother to her, and had managed her education entirely herself. Now Toodles was very frisky, and this tried poor Lisette much.

She was very conventional in her ideas, and hated indecorums of all sorts. Sometimes she would look quite heart-broken when Toodles, in the presence of company, would open her mouth wide and yawn.

Toodles loved her friend dearly, and when she saw how sad her bad conduct made Lisette look, she would go up and kiss her, O! so gently, as much as to say, "You know I do not mean it: I will try hard and be a better little dog for the future."

Lisette would only shake her head and sigh and say: "It seems to me, my dear, it's no good teaching you manners at all."

But sometimes Toodles would be so naughty as to fight the three cats all around, which grieved Lisette deeply, because she chose to treat them all with dignified contempt.

"O! that horrible black and tan!" said the tabbies, one night, to each other. "I should like to know why in the world she is called a toy. She don't seem much like one to me."

"I wish she were a toy," replied the other tabby, "then she might be broken, and there would be an end of her."

"I don't know," said the Persian, joining in. She did not often condescend to enter into conversation with the tabbies — she thought herself too grand — but to-night they had entered on a subject very near her heart. She had felt so angry at times that she had resolved to go away and never come back. "I don't know," she said, "about that. To me the poodle is insufferable, and, O, law! what has she to be so proud of?"

At this she paused, and opened her great green eyes, and surveyed her superb black shining coat, giving a side-glance at her long bushy tail, with extreme pride.

"French, ain't she?" said a younger tabby.

"French or not French, if I could extinguish her with a look I would," answered the Persian.

"But now," said the other tabby, Goldie, who disliked the Persian because she kept so aloof, "ain't *you* rather proud, yourself?"

"*Well*," returned she, "if I am I have something to be proud of."

But this vexed the tabbies; they did not at all like the tone she was taking. And the little one said:

"Law! are you so very valuable? I should not have thought it!"

"SHE WOULD KISS HER, O! SO SOFTLY."

"We will not discuss the point further," said the Persian, with most alarming dignity, and she stalked out.

Now the dogs lived up-stairs, at the top of the house, with their master and mistress, and only came down now and then on an exploring expedition, just to see how things were going on. I am disposed to

think they were very happy little dogs, for they lived in a cozy, bright room, with always an easy-chair or sofa or rug to lie on.

I suppose no one is perfectly happy, and these little dogs had one trouble, and to them it was a very big one — they had to be washed. Lisette was white, and she had to be washed very often; but Toodles used to cry and kick and make such a fuss! and Lisette was very sorry for her. She would kiss her, O! so softly, for a long time after.

"I don't believe you mind it one bit," said Toodles one day, in a peevish little voice, just after the washing was over.

"Yes, I do," said Lisette, "there are some troubles we must bear in life, and this is a small one; but you are too young to understand them now — by and by you will.

Now Lisette was only one year older than Toodles, but she seemed many, she was so maternal and sedate. She always kept her age a secret lest Toodles should lose her respect and fear of her.

"My dear," I have often heard her say when Toodles was disposed to grumble because she did not go out as often as she liked, "listen to me. O, I am so much older than you! Don't tempt Providence by complaining — you might go out and get lost!"

"Were you ever lost?" asked Toodles.

"Once," said Lisette, her voice trembling a little, "I will tell you all about it some day — not now," and she looked very sad.

Toodles tried very hard to look the same.

"It must be a fearful thing to be lost," she thought, and she should be frightened ever to stir out again if such a fearful catastrophe were likely to occur.

Lisette turned round and kissed her, and put her paws round her neck, as much as to say, "Nothing can very well hurt you if I am here."

Toodles — very much saddened by the conversation — put her little black head on Lisette's soft, curly white coat and went to sleep, and dreamt she was running after a tabby cat, and the cat went so fast she ran miles after it, and when at last she stopped quite out of breath, the tabby turned round and glared at her with her great green eyes, and said: "Ha! ha! you are lost! you are!"

With a little cry Toodles awoke, and found herself all safe with the dear little poodle, and she muttered to herself, "I will never go out again;" and she sat up and heard the lark and the cuckoo in the clock having a wrangle, as they sometimes had. Now the lark and the cuckoo, I know, were the unhappiest of all the pets. The lark felt he was a disappoint-

ment; he knew he ought to sing, and he never did anything of the kind. When he first came he was too young to sing; now he was getting older he was too sad. He did not quite know why it was so very impossible — but I know the reason. He thought he was in the wrong place.

"If I were only in a right one I should sing fast enough," he used to say to himself.

One morning, when he was put outside the window, and felt the warm sunshine, he gave a faint chirp, and this so agitated his master and mistress that he said: "I must never do that again, or I shall never get away."

The thing that had bothered him, ever since he had been there, was the cuckoo in the clock. The first time the cuckoo came out it gave the lark a curious pain, for the bird seemed to him like one of his own kind; then his spirits sank because it was not; and just after this reflection the cuckoo came out again and struck ten, and he was more bothered than ever. He was quite sure birds of his own sort never told the time and he wondered why, as a matter of course, whenever he said "cuckoo," the clock struck as well.

They were so strangely mixed up together that he hardly knew one from the other.

"Well, you are a queer one," he said one day, just

as the cuckoo was going to shut to his little door, as much as to say, "There, I have done; you get no more out of me!" but it was too late, and on that occasion he received no answer. The next time the cuckoo came out he stayed longer, because it was twelve o'clock, and he had to cuckoo and strike twelve times. The lark said sadly to himself, "No, he is not right; there is something very odd about him; and why in the world does he always make that noise when he says 'cuckoo'? I must speak to him, though; he is better than no one," and he was longing to have a word of comfort from somebody. Poor little lark! I was so sorry for him, for he longed to go to the place from whence he came.

"Hallo!" said the lark, just as the cuckoo was about to bang to his little door very crossly. "Who are you?"

"Who am I?" said the cuckoo, in peevish tones.

"Yes," answered the lark, "who are you?"

"Well, I am a cuckoo."

"Well, you are a queer one, then; whatever do you make all that to-do for when you come out? Why can't you 'cuckoo' quietly, like another bird? I can't think how you manage to make such a noise!"

"Of course I make a noise," said the cuckoo, getting very cross, "precious angry they would be with

me if I did not. It is very hard work with me, I can tell you. Sometimes I can't, I am so tired. I am always working."

"Well, but what makes you do it?" inquired the lark.

"Why, my works, of course," he answered.

"Heigho!" said the lark, chuckling to himself, "he has got works, he has!"

He paused a little over this, for he wondered much at it. One thing he did know, and that was he had got no works; and no proper bird ever had, he thought to himself. So he hit on a grand question, which he fancied would solve the problem:

"I say, were you ever born?"

"I was made," replied the cuckoo, in a peevish tone, "and that's just the same thing."

"O! is it?" answered the lark, in a doubtful manner.

"Of course it is! and whoever asked you to come here and worry me? I am of some use, and whatever is the good of you, I should like to know?"

"Well, don't be so very cross; and of course I am of very great good."

He could not express himself in words, but he knew it all by instinct. If he could have spoken his feelings he would have said:

"You are only made by a man, and you live in a very fine house. You are painted a nice color, and it is very clever of you to make that noise, and tell the time. But you are only a man's work, and I am the work of God. You can tell us the day is passing, but I can tell the weary and sick at heart to take fresh hope, for the spring is at hand."

And so he knew he was the superior; but he only said, not wishing to hurt his new friend's feelings, in a conciliatory tone, "You certainly do it very well."

"Well," said the cuckoo, very angry, "whatever are you driving at? My nerves can't stand this!" and he went in.

Now it happened on one New Year's Eve, when all the family were out, and only one cross servant left at home, that the little dogs were alone in their master and mistress' room. Toodles had been restless for some time, and it was quite in vain that Lisette asked her to be quiet. She was feeling rather sad herself, only she never complained. At last she said:

"What is the matter, my dear?"

"O, I don't know," yawned Toodles, "only we ought to be enjoying ourselves. Everybody is, at this time. It don't seem like a holiday to be sticking here!"

"I don't know what we can do," said Lisette; "be quiet a minute or two, and I will see if I cannot tell you a story."

"No, I have got it," said Toodles; "let's have the cats up—it will be such fun!"

"Have the cats up?" answered Lisette, in astonishment, "why, they don't like us!"

"O, but they all looked so miserable to-night when I came up. I saw one sitting in the stair-case window. They are very dull!"

Lisette agreed, but on one condition: and that was that Toodles should not run after any of their tails. Toodles' spirits rather sank, for this had been one of her chief reasons for having up the cats. Lisette also made her promise to behave courteously.

"Remember, they look down on us," she said, "and think what a feather in their caps it would be if we should be rude, or yawn, or behave in any way that could be thought unlady-like."

And Toodles promised. She hoped, spite of all these restrictions, she might get some fun out of them. Toodles was making such a noise, capering about the room, that it was not for some time that she heard a faint twittering in the lark's cage. She also perceived the cuckoo's door was trembling. Her sympathetic heart at once told her what was the matter, and she said, in a kind little voice, "Don't be frightened, my dears, I shall not allow the cats to come unless they give me their word of honor not even to look in your direction."

"Thank you," said the lark. He also muttered something under his breath about the cuckoo having nothing to fear. Cats would not care for such a tough supper.

Fortunately nobody heard him, or there would have been a disturbance, as the cuckoo always chose to believe the cats wanted him very much.

Lisette, thinking she had now made arrangements for all their comfort, proceeded down-stairs to issue her invitations. Toodles was going to rush off at railway speed, but Lisette said it was most undignified, which hurt poor Toodles very much; however, they arrived in the kitchen at last.

Now Lisette felt rather nervous at inviting the Persian, who considered herself so grand, but she would not draw back now she had come, and there was Toodles, panting with excitement, at her side. So she said, in a timid little voice:

"Good-evening."

"Good-evening," answered the Persian, without turning round.

"You are all alone, I see. We are going to have a small gathering this evening. It is, generally, a social time, and we don't like to think of anyone spending it alone. We shall be much pleased if you will join us." And here, seeing something more was

needed, she added: "We need not say what an ornament you will be to the evening."

This, of course, pleased the Persian, and she said, in a less frigid tone:

"You are very kind; when am I expected?"

"In ten minutes," answered Lisette.

"Very well," replied the Persian, in a voice of extreme condescension, "I shall be there."

If anyone had told her, half an hour ago, she would ever consent to spend an evening with the horrid little dogs, she would have scouted the idea with scorn.

But she really was very dull. Besides, she had been flattered and treated in a proper manner, and that was everything. But just as Lisette and Toodles were going out of the kitchen a thought struck the Persian, and she said, "Ask the other cats."

"Well," said the poodle, "I don't very well see that I can leave them out."

"All right," answered the Persian, "I do not wish them to be omitted."

Lisette, with Toodles at her heels, then repaired to the scullery, where the two tabbies were looking out dismally into the area.

Lisette often felt sorry for the mother tabby. She herself always knew by instinct when anything was wrong with anyone, and she repeated her invitation

with more warmth than she had done to the Persian. She said she did not like to think of their spending a lonely New Year's Eve. She mentioned the fact that the Persian would be there, and of course the tabbies felt the Persian would crow over them if they did not go, so, partly because they were dull, and partly from the other reason, they consented.

"We shall, then," went on Lisette, "get together in ten minutes."

A POODLE'S PARTY.

PART II.

TOODLES ran back and whispered, loud enough for Lisette to hear, "There will be lots of fun!" which annoyed Lisette extremely, as there was no fun provided whatever.

But she forbore to reprove her, and only muttered as she went up the stairs something about "old heads on young shoulders," and followed it up by saying, in a cheerful voice, "And now we must arrange the room."

The room being settled — it did not take very long, as it consisted only of dragging three ottomans to the fire, — the guests' arrival was announced by a faint, but aristocratic "Meow! meow!" and also a black paw might have been seen to come round the just-

op[illegible]door, but it was hastily withdrawn. Toodles testified delight by jumping off the chair, and crying in a rather loud voice of exultation, "They have come — they have come!"

Lisette gave her a grave look, and said it was most indecorous to make such a fuss. She then pulled the door wide open, and there sat the three cats all in a row.

"I have something to say to you all," she said, shutting the door, and all that Toodles heard, though she had her little black nose pressed close against the door was, "I am sure I can trust you — naturally timid — easily frightened —" and "Of course — of course!" from the three cats, "we quite understand."

Then they all came in.

Lisette made them be seated on the three ottomans, while she and Toodles occupied a chair. But, just at that unfortunate moment, the cuckoo came out, and the poor little lark, who could not help feeling some perturbation, gave a little twitter; and the unconscious faces the three cats immediately put on were very funny.

"It is very snug up here," said the Persian, in a grand tone, feeling she must say something, and both the tabbies echoed faintly, "Very nice — very nice indeed!"

But Toodles, seeing the guests had been seated five minutes, grew very impatient and said:

"Yes! but what shall we do to amuse ourselves?"

"Well," said Lisette, "I am willing to do whatever is most agreeable to my guests."

Toodles wanted hide-and-seek; but, as Lisette foresaw this meant Toodles, in the excitement of the game, running after the cats tails, she discouraged this idea, and it was finally agreed that a story should be told.

It was at once voted that Lisette, being the eldest and the hostess, should be the narrator. Toodles looked discontented, and cried, in an excited way "When shall I tell mine?"

Lisette gazed at her very seriously, and then she was quiet. After a few seconds Lisette began thus:

LISETTE'S STORY.

"The first thing I remember," said Lisette, "was playing with my little brother, in a shoe-maker's shop in France. I know we were very happy, and it was a great delight to eat the boots and shoes. One day I was horrified by hearing our master say to his wife, 'It is no good. I must sell these two dogs. This is

the fifth pair of boots they have spoilt; besides, we can't afford to keep them.'

"At this we began to tremble a little, for we were very fond of each other, and we could not bear the idea of parting.

"'O! never mind,' said my brother, 'they will forget all about it,' we determined to try and believe all was well.

"But, alas! one unhappy day, in a moment of affection, I ran into the shop after my mistress. I saw a little girl having a pair of shoes tried on. 'O! what a pretty little dog!' she said. I could not help being pleased at this, and the mamma, who was with her, also said I was pretty. And each time they said so I wagged my tail in acknowledgment; but what was my horror when my master came in, and said he should be very glad to sell me. The little girl instantly began to clamor for me, and her mamma said: 'Very well, I will buy her for your birth-day, my dear.'

"My unkind mistress said something about seven francs, but I ran off in a great fright, lest they should take me then and there. I went to my little brother crying bitterly.

"'What is the matter, dear?' he said, for he was very fond of me.

"'I am going to be sold!'

"'O, never mind. They'll forget again, if we keep very quiet; and don't you go into the shop!'

"So we were as still as mice for some time. Then we got up our spirits, and were even contemplating a boot, when a young man came one morning, and said

"IT WAS AGREED THAT A STORY SHOULD BE TOLD."

he had called for the little dog for his sister, and my mistress fetched me.

"I know she was sorry to let me go, for she was very fond of me. I had no time to take a proper farewell of my brother, for the young man was in a hurry, and I only said good-by very faintly, and he called out, as cheerfully as he could, though he was

quite heart-broken, 'Keep up your spirits, and we shall meet again.'

"O, my dear little brother!" — here Lisette's voice began to tremble, but she went on after a pause — "he was much handsomer than I was; so much bigger and stronger. I shall never forget that morning I left him. I felt my life was done; we should never meet again — we should never tease the kitten, or run after her tail."

"O!" said Toodles; "you never mean to say *you* ever did any such thing?"

"Yes, I did," said Lisette, "but then I was so young — only four months old."

"But you met your brother again?" said the elder tabby, in a sad, inquiring voice.

"Bless him! I did see him again; but I must go on to tell you how it happened."

"Yes, do," said the cats, who had tried to look very sympathetic, "it is so very interesting."

As for little Toodles, she had got close to Lisette, and was so absorbed in hearing of her troubles, that she gave, when no one was listening, two little grunts, and Lisette kissed her softly twice, as a sign that she understood her. Then she resumed her story:

"The young man took me up in one hand very disdainfully, and carried me along. I was too miserable and too hopeless to offer any resistance, so we went

on till we came to the river, and, it being very hot, he thought he would have a nice swim, so he threw me down on his coat, and told me to lie there, which I did, till I saw him jump into the river. Then a brilliant idea came into my head, to run off, and find home and Blanc-Blanc.

"So I started off, inspired with new life and hope. I had great difficulty in finding my way, and it was not until nine at night that I reached my dear old home. I was rather afraid they would be angry with me, but the joy of being back was stronger than my fear, and I crept into the shop, and there sat my mistress, and all she said was:

"'O! there you are, Lisette. I am glad you are not lost. You must be hungry, poor little dog. I will fetch you some supper,' which she did.

"Of course I made a great fuss over my mistress, and my supper being done, my first thought was to go to Blanc-Blanc. I went into the kitchen, and into the *salon*, but he was not there. I looked for him in all the bedrooms, and in the garden. I called to him — 'Blanc-Blanc! I am not sold! I have come home and they are not angry with me! We shall be so happy again!

"But his voice never answered; and my mistress, who was going up-stairs to bed said:

"'O, poor little Lisette. You are looking for your

brother, but *he* is sold instead of *you;* and not a bad exchange, either, for he fetched more money, and I would rather keep you.' "

Here all the cats mew-mewed their sympathy, and there were tears running down Toodles' little black cheeks. Lisette's voice trembled, and it was some minutes before she went on, and all the animals and birds were so still you might have heard a pin fall.

"I did not know how it happened for some days," said Lisette, trying to speak cheerfully. "I found it out only by degrees. The young man was afraid to go home without me, as it was his sister's birthday, and I was to have been her present. So a bright idea struck him — to go back to the shop and get my brother. 'He is much handsomer,' he said, 'than the other one, and she will be more pleased;' and so he came, offering to pay for us both, if I were not found. Of course I do not know how my brother took it; I only know I was very dreary without him, and I never expected to see him any more. I was too disheartened to take any interest in kitty, and I never contemplated a boot, though I sat nearly all the day in the shop with my mistress, for I was fond of her, as she was all I had left.

"One day a young lady came and asked for me. I

was under the counter, and I heard all that passed. She said, 'I will take her at once.'

"My mistress took me up and gave me to her, and said, sadly, 'Good-by, Lisette; I suppose, then, you must go, for I want the money badly.'

"I was so heart-broken at having lost my brother that I hardly cared what became of me now. Still, I was sorry to part with my mistress, and I was cross as well as sad. The young lady took me up very tenderly and said:

"'You may be quite happy at her coming to me, for I shall be so fond of her, and take such care of her!'

"But I was not going to be pleased by anything or anybody, I said to myself. 'I will never kiss her, or like her, or be a nice little dog to anybody again, so she need not flatter herself that I shall, because I shan't; and when she finds out how disagreeable I am she will let me go, and perhaps I shall find Blanc-Blanc somewhere, for I dare say wherever he has been he has run away before now.'

"And all this time my mistress was carrying me tenderly in her arms. She took no notice whatever of my ill-temper.

"'The poor little dog is shy,' she said, 'but I shall be so kind to her Lisette will soon be very fond of me. Won't you, Lisette?' giving me a kiss.

"Of course I did not answer, but if I had, I should have said: 'Don't you think anything of the sort! I intend to be a hateful, snarling little dog to the end of the chapter. I should not wonder if I bit somebody's leg. I should like to do anything that is bad!'

"So I Started off."

"'We shall soon be friends, I know,' said my new mistress, 'and now here we are at last, at home.'

"It was a hot day in August, and we had walked a long way. Now she opened the gate and I heard dogs barking.

"Then we came down a long garden, and — what

do you think was the first thing I saw? A little, white fluffy thing running about the lawn — who was it?"

"Your brother!" shrieked all the company in tremendous excitement.

"Hear! hear! hear! hear! hear! hear!" and they all clapped their paws as loudly as ever they could; but Toodles and the old tabby were sobbing, and so was Lisette. And the poor little lark tried to do what he could, and if ever he was near a song he was then; and if he could he would have sung "I am so glad!"

His twitter excited them, and they clapped their paws together more wildly than ever. It was some time before it all subsided, and Lisette said, wiping her tears away with her soft, fluffy paws, and trying hard to stifle her emotion:

"It is so good and kind of you; and, if anything could console me for my troubles, it is all this goodness.

"Of course it would be impossible to tell you our joy at meeting. We rubbed our heads together — we scampered up and down the garden for pure delight. We had got all we wanted; there was a bright, beautiful world to us once more. We sported among the flowers. We chased each other up and down the

garden, still sweet with roses, without troubling our heads about the future. We were together!

"O, those were merry, merry days! Now that I had found my brother I grew fond of my mistress. I was very amiable to her, and she thought her prediction of our being great friends had come true. She never said much about my meeting with Blanc-Blanc. All I heard her say was: 'I think Lisette knew her brother again.'

"'Knew him again!' I thought to myself, very angrily, 'how little she understands; but then you can't expect human beings to have the feelings we dogs have.'

"One day, when I came in, I found my mistress putting all her things in her boxes. I did not understand what it meant till the day after; but I then found out from the conversation that she was going away. A dreadful pang went through my heart. Was I going too?

"I did not tell my brother — I could not. And, after all, I could manage to hide. The next day there was a great bustle in the house, and everybody running about, and looking hot and tired. I sat quite still under the table all luncheon-time, and never moved. I went after luncheon and hid in the garden, behind a gooseberry bush.

"'They will never find me here,' I thought, and I waited till I got weary; then I heard Blanc-Blanc scampering up the path, and he called to me to have a game with him, and the desire to do so made me forget my fears. I had been hiding such a long time that if they had been going they must be off now, I thought, and I sprang out, with great joy.

"We had such a merry game! We chased each other through the beds, in and out again. In our excitement we did not hear approaching footsteps, and suddenly, before we had time to move, I was caught up.

"'Here is Lisette, dear,' said a voice which was not that of my mistress, but one of the ladies of the house. I knew her voice well. Then my mistress took me up in her arms, and I knew I should not escape; but I gave a last look at Blanc-Blanc. He was still standing with his tail erect, ready to catch me. He hardly knew where I had got to, and, of course, he had no idea we were going to part, and the last I saw of him he was wagging his tail among the gooseberry bushes. He was so polite, and he wagged his tail whenever any of the family appeared. I shall always see him as I saw him then, his dear face still full of the excitement of the chase, and his tail knocking against those bushes.

"Then we came up the garden, and a sort of despair took hold of me. I gave another last look at Blanc-Blanc. I saw him still standing in the sun shine — quite happy. He did not know — he did not understand. Then we left that dear old French garden, where we had been so gay, and had such mad games. We came through the hall — we got into a carriage laden with parcels and baskets — my mistress waved a last farewell — the door was banged to, and we drove off. And so — for a second time — I lost him."

Then Toodles got down, and whispered in all the cats' ears, but Lisette was too sad to hear:

"That is why Lisette is always watching the little white dogs. She fancies till she sees them quite closely that one of them must be her brother."

"Ah, poor thing!" sighed the cats; and when Lisette's grief had somewhat subsided they said:

"And what next?"

"What next?" said Lisette, in a dreamy tone, "why, I think that's all."

PINKY POSY AND HER SEVEN LITTLE DOCTORS.

ONE pleasant spring morning, when all the little bushes were merrily wagging their heads, when all the little birds were cheerily singing in the tree-tops, when all the little blustering grasses were clashing their sharp spears, and when the sun, rising betimes to thread his golden needles, was hurrying for dear life to trim all the new golden hats for the dandelions, little Pinky Posy, the lovely Paris doll, lay very ill and still under her blue satin bed-curtains.

Poor little Pinky Posy's eyes were quite rolled up in her head; otherwise she looked very much as usual. Her cheeks were red and her mouth was red as a cherry, and the lace night-cap, with its top-knot of blue, was perched evenly on her crown of golden curls, not a hair or a scallop one bit askew. The

seven little doctors, who were loudly disputing about Pinky Posy's malady, around Pinky Posy's bed, at last agreed it was not stomach ache, or earache, or toothache, else she would have been more "mussed up." But now her head was where it ought to be, and her feet were where they ought to be, and her hands were folded comfortably over her heart!

These sage little doctors, having harmoniously decided what Pinky Posy's illness was *not*, soon began to dispute more noisily than ever as to what it *was*.

"Look here!" Doctor Fanny's cane came down with such a thump that all the little medicine bottles and spoons and tumblers on Pinky Posy's bedside table rattled and shook alarmingly.

There was an air of wisdom about Doctor Fanny. Her round dimpled face was, to be sure, pretty well concealed by a pair of spectacles, and a very large, white, beaver hat of her papa's. But her clothes were meant to be nice-looking and professional. Her coat skirts trailed on the ground, and so did her left coat sleeve. The right sleeve was rolled up for action: surgery or slaps, as circumstances might dictate.

"Look here, sirs! Mrs. Pinky Posy is ill of faints and such! *I* can cure her, with fixing her head in hot water and her feet in cold, yes."

The six remaining little doctors now protested with one united clamor against Doctor Fanny's treatment, and hustled Doctor Fanny away from the bedside just as she was about to pounce upon Pinky Posy.

"It's *my* 'pinion," piped Doctor Maria in a very shrill treble, "that this patience is 'tacked with small-pox and di'theria both together. First, she must be buried all at once up to her head in the garden, and wait there till a pouring April shower comes. Then *more* things, but *no medicine.*"

Doctor Maria's plan was received with favor by such of the small practitioners as were used to being dosed with castor oil on much slighter provocation than small-pox. But Doctor Maria's looks were against her. *Her* dress was by no means professional. A very tall soldier's hat of bear-skin decked with an undue amount of feathers, towered very much aslant over her auburn braids, and her brother's broad blue drill jacket hardly reached to her knees, revealing an unusual length and breadth of striped red stockings.

Doctor Maria's plan claimed no further attention, and the dispute over Pinky Posy was renewed more violently than ever. "Leeches! blisters! powders! pills! baths! hair mittens! gruel! beef! pigs feet!" were shrieked out by the various doctors.

"You see! I know! goose! reediclous, put her out! for shame!"

The little doctors were by this time quite in a rage round the sick doll, and from words were about to fall to blows.

"Let's take Pinky Posy to the hospital!" screamed Doctor Lulu in a lull of the tumult.

Doctor Lulu's short bristling hair and sharp eyes suggested anything but gentle treatment of Mrs. Pinky Posy on her way to the hospital.

Doctor Lulu forthwith seized the invalid by the head.

Doctor Maria, struggling to the rescue of Mrs. Pinky Posy, firmly grasped her by one foot.

Doctor Ann, indignant, snatched at the other foot.

Contrary minded doctors, Sally and Sue, clung pertinaciously, the one to the right and the other to the left of Mrs. Pinky Posy's small hands.

And now, while this officious little conclave were rudely wrangling over their patient, her lace cap with the blue top-knot was jostled off, and the next moment nothing would have remained of poor Pinky Posy save a few fragments in the clenched fingers of the little physicians. But happily the sick doll just then serenely opened her eyes on her small attendants and brought them to their senses.

Then they all began to embrace each other and congratulate themselves on Mrs. Pinky Posy's wonderful recovery.

"She might have died, if it hadn't been for me," proclaimed Doctor Fanny, pompously.

"You mean if it hadn't been for *me!*" rebuked Doctor Lulu, sternly.

"If it hadn't been for *me!* and *me!* and *me!*" asserted all the rest with great positiveness.

And now again was a great uproar, each little doctor loudly claiming the credit of Mrs. Pinky Posy's cure.

"Let's — have — a — Vienna — supper — like the — big — doctors!" shouted Doctor Lulu, suddenly, emphasizing each word so as to be heard above the din!

"A supper! Oh, let's!" shouted back the six other small belligerents in tones of delight.

At this cry of supper, oil fell again upon the troubled waves. Smiles and dimples succeeded to frowns, and merry laughter to discordant outcries.

Seven pockets were speedily emptied of their contents. The little doctors hastily huddled in a circle on the floor, around a half nibbled tart, three burnt doughnuts, a mingled mass of dried apples and dates much powdered with various kinds of crumbs, a

pickled lime and half of a very ripe banana.

Festal proprieties were duly observed till Doctor Lulu held forth a paper bag of peanuts which she had reserved for the crowning dish of the banquet.

Unfortunately the paper bag burst before it was set down and then a great scramble ensued for the nuts. Fingers were scratched, toes stubbed and trampled on, in this raid upon the last and greatest délicacy of the Vienna supper.

With the disappearance of the last peanut, decorum and concord returned to the seven little doctors. They jumped up with one accord, danced over the crackling shells, embraced and kissed each other, declaring, with sunniest of smiles, they never had a more beautiful time in all their lives than they had that morning playing doctor. Then they ran gleefully home, some to their lessons and some to their tasks, and some to sharp reprimands for having worn and damaged clothing that did not belong to them.

Mrs. Pinky Posy, meantime, was left much dishevelled and awry, to convalesce after her own fashion under her disordered blue satin bed curtains.

CHRISTMAS IN A CABIN.

THREE jollier little darkies never existed! and why should they not be jolly, and happy as any black babies that ever came into this pleasant round world — a little jollier indeed for all being born on the very same day, as one could not say to the other, "I am older and wiser than you."

They were called Red, White, and Blue, in honor of their country's flag. They could laugh from sun-up to sun-down; and on a cold evening they could dance before the great fire at the end of the cabin until their daddy's fingers were stiff, picking the old banjo.

What black little darkies they were! How their eyes did shine! But one thing certainly was very strange indeed; while Red and White, the two boys, had the tightest curling wool that ever grew, Blue, the little girl, had *hair*, black hair which fell in beautiful

curls down her small back. Their mammy said, "de good Lord gave Blue de har, so to let dem know dat de little gal must not be knocked round, like de boys what had de wool."

It was Christmas Eve; and Milly and Obadiah, the daddy and mammy, were up at the great house, hepling get ready for the grand Christmas dinner. Before going they had piled up the big logs on the fire, and told the children to go to bed, and not forget their prayers.

They all lay in a small trundle-bed; their prayers had been reverently said, and they were talking by the pleasant fire-light.

They did not go to bed, like many of the poor little darkies near them, in the same clothes they wore in the day time; but had neat blue checked night-gowns.

"Mr. Robert say he done take me to de norf, if mammy 'll gimme way," said Blue.

"Mr. Robert is never going up to de norf, no more," said White.

"Dey don't have no cabins, nor houses, nor post office, nor stove, nor nuffin in de norf," said Red, contemptuously, "dey live in de woods, dar."

"Who tole yer dat?" said Blue. "Mr. Robert done tole me dat dey don't say 'Christmas gift' like

we do, fur an old man dat has a fur coat on his back done crawl down de chimly in de *houses;* an' Christmas day, de folks all get de candy an' gold rings, an' breast pins dat he totes on his back up to de top of de house an' slides down de chimely."

"Don't yer tole no lie, now!" said Red, sitting up in bed and looking with great severity at his sister.

"I don't tole no lie," said Blue, "he say when he was little like I, he found a big wood horse coming right smart down de chimely, an' he looked an' de ole man done run away like a squirrel; an' he hollered, 'hold on dar! yer done forget to fetch de saddle;' an' de old man holler down de chimely, 'I done fetch it next Christmas,' an' de next year de saddle come down de chimely!"

This was too much for Red and White; they sat up with wide open eyes and stared at poor Blue.

"O, Lor!" said Red, "won't I tell mammy to lay de switch on you! Yer tell wuzzer lies dan old uncle Pete."

White and Blue both laughed, but Red said scornfully: "Does yer blieve dey have more at de Norf dan de Souf have!"

"I dunno," said Blue, still laughing, "like nuff."

But she was disappointed for all she laughed; for she had anticipated a pleasant time telling Red and

White about the funny old man who came down chimneys and threw about valuable things so recklessly.

"If a gal will tole such a right smart lie as dat, when she's little," said White, turning with mock gravity towards Red, "uncle Pete won't open his mouth when she gets to be a mammy. Look like she must have a switching, Red."

"Sure nuff," said Red, solemnly.

They lay very quiet for a while, and nothing was heard but the wind outside and the crackling of the fire within. Then Red said, gently:

"Be good chile, now, an' say dat yer done tole us a lie; an' we won't tell mammy to beat yer."

"I done say de truf, an' I don't reckon mammy 'll switch me, cause yer told her to, anyhow!" said Blue.

"I shall go up to the house at sun-up and say 'Christmas gift,'" said Red, softly, to White.

"It looks like I'd go soon as you, I reckon," said White, in the same undertone.

It was quite evident that poor Blue was intentionally snubbed. She was on the point of getting up and leaving them, when a low moan, followed immediately by a louder, came from the fire-place.

"What's dat?" said the boys, starting up in fright.

A bright thought came to Blue, — why not say this

is the old man Mr. Robert told about, and perhaps prove the truth of her story?

"What yer scat 'bout?" she said coolly, although her heart was beating hard, under her blue-checked night gown.

"Go say dat daddy and mammy's done gone to de house," said Red, as the moans grew into heavy and absurd groans; and he gave Blue a persuasive little push.

"I's powerful scat!" whispered his sister, nestling down.

"So's Red," said White, chuckling under the bed clothes; "an' he done send a little gal whar he darsn't went hisself."

This seemed to revive Blue's spirits, and she went under the bedclothes and chuckled with White.

"Let's get out of bed and go to de fire," said White, taking Blue's hand.

"I go, I reckon," said Red, as they started; and tightly grasping hands the union colors advanced to meet the enemy.

"When we get to de fire all holler, 'What yer want dar!'" said White in a whisper.

They advanced, stood before the fire, and at the signal from White out came the challenge from the unbroken line: "What yer want dar!"

They waited a moment and no answer came. Then Blue began to dance a little to keep her feet warm, and White held up a foot before the fire.

"Holler again, right smart!" said Red.

They called again, "What yer want dar!" and a solemn voice came down the chimney: "I want to come down!"

"Down de chimly!" whispered Blue, excitedly. "O, dat's de ole man wid fur close on; he done foller Mr. Robert from de Norf!" Then she crept to the fire-place and said bravely: "Look like you's de old man from de norf wid fur close on yer back."

This so much encouraged the boys that they laughed merrily; and peals of laughter came down the chimney.

"O go long dar!" yelled White, "if yer didn't bring us nuffin."

"Look like you's all eyes," said Blue, as the footsteps and laughter came fainter and fainter from the distance.

"Look like yer har was standin' straight, now," said Red.

"I wasn't scared a mite," said Blue.

The fire was nearly out, still they sat there talking and laughing; but after a time their heads began to nod, and they were nearly asleep when a voice from

the chimney said sternly: "Put out that fire!"

"Look like yer'd leave us in de dark," said White.

"Put it out!" said the voice; and they covered the few bright embers with ashes, and found themselves in utter darkness.

"I reckon dis is de blackest night de good Lord eber made," said Red, clinging to the others.

"Is the fire all out?" called the voice, gruffly.

"Yes, but de ashes is powerful hot; burn yer legs, I reckon, if you come down dar!" said Blue, anxiously.

"You can rake out the things, I guess," said the voice; "come now! my time is short, lively there!" The voice was not so gruff as before.

Bang, came something down the chimney. White pulled it out.

"Say, is you de ole man wid de fur close?" said Blue.

Slap, came something, and buried itself in the ashes.

"Say," said Blue, "is you de ole —" Down came something else, and they hurried it to a safe place.

Blue reached her curly head forward into the wide fire-place: "*Is you de ole man* —" but before she was fairly out of danger a fresh supply came pouring down the great chimney. "Rake them out!" said

the voice, "those are presents to the union flag, from old Santa Claus."

"Santa Claus, Santa Claus, dat's de name of de ole man wid de fur close," said Blue.

"If you try to see anything before morning I shall fly down and take everything away," said Santa Claus, with horrible groans which fell unheeded on the ears of Red, White, and Blue.

Soon they crept into bed, chilled but happy.

"I done smell cake, an' candy," said White, chuckling.

"I feel something hard an' round in dis yere," said Blue.

"I wish de fire was lighted!" said Red.

"De quicker we go to sleep, de quicker we wake up," said White, wisely.

"What if dey's jus foolin' us, and dey's nuffin but paper bundles?" said Blue, half laughing and half crying.

"Didn't yer done smell de cake?" said White.

"Sure nuff!" said Blue, happily.

"Hold yer tongue, den, an' don't keep waking me up," said Red.

Wishing and wondering, they soon fell asleep.

In the morning, when the great sun, which never neglects even the lowliest of earth's children, sent a

bright ray through the broken shutter of the little cabin, it fell on the faces of the three jolly little darkies, and they sprang up like three Jacks in boxes all let loose at the same moment.

First they looked at each other as they always did every morning, and laughed. Then they looked around for the bundles, hoping it was not a dream.

It was no dream! There in a broken paper bag lay a round tin ring, painted red, with a horse that looked crazy for a gallop, fastened inside. Three bundles of candy, as bright, and of as many colors, as a darkie belle's dress. A doll with pink cheeks and a seductive smile. A jack-knife and a tin horn. A harmonica, and bright picture books, full of all sorts of impossibilities for man and beast.

Their mammy was outside the cabin talking with Mr. Robert, from the North; but they had no ears for any one.

"You see, Milly," said Mr. Robert, who, suffering from undigested bunns, or Latin verbs, was visiting the South for his health's sake, "I only just meant to call down the chimney and frighten them; but when they hollered up so coolly and asked if I were Santa Claus, I nearly killed myself laughing, for I was the one who told Blue about 'de ole man wid de fur close,' and what he did for me when I was a shaver.

Of course, after I laughed, I couldn't frighten them, so I thought I would play Santa Claus in good earnest. I went back to the house — Tom was with me, and I made everybody there give me something, and then we banged the things."

"Wasn't yer shamed of yerself now, Mr. Robert, scarin' de poor chileuns when dey hadn't no daddy nor mammy dar?"

"Yes, I was," said Mr. Robert, with an honesty that won Milly's heart, "that's the reason I got the duds for them. Don't you ever tell them it wasn't Santa Claus."

"O, go long, Mr. Robert!" said Milly, "you spect dey will b'lieve dat for ever?"

"Poor little nigs!" said he to himself, as Milly went into the cabin, "I *should* be ashamed if I had given them nothing but a scare!"

After Milly had admired all the presents and assisted in dividing them amicably, Blue said slyly:

"Mammy, de boys jus' want you to gimme a right smart switching; caus I done tole a lie last night."

"Dat's no kind o' lie at all!" said White, "look like uncle Pete beat dat when he's sleep."

"Mr. Robert give me a Christmas gift," said the daddy, "an' I don't reckon I can ever feel too proud of it." And he unfolded a large American flag, and

spread it reverently across the cabin floor. "Thar,' he continued, pointing to the stars and stripes, "that's the thing yer all was named for!" and the three little darkies, falling into a line, gave three cheers, and rousing ones, for the Red, White and Blue!

PRUE'S POCKET-BOOK.

IT was a little leather affair, somewhat rubbed at the corners, and tarnished at the clasp — a cheap article to begin with, and none the better for use. But these were not the faults Prue was considering so gravely, for pocket-books are like people; one forgets their outward appearance if there is real worth within. It was soul-poverty — empty compartments — that the thoughtful young eyes were studying. There were four pockets, and only one silver quarter rolling about in a solitary way, not able even to jingle all alone.

Prue dropped it into her lap, as she sat on the back porch, and resting her elbow on her knee and her chin between her palms, said, as if talking to the tall hollyhocks that nodded graciously to her from the garden.

"If 'twere a whole dollar, even! But my life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hardly ever has any *whole* things in it — just little bits that don't fit together. What can anybody do with one quarter! Just little common things; and I want to have something whole and — uncommon!"

The hollyhocks only bowed, as they would have done if she had remarked that it was a pleasant day. But a human voice answered, for Rob Griswold, digging for angle-worms in the lane beside the house, looked over the fence.

"Hollo! Prue! What are you doing there?"

"Thinking."

"Didn't s'pose girls ever did that. What about?" said Rob, saucily.

"Well, I was wishing," began Prue slowly, trying to put her vague discontent and longing into words, "that I could — get up higher."

"Take a pair of stilts," suggested Rob, briskly.

"No; I think that's the only way I've ever had — just sticks that didn't belong to me, that I couldn't stay on but a minute anyway, and maybe throw me down before that. I don't want make-believes," answered Prue, dejectedly.

Rob was not good at understanding metaphor, and did not care to trouble his curly head with the effort.

"That sounds like the stuff girls put into their compositions," he observed. "They always say such

things when they write about 'Spring' or 'Perseverance.' If you really want to go up, Prue, hire a balloon."

"Of course I don't mean *really;* you know well enough. I'm only tired of all the little bits — "

"Sick of hash, and want a roast," interposed Rob. "Looking in your pocket-book to see if you've money enough to buy it?"

"I was thinking what I'd do if I had plenty of money," said Prue, dropping back into plain English.

"Ho! I know that without thinking. You'd hitch a sash to your dress, and ruffles and flummeries all around the bottom of it, and put a hat all feathers and ribbons on the back of your head, and frizzle your hair down over your eyes — so, and wear kid gloves that would make your fingers stick out — so," illustrating with his own curly locks and muddy hands. "You wouldn't be nice little Prue any more, but Miss Liscomb — ah–h! And you wouldn't sit on the steps in the yard, but you'd go out walking this way — " and Rob minced and flirted down the lane, holding his angle-worms in one hand, and an imaginary train in the other. At the gate he paused, however, and reflecting that his companion really had looked "blue," called back good-naturedly.

"I say, Prue! Come and go fishing with me."

"No, thank you!" said Prue, rather shortly. "I don't see any fun sitting with your feet in the mud and your head in the sun, watching for fish that won't bite, while all the flies and bugs in the country bite you."

Rob walked down the road, whistling carelessly, and Prue looked after him with the momentary flush of vexation fading out of her face.

What did a boy know about it? "I *would* have some of those things, too — some pretty things, I mean," she said, looking wistfully down at her plain dark dress and little white apron. "But they wouldn't be all — they wouldn't be *first*. If I only *could* take music lessons! And buy some of the books Nat likes, now and then! Brother Nat does work real hard in that old machine shop. I wish I could help, someway; but I can't even get him anything for his birthday with one quarter," continued Prue, returning to her original grievance — the thought with which she had first opened her pocket-book.

"Prue! Prue!" called Aunt Barbara's voice — Aunt Barbara who was the only mother Prue had ever known, and who had kept house for them ever since she could remember. "I want to send Mrs. Neil her butter now. Will you take it?"

"Yes'm," answered Prue, ready and active always.

But when she had donned her hat she paused for a moment in the kitchen doorway.

"I'll go so, Aunt Barbara?" with a glance at her dress.

"Surely, child," said Aunt Barbara, cheerily, "You're nice and clean, and that's enough for common folks."

"I'm afraid I don't want to be just 'common folks,'" said Prue, pondering the phrase as she walked slowly down the path. "I want to — I don't know *what*, I suppose, exactly."

Not knowing exactly, left a wide margin for dreaming and wondering, and her thoughts traveled fast and far, while her feet were going a single mile. Prue always liked that walk, passing quite out of the village, and under great shady trees, but to-day she scarcely noticed the flecking lights and shadows on the grass, and changed almost unconsciously from hand to hand the basket with its rolls of fresh butter. She had not even seen the great black cloud rolling up in the west, until Mrs. Neil spoke of it as she stood on the steps.

"We shall have a shower soon. Hadn't you better stay?"

Then Prue suddenly remembered that she had walked very slowly, and that Aunt Barbara would be anxiously expecting her.

"No, thank you. The sun is shining yet, and I guess I can get home before it rains; I'll hurry."

But summer showers can hurry also, and this one gathered rapidly. Presently there came a peal of thunder, then a louder one, and before Prue reached the edge of the village the first drops began to fall. On she hastened until she arrived at the church; then, almost breathless with long running, she paused for a moment's rest under one of the great trees in the yard; and there the rain fairly surrounded and conquered her. Faster and faster it came, making its way through the leaves, and beating down the branches until the old tree could no longer shelter her, and she was forced to leave it and run to the building itself. Crouching closely back in the deep arched doorway, she suddenly discovered that the door was unlocked, and pushing it far enough open to enter, she found refuge at once.

The storm was no further annoyance to Prue; indeed she almost forgot it in her delight at finding herself alone in the church. It was a rare pleasure that had sometimes come to her through her acquaintance with the old sexton, and now that he had left the place she had never expected to enjoy it again. How beautiful were the stained windows to her inexperienced eyes! And how very large and still the

empty audience room seemed! So dark, too, with the clouds and rain outside, that Prue could scarcely see at first; but by and by as she grew more accustomed to the dim light, she nestled down in a cosy corner and gazed up at the organ. It was the object of her wondering admiration and ambition always, conjuring up vague bright fancies of some day when she should be able to play upon it, and all its sweet grand music awaken at the touch of her fingers.

How long she sat there Prue never knew — it is quite possible she had passed from waking to sleeping dreams — when she was startled by the sound of footsteps, and, raising her head, saw two figures, with hats pulled low over their faces, passing up the aisle. Who could they be? What would they say at finding her there? Prue shrank a little farther back in the shadow, and they passed on, without seeing her, through up to a door behind the pulpit, leading into a small dark store-room. What were they seeking? The church silver was kept there — the old sexton had shown it to her once; and with that remembrance came a thought that made Prue's heart beat wildly. The men were robbers! They meant to steal the silver! The conviction flashed upon her like a gleam of lightning, and, straining her eyes in the gloomy room, she watched them.

Yes! they were working at the lock, and speaking to each other in tones so low that she could not catch the words. What if she were partly to blame for the theft? She had left the outer door slightly ajar, and that might have tempted them. What could she do? In a moment they had made their way into the closet, and Prue, with her pale lips pressed closely together, and her small hand tightly clenched, tiptoed softly up the aisle. That beautiful silver service! She could not have it lost through any fault of hers; and summoning all her courage she sprang suddenly forward, closed the door and locked it, and the thieves were captured.

There was one instant's astonished silence, and then two voices, oddly mingled, began to call:

"Holloa!" "Who's there?" "Let us out!" Prue answered not a word, but intent only upon reaching the street, and giving the alarm, flew down the aisle and out into the vestibule. But there the tables were turned. The outer door was locked. The men had done it on coming in, taking the key with them, and she too was a prisoner. Something uncommon had surely come into her life at last.

Frantically she pulled at knob and lock, but uselessly. Then she stole back into the church, and looked eagerly for some way of escape; but the high

windows were all closed and fastened. The men in the closet were pounding and knocking against the door, and Prue trembling, reassured herself with the thought that it was strong. If they should get out now — she shuddered and concealed herself in a dark corner. Her prisoners shouted now and then, but their voices sounded muffled; no one would hear them. No one on the street could hear her if she called, and she dared not make the attempt; that would reveal to those terrible men that their jailor was only a little girl.

When would help come? and how? She could think of no way. When she was missed no one would think of looking for her there. She knew so well how Aunt Barbara would begin to grow uneasy, and the places she would search for her. How long it seemed since the early afternoon when she had been safe at home! Prue remembered penitently her murmuring thoughts. How sweet it looked now, the plain home, and the common life with its "little bits."

She thought hours must have passed — it seemed more like weeks — when she remembered the church bell. If she could but ring that! With fresh hope and courage she made her way to the belfry, and, seizing the heavy rope, finally succeeded in making

the great tongue speak. Loudly and clearly it called to the village, and the village answered. "The butcher, the baker, the candle-stick-maker," and the minister besides, came hurrying up to learn why the bell was ringing at such an unwonted hour, and finding the building closed and locked, the marvel increased.

Some one soon found a key to open the door, and Prue, rejoiced, frightened, just ready to burst into tears now that the long suspense was ended, met the wondering group, and tremblingly told her story.

"Thieves? After the silver? Have them out of that!" cried excited voices; and the store-room was thrown hastily open, while an eager band stationed themselves to prevent escape.

"Mr. Miles! Deacon Crosby!" exclaimed the minister in astonishment, as the two figures emerged from the darkness.

"Dear me!" ejaculated the deacon, looking around him in a bewildered way at faces as bewildered as his own, "Who on earth locked that door? I'm almost smothered! And who rang the bell?"

"Why — Deacon —" began the minister.

"Went in there after some of those old singing books that had been voted to the mission school, Mr. Miles and I," interposed the deacon, wiping his

streaming face. "We'd carried off one lot, and had to come back for another through the rain because we'd left the church door open. And we had no sooner got inside than some one locked us in. Most surprising thing—"

But there he was interrupted by a peal of laughter from the crowd, so loud and long that the solemn old walls fairly trembled. Poor Prue! her deed of heroism only a ridiculous blunder after all! She waited for no farther explanations, but slipped out unnoticed, with cheeks burning, and eyes half blinded by tears of pain and mortification, ran home as fast as her feet could carry her, with only one wild wish, that her home was on the other side of the globe.

"'Tisn't anything to fret about," said Aunt Barbara the next morning. "It only shows that your heroic folks are made more by circumstances than by deeds. If those two really had been robbers, your name would have been in all the papers as a wonderfully brave girl."

"Just what I think about it," said a voice at the open door. "Excuse me, madam," and old Deacon Crosby entered. "I couldn't help hearing your remark, and it is my own opinion exactly. I hope Miss Prue doesn't feel troubled. I—we—think her care for the church property proves her particularly trust-

worthy; and that she showed a great deal of skill and courage — though it was unnecessary, to be sure. In short, my dear, it has occurrred to us that we should be glad to have you continue your care of the building. There's been no one in charge since the sexton left, and I 've no doubt you would keep it in nice order. In a small place like this the work is not heavy — scarcely worth a man's while — we rarely light up the church, you know, and I could attend to that when necessary. What do you say? The pay is not large."

But the sum he named seemed a fortune to Prue, from whose heart the burden had suddenly rolled, and into whose cheeks and eyes the flush and sparkle of joy were coming. She scarcely knew how she answered, or what more was said. only that it was all arranged, and a great key given into her possession.

Of course everybody knew it soon — everybody always knew everything in Chrichton — and Rob leaned over the fence again to speak to her.

"O, Prue! So you really are going up? with a broom, too, like the old woman that was tossed up in a blanket?"

"Yes; her example is lofty enough for me," answered Prue serenely. "She went 'seventeen times higher than the moon,' I believe."

"Good by, if you should be too far up to speak to a fellow the next time you see him," said Rob.

Prue laughed, but when he was out of sight she slyly hugged her old pocket-book, and whispered:

"You poor little hungry thing! there are better times coming for you."

They did come — times of taking in sweet honest earnings, and of giving out kindly generous help, and these together made a channel of blessing through Prue's pocket-book.

ONE OF THE CHRISTMAS DOLLS.

"WHAT, *what* is to pay with this little forefinger?"

Syra Floyd's papa had her in his lap. Having been gone two days, Col. Floyd was very glad to see his little daughter. He had just lifted her two soft, dark, dimpled hands to his lips, both together, for a kiss, just as he often did mamma's, and now he had dropped the right and kept the left, separating the tiny forefinger from the rest. Its rosy tip was as rough as a grater. He examined it a little, and it grew rougher than ever, bristling with tiny scales, for all the world like a fish's back rubbed the wrong way.

Syra laughed, and drew her finger away.

"It's the Dolls' Fair, papa—that's where I've sewed into it."

"The Dolls' Fair?" echoed papa.

"Yes, papa; in the Wide Awake, you know."

"In the Wide Awake?" echoed papa, still at sea.

"O papa!" cried Syra, "how hard you do understand things! It's my magazine, don't you know? And it has a Fair in Boston, and they send dolls, and they're given to the sick children in the Hospitals Christmas day, and we don't get the prizes unless we do every single stitch, no matter how little we are, and I *have*, havn't I, mamma? And I must go back to her this minute, for she is going to-morrow!"

Col. Floyd turned helplessly to his wife. She smiled, and made a statement somewhat clearer than Syra's concerning this Dolls' Fair.

"It's thorough New England," she said. "The children have to give both body and soul to accomplish anything, and *therefore* it seemed to me a very good thing for Syra. She is really growing selfish, with only herself to consider. I thought the long, patient service for some other child, poor and sick, might help fix the idea in her mind, really graft it there, you know, that it is the duty of the rich and the happy to care for the unhappy and the poor. The labor of her own hands seemed to me better than just the impulsive giving of money, don't you think so? Syra don't feel the giving of money — in her case it is no charity at all. These are not like the days when

we constantly had something to do for our black people, you know."

"Come and see her, papa!" called Syra, from the nursery.

Papa and mamma went in. Papa immediately raised both hands.

"A doll! You call that a doll? You don't pretend to say, now, that such a magnificent creature as that can be hugged and played with?"

Syra stood proudly holding "the magnificent creature" on the roof of the play-house for all to behold. "See," she said, "her hair is real, just as real as mine, papa. It will snarl, and everything; and the little girl that gets her can put it up in crimps every night, and I should think that would be fun for a child that has to lie abed so much. I made everything so as to give the little girl lots to do. All her clothes will take off and put on, and there's a 'nighty' so she can undress her at night. Mamma, would papa know what nice stitches if I should show them, do you think?"

"Doubtful," said mamma.

But papa got down before Syra and the doll—it was no little thing to look at his daughter's first stitches! great, tender fellow after all, though he had grimly led his gray regiment over hopeless fields, and

through rash sieges; the New Englanders had met his work at Knoxville and Lookout Mountain — perhaps it might be their children who were to meet his little daughter's work in the far Northern hospitals. 'See," said Syra, "these are her drawers; it was so hard to hem and trim such bits of things. You can't see now how true the band is sewed on, and the gathers scratched, 'cause her waist covers it, but you can when she goes to bed if you come in. You can see her chemise sleeves, too, then, the most tiniest things, and I'll show you the button-holes. Look at her skirt, papa! isn't it cunning?"

Papa thought it was, rather. "And they give you a prize if you have sewed it well?" He took Miss Lurline — that was the doll's name — into his hands, and peered at her clothes. It cannot be denied that to his geometrical eye many of the stitches seemed set at unusual angles, and that the much sewed fastenings of the seams reminded him of stacked guns; but he contented himself with suggesting that some of the knots be tucked inside the hems.

"Papa dear!" screamed Syra, "*you are helping!* I can't tuck those knots in *now*, if I wanted to! Mamma certifies to the Wide Awake that I haven't been helped the least that ever was!"

Papa smiled at mamma over the white honesty of

the little needlewoman, and restrained himself as a soldier and a man of honor should from pointing out a puckered gore in the polonaise, but pulled the sash bow over it, devoutly trusting this would not be set down by the recording angel above as "helping."

But Miss Syra looked quite dissatisfied with something as she sat down. The doll lay across her lap, with the great blue eyes fast shut. "If I'd only sewed spryer I could have had her a spell myself, then. I wish that nasty Deena Sperry hadn't come here last week, then I should had the 'nighty' done, and put her to bed ever so many nights, and had as good a time as the girl up North that's going to have her!"

She heaved a sigh, and roused Miss Lurline, and undressed her for bed. There had been no signs that Miss Lurline was refractory, but suddenly smart slaps resounded upon the fair, naked, kid body—slaps? it was nothing short of a sound "spanking."

"There, Lurline Floyd, you needn't think to do just as you like quite yet! Perhaps you *have* been tol'ble good—if you have, this is for what you'll do up north! That sick girl'll never c'rect you and do for your best good as your own mother would—do you hear?"

Evidently Miss Lurline did hear, and was taking it much to heart, for she was presently caught up to the maternal bosom.

"Did its own mother scold it? Well, it shall sleep with its own mother all the night! It won't hurt Edith to lie in her own crib for once."

They went over and bade Edith good-night — a simple matter enough, as she hadn't been dressed all day, and lay smiling in her crib, just as she was put to bed the night before. This utter amiability quite touched the mother's heart.

"Why don't *you* behave like that?" she asked Miss Lurline. "Edith," she added, softly, "Edith, I've had you with me every night all your life, but your sister is going away, and as I *cannot* have a doll each side of me — I should certainly roll over on one of you — you will have to sleep here. See how good you can be, dear, and not whimp a whimper!"

Edith didn't look like "whimping" at all; and her sweet temper nearly put Miss Lurline out of favor. At least that young lady got several shakings on her way to bed. "You proud creature! it's well you're going, for you would make trouble in the family,— me a-leaving my sweet Edith for you! If it weren't for the good you are going to do in the Hospital, I'd slap you this minute! You don't care — you think you're going to that Fair, and see ninety millions of dolls, that's all *you* think! The Hospital isn't in your mind two minutes at a time, I do b'lieve!"

The most serious reflections ought to have been produced in Miss Lurline's mind — that is, if any creature with such a locket, and such a ravishing sash, to say nothing of "real button boots and a real button-hook," ever did reflect. Besides, she was going to Boston! All the way from Georgia to Boston!

But when Mrs. Floyd came up to kiss her child, she found the vain doll half out of bed, smiling, wide awake, looking for all the world as if she contemplated getting up and dressing herself.

Mrs. Floyd put her back in bed, and told her she better sleep all she could with such a journey before her, and perhaps she did, for her eyes were such a beautiful blue next morning, and her cheeks such a beautiful pink, that Syra burst out sobbing while she was dressing her.

"How *can* you smile so!" she cried at last, half angrily. "You know, don't you, that in an hour the express man will stop here,and you'll be put in a box, and go, and that you'll never see any of us again? The clock is ticking now! Don't you hear it?"

Syra was still in tears when Mrs. Floyd came in with papers and strings and the box. As she saw her mother she sobbed aloud, and buried her face in Lurline's rosy skirts.

"Mamma, I shan't send her! I can't! She is too pretty! I want her myself! I shan't! I shan't!"

Mrs. Floyd might or might not have been astonished. But she spoke quietly:

"Very well — that is, if my little daughter really doesn't care to do good, at least not to anybody but herself."

Syra turned her little back on her mother. There was a very still silence. Only sniffs, snuffs and sobs. At last Mrs. Floyd went out. Miss Lurline smiled at that, although her beautiful costume was getting sadly spotted with salt tears, and she had reason to fear she should never visit the Fair.

But suddenly Syra lifted her head.

"I can't cry any longer," she said to Lurline, "or you won't go to-day, and you *must* go! It would be stealing! You're not mine! I bought you and dressed you for a sick girl, and you must go to her. And I want you to be good when you get to her, and lay your sweet cheek to hers every night, and be just what a doll should — you mustn't think just of yourself, as you have here."

Then she went to the door.

"Mamma!"

Mamma came, bringing again the packing-box.

"Get her ready fast, now!" said Syra, cheerily.

"Fast and careful," said mamma, as if nothing had happened.

They tied her round, white arms down to her waist, and they tied her little booted feet together, and then wrapped the beauty up bodily in white fleecy cotton, wound and wound it about her till she was all of a bigness everywhere, and then they laid her in a great bed of cotton, and covered her up, until the box was level full, no sign of a doll anywhere.

Syra laughed as gaily as if she never had cried.

"*Won't* she be a surprise when they dig down to her?" And even when the expressman came, and tucked the box under his arm and walked off with it, Syra was all glad eagerness.

"Be sure it's directed to the Wide Awake magazine," she called after him.

And then she bounded away to her own old Edith. Her she hugged as close as if the beautiful Lurline had not lain on her bosom ten minutes before, all wet with salty tears.

"Edith, dear," said she, earnestly, "don't you *never* feel envious to that doll I had with me last night! She was a missionary-doll, and she is gone now, gone up North to do good. I s'pect she'll spend her life in some very poor place. And we

must be glad she is so very beautiful, 'cause in a poor place the beautifuller the better."

. . . . . .

And it was a "poor place," sure enough, where the "missionary doll" went after the gay delights of the Dolls' Fair were over. She journeyed half across the continent to a washerwoman's house in Chicago. She went smilingly, and never dreamed of gathering up her fashionable attire in scorn when the Doll-distributor introduced her into the bare tenement room. It was at little lame Norah Nolan's bed-side. Norah usually could not stir much, for having a heavy weight attached to her hip; but when she saw the great, rosy, smiling doll, she gave a little flying spring upward to meet her.

"O-o-o!" It burst from the child's lips in a quick, fainting sigh, half pain, half rapture. The Doll-distributor tenderly laid the smiling creature down in the wasted arms. The weak little hands, with a great effort, held her up high enough to look her full in her face, her gay, exquisite face. The sad gray eyes, sunken with long pain, lighted and lighted as they wandered over the bright, dainty robings, the thin fingers tremblingly sought to caress the waving golden hair, a smile of gladness grew on her countenance — but all at once this smile quivered and flashed into

tears, and the child buried the doll in her arms, and turned herself, despite the pain of the moment, to the wall.

The Doll-distributor and the mother dried their eyes, and smiled at each other.

"O mem!" said the mother, "she's wanted for the doll that bad that some days it was which and t'other in my mind — the loaf o' bread or the doll! If she'd been well an' could a-played round, I'd not 'a' took it to heart so, but on her bed from morn till night, her ristless arms a-wantin' somethin' to hold and love — "

"You should have told me this before," said the Doll-distributor. "There are hundreds of ladies in Chicago who would have gladly dressed a doll for her had they only been spoken to about it. Why didn't you speak?"

"Wes are no beggars, mem. But when Missus Giles heard in the papers that the children was a-makin' dolls for Christmas prisints to the sick, an' they was to be some of 'em sent to Chicago, thin Norah said to me, 'Mother, an' shouldn't you think I was sick enough?' An' I said 'Yis, I should think as you was.' An' said she, 'But how would they know?' An' I couldn't tell her that. An' said she again, 'They won't know!' An' she said again,

'They won't know.' An' I grew sorry like iv'ry day, her a-lyin' there, and a-wantin' one o' thim Christmas dolls, and so one day I made bold to spake to the good docther. An' he said the next time he came, that the doll would be here, but I niver told her, for its betther to want an' go wantin' thin to expict an' go wantin'."

"We selected the loveliest of all the dolls for your little girl when we first opened the box," said the Doll-distributor, gently, "and I am glad we did."

She bent over the bed to say good-bye. Little Norah didn't turn, too womanly to show her face all tears. "Please give my love to all the children in the world," she said.

After the Doll-distributor was gone, Mrs. Nolan left her wash-tub, and, helping Norah back to her usual position, she sat down on the bed. And then they looked at the doll together. They sat her down, and they stood her up, and they looked at all her flounces and puffs and loopings and ribbons. "I could play with her myself," said the mother, with a grim smile, "she's so big and handlesome — a right good armful, like a live baby!"

"I wish I knew the name of the little girl who sent it," said Norah.

In a minute more she came very near knowing, for

in examining the under clothing they found a slip of paper sewed fast. On it was a name. They knew it was a name, but neither mother nor child could read writing. Only, Norah thought she could tell the two big letters; she was certain they were "S" and "F." Mrs. Nolan said they could ask the doctor next day, but the tiny slip got away, and never could be found again, and so the little girl who dressed the Christmas doll, was known in the washerwomen's house only as "S. F."

There was great gladness all that week. In the company of Dolly (Miss Lurline never told there her real name) Norah seemed to grow better day by day; but about New Year's the old suffering came back to claim her. Yet still it was the same with a difference. Dolly made the difference. Her "sweet cheek" pressed to Norah's pale face often hushed the weary moans of pain, and the child forgot her sick self "in getting Dolly to sleep." And even when the little tender hands grew so weak that sometimes Dolly would roll away, there would still be a smile and a touch of humor in the small, patient voice. "Mother, my little girl is *so* bad! She has run away *again!*"

Mother was never too tired to leave the washtub and restore Dolly to the empty arms.

Finally the arms grew all too weak to hold Dolly

up to see. But no less was Dolly a comfort, for Mrs. Nolan tied her up by cords over the bed, and there the beauty sat and swung and swayed and whirled and nodded and smiled, all for Norah, just as good as "S. F." had bidden her be. To the very last an answering smile would creep over Norah's wasting face.

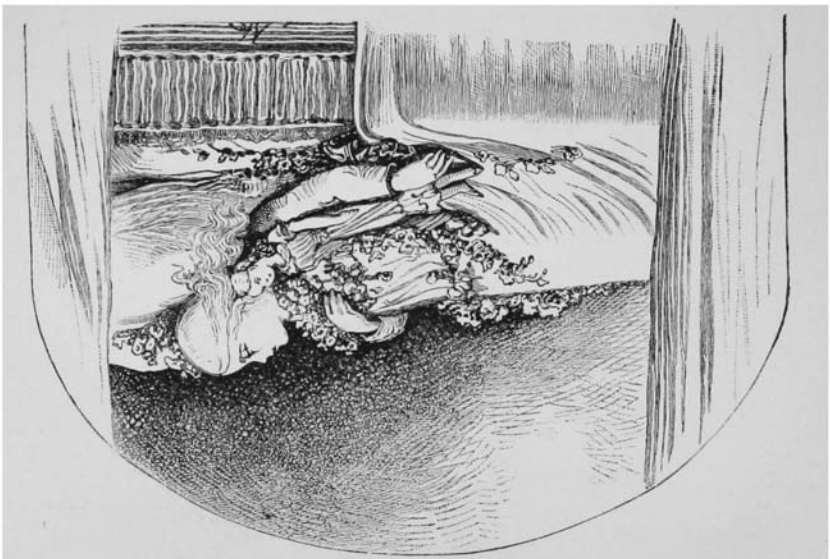
"Mother," she would say, "she is so pretty — so healthy! Dolls don't ever get sick, do they? Mother, I wish I was a doll! Then, instead of lying here, I'd be up and away, a-comforting of some other sick girl, wouldn't I?"

And, almost to the last, a quaint little ceremony was daily observed. It was called "*Thanking 'S. F.'*"

Propped among the fresh pillows, the brown locks smoothed, the little face even paler and thinner than yesterday, Norah would sit up, as nearly as she could, to thank the dear "S. F."

Perhaps "S. F." lived north — they did not know. A kiss was waved north. Maybe "S. F." lived south — a kiss was waved south. But it might be she lived West — a kiss was waved to the westward. And still it might be east — they did not know — so a kiss was waved east. And with the kisses, "*Thanks!* THANKS! THANKS!"

One night Mrs. Nolan was wakened from a sound



sleep. Norah's hand was on her arm. The cold, white winter moon shone in on the bed. The child's face looked like marble. Her eyes were wide open, and very deep and dark.

"An' what is it, dearie?'" she asked, tremblingly.

"'S. F.' has not been thanked for three days, now, mother. Couldn't I sit up now?"

"The howly saints! no-! An' lie down; ye'll be cold up there, and yer dolly'll take a chill — come, now!"

Norah covered Dolly hastily.

"We must thank her in the mornin', then, sure mother. An' mother, I don't scarcely ache at all to-night. I'll be getting well the morrow, maybe, don't you think so?"

Norah was "well the morrow." The morning sun shone in on a little face, lily white and pure, free from all traces of pain.

Dolly, on her breast, smiling, rosy, blue-eyed, gay in her silken robes, was taken gently away from the cold little arms that refused to yield her.

But before they carried the child to her last peaceful sleep, Dolly, still smiling, was placed again on the little heart she had made so happy.

"I think 'S. F.' would like it so," said the Doll-distributor, as she tenderly covered the twain with white flowers.

Would you not, "S. F."?

And, "S. F.," you did not get the prize; but you may know, for a sweet satisfaction, that each day rough Irish fingers waft you a kiss of thanks for the blessed hours you gave to little Norah with your Christmas Doll.

NANNIE'S GRADUATING DRESS.

JENNY (who is Nannie's sister) was in a brown study. This was a pity, from a pictorial point of view, since Miss Jenny was brown enough naturally, brown, with no crimson lights, no lights at all excepting the gloss on her black hair, and the sparkle in her black eyes.

Jenny, all her life, had cried more or less over her sallow cheeks and her swarthy brow and her brown hands. She had read physiology and Journals of Health to a prodigious extent, considering she was only fourteen. "The Ugly Girl Papers" lay in her private bureau drawer, and it is not to be denied that she had dabbled with many of the simplest of the cosmetics, on days when the family were away from home; and that she took her walks, and played ball, and learned gymnastics, more to get a pretty tint on her cheeks than for health or fun.

And then there was her dress. Plain girls are obliged to think so much more about what they shall wear than pretty ones. For instance, Miss Jenny is before her mirror binding her braids with a pair of brand new blue ribbons. The glass reveals a cheek and neck sallower than ever before, so it seems to Jenny.

"Oh, dear! I can't have selected the right shade! It don't become me one bit. Lily Rogers did look so well in blue ribbons, and I was sure this was the same shade! And I shall have to keep them, and wear them, too, for I *can't* have new ribbons again until next winter!"

Poor Jenny's bows were the exact shade that threw up the wild-rose tinting on Lily Rogers' cheeks—but, alas, that brown-and-blue is not rose-and-blue!

And it was as she said. One of six children, a mistake in purchasing *could* not be repaired. And mistakes seemed to be the rule. Perhaps they *are* the rule with very brown complexions. Will, her brother, really had seemed to hit upon the best solution of poor Jenny's problem. It was the morning of her first appearance in her purple winter frock.

"Well, I declare, Jen. You'll have to give it up, or else take it out in being either good or clever."

Jenny had laid the remark to her heart. She had tried to be both good and clever, and she suc-

ceeded pretty well, though there seemed to be the old chromatic difficulties in the way, even in these directions, for she had her bitter secret times, when she fancied that a good deed was much better appreciated in a pretty girl than a plain one, and that teachers were more willing to help the former, than the latter.

This was only Jenny's fancy, for her teacher had said to some of the other teachers that "that nice little Jenny Dayton was likely to turn out as fine a student as her sister Nannie."

And the teacher to whom she was speaking said "yes," and how thankful Mrs. Dayton ought to be, that her children, so many of them as there were in the hive, were all bright, capable young creatures, who, give them an education, would make their own way in the world. How surprising Nannie was in her French! In her old gowns she had led her class from beginning to end!

It was of Nannie, this prodigy in Parisian accents and French conversational niceties, all achieved in "old gowns," that the good and clever younger Dayton, our brown Miss Jenny, was thinking.

Nannie, who was about to graduate! Nannie, whose blooming time had come, who ought to burst out like a lily or a white rose, and who had only the "old gowns!" Jenny knew how bitter it must be. Such

a worm gnawing at the heart of the fine success! She *couldn't* graduate in an old gown!

This nasty "worm" had taken a nip at the peace of the whole Dayton family, for they were a loving family, a widow woman's tenderly-trained home-circle. Even Benny, aged six, felt anxious about Nannie's "white dress."

The "white dress" subject had been publicly discussed in April, for the first time — this was the beginning of the summer term, that term which was to close with the graduating exercises. To be sure, many times during the last year, Nannie and her mother had spoken together of the matter. But now it had come time to seriously consider it, with a view to action. This morning, Mrs. Dayton had found Nannie behind the pantry door, ostensibly cutting the bread, but really crying.

"That graduating dress, you know," Nannie had said. "Mother, it seems impossible. I must have it someway, and, yet, how can I? And how can I do without it?"

Fair blonde Nannie looked well in anything, — her black silk or her calicos. And, feeling this, Mrs. Dayton asked anxiously:

"My dear, you *couldn't* wear your white piqué with a new sash and gloves, — you couldn't, could you?"

"No, mother, I couldn't," said Nannie. "That is the one thing I couldn't do. I couldn't seem to dress like them, and still have it evident I was a cheap imitation, a cotton lace affair, you know. I could easier wear my black silk, and linen collar and cuffs, with my street boots, and no gloves. Oh, I *much* rather! Mother, *maybe* I can do *that.* I will if I can. Oh, I wish I could!"

Mrs. Dayton shook her head.

"I wish you could, Nannie. But, of course, you can't. I don't, indeed, know *why* you can't, but you can't."

They were at the breakfast table now, and the whole family were interested.

"What a nasty state of things!" said Ned. Ned was the oldest brother, a year younger than Nannie herself. "What a nasty state of things, I say, that a girl can't wear anything she has a mind for! Nan, I *would* wear my black silk — it's no end sweet with rosebuds, you know, and I'll buy you them myself. Come, now! it'll be all the same next day. A fellow would do it in a minute."

Nanny smiled at him through her tears; her eyes were the big soft violet kind, and, with rosebuds, might carry off any sort of costume.

"Poor Ned," she said. "You just wait until you

are in college, and *your* graduating time comes. I've read horrors about 'class expenses.'"

"Hang such school follies, then," said Will, another brother.

"I agree with you, dear," said Nannie. "These graduating suits must make trouble for other girls than me. When I teach, I shall throw my influence against the practice. Teachers *could!* *I* shall just crusade!"

"What is it you've got to have, anyhow?" asked Ned. "A white dress, I suppose."

"Yes," said Nannie, "but not the simple school-girl muslin with blue ribbons that you read of in story-books. The 'class' has its own dressmaker. Miss Beebe is to make all the suits, and just the making is eighteen dollars each."

Ned gave a long whistle, and Mrs. Dayton sighed.

"Then," said Nannie, "there are sashes, and white kids and white slippers, and 'class handkerchiefs,' and 'class rings,' and 'class photographs.' And there are the flowers, besides, and the class have decided to have a hair-dresser to do our hair, and we are all to be at Mrs. Knights' to have it done, and there is to be a carriage to take us in our full dress, two at a time, and *that* will be another expense. Oh, it's no use, I *never* can!"

"I declare, Sis, I don't see *how* you can, myself," said Ned. His cheeks were a manly red, and his eyes sought hers sympathetically. I said a *manly* red, because it would have been simply boyish to have whistled, and left the room, and the trouble behind, in it.

"Back out! I would!" said Will stoutly.

"She can't," said Jenny. "She's the one that's going to read the valedictory poem, and she *must* be there, and she *ought* to look the very nicest of anybody."

"Well, and so she will, no matter what she wears," said Will.

It was so genuine that Nannie laughed. "Well, if so much is settled, it's enough for one sitting. Let us dismiss the whole wretched thing for to-day. I *would* like to 'back out,' as Willy proposed. Miss Leet said that sometimes girls at the Normal school left before the end of the course, and sacrificed their diplomas, just because they *could not* meet the graduating expenses. I think it's *wicked*, WICKED!"

But here Nannie checked herself. It was Saturday. No school. She went off to do the chamber-work. Jenny heard her humming the "class song."

"O, ever and ever, on and on
While there's a duty still to be done,
While there's a height yet to be won."

And Jenny wondered whether just now the "duty" and "height" could lie in the endeavor that the white costumes be lovelier than those of the last graduating class. Poor Nannie! it must be so hard. Jenny felt it all, though there were four years between her and all such troubles, and she laid down her grammar, wearily.

"O, I do wish I could help her!" she sighed. Suddenly she dropped her head. As suddenly she lifted it again. The little brown face glowed with a dull unlovely red. No, she *didn't* look like a heroine, and even from her words you would hardly guess at the heroism. "I *would* help her with mine! I would, I *would!*"

And, tightly clasping her brown hands, Jenny bravely put away the poor little dream about her next dress. She had enough now to buy it, almost. It was to be a green dress.

"Green is becoming to everything," she had reasoned. "The worst old things out of doors don't look bad when they are grown over with grass and leaves. I can take the hint! I believe homely girls ought to wear green."

Poor, morbid, little, brown Jenny!

And now she was about to give up the green gown for Nannie!

"I don't believe but what we could, all of us

together, so," said Jenny. She had gone to her drawer, and now was counting her bills and laying them aside — a pathetic little sacrificial pile. A long time had those bills been in accumulating: they meant a ribbon foregone, the old cloak worn through the winter, and many careful patchings and darnings. There was quite enough now to buy the sheeny green poplin, *or* enough to pay for the making of Nannie's graduating dress. Dear Nannie! The faster the tears of self-denial fell, the dearer Nannie grew — one of the sweet mysteries of loving.

Ned was at work among his mother's window-box flowers. "Ned," said a voice at his elbow. "Ned, you remember you was going 'camping out'?"

"Well, yes, I believe I do remember something of the sort. What of it?"

"Ned, isn't there anything you would rather do? Think, Ned."

"What do you mean?" But looking around he caught the high, intense look on Jenny's good, brown face, and saw the black eyes swimming in tears.

She dropped her head against his arm. "Why, Ned, — *Nannie!* Don't you see? Don't you *know* what the money could do for her? *I* am going to, Ned."

Ned went red and white by turns, for the next five

minutes. He did see. It was a big moment, but he was equal to it. His bright sister left a prey to mortification, and disgrace! Yes, Ned himself felt it would be a disgrace if Nannie shouldn't have a graduating suit — a family disgrace, a public disgrace.

"I wished I could help her bear it," he said to himself. "Here's the chance, — I will!" He took out his pocket-book and gave all the money there was in it, just twenty dollars. It, too, had been accumulating for a year. A flush of pain, deep as Jenny's own a few moments ago, went with the giving. Poor fellow!

He crowded the money almost roughly into Jenny's hands. "Here, take it and get away with it! I *might* be sneak enough to repent."

"I took all mine first, Ned," Jenny said tremblingly. "And, Ned, I don't think you will be sorry. We couldn't let Nannie be humbled."

But Ned was walking away. Of course "Nannie couldn't be humbled." She wasn't going to be. He had done his utmost to save her from it. But don't ask him further, just now. It was bitter, bitter!

Jenny went in. Mrs. Dayton was moulding bread in the kitchen. Jenny shut all the doors before she spoke. "Mother, you have *some* money towards Nannie's things?"

"A mere drop in the bucket, dear, — six dollars. Enough for the sash and gloves perhaps."

"And don't you think perhaps Nannie has a little herself?"

"She may have a dollar or two, and she may not. Why?"

Jenny laid her bills down on the moulding board. Mrs. Dayton was bewildered. "Ned and me, mother, — he would rather, than to 'camp out,' and *I* would rather than anything else in the world."

Mrs. Dayton found it a trial to accept it even for Nannie. She took the bills reluctantly and stood pondering.

"Is it enough, mother?"

Mrs. Dayton thought it was.

And then Jenny ran away — to cry. She was glad, so glad, but she cried all the same. Of course. And I fear Ned was somewhere with tears in *his* eyes. He would have given the money again, a dozen times — but, oh, why need it have been necessary! Why *couldn't* Nan have worn her neat black silk and left him his pleasures? Tears, yes! Mrs. Dayton's eyes were brimming with moisture when she went up stairs to Nannie; and before she said ten words Nannie was crying as hard as ever she could cry.

"Oh, I can't, I *can't* take it! Why, mother, it is

Jenny's best dress for next fall, and it is Ned's vacation! How can I parade upon the stage knowing what my fine clothes cost! They will hate me—they *ought* to hate such a selfish girl! I will not do it!"

But she did. Her mother reasoned with her that her brother and sister would a thousand times prefer to give up their little pleasures, than see her so conspicuously mortified.

"You would never feel quite the same again toward life, Nannie," she said, "It would destroy all the pleasant memories of your school-days. Take it, dear, you will be able to make it up to Ned and Jenny, I am very sure."

Red eyes met around the dinner table; but in the afternoon Nannie set off, quite lighthearted, to call upon some of the girls, and the class got together and went down to Miss Beebe's and were "measured."

Nannie was very lovely indeed at the graduating exercises. Ned and Jenny did feel then, if not before, that they "would a thousand times prefer."

But it must be added that the vision of the "sweet girl graduates" was not quite so compensating to Ned in the hot summer vacation which followed. For, without money he could no more go up country with the fellows than Nan could graduate without her dress.

He felt "so mean" to abandon the excursion he himself had proposed. "And it all was so useless, so needless!" he ground out between his teeth more than once, fingering his fishing tackle and caressing his rifle under the hot roof of his chamber.

And Nannie, sighing with the breathless heat of the twilight, said one night, "Ned, do you know the money spent on that graduating suit would have taken Jen and you and me all into the woods for a whole week? What a *shame!* Yes, *what* a shame!"

"O, never mind," said Ned. "You have the suit you know."

"The suit — I hate it! Where can I ever wear it? I'm not likely to go to parties, and where else could I wear that elaborate gown and those white shoes? Only *think*, how the whole family was robbed to get it!"

"Never mind, Nan," says Ned again, this time less bitterly.

But Nannie means to "mind." She begins as a teacher in September, and she has vowed three vows. One is to buy dear Jenny a ravishing suit of brown and crimson — how shocking that the child meant to have a green one! The second is that the whole family shall keep house in the woods next summer until they are tired of it. And the third is to crusade uncompromisingly against "Graduating Dresses."

KITTY'S CHRISTMAS.

DECEMBER twenty-fourth. Overhead the sky was clear as a bell. Under foot the ground was hard as frost could make it. It was bitter cold, and so still that it seemed as if the air was holding its breath. In the east the sky was ruddy with the first morning light, while in the west, low down on the horizon, two or three sickly-looking stars struggled faintly against the coming day.

Kitty Merrill had been out of bed since five o'clock, and five o'clock on the twenty-fourth of December is a tolerably early hour for a girl of ten to be stirring. But Kitty had her reasons, and if the morning had been twice as cold and the hour twice as early, they would have been good and sufficient. One was that it was her birth-day, and another and by far the most important was that she was going to Boston that very day to spend Christmas with her cousins.

Now a visit to the city at any time would have been an event in Kitty's life, but just now, in the very heart of the holiday season, it was like the prospect of a day in Paradise. As a general thing Kitty hated to go to bed at night, and hated ten times worse to get up in the morning, but on the evening preceeding this memorable day, she expressed a willingness to be tucked away anytime after six o'clock. As soon as tea was over she re-packed her little satchel, which she had done at least twenty times within the past two days, placed it on a chair by her bed and propped the handle up so she could take hold of it without loss of time in the morning; placed her stockings and shoes in such a position that they would almost put themselves on if she should jump out of bed in the dark; laid her clean things on the foot of the bed; counted over her money and looked at her railroad ticket, and finally, after a series of vain efforts, fell asleep.

By and bye she awoke. It was dark, but she was sure she had overslept. There was a sound of somebody talking down stairs, and then she heard a door shut. She felt for her stockings, put them on, and was groping for the lamp when the kitchen clock began striking — one, two, three, and so on up to ten. She had been in bed three hours. After a while she

got asleep again, and when she opened her eyes the second time it was really and truly morning. The darkness was just beginning to turn into day. She jumped out of bed and ran to the windows, but the panes were so thickly coated with frost that it was impossible to see through them. Her warm breath made a peep-hole, however, and she looked out upon the little village street. In one or two houses she could see the glimmer of lights which showed that the people were already astir, and a moment later there was a noise of some one about the kitchen stove. She hurried her clothes on as well as she could by the dim light and hastened down stairs.

"Mercy on us, child! what are you doing down here this time o' night?" ejaculated the girl, who was just putting on the tea-kettle. "It's only half past five, and your mamma won't be up this hour. Go back to bed, again. You'll freeze to death before it gets warm down here."

"I should think you'd remember this was my birthday, Jane Walker," answered Kitty, with a great deal of dignity, "and I'm going to Boston, too, this very day. I've got a sight to do to get ready."

"I'm sure I don't know what, besides eating breakfast, and you can't have that before seven o'clock," returned Jane. "I heard your pa say last

night, that the train didn't go until nine. I don't s'pose you'll start off afoot."

To this Kitty made no answer, but continued to warm her fingers at the stove until Jane had started the sitting-room fire. Then she bethought herself of her satchel, which she brought down and emptied and repacked again. There was her nightdress, her brush and comb, a morning wrapper, and a small assortment of Christmas presents, mostly the work of her own hands, which she was to take with her for distribution. These, after one examination, were carefully put back. Then the jaws of the satchel were shut with a click, which sounded as if they had said "all right," and the precious burden was deposited near the door.

By this time Mr. and Mrs. Merrill were down, and breakfast was soon in progress.

"You'll have a lovely day, Kit," said her father, as he helped her to a hot roll. "It's sharp, now, but when the sun gets up it'll be warm enough for you."

The state of the thermometer made little difference to Kitty. Heat and cold were alike to her, provided it didn't rain or snow.

"You must think of us once in a while, to-morrow," said Mrs. Merrill. "We shall have to eat our Christmas dinner alone, I am afraid."

Her voice trembled as she spoke. Kitty knew what was in her mother's mind, and jumping from her chair put her arm round her neck as she said·

"I won't go at all, mamma! I know I oughtn't to go away Christmas. I can have just as good a time at home with papa and you, and Boston can wait for me."

She tried to say it bravely, and laughed a make-believe little laugh to end off with, but it was hard work, and in spite of herself a tear dropped upon her mother's hand.

"No, no, dear. It will give me more pleasure to have you go than it possibly could to have you stay at home. I ought not to have said a word, but I couldn't help thinking of poor Tom."

Kitty kissed her mother without speaking. Mr. Merrill's head bent lower over his plate for a moment. Then he said:

"He's happier to-day than we are. And yet it seems harder to bear every Christmas that comes. The day ought to bring sunshine into every house, but it has been the darkest of all the days in the year ever since he left us."

Five years before, on Christmas Eve, Tom Merrill, a ruddy-cheeked, handsome, adventurous lad of sixteen, said "good-night" to his father and mother,

kissed little Kit in her crib, and lamp in hand, went up stairs to bed. The door that closed behind him might as well have shut him into his grave, for never since that time had his face been seen or his voice heard by those who loved him most. How well Kitty remembered the day that followed! the silent agony of her father, and her mother's sobs and tears. She remembered, too, the letter which came a day or two later, overflowing with affection for them all, and saying that he was going to sea. From a mere child he had had a passion for a sailor's life; a passion that had grown with his growth. He struggled against it, for he knew his mother's terror of the sea, and he knew, too, the hopelessness of obtaining her consent to his going away, even upon the briefest of voyages. One day the temptation came in too strong a form to be resisted. A companion, whose father was a sailor, told him of an East India merchantman lying in Boston harbor, whose captain wanted to ship two or three boys for the voyage. His mind was made up in an instant. Two days afterward he was on board the ship, whose sails were spread for the shores of another continent.

Two years passed. The gloom in the household was gradually dissipated by long letters from the repentant runaway, dated at foreign ports, and filled

with loving messages. He should be home, he wrote, in two years, never to go away again. Then came a long silence. One day a neighbor stopped at the gate with a daily paper in his hand and handed it with a pale face to Mr. Merrill. One glance at it was enough, and the stricken father staggered into the house to tell the dreadful news. Tom was dead. Bright-eyed, cheery-voiced, affectionate Tom, the boy on whose future they had built so much, their hope and pride was dead. The account was a brief one. He was washed overboard in a gale off the Chinese coast, and although every attempt was made to rescue him it was found impossible on account of the high sea and the darkness. That was the story and those were the events which Kitty remembered so vividly.

With a strong effort Mrs. Merrill choked back her tears, and spoke in a lighter tone:

"Finish your breakfast, dear, for you will need all you can eat. Railroad riding makes one hungry."

Half an hour afterwards, Kitty, bundled up to her nose, stood at the sitting-room window waiting for her father to bring the horse round, for it was a good three miles' ride to the little station where she was to take the train. And this brings us back to the time when our story begins.

The journey to Boston was an uneventful one.

Nothing in particular happened except that she was embarrassed a portion of the way by the steady staring of a tall old woman with a wen on her neck, and once her hat was snatched from her head by an active baby of foreign parentage which sat, or rather was held, in the seat behind her.

Two hours isn't a very long time to ride, but Kitty soon got tired, and it seemed as if she never would reach her journey's end. For the first fifteen minutes she looked out of the window; then she ate her luncheon, and then she began seriously to think of repacking her satchel. She went so far as to open it, but a natural reluctance to take the traveling public, especially the woman with the wen, into her confidence, led her to give up the idea, and she closed it again, not, however, before abstracting an envelope containing photographs of her father and mother, which she had been commissioned to deliver to her aunt.

"I can put them in my pocket," she said to herself, "and then they'll be all ready to hand out."

At last the cars rolled into the Boston depot, and five minutes later her uncle was putting her into a hack and giving the driver directions where to go. Such a greeting as she received from her innumerable cousins when they drew up at the front door! Such

a dinner as they had when she had got her things off and her feet warmed! Such a multitude of plans as were unfolded after that dinner was eaten and they were gathered together in the sitting-room about the cosy open grate!

"It's the day to buy presents to-day," said Jennie, "and we're all going down town this afternoon, me and Effie and Julia and Gracie and Willie, and you are going, too, and I've got four dollars, and Gracie's got two dollars, and Julia won't tell me how much she's got — don't you think she's mean? — and I'm going to buy a wax doll — "

"Don't talk so much, Jen," interrupted Julia, who was a year older than Kitty and the eldest of the family of cousins; "you won't have anything to tell if you keep on. How much money have you got, Kit? Let me count it."

Kitty meekly produced her portmonnaie, whose contents were emptied, paper, silver and scrip, upon the rug in front of the fire, and the whole party on their knees began to count it. After a great many times recounting and several narrow escapes from downright disputes, it was formally declared that Kitty was possessed of six dollars and thirteen cents.

"Why, you're awful rich," said Gracie; "are you going to buy me anything?"

"I don't know," answered Kitty, doubtfully. "I've got something for you in my satchel — all of you."

"What is it? Where is it? Let's see it!" demanded the cousins in chorus.

But Kitty stoutly refused.

"You must wait till night," she said. 'It wouldn't be like Christmas to give 'em round now."

Her resolution might possibly have broken down under the combined assault of her kin, but just then the clock on the mantel struck two, and Aunt Mary came in to call the children to dress to go down town. That task was soon accomplished, and before three o'clock the entire family, including Kitty, were packed in an already overflowing horse-car, and on their way down Washington street.

The streets were crowded, and though the air was still sharp, and many of the people Kitty saw were insufficiently clothed, everybody looked happy. Even the little children who hadn't a cent to spend, and whose faces and fingers were blue with the cold, seemed to find a source of intense enjoyment in the shop-windows round which they congregated and indulged in dreams of possible possessorship of various articles their forlorn little hearts yearned for. Almost everybody was carrying parcels, and the children looking from the car began to be nervousy anxious

lest everything in the stores should have been sold, and the establishments themselves closed up.

By-and-by the toy-shop region was reached, and they left the horse-car, Aunt Mary supervising and directing their movements, which under the circumstances was almost as responsible a task as the managing of an invading army. The windows of the great shops fairly glowed with the wonderful creations of the toy-makers — gorgeously dressed dolls of all descriptions, sizes, and complexions; drums, swords, jumping-jacks, tea and dinner sets, trains of tin cars, kitchens, carriages, and hundred of things Kitty had never seen or dreamed of, and of course could not tell the names of. There were pianos for dolls to play; tables for dolls to eat from; tubs and boards for dolly washerwomen; dolls that walked, lolls that talked, and dolls that rode in carriages which moved all of themselves. There were cats with real fur that mewed, dogs that barked, bears that stood up and opened their red flannel mouths, and all sorts of animals that wagged and bobbed their heads at the least touch. Poor Kitty was fairly bewildered. She stood staring at the cases inside one of the crowded stores, wondering what she should buy, and utterly unable to make up her mind. People pushed against and jostled her, and crowded

her into the narrow places, and turned her about, but she managed to keep within the protecting reach of Aunt Mary, who was busy making selections and paying for them, at the various counters. At last Kitty saw something which attracted her attention and which she determined to have. She felt in her pocket for her portmonnaie and found that it had settled to the very bottom. First she took out her handkerchief and laid it on the counter, then an apple, then the envelope containing the photographs, then a little bead bag, and lastly her portmonnaie. During this process the attention of several of the shoppers was drawn towards her. Among them was a handsome young man, who with his arms full of parcels was waiting for his change at the counter near her. He had been watching her with a puzzled as well as amused look, and when she moved rapidly away after making her purchase he passed his hand over his eyes as if trying to read some memory he had forgotten. The next moment he discovered she had left the contents of her pocket on the counter where she had placed them. She was yet in sight, and he gathered the various articles up hastily to return them. As he did so, the inscription on the envelope caught his eye: "With the compliments of Paul and Katherine Merrill." His bundles dropped

to the floor. With trembling fingers he drew forth the pictures. His face grew pale — then flushed. Suddenly, and unmindful of his bundles, he moved swiftly across the store, and placing his hand on the arm of the little girl said:

"Is your name Kitty Merrill?"

"Yes," answered Kitty, faintly, half-frightened, and looking about for her aunt.

"Won't you come this way just for a moment, out in that corner where there are not so many people?"

Kitty followed him mechanically. She did not dare do otherwise. There was a place in the rear of the store which contained nothing especially attractive, and it was just now almost deserted. When they reached it the young man turned and putting a hand on each shoulder, and his face close down to Kitty's own asked in an excited tone:

"Kit, don't you know me?"

The frightened little girl could not answer. She shook her head slowly, and the tears came into her eyes.

"Look! look again! Who is there in all the world you would like to see most?"

Kitty did look. A sudden thought shot through her heart. She hardly dared give it utterance. She

trembled from head to foot with hope and fear as her lips stoutly shaped the word —

"Tom!"

"Yes, Tom! your own, own brother Tom, who hasn't heard from you and home for three long years! Why, Kit, I can't believe my eyes! You dear, darling girl!"

"Oh, Tom!"

That was all Kitty could say as she clung to her brother's neck, sobbing hysterically.

"Father and mother, Kitty — are they here? You are alone; are they well? Are they living?"

"Yes; but oh, Tom! I thought you were dead — they think you are dead. The paper said so, and we never heard from you. Why didn't you write?"

"I did write, Kit. But it's too long a story to tell now. I touched American soil for the first time for five years this morning, and I was laying in a store of things to take home to you to-night. I was watching you at the counter, but I couldn't remember where I had seen your face. You've grown into a young lady, Kit, and I'm proud of you. But now tell me how you came here, and who is with you, and when you are going home!"

"I've just come to-day, Tom. I came down to spend Christmas at Aunt Mary's, but I'm going right

back again to-night with you. Oh, how I wish mother could know!"

It would take too much space to describe the astonishment and delight of Aunt Mary, when Tom made his appearance before her and she had heard his story.

"You must go home to-night, Tom," she said, as they sat round the tea-table. "We'd like to keep you and Kitty here for a month, but we mustn't."

"As if I should stay!" answered Tom. "If there were no other way to get home, I'd walk there."

"The train starts at seven," said his uncle, "so you'll get there about nine, and the depot stage'll take you over to the village."

That night, just as Mr. Merrill was winding the tall clock in the corner of the sitting-room preparatory to going to bed, and Mrs. Merrill was setting back the chairs, there was a sharp ring at the door-bell. When the key was turned and the door opened, Kitty burst in like a gale, her cheeks red and her eyes shining.

"Oh, papa! oh, mamma!" she cried, dancing from one to the other, kissing and embracing them alternately. "I couldn't stay away from you Christmas. I never knew how much I loved you and everybody

else till now. Such presents! Oh, mamma, you can't guess *what* I've brought home for you. I'm afraid if you don't go right to bed I shall tell you. I don't believe I *can* wait till morning, anyway."

"Why, little daughter, what has come over you?" said her father. "I never saw you look so excited and happy before."

"I never was so happy before, papa: and both of you will never be so happy as you'll be to-morrow. You mustn't ask me any questions, but go right to bed and not peep nor listen. And you must give me both your stockings to hang up, papa; your very biggest, biggest pair. Mamma shall have her share of what you find in them."

Both father and mother laughed as they left the room, willing to wait until next morning for Kitty's explanation. When she was sure they were both in bed, and when she had possessed herself of her father's stockings, she softly turned the front door key and admitted Tom, who had been waiting outside, together with numerous bundles which the expressman had brought to the door. After these had been duly arranged, Tom crept carefully up to the little chamber where all the nights of his boyhood were spent, and tired out with the day's experience was soon fast asleep.

. . . . . .

December twenty-fifth. Christmas. At five o'clock the house was still. At half past five Kitty's step was heard descending the stairs. Then there was a sound of muffled voices in the sitting-room. Mrs. Merrill half rose from the bed and listened. A minute later Kitty rapped sharply on the door.

"Are you awake?" she called. "A Merry Christmas, papa! A Merry Christmas, mamma! I want you down stairs just as soon as you can dress. My present can't wait any longer. You mustn't come one by one, either. It's for both of you, and you must come together."

Kitty's mysterious return from the city, and the equally mysterious character of her present, had aroused their curiosity. They were ready.

"You must shut your eyes when you come in, for a minute," said Kitty, who was keeping watch and ward at the sitting-room door. "*Now!*" and the door was flung wide open.

In a big arm-chair, in the middle of the room, sat Tom, his feet in his father's long gray stockings, the old twinkle of fun in his eyes, and the same roguish curve to his lips his mother remembered so well. He kept his seat but for a moment. Then he sprang to his feet and reached out his arms.

"Father! mother!"

"Tom!"

What need to say more? How Tom was picked up by a whaling vessel and carried away upon a long voyage; how he vainly tried to communicate with home, and the story of his adventures in strange seas and foreign lands — this would take too much space.

The day that followed was a red-letter day in the Merrill calendar. Nowhere in all the land where Christmas had a living meaning was there a happier household, and all the pain and sorrow of the past were amply compensated for by the perfect peace which now rested upon it.

MRS. WHITE'S PARTY.

"NOW, Ef May, you go right straight back home! Lotty an' I want a little time to ourselves without a little snip like you taggin' after, an' listenin' to every word we say; so you go right straight back this minute!"

Little Effie Maylie Marsh (called "Ef May" for short) turned her round blue eyes for a moment full upon her sister, and then, without word or sign, trotted composedly along in that sister's wake, serenely oblivious of the fact that she was the one too many in the little party that had started, joyful at the prospect of a whole afternoon's confidential chat, for the blackberry patch over the hill, when poor Ef May as usual intruded her roly-poly presence just when she was least wanted.

"Did Mother know that you came?"

Sister Anne looked and spoke with all the dignity that her twelve years were capable of, but the intruder never flinched.

"Yes, she did. *I* said lemme go pick blackberries with the other girls, an' *she* said"—

"What?"

"Yes, if they don't pro*ject.*"

Both girls laughed, for Ef May was famous for her conversational blunders, and good-natured Lotty whispered under the shelter of her sunbonnet:

"Let her go, she won't do any harm."

"Yes she will. She'll hear every single word we say and tell Gus of it just as quick as she gets home. *I* know her, of old."

Poor Anne had had bitter experiences of her little sister's quickness of hearing and equal quickness in repeating whatever she had heard, and she was far too shrewd to trust her on this occasion. But how to get rid of the dear little nuisance — ah, that was the rub!

"May," she whispered mysteriously, and Ef May pricked up her ears and looked curious; "if you'll go home now, like a good girl, you shall (put your ear closer, so Lotty won't hear) go to *Mrs. White's party*, to-night."

Ef May had often heard older people talk about parties, and in her inquisitive little soul she had longed many a time, to know more about them, and especially to see with her own eyes what they were like; and now she stood with her great blue eyes wide open like a pair of very early morning glories, and a little flush of excitement deepened the roses on her plump cheeks, as Anne continued in her most seductive tones:

"Now, run right along, there's a darling! and I'll get you ready, my own self, and see that you have a" —

"Rockaway?" suggested Lotty, in a voice that sounded suspiciously hoarse, to which Anne replied, with an air of lofty disdain that, —

"Ef May had outgrown such babyish ways long ago, and would go to the party as other folks did."

Ef May was a very old bird for one of her age, and this "chaff" between the two girls did strike her as a little suspicious. Perhaps there was some hidden flaw in this magnificent offer, and jerking her little yellow curly head one side like a shrewd canary, she fixed one round bright eye full upon her sister's face as she asked solemnly:

"Now, Anne Marsh, — 'honest an' true, black an'

blue,' can I go to Mrs. White's party, this very night?"

"Yes, you shall, if I have to go with you myself."

Ef May was satisfied; even Lotty's half suppressed giggle passed unobserved, and her face shone with happy anticipation as turning her chubby feet homeward she smiled her parting salutation:

"Good-by, — I'll go home an' *'repair* myself for the party."

The girls laughed, but Lotty said rather regretfully:

"It was kinder too bad to *fool* the little thing so. What will you say to her when night comes?"

"Oh, I'll coax her up, somehow — make her doll a new hat, maybe."

And thus dismissing poor Ef May and her forthcoming disappointment from their minds, the two girls walked gaily on laughing and chatting in their pleasant school-girl fashion, as they gathered the rich purple berries, heedless of scratched hands and stained finger tips, while they listened to the partridge drumming in the cedars overhead, or the social chatter of that provident little householder the squirrel, who, perched upon some convenient bough out of possible reach of their longing fingers, discoursed in the choicest squirrel language of his way of preserving acorns and beechnuts, by a receipt handed down from

his forefathers, as far back as the days of Noah, — a receipt that never had failed and never would.

It was after sunset when with full baskets and tired steps, they walked up the lane that led to Anne's home; both starting guiltily as they caught sight of Ef May's little figure seated in the doorway with her bowl of bread and milk, and her blue eyes turned wistfully upon them as they came slowly up the clover-bordered path.

"I was in hopes she'd be asleep," muttered Anne with an uncomfortable feeling at the heart as she saw the joyfully significant nod with which her little sister greeted her, and hastily bestowing a generous handful of the delicious fruit upon her, she said, with an effort to appear natural and at ease:

"See what a lot of nice, ripe blackberries I brought you!"

The little girl smiled, but she shook her head with an air of happy importance.

"I'll put 'em away for my breakfast," she whispered. "I must save my appetite for *to-night*, you know."

Anne could have cried with a relish.

"Oh, Ef May," she began penitently, "I'm afraid I've done wrong in telling you — "

"Come, Anne! Come right in! Supper is wait-

ing for you," called their mother, and the confession was postponed until they should be alone again; but when that time came, and, after her usual custom Anne took the little one to her room to undress and put her to bed, the sight of the child's happy expectant face forced back the words that she would have spoken, and made her feel that she could not yet confess the deception.

"You must curl my hair real pretty, now. I *do* wish," with a sigh, "that mamma would let me wear her *waterwig*."

And the bright eyes shone like stars, as she thus gave the signal for the preparations to commence; and Anne obeyed, patiently brushing out the tangled locks and curling them one by one over her fingers, while she listened to the excited chatter of her little charge and vaguely wondered how long it would be possible for those dreadfully wide awake eyes to keep open. She was as long about her task as possible, but the the last curl was finished at last, and Effie asked eagerly:

"What dress are you going to put on me?"

By this time poor Anne was fairly desperate.

"I forgot to tell you," she said with a sudden determination to carry out the joke to the end, "that this is a queer party, something like the 'sheet and

pillow case balls,' that you've heard of, — and everybody goes to this in —— in their night-gowns."

Ef May looked up sharply.

"What's that for?" she asked with a suspicious look at her sister's guilty face.

"Because — well, I guess its because its the fashion."

Ef May pondered the subject for a moment, and then her brow cleared:

"I'll wear my very bestest one, then, with the *tuckered out* yoke an' *Humbug* trimming," she said, complacently, "an' my corals outside."

Anne obeyed without a word, and the little lady surveyed herself in the glass with a smile of intense satisfaction.

"Ain't it most time to go?" she asked, and Anne detecting, as she thought, just the ghost of a yawn in the tone, replied briskly:

"Oh no, not for some time yet. Come and sit in my lap,— there lay your head on my shoulder, ea-sy, so as not to tumble the curls, and I'll sing, 'Tap, tap, tapping at the garden gate,' so you won't get tired of waiting, you know."

The little girl was nothing loth to accept her sister's offer, for in spite of her exertions to keep herself awake the heavy eyelids would droop, the curly head press more heavily, and the lively, chattering little

tongue grow slower and more indistinct in its utterances until at last it was silent altogether; not even the tinniest line of blue parted the golden lashes, the dimples settled undisturbed into their old places about the rosy mouth while only the faintest breath of a sigh answered to Anne's good-night kiss as she softly laid her precious burden down among the snowy pillows of her own little bed, and stole away, with the secret resolve in her heart that never again by word or act, would she deceive the innocent little sister who trusted so implicitly in her truth and honor.

. . . . . .

It *was* a funny party, and Ef May looked about her in astonishment as a servant in dressing gown and night-cap, announced in a sleepy sing-song tone:

"Miss Ef May Marsh?"

Mrs. White, a heavy-eyed lady in an elaborately embroidered and ruffled night-dress, gave her hand a little languid shake, and asked, in a faint, die-away voice:

"How do you rest, my dear?"

"Very well, maam, generally, 'cept when I eat too much cake for my supper."

At this Mrs. White nodded intelligently.

"'s that you, Ef May?" murmured a voice at her elbow, and there was Tommy Bliss, his brown curls

all in a tangle, and — oh, horrible! in a yellow flannel night-gown with *legs*. Such a figure as he was, with his short body all the way of a bigness, and his little yellow straddling legs like an old-fashioned brass andiron.

Ef May turned away and pretended not to see him, while she remarked with an air of kindly condescension to a little girl near her:

"It's *impressively* warm here."

"Kick the clo'es off, then."

There was a refreshing briskness in the tones that went straight to Ef May's heart and she "took to" the stranger on the spot.

"Who is that old gentleman with such a big tassel in his night-cap?"

The little girl rubbed her eyes and looked in the direction indicated.

"Oh, that's old Dr. Opiamus. He gives all the babies paragoric, and the old folks laudanum, so that they can die and not know it."

Ef May shuddered. There was something in the idea that even to her childish fancy was horrible.

"Don't you want another blanket?" asked her new friend; but Ef May shook her head.

"I hear some music?" she exclaimed, and just

then began the funniest medley of sound that was ever heard:

First, a low, soft, half-frightened strain as of some wandering night-bird calling to his mate to set her glow-worm lamp in the window to light him home; then the quick, cheery note of the cricket chimed in; the owl's solemn "too-whit! too-whit! too-whoo!" broke in at stately intervals; and the "rain-call of the loon burst forth like a wild, wierd laugh in the midst of the softer sounds, until the dancers, who had tried in vain to keep time with the strange music, faltered, hesitated, and at last stopped entirely, and dropped off to sleep upon the couches and easy chairs with which the rooms were filled, to a low, monotonous march that sounded exactly like the patter of rain-drops upon the roof.

The costumes were a study, and Ef May, who strange to say didn't feel at all sleepy herself, found it rare fun to watch them.

There were old ladies, who minus their false fronts, teeth, and spectacles, would never have been recognized by their most intimate friends, in "calf's-head" night-caps tied tightly under their chins, short night-gowns with wide, crimped ruffles at neck and wrists, and blue flannel petticoats just short enough to show the felt slippers beneath; young ladies, whose wealth

of curls, braids and puffs had many a time excited the admiration and envy of their less fortunate sisters, appeared here, looking like picked chickens, their luxuriant tresses packed away in a drawer, their flounces, and ruffles, and panniers, and overskirts, all safe in the closet, their jewelry and their smiles laid aside together; and they nodded indifferently to stately gentlemen in tasselled night-caps and gorgeous dressing gowns; or frowned aside upon the boys, who, in all sorts of night gear, bobbed about in the most desirable nooks and corners, disturbing everybody with their clumsy ways and sleepy drollery.

In short, taken as a whole, a comical looking set they were,— and *so* stupid! Ef May felt somewhat hurt, and a good deal offended, when even her new friend dropped off into a doze instead of listening to her questions; and she was only too glad when a good looking young gentleman with a pen behind his ear, and a roll of manuscript sticking out of the pocket of his dressing-gown, walked leisurely up to her, and began talking in a queer rambling fashion about the people around them.

"What makes some of the sleepiest folks groan and grumble so, all the time?" asked the little girl curiously, and her companion laughed, a queer, dreamy sort of a laugh, as he replied:

"Oh, those are the ones that came here on nightmares,— that sort of riding always makes people restless, it's worse than a *hobby* for that!"

He spoke the last words with a sudden fierceness that startled her, but he didn't seem to notice her frightened face for he kept on talking, in that steady but far off tone:

"Do you see that man there with his face all twisted up into a knot? That's the head master of the Boys' Grammar School,— he ate toasted cheese for his supper and he's having a hard night of it,— no doubt the *boys* will have *a hard time of it*, to-morrow."

Ef May thought of brother Gus' careless scholarship, and trembled.

"There's a little girl that told a lie to her mother, — hear her moan and sob! She will confess her fault and ask to be forgiven, in the morning, I think."

Ef May silently took the lesson to heart.

"Do you see that old fellow in the corner? How he grasps with his hands and mutters, and now he is trying to call 'murder!' He has spent all his life hoarding up riches, and now, sleeping or waking, he lives in constant terror of losing his gold that he will neither spend for himself or others."

"But here," and the speaker pointed to a corner near at hand, where rolled up into a round yellow

ball, was the figure of Johnny Staples, sound asleep in the velvety depths of an easy chair, his good-natured, honest little face, calm and peaceful, with not a cloud of suffering, remorse or fear to mar its innocent beauty.

"But here," he repeated, "is one who will find in our friend's party the refreshment and rest that only health and innocence can reasonably expect."

Just then the company showed signs of a general breaking up, and the assembled guests gave such a loud, unanimous *snore* that Ef May started up, terrified half out of her senses; and pulling vigorously at her sleeping sister's sleeve, she cried out with a burst of angry tears:

"It's a nasty, mean old party, any how! They snore, an' talk in their sleep, an' make up faces, an' — I won't go again, *so*, there!"

But she *did* for all that.

ANNA ALBITZ OF BIRKENDORF.

HAVE any of the little readers of the WIDE AWAKE ever seen a castle, — a real castle with strong turrets and dark battlements rising high where the birds fly?

When I was a little girl, I used to think how delightful it would be to live in a castle, full of queer, dusty, musty old rooms, where I could find fairy-books and giant-stories, and dolls that were very old, and had belonged to the little countess, or the little duchess, or even, perhaps, to the queen's daughter. But, most of all, I thought it would be great fun to climb up on the battlements and look so far below, and see the lakes and fields and woods and houses spread out for miles and miles around me; and I want to give you just such a pleasure as this.

Come then with me. We have only to sit between the broad, swift wings of a bird that loves to carry children wherever they like to go.

See how we rise! How soft the air is, and how the fields fly past us, and how the great ocean far down beneath us waves and sparkles in the sunlight!

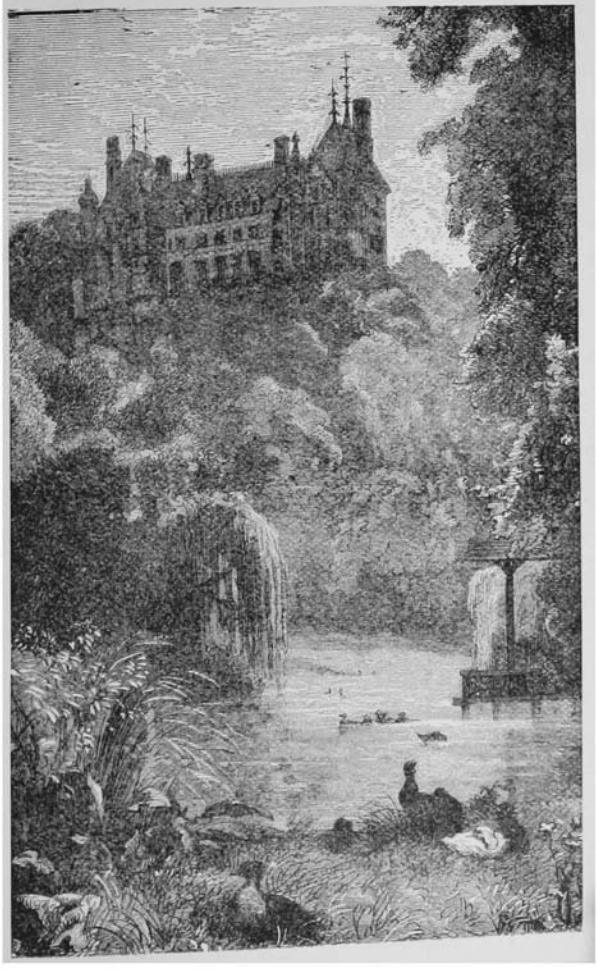
Here are new gardens, cities, lakes; and mountains wearing their snow-caps far above the green and blooming valleys. And now, — for the bird knows where we wish to go, — we will descend, swift as light, yet lightly as a feather; for here are the antique battlements and feudal towers of something more than a single castle, for these make part of the ancient walls that wind around and enclose the charming little city of Freyburg, in that picturesque bit of this great world called Switzerland.

We will not go down into the city, but will sit in this recess of the gray old battlements in the shadow of the turret, where the whole of Freyburg is beautifully mapped before us in the yellow sunshine.

I have chosen this spot because it overlooks the Rue St. Nicolas, the street which was the scene of an action which will quicken every little heart that hears it.

On this street stands the St. Nicolas cathedral, a stately pile, whose walls are used to the sweet vibrations of one of the finest organs in the world; that, by sunlight and moonlight, lifts, shining, the highest spire in Switzerland.

Yet to see this fine cathedral did not bring us here,



else we might as well now be standing, dumb, before St. Peter's dome in Rome, or before the lovely sculptured master-piece in Milan. Through the city winds the Sarine river, with the homes of the German quarter clustered on its banks; the line between German and French Switzerland runs through the city, and across it the French quarter rises upon a gradually swelling terrace of sandstone.

This Swiss city is very pretty, with its college, museum, hospital, schools, orphan asylum, public baths, libraries, learned societies and manufactures; with its many curious fashions, its quaint old houses, and its Jesuit monastery; yet we did not come to Switzerland to look on these.

The arch of yonder fine suspension bridge is the second longest single curve in the world; and there before the town-hall stands the ancient linden tree planted in 1480 to commemorate the victory of Morat over Charles the Bold in 1476. Worth coming to see, yet not for these we came.

Look now into the Rue St. Nicolas. It is a pleasant, rather idle looking street just now, — the people pass to and fro in no great hurry, and not many of them; and we can just hear the gay troll of the peasant drivers as their teams crawl lazily along. Those two new houses you see, near the Hotel des Merciers, were not there in 1871.

One of them was the *maison* Gottrau, and it had an iron balcony which was on that day worth more to human life than both houses put toge her.

I do not know the name of the other house; but to distinguish it, I will call it the *maison* Monnard, as the Monnards lived in it.

In the morning of November eighteenth, Madame Monnard went out to another part of the city, leaving at home her two little children, Marie and Victor Monnard, in the care of her servant Anna Albitz, a young girl from Birkendorf.

Anna took the little ones into the nursery on the second floor, and gave up her time to them. Little Victor, five years old, had some blocks and quaint carvings which could be combined so as to represent many pretty devices; but particularly was he pleased with the result of his own ingenuity in fashioning a tiny Swiss chalêt such as he had often seen and admired.

He had the quiet meditative soul of the born architect, and would be very silent and happy for hours, in dreaming over what his little fingers strove to realize.

But Marie two years older, was a highly imaginative, very restless little maiden, who darted from one occupation or fancy to another, and would be quiet only when Anna would tell her stories.

Anna was a patient girl, and fond of the children,

but she had a letter in her pocket, a letter from Franz, her German sweetheart; it had come that morning, and she had had a chance to read it only hastily once,— and once is not enough for a love-letter, I have heard it said.

"If you were only a good, quiet little girl like your brother!" said Anna.

"Hoh, hoh!" laughed Marie, "a good little *girl* like my *brother*! Do you hear that, *Mademoiselle* Victor!" and, turning to her brother, she upset his little chalêt by her too hasty motion.

Victor settled back from the small ruin with a very heavy sigh, but did not speak.

He was sitting near the door that opened upon the stairway to the first floor. As he looked up at his sister, Anna noticed that he was very pale around the nostrils and lips, while his little cheeks were hotly flushed and his whole face beaded with sweat, and his curly hair drooping from the same moisture.

"Dear child!" she cried in some alarm, "you are baking yourself over those nasty blocks!"

"How very hot it is, Anna!" said Victor faintly, "feel — the floor is burning to my hand."

Now Anna had been for some minutes unconsciously oppressed with a sense of increasing warmth, while thoughts of Franz and his letter, and the constant, ur-

gent questions and flighty motions of little Marie, had prevented her from more closely observing. With a fear she could not have named, she bent over little Victor, touched the floor one instant with her trembling hand, and saw a fine thin stream of smoke creeping softly between the door and sill.

She rose quickly with the wondering and nearly fainting boy caught close to her breast.

"Oh, Anna!" screamed Marie at this moment, "come — come quick! — do open it!" She was tugging at the window. "The street is filling with people — both ways!" — Here Marie stopped.

She had felt only a childish excitement, — the mixture of wonder, curiosity, and desire to see something unusual going on - such as very often stirs little breasts.

But Marie had a quick mind. She saw the people running, flocking closer, tossing their arms, pointing and shouting aud looking up at *their* window, each face with the same terrible gaze.

All in an instant, it seemed, flames and smoke shot out and disappeared, then flashed out again beneath the window, between them and the staring, shouting crowd; and above the confused war of voices rose now distinctly the fearful cry:

"*Fire! fire! fire!*"

Marie turned from the window with her heart beating so fast that the sound of it was like a drum beaten in her ears. She understood now.

Anna Albitz, with Victor in her arms, stood just behind her. Anna, too, had been looking out; but now she only looked at Marie and took hold of her shoulder with one hand, a firm hand but so cold that little Marie felt the chill through her sleeve.

"Quick!—keep close to me!" said Anna, and she went to the door near which Victor had been playing. She opened it a little way, but through the opening a sheet of flame and a choking gust of smoke instantly whipped into their faces.

Anna shut the door and turned without an exclamation, still carrying Victor and dragging Marie, and opened an opposite door that led up a stairway to the third story. She closed this door behind her to prevent the draught, drew quickly her skirts over Marie's face and shoulders, and through the smoke, lashed at with single tongues of out-leaping flame, she fled up the stair to the third floor and into a room over the one they had just left.

She had already seen that the fire raged on the first floor, encircled them on three sides, and was rapidly mounting.

The window was the only hope. Victor lay inanimate over her shoulder. Anna opened the window and showed him and little Marie to the crowd now filling the Rue St. Nicolas.

They saw her, and by her motions could tell that she called to them; but the din of voices and the roar of flames swelled between, so that they heard nothing.

Still she showed the children, and clasped her hands, raising them, so clasped, as in a burst of prayer, then stretching them down toward the up-turned faces.

Suddenly a wilder eddy of smoke and flame obscured the window. When it ebbed, the window was empty.

But Anna was working!

She rolled little Marie, who was docile and stupefied with fright and smoke, in a blanket, and laid her down on the floor close to the window; then she wrapped a woolen cape around the benumbed Victor.

As she did this she saw little wavering spears of flame creeping between the doors and sills of the room, and she heard a harsh crackling and snapping along the walls, and the smoke grew so dense she could hardly see; but she again stood at the window and showed the boy.

The flames from without drove her back, and again as they subsided she reappeared.

Now a great shout arose; it was unmistakably the

cry of hope, and Anna, leaning out, looked instinctively toward the balcony of the *Maison Gottrau*.

There she saw a fireman with a coil of rope. Anna understood and waved her hand. The flames covered the window. Anna pressed her hand upon the letter in her pocket, and said very softly, not knowing that she spoke :

"Franz ! poor Franz !"

The flames fell away, and went curling and licking along the façade, and Anna leaned quickly out. Four times the fireman threw the rope, and four times the girlish arms were seen to vainly grasp for it ; but the fifth time Anna caught it, and a tremendous cheer greeted her.

In a moment the noose was firmly knotted around Victor's body, and Anna swung him gently out and down. As she did so, bracelets of flame wreathed around her arms, but she did not flinch.

The boy was drawn safely into the balcony, and again the rope was thrown.

Anna stood ready with little Marie, still completely enveloped in the blanket, to protect her from the flames. Anna caught the rope the first time it was thrown ; but the crowd did not shout, and there was no noise save that made by the hungry and fast-spreading flames ; for they saw that the room where

she stood was bright-colored behind her with the flames, or black with the smoke, alternately.

The moment was too awful for even a cheering cry.

There seemed to be but one heart and one eye in that crowd, and that heart and eye were fixed in breathless terror and suspense on the unaided effort and unequalled heroism of one poor servant girl.

As Anna was tying the rope around Marie's waist, a jet of flame rose suddenly, as if it were a creature with life and meaning, and, sliding around Anna's waist, clasped her in a white, hot belt. But she fastened the knot firmly, and leaned out and swung the little Marie into safety.

The single heart of the crowd beneath gave one great cry, and then all was speechless, tense expectancy once more.

A fire brigade from Berne was working valiantly, and the fire, which had at first threatened the whole block, was now under control and held in narrow limits. But in its fervid heart, as in a furnace, stood Anna Albitz, cut off from all hope, if her own matchless courage and endurance failed her. The roof was already in flames, but still that one window was strangely spared; and as the flickering, hissing red waves once more fell away from it, they saw Anna

reaching for the rope, which again she caught at the first attempt, and, noosing it around her waist, she fell, rather than swung, from the window.

Tears and shouts, of joy, pity and irrepressible admiration, greeted the poor girl, as she was gently lowered into the street, scorched and burned almost past recognition.

Little Marie and Victor were unscathed, but Anna was found to be so badly injured that she was taken at once to the hospital, and every care and tenderness shown her, while the whole Swiss and German press warmly praised the heroism of Anna Albitz of Birkendorf.

She was only a simple unknown peasant girl, yet she behaved as bravely and patiently as the famous maiden of Domrémy, Jeanne d'Arc.

And it was to see the city where this brave deed was done, to look into the Rue St. Nicolas — unmindful of its ancient linden, and soaring cathedral spire — where that true heroine stood unflinching in a sheet of flame to save those little children, — it is for this we came to Switzerland.

For this is a true story of an event which actually did happen in Freyburg, and if I ever learn (as I think I may) what afterward became of noble Anna Albitz of Birkendorf, I shall be glad to tell.

The pen and the tongue can do great things; but I think a true and loving life is greatest of all. And one who perfectly lived such a life has said:

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

I would rather face the great judgment as Anna Albitz,* with that one loving perfect deed recorded against my name, than as Shakespeare, or the planet-finding Herschell, or the builder of St. Peter's lofty dome.

A GREAT WOMAN.

MANY of the readers of the Wide Awake have doubtless seen Tom Thumb, and his little wife and friends. Not so many of them, perhaps have seen persons who are as much larger than average human beings as Tom Thumb is smaller. Shall I tell them about a woman of unusual stature, who once lived in the state of Maine? She may be living at this time, for it was not many years ago that I saw her, and she was then not middle-aged; and, as she was somewhat sensitive regarding her remarkable size, perhaps it would be as well not to give her real name, but simply to call her Sylvia, since she was born and brought up in the country.

When I saw Sylvia, she was probably not more than thirty-five years old. She must have been then nearly seven feet tall, and was said to have grown a little within a year or two before. My young friends

will better realize what it is to be nearly seven feet high when I tell them that when Sylvia sat in a high-backed rocking-chair, in which if a tall man sat his head would just reach to the top of the back, you could go behind her and put your fingers across the top and under her arm; or she could easily sit in it, with her elbow resting on the back, and her hand supporting her cheek, as other people lean an elbow on the arm of the chair in which they sit.

Yet Sylvia had been a very little baby — even smaller than usual. She was one of twins, and they were both so very small that in the night, when the babies were in bed with their papa, who was not at all a large man, he turned over in his sleep and crushed one of the poor babies to death without knowing it.

But either he was so shocked at what he had done that he was more careful in future, or the mother took the precaution to save her other baby by putting it to sleep out of his reach; for Sylvia, the small twin that was left, managed to get through her babyhood without being mashed by her papa. She was always small of her age, and a delicate little thing, and did not begin to take on unusual proportions until she was as old as other girls are when they cease growing. Instead of stopping when she was seventeen or

eighteen years old, as most girls do, she simply kept on growing and growing, for ten or a dozen years longer, just as fast as children grow. She was never fat or plump, but had the rather meagre habit which children have who grow rapidly.

When she was twenty-two or three years old she fell on the icy door-step and broke her arm. The doctor who set it was astonished to find that the bones were yet soft like a little child's, instead of firm and hard, like a grown person's; and this softness of the bones seemed to continue until she stopped growing.

Sylvia's parents were poor people, and by the time she was a woman they were growing old, and she was obliged to do something for their support as well as her own. She could not work any faster, or earn any more, because of her superior size; in fact, it is not strange if she did not feel so strong and well as other girls, since so much of her force went toward growing. She used to go out among the villagers and townspeople and nurse sick people and take care of little young babies; she was a very careful and tender nurse, and I have heard it said that when she was holding a little baby, instead of taking it on her arm, as most of us do, she laid it on one of her hands with its head toward her finger-ends, and its little feet

along her wrist, and in this great, warm, loving hand, as in a cozy cradle, the little creature would go comfortably to sleep without a thought of how exceedingly funny it was, to be thus literally held in the hollow of one's hand.

Everybody loved Sylvia, not because she was a great woman, but because she was always kind, and gentle, and helpful; and even the rude boys in the street, who were sometimes tempted to shout and jeer at her, because it was so droll to see a woman so much larger than any man in town, were generally polite to her; partly because they knew how easily she could pick them up and toss them over the fence if she chose, and partly, perhaps, because most of them remembered how kind and patient she had been when some of their friends were sick, or when their mothers needed help.

Once Sylvia went to help a farmer's wife who had more work on her hands than she could do alone. Sylvia was not only handy and faithful, but she was by this time unusually strong and capable of doing hard work. One evening she had been straining the milk into big pans in the kitchen — they used big, heavy, brown, earthen pans, not often seen in cities, — and she started to carry them down cellar. So she took up a pan, holding nine or ten, perhaps twelve

quarts of new milk, and went toward the cellar door.

Now this was an old-fashioned kitchen, and had in the ceiling overhead a row of hooks which were made to hold long poles for the purpose of drying apples, pumpkins, and other things. Ordinary people were obliged to stand in chairs in order to reach these poles, and the drying apples were quite out of the way above people's heads. But Sylvia was not an ordinary woman; and as there were at this time no poles in the hooks she forgot about them, and as she passed too close to one it caught in her hair and held her fast. The poor woman could not raise her hand to her head to free herself, because both hands were steadying the great pan, swimming-full of milk; she could not even move her head back and forward to try and unhitch it, because such shaking would spill the milk on the nice, white kitchen-floor which she had just scoured; and there was no one but herself in the house at the time, as the farmer was in the barn-yard with his cattle, and his wife had stepped into a neighbor's house.

So poor Sylvia could do nothing but stand and wait, and occasionally give a faint call for help; for surely no one could shout very loud, with her head caught up by the hair, and her whole attention en-

gaged in holding without spilling a heavy pan of milk. More than half an hour passed before poor Sylvia was liberated from her painful predicament; and even when the farmer, coming in for another milk pail, discovered her sad plight, he laughed so immoderately at the affair that it took him a long time to free her. In fact, it was said that he did not know what to do first, and actually went to the neighbor's to call his wife, without thinking to relieve poor Sylvia first, by taking the pan from her aching hands.

By and by, Mr. Barnum, the showman, heard in some way of Sylvia, and he at once sent an agent to see her, and try to hire her to come to his museum in Boston as a curiosity. Now poor Sylvia was just as averse to being stared at as you or I would be; she could not bear to be set up for a show and have all manner of people looking at her and making remarks about her broad shoulders, and her large hands, so at first she refused.

But her parents were getting old, and she could not obtain by her poorly-paid labor many little comforts which she knew they needed; and, moreover, she had greater expenses than most country women, since it took so many yards of cloth to make her garments. All her friends and acquaintances joined in telling her that it was really her duty to accept

Mr. Barnum's offer, which was a great deal more money than Sylvia had ever earned or seen in her life; and so, finally, after many tears, she decided to go.

Of course Sylvia could never buy anything ready made, as she could never find any garments large enough. All her "things," excepting shawls and handkerchiefs, had to be made on purpose for her, shoes, stockings, and all. She had always been obliged to wear knitted gloves or go bare-handed; but when she was going to Boston for the first time in her life she thought she ought to have a pair of kid gloves. She searched in all the stores and sent all over the country, hoping to find a pair of men's gloves which she could wear; but none large enough could be found, either of kid, silk or cotton, and poor Sylvia was obliged to go to Boston with a pair of home-made gloves.

Mr. Barnum treated Sylvia very kindly, but he made the most of her size, wishing her to wear high head-dresses and high-heeled boots, which added greatly to her gigantic appearance, and, in consequence, she looked a great deal larger in Boston than she ever had looked in Maine. She was a good woman, and she was undeniably a great woman.