Little Maid Marian

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Chapter 1

A Mustard Seed

The cat and kitten were both eating supper and Marian was watching them. Her own supper of bread and milk she had finished, and had taken the remains of it to Tippy and Dippy. Marian did not care very much for bread and milk, but the cat and kitten did, as was plainly shown by the way they hunched themselves down in front of the tin pan into which Marian had poured their supper.

In the next room Grandpa and Grandma Otway were sitting and little bits of their talk came to Marian's ears once in a while when her thoughts ceased to wander in other directions. "If only one could have faith to believe implicitly," Grandma Otway said.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, and should say to that mountain, be ye removed," quoted Grandpa Otway.

Marian sighed. They talked that way very often, she remembered, and she herself had grown to consider it quite as difficult as did her grandmother, to exercise complete faith. She had made numberless mighty efforts, and yet things did not come out as she supposed they ought. She sat gravely watching the cat and kitten lap up the last drop of milk and carefully clean the sides of the pan in a manner quite inelegant for humans, but no doubt entirely a matter of etiquette in cat society, and then when Tippy, having done her duty by the pan, turned her attention to making Dippy tidy, Marian walked slowly away.

The sun was setting behind the hills, and touching the tops of the trees along their base; further away the mountains were very dark against a yellow line of sky. Marian continued her way thoughtfully toward the garden, turned off before she reached the gate and climbed a ladder which leaned against the side of the old brick wall. From the ladder one could reach a long limb of a scraggy apple tree upon which hung early apples nearly ripe. Marian went up the ladder very carefully, taking care not to catch her frock upon a nail or a projecting twig as she crept along

the stout limb to settle herself in a crotch of the tree. From this spot she could see the distant sea, pinky purple, and shimmering silver.

Marian did not gaze at this, however, but turned her face toward the mountains. She clasped her hands tightly and repeated firmly: "Be ye removed into the midst of the sea. Be ye removed into the midst of the sea." Then she waited, but the mountain did not budge an inch, though the child kept her eyes fixed upon it. Twice, three times, she repeated the words, but the mountain remained immovable. "I knew it; I just knew it," exclaimed the child when she had made her final effort, "and now I want to know how large a mustard seed is. To-morrow I'll go ask Mrs. Hunt."

It was to Mrs. Hunt that she took all such questions, for she hesitated to talk of very personal things to her grandparents. They would ask her such sharp questions, and sometimes would smile in a superior way when they did not say: "Oh, that is not a subject to discuss with children; run along and play with Tippy." She did not always want to be playing with Tippy when such mighty problems were uppermost. She had many times tested her faith with the mountain, but had always come away humiliated by the thought that her faith must be too weak.

Though she brought her test to bear upon the mountain there was another thing she did not dare to experiment with, though she always intended to do so when the mountain should answer her command to be removed. To be sure it would not make much difference to her if the mountain should remove into the sea; it probably looked quite as well where it was, and Marian supposed that no one would care to have its place changed, but it made a great and mighty difference to her about this other thing. She had never breathed her ardent wish to any one, not even to Mrs. Hunt, and now that this fresh test of faith had failed she would have to gather up a new stock before she could try again.

The purple and pink and gold were fading; the sea looked gray; the distant mountain was hidden under a cloud when Marian climbed down from her perch to answer her grandmother's call: "Marian, Marian, where are you? Come in out of the night air; the dew is falling." Dippy was chasing moths in the garden as Marian took her way toward the house. She watched him leaping up as each soft-winged creature flitted by. When he failed to catch his prize he opened his mouth in a mute meow, and looked at Marian as if asking her to help him.

"You mustn't catch moths, Dippy," said Marian. "They might disagree with you. I should think anyhow, that they would be very dry eating, and besides it is wicked to destroy innocent little creatures. Come, you must go in with me." But this was the time of day when Dippy liked

specially to prance and jump and skurry after dusky, shadowy, flitting things, so before Marian could pounce upon him, he was off and away like a streak and could not be found. Then Marian went in obediently at her grandmother's second call to spend the rest of her evening sitting soberly by, while her grandmother knitted and her grandfather read his evening paper.

She had tidied up her room, fed the cat and kitten, and darned her stockings the next morning before she was free to go to Mrs. Hunt's. Grandpa would go for the mail, and there were no errands to do, except to return a plate to Mrs. Parker. It had come with some spicy cakes for grandma, and must be taken back promptly.

The garden did not attract her just then, for it looked much less mysterious by daylight. There was a fine array of poppies, larkspurs, phlox and snapdragons; the oleander in its green tub was all a-bloom, and there were six newly opened buds on the rose-bush. Dippy was fast asleep in the sunshine, as if he, too, realized that the garden was not so alluring by morning light.

It seemed no time to exercise faith upon the mountain, for a haze covered it, and one could not feel even the near presence of a thing one could not see, so why attempt to address a command to it to be removed; to all intents and purposes it was removed when it was out of sight.

Marian thought all this over as she trotted down the village street to Mrs. Hunt's. Hers was one of a line of long low white houses set back among trees. A border gay with nasturtiums, sweet peas, and marigolds flourished each side the front door, but Marian did not pause there; she went around to the kitchen where she knew Mrs. Hunt would be this time of day. There was a strong odor of spices, vinegar and such like filling the air. "Mrs. Hunt is making pickles," said Marian to herself; "that is why she was gathering cucumbers the last time I was here. I would rather it were cookies or doughnuts, but I suppose people can't make those every day."

True enough, Mrs. Hunt was briskly mixing spices, but she turned with a smile to her little visitor. "Well, chickadee," she said, "how goes it to-day?"

"Oh, very well," returned Marian vaguely. "Mrs. Hunt, how big is a mustard seed?"

For answer Mrs. Hunt put her fingers down into a small wooden box, withdrew them, opened Marian's rosy palm, and laid a pinch of seeds upon it. "There you are," she said. "I wish I could get at all the things I want to see as easy as that."

Marian gazed curiously at the little yellow seeds. "They're not very big, are they?" she said.

"Not very."

"Then you wouldn't have to have much faith," Marian went on, following out her thought.

Mrs. Hunt laughed. "Is that the text that's bothering you? What are you, or who are you, trying to have faith in? Tippy? Has she fooled you again by hiding another batch of kittens?"

"No, Mrs. Hunt," Marian shook her head "it isn't Tippy; she is all right, and so is Dippy, but you know if you want a thing very much and don't see anyway of getting it ever, till you are grown up and won't care about it, why it makes you feel as if—as if"—she lowered her voice to a whisper and looked intently at her listener, "as if either you were very wicked or as if—that about the mustard seed—as if"—she hesitated, then blurted out hurriedly, "as if it weren't true."

"Why, Marian Otway, of course it must be true," declared Mrs. Hunt.

"Then I'm very wicked," returned Marian with conviction.

"Why, you poor innocent, of course you are not. We are all more or less imperfect creatures, I suppose, but—well, all is, if I were your grandma, I wouldn't let you bother your head about such things. It is hard enough for the preachers to settle some things for us and themselves, so how do you suppose a baby like you is going to get the gist of it?"

"If you were my grandma what would you do?" asked Marian coming to the point.

"I'd give you interesting story-books to read, and see that you had healthy-minded playfellows. You ought to be going to school; you are enough bigger than my Annie was when she first went." This was a point upon which Mrs. Hunt felt very keenly. She thought Mr. and Mrs. Otway had not the proper ideas about bringing up children and that Marian was too much with older persons. "I would send her off to school quick as a wink," she had more than once said to Mrs. Otway, but her remark had been received with only a smile, and one could not follow out an argument when another would not argue, so kind Mrs. Hunt had been able only to air her opinions to Mrs. Perkins and her other neighbors, and once in a while to let Marian know how she felt about her.

She had lost a little girl about Marian's age and made a point of being especially good to the old-fashioned child who lived in the brick house at the end of the street. The other houses were all white or gray or brown, built plainly, and were either shingled or clap-boarded affairs so that the

brick house was a thing apart and its occupants were usually considered the aristocracy of the place. The older men called Grandpa Otway, "Professor," and the younger ones said, "Good-morning, doctor," when they met him.

At the college where he had taught for many years he was still remembered as an absent-minded, gentle but decided person, strong in his opinions, proud and reticent, good as gold, but finding it hard to forgive the only son who left home and married against the wishes of his parents. When baby Marian's mother died her father had written home, asking that his motherless baby might be taken in and reared in the American land which he still loved. So one day Marian arrived in charge of a plain German couple, but her father had not seen her since and he still lived in far off Berlin. Once a year he wrote to his little daughter and she answered the letter through her grandmother. The letter always came the first of the year and the latest one had given an account of a German Christmas. It had enclosed some money for Marian to provide trinkets for her own tree the next year.

Yet, alas,—and here came the tragedy—Marian had never been allowed to have a tree; her grandparents did not approve of such things; the money must go to the missions in foreign lands, and when the next missionary box was sent Marian's Christmas money was sent with it in one form or another. Even if Grandpa and Grandma Otway had known what rebellious tears Marian shed and how she told Tippy that she hated the heathen, and that she didn't see why they couldn't go barefoot in a country as hot as China, and why they couldn't eat rice as well as she, and why missionaries had to have all sorts of things she didn't have, even if her grandparents had known that, they would have said that it showed a wrong spirit and that a little girl bid fair to become a hardened sinner, so she ought to be made to sacrifice her own pleasures to so good a cause.

That would have been the least of it, for there would also have been a long lecture from both grandfather and grandmother with a longer prayer following and there would probably have been an order that Marian must go without butter for a week that she might be taught to practice self-denial. So Marian had thought it wise to say nothing but to accept with as good a grace as possible the bitter necessity of giving up her Christmas tree.

With the mustard seeds folded in her hand she stood watching Mrs. Hunt tie up her spices, but the seeds were forgotten when Mrs. Hunt said: "What will you do with a teacher living in your house and you not

going to school, I'd like to know. Mr. Hunt says he rather guesses you'll not stay at home, but Mrs. Perkins says like as not your grandma will have her teach you out of hours and pay her board that way. As long as she is the daughter of a friend your grandpa would want to make it easy for her and they'll fix it up some way."

Marian could scarcely believe her ears. "Coming to our house? Who is she? What is her name, Mrs. Hunt? When is she coming? Who told you?"

"Dear bless me, what a lot of questions. Take care and don't get your sleeve in that vinegar; it'll take all the color out. I'll wipe it up and then you can lean on the table all you want to. There. Well, you see it was Mrs. Leach told me. It seems this Miss Robbins is the daughter of one of the professors at the college where your grandpa was for so many years. He was one of the younger men, Mr. Robbins was, being a student under your grandpa when he first knew him. Now he is one of the professors with a big family and none too well off, so his girl is coming to teach our school and Mr. Robbins asked your grandpa if he wouldn't let her board at his house. She's the eldest, but she hasn't been away from home much because she's had to look after her younger brothers and sisters since her mother died. Professor Robbins feels sort of anxious about her; he is afraid of the wicked wiles of a big city like Greenville."

"Why, Mrs. Hunt, it isn't a big city, is it?" said Marian innocently.

"Ain't it?" laughed Mrs. Hunt. "At all events he didn't want her cast loose on it, and so he wrote to your grandpa, appealingly, I should say, for it's fixed up that she is to come to the brick house when the fall term begins and that's not far off."

"Oh!" Marian slipped down from the wooden chair upon which she had seated herself, "I'd better go home and ask about it," she remarked. "I'd much rather have some one beside grandpa teach me; he uses such terribly long words and talks so long about things I don't understand. Sometimes I can't make out whether I'm very stupid or whether the lessons are extra hard."

"I guess you're no more stupid than the usual run of children," said Mrs. Hunt stirring her pickles, "and I guess you will learn as much about Miss Robbins and her affairs from me as you will at home. But there, go 'long if you want to. Come in to-morrow; I'll be baking cookies," she called after the child.

Marian answered with a nod as she looked back. Between the door and the steps she halted once to open her hand and look for the mustard seeds, but in her interest in Mrs. Hunt's news she had let them fall to the floor and but one clung to her moist fingers. She tasted it and found it

strong and biting. "It can't be the bigness," she murmured; "it must mean the hotness and strongness." This view of the matter gave her a better understanding, according to her own ideas, and she was glad she had tasted the small seed. After all, there were pleasant things opening up. What if she could not move mountains, there would be fresh cookies tomorrow and out of somewhere a beautiful young lady was advancing toward her, not exactly a playfellow, maybe, but some one much younger than Grandpa and Grandma Otway.

Chapter 2

The School-Teacher

The brick house had not the cheerful air of Mrs. Hunt's white-boarded, green-shuttered abode. It was set back a few feet from the side-walk, but a brick wall on each side shut out any glimpse of the flower garden, and the iron railing leading up from the flight of steps gave the place an air unlike the rest of the village houses. Upon the top step Dorothy Robbins stood a few moments before she rang the bell. She cast an upward glance at the windows first; the shutters were all bowed and silence reigned everywhere. She wondered what was behind the brick wall, and if the inmates of the house would look as forbidding and inhospitable as the house itself. She knew the Otways had a little granddaughter and half looked to see the child hanging on the gate or skipping down the path as she approached the house. The door-bell clanged solemnly and presently a sedate, middle-aged woman came to the door.

"Is Mrs. Otway at home?" asked Miss Dorothy.

"No, ma'am, she ain't," was the reply given most ungraciously. "She's to a missionary society or a temperance meeting or something, and he's gone with her."

"Is no one at home?"

"I'm here, and Marian's somewhere about, I guess. Was you calculatin' to show goods or solicit anythin'? We hain't no call for dress-makers' charts, and we don't want to subscribe to no cook-books, I'm cook-book enough myself."

Dorothy smiled. "Oh, no. I don't make my living that way," she answered cheerfully. "Perhaps I'd better see the little girl, Miss——" she added after a few moments' thought.

"Hepzibah Toothacre is my name," remarked the gaunt woman as she turned away leaving the young lady standing on the step.

Dorothy made a wry face. "Toothacre or some kind of acher I should think," she said to herself. "She looked sour enough to be several kinds of ache rolled in one. I hope the rest of the family are not like that."

She did not have to wait long before a little girl came along the dim entry toward her. She was brown-haired, brown-eyed, dark-skinned and rather pale. She wore a plain blue gingham frock, and her hair was tied in two pig-tails with a narrow black ribbon. She paused timidly at sight of a stranger, but at Miss Dorothy's smile she came forward eagerly. "Oh, are you—are you——" she began.

"The new teacher?" interrupted Miss Dorothy. "Yes, dear, I am. May I come in? The ogress that guards your castle looked as if she might make a meal of me and I was afraid to come any further."

Marian looked puzzled for a moment, then her face broke into a smile. "Oh, you mean Heppy. She is rather cross sometimes. She was not very polite not to ask you in, but she is in a bad humor to-day; there were two peddlers here this morning and she can't bear peddlers."

"She thought I was one, and that was why she was so grouchy, I see."

"I will go and ask her to show you to your room," returned Marian; "it is all ready."

"Can't you show me?" asked Miss Dorothy with whimsical anxiety in her tones.

Marian laughed; she knew that Miss Dorothy was only pretending to be afraid of Heppy, and the pretense made her seem more like a little girl. "Of course I can show you up," she made answer. "Grandma didn't expect you till the late train and she had to go to her missionary society; she's president of the board, you see."

"Oh, yes, I quite understand. I didn't suppose, myself, that I could get here till the late train, but I was able to make better connections than I expected and here I am. My trunk will be along after awhile. You are Maid Marian, I know, but I do not see the greenwood and where are Robin Hood and his merry men?" Then seeing that Marian hadn't a notion of what she meant, she said, "You don't know them, do you? I'll have to tell you some time, you and the rest of my scholars, for of course you are coming to my school."

"Oh, am I?" Marian's face was radiant.

"Why, yes, I imagine so. Don't you go to school?"

"I haven't been yet. Grandpa has always taught me at home, you know."

"Oh, that's it." Miss Dorothy was taking off her hat, standing before the mirror to puff out her soft ripples of hair. "What a lovely big room this is," she remarked. "I never had such a big room all to myself. We are such a large family that we always have to double up, I don't mean like a jack-knife," she added with a little laugh. "I wonder if I shall have to hunt

for myself in that big bed; if I do you will have to come and find me, for I might get hopelessly lost if you didn't."

Marian laughed. This merry talk was very delightful; even Mrs. Hunt was never quite so fascinatingly entertaining. She stood gazing at Miss Dorothy with admiring eyes as she put a few touches to her dress. Surely it would mean great things to have a young lady in the house.

Miss Dorothy gave a final survey of the room as she turned from the mirror. "I like it," she said nodding to Marian, "and when I get down those solemn-looking pictures, hang up my own favorites, put a cheerful cover on that table and a couple of bright sofa pillows on that lounge, and have some plants in that south window, it will be very cozy."

"Oh, will you dare?" began Marian and then stopped short. There were probably no lengths to which a teacher might not be allowed to go, even by so particular a person as Grandma Otway.

"Why, what is there so very daring about that?" asked Miss Dorothy. "It isn't like walking a tight-rope, or shooting Niagara Falls in a canoe." There was a saucy look in her eyes as she spoke, and a dimple came and went as she strove to keep her face grave.

"It isn't like that, of course," said Marian feebly. "It will be your own room, and you are a grown-up lady who can do as you please. I suppose it is only children who don't dare to do things like moving pictures and putting flower-pots on the window-sills when they are freshly painted."

Miss Dorothy's merry laugh rang out. "Oh, you dear, transparent baby. You've spoken volumes in that speech. Now I'm ready to go down. What shall we do? My trunk will not be here till after the next train is in, they informed me at the station. I'd like to see the schoolhouse, but perhaps we'd best wait till morning, then it can be shown me officially. Could we dare to walk in the garden if I promise not to race over the borders and recklessly pull the flowers? Does one dare to leave the house to do that?" There was a little mocking look in her eyes as she spoke.

"Oh, yes, of course we can go anywhere we like in the garden," returned Marian. "Do come, and I will show you my apple tree. If you are not afraid to climb you can see the ocean from my seat in the crotch,—and the mountain, too," she added more soberly.

"Don't suggest mountains yet," said Miss Dorothy, becoming sober too. "But there, I won't think about mountains; I've always managed them and I always intend to."

Marian gazed at her with new intentness and drew nearer. "Can you manage mountains?" she asked wonderingly.

"Why, yes; if you don't make them out of mole-hills it is easy enough."

Marian pondered over this answer all the way down-stairs, but could not make head or tail of it. She would ask further when she knew Miss Dorothy better. She felt quite assured that she would not be long in feeling as much at home with her as with Mrs. Hunt.

As they passed the kitchen door near which the grim Hepzibah stood, Miss Dorothy drew her skirts aside and fled down the garden walk, giving a pretended scared look over her shoulder as she caught Marian's hand. "Don't let her get me, will you?" she said. Marian fell in with her mood and promised that she should not be delivered to the ogress, though in her heart of hearts she felt that a person who would dare to take liberties with Grandma Otway's best room surely could not be a very scary individual, and by the time they had reached the apple tree, she had decided that Miss Dorothy would probably have no fear of climbing to the very top, if she cared to.

"The Garden of Hesperides and the Golden Apples!" exclaimed Miss Dorothy, settling down into the crotch and giving Marian a hand to help her to a seat by her side. "Isn't this too lovely for anything? It will be the finest place in the world to come and read fairy-tales. Do you know many? I have brought a lot with me, and we'll have a lovely time here before it gets too cold to stay out."

"I don't know many fairy-tales," Marian answered doubtfully. "Grandma doesn't exactly approve of them; at least she never tells me any. She says that Bible stories are entertaining enough for any one, and she lets me read those 'simplified for the understanding of a child.'" She spoke with perfect gravity, though Miss Dorothy turned her head to hide the smile she could not prevent.

"I suppose, then," said Miss Dorothy, "that you have a book of those."

"Yes; it belonged to grandpa when he was small, and it is called 'Tales from the Bible, simplified for the understanding of a child'; I read it generally on Sundays. Mrs. Hunt knows about Cinderella and the Glass Slipper and about the Pig that huffed and puffed till he blew the house down."

"Oh, I don't know that last one," said Miss Dorothy; "you will have to tell me, and I'll tell you about the Golden Apples. Don't the apples smell good? Do we dare have any of them when they are ripe?"

"Oh, yes, we can have two a day; one in the morning and one at noon; grandma says they are lead at night."

"Goodness me! I believe I have heard that saying before," said Miss Dorothy, mentally determining to carry apples to her room to eat when she felt inclined. Mrs. Otway should not decide such matters for her. She

sat with her chin in her hand looking off at the ocean, blue in the distance. Marian, watching her, decided that although the new teacher did not exactly fill her expectations in some respects, in others she far exceeded them. She had very blue eyes that could be merry or soft as her mood was, her hair was wavy and of a light brown color; she was fair of skin, had rather a large mouth and not a specially beautiful nose, but she was good to look upon and the more one looked the more charming one thought her. She was dressed very simply in a gray traveling gown with no jewelry but a silver pin fastening her collar. Her face in repose was serious and Marian could see that she was not one to be trifled with, in spite of her fun-loving spirit.

"There are many things I want to know," said Miss Dorothy after a while, "but I will wait till I absolutely have to ask questions."

"If you want to know one thing," returned Marian, "I can tell you. If you would like me to tell you when grandpa and grandma will be here I can say in about five minutes." She was looking off down the street and Miss Dorothy saw two figures approaching.

"Then we'd better go in," she said. "I should not like them to meet me in an apple tree; they might think me very undignified."

Marian was rather inclined to think they might, but she glossed over the fact by saying, "Well, you see it has been such a long, long time since they were young they must forget how it feels."

Miss Dorothy smiled and began to climb down the ladder, Marian following. In a few minutes they were walking soberly up the path and reached the front door just as Mr. and Mrs. Otway were there.

"Miss Robbins has come," announced Marian with a little nod of her head in the direction of the young lady in the background.

"Ah-h," responded her grandfather, "then I was right, my dear," he turned to his wife, "I said it was probable that she would get the first train. We should have told Hepzibah or else you should have remained at home."

"I never remain at home from the quarterly meeting upon any pretext," returned Mrs. Otway firmly; "it was a most important one."

But Mr. Otway had hastened forward and was holding out his hand in welcome to Miss Dorothy. "I am glad to receive my old friend's daughter," he said with a stately bow. "This is Miss—ah, yes, Miss Dorothy. I may have met you when you were less of a young lady, but I cannot separate you, as a memory, from your sisters."

"I think I remember Professor Otway," returned Dorothy smiling up into the near-sighted eyes which were peering down at her. Mr. Otway

was tall, spare, a little stoop-shouldered. His hair was quite gray and grew sparsely around his temples; his face was clean shaven. Mrs. Otway was below medium height, plump and keen-eyed. She wore an old-fashioned gown and a plain bonnet. Winter or summer she never went out without a small cape over her shoulders. Upon this occasion it was of black silk trimmed with a fold of the same. She looked approvingly at Dorothy's neat frock, but a little disapprovingly at the arrangement of her hair.

"I am sorry not to have been here to welcome you," she said, "but there are certain matters of business which cannot be set aside for uncertainties. I hope Hepzibah or Marian showed you to your room."

"Marian did, and has been a very kind hostess," returned Miss Dorothy. "I am very glad you did not give up an important matter for anything so indefinite as my arrival. You must never let my presence allow of any change in your arrangements, Mrs. Otway. I am exceedingly grateful to you for taking me in, and I should be very uncomfortable if I were to interfere with your usual routine."

Mrs. Otway nodded approval. "We shall consider you one of the family, my dear Miss Robbins," she told her. "Marian, take my things upstairs." She gave her bonnet and cape to her granddaughter and led the way to the semi-darkened parlor where she established herself in a haircloth rocking-chair while Miss Dorothy seated herself upon the sofa.

Marian laid the bonnet and cape carefully upon her grandmother's smooth bed and went down to tell Hepzibah that it was the teacher, who had arrived. She had not wanted to leave Miss Dorothy, in order to give the old servant this piece of information, but now that her chance had come she went straight to the kitchen.

Hepzibah was stalking about preparing supper. She looked up sharply as Marian entered. "Well," she said, "what's wanting?"

"It's Miss Robbins, the teacher, Heppy," Marian told her. "You saw us go by down the garden, didn't you?"

"Why didn't she say so?" returned Heppy in an aggrieved voice. "How's I to know she wasn't a book-agent or a body selling home-made laces and embroidered shirt waists. She was carrying a bag and it might have been full of wares for all I knew."

"But she doesn't look like a peddler."

"Looks belie folks sometimes. Some of 'em is dressed as good as the best, in hats with feathers and kid gloves. She might have been that or anything, for all I could tell. I'll do just the same next time. She'd oughter have told her business right out, instead of hemming and hawing and

asking was Mrs. Otway to home. That's the way they all do; get the name next door and come as brazen as you please asking for Mrs. this and that. I'd like to know who's to tell the sheep from the goats."

"I would know in a minute that Miss Dorothy wasn't a goat," said Marian.

"Oh, you know a heap, don't you," replied Heppy scornfully. "If you knew so much why didn't you tell me who it was first off?"

"I didn't know exactly who it was but I could easily guess, for I knew the teacher was coming some time soon."

"I don't see why your grandma didn't say I was to look out for her," Heppy went on with a new grievance.

"Maybe she thought you would know, because you helped get her room ready, and knew she was expected," Marian made excuse.

"As if I could remember anything on a Saturday, when I'd been pestered to death, answering the door a dozen times, while I was cleaning my kitchen. She might have chose some other day to come."

"She has to begin school on Monday, and besides that would be just as bad, for it would be wash-day and you are cross always then, Heppy, you know you are."

Heppy turned on her. "You just go out of here," she said. "I don't want you 'round underfoot, pestering me at meal-time nohow. I guess I can get a meal for four just as easy as for three and I don't need your help neither."

At this Marian was fain to depart, seeing that Heppy was in one of her worst moods, when everything was a grievance. It was a pleasant contrast when the little girl was met by Miss Dorothy's smile as she returned to the parlor, so she settled herself by the side of this new friend, folded her hands and let her feet dangle over the edge of the sofa. It was rather a slippery seat and in time it might be that she would have to wriggle back to a firmer place, but its nearness to Miss Dorothy was its attraction and she felt well satisfied and entirely secure when the teacher's arm encircled her and drew her closer. "I am to have one new pupil anyhow," said Miss Dorothy, smiling down. "Won't it be nice for us to be going to school together every day, Marian?"

"Oh, am I going?" Marian looked from one grandparent to another.

Mrs. Otway nodded sedately. "We have concluded that it is best," she said. "Your grandfather has many affairs to attend to, and it is a tax upon his time to teach you, therefore, since you will not need to go to school unattended, we think it best. We shall see how it works, at all events, and if it seems wise to withdraw you later, we can do so."

Marian gave a long sigh of satisfaction, but said nothing. She was constantly told that little children should be seen and not heard, and moreover she thought it might hurt her grandfather's feelings if she showed too much pleasure at the change. Yet when she gave the new teacher a glad smile, Miss Dorothy realized that the prospect of school was a pleasant one to at least one of her pupils.

Chapter 3

A New Road

Instead of sitting in a straight-backed chair in her grandfather's study, conning over dry lessons while Mr. Otway wrote or read, it was quite a different experience for Marian to go to school to Miss Dorothy in a cheerful little schoolhouse where twenty other girls were seated each before her particular desk. Lessons with Grandpa Otway had been very stupid, for he required literal, word-for-word, gotten-by-heart pages, had no mercy upon faulty spelling, and frowned down mistakes in arithmetic examples. He did not make much of a point of writing, for he wrote a queer, scratchy hand himself, and so Marian could scarcely form her letters legibly, a fact of which she was made ashamed when she saw how well Ruth Deering wrote, and discovered that Marjorie Stone sent a letter every week to her brother at college.

However, the rest of it was such an improvement upon other years, that every morning Marian started out very happily, book bag on arm, and Miss Dorothy by her side. The first day was the most eventful, of course, and the child was in a quiver of excitement. Her teacher was perhaps not less nervous, though she did not show it except by the two red spots upon her cheeks. It was her first day as teacher as well as Marian's, as one of a class in school. But all passed off well, the twenty little girls with shining faces and fresh frocks were expectant and the new teacher quite came up to their hopes. Marian already knew Ruth Deering and Marjorie Stone, for they were in her Sunday-school class, and some of the others she had seen at church. Alice Evans sat with her parents just in front of the Otways' pew, so her flaxen pig-tails were a familiar sight, while Minnie Keating's big brown bow of ribbon appeared further along on Sunday mornings.

Marian felt that she did quite as well as the other girls in most things, and was beginning to congratulate herself upon knowing as much as any one of her age, when she was called to the blackboard to write out a sentence. At her feeble effort which resulted in a crooked scrawl, there was a

subdued titter from the others. For one moment the new scholar stood, her cheeks flaming, then with defiant face she turned to Miss Dorothy. "I can spell it every word," she said, "if I can't write it."

Miss Dorothy smiled encouragingly, for she understood the situation. "That is more than many little girls of your age can do," she said. "Suppose you spell it for us, then."

With clenched hands Marian faced her schoolmates. "Separate syllables, and enunciate with distinct emphasis," she finished triumphantly, without looking at the book.

"That is a very good test," said Miss Dorothy; "you may take your seat. Now, Alice, I will give out the next sentence, and you may spell it without the board," and the day was saved for Marian.

After this she triumphantly gave the boundaries of several countries, told without hesitation the dates of three important events in history, carried to a correct finish a difficult example in long division, and when the hour came for school to close she had won her place. Yet the matter of writing was uppermost in her mind as she walked home, and she said shamefacedly to Miss Dorothy, "Isn't it dreadful for a girl of my age not to know how to write?"

"It isn't as if it were a thing that couldn't be learned," Miss Dorothy told her for her encouragement, "but you must hurry up and conquer it. You might practice at home between times, and you will be surprised to find how you improve. Have you never written letters to your father?"

Marian shook her head. "Not really myself. Grandma always writes them for me," then she added, "so of course she says just what she pleases; I'd like to say what I please, I think."

"I am sure your father would like it better if you did. I know when my father was away from home the letter that most pleased him was written by my little sister Patty when she was younger than you."

"How old is she now?" asked Marian.

"Just about your age. She can write very well, but you can distance her in spelling and arithmetic."

"I'll catch up with her in writing," decided Marian, "and maybe she will catch up with me in the other things."

"I'll tell her what you say," said Miss Dorothy; "that will be an incentive to you both. I should like you to know our Patty. She is our baby, and is a darling."

"I should like to know her," returned Marian warmly.

"I'll tell her to write to you," promised Miss Dorothy.

"Oh, good! I never have letters from any one but papa, and he writes only once a year. I wish he would write oftener, for his letters are so nice, and I do love him, though I haven't seen him since I was a baby."

"Perhaps if he knew you really cared so much to hear, he would write. Why don't you send him a letter and tell him?"

"Oh, but just see what a fist I make at writing. I will tell him as soon as I can write better, although," she added with a sigh, "that seems a long time to wait."

Miss Dorothy was thoughtfully silent for a few minutes. "I will tell you what," she said presently. "I have a small typewriting machine which I will teach you how to use. It is very simple, and you spell so nicely that it will be no time before you could manage a perfectly legible letter to your father."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, I do love you," cried Marian. "That is such a delightful idea. What an angelic sister Patty has."

Miss Dorothy laughed. "What a funny little girl you are. I am glad, however, that you didn't say: How awfully nice! I am afraid that is what Patty would have said, but she hasn't had the advantage of associating with only scholarly people like your grandparents, and so she talks as her brothers and sisters do."

"I should think she would be awfully happy to have so many brothers and sisters," remarked Marian.

"Oh, dear, see what example does," exclaimed Miss Dorothy. "You said awfully happy and I never heard you say awfully anything before. I'll tell you what we'll do; whenever you hear me saying awfully nice or awfully horrid you tell me, and I'll do the same by you. Is it a bargain?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, Miss Dorothy, but I'm afraid I should feel queer to correct you."

"I am not perfect, my dear," said Miss Dorothy gravely, "not any more than the rest of humanity. I shouldn't expect you to correct me ordinarily, but this is a habit I want to get out of, and that I do not want you to get into, so we shall be a mutual help, you see, and you will be doing me a favor by reminding me."

"Then I'll try to do it. How shall I tell you when other people are around? It would sound queer if I said: Oh, Miss Dorothy, you said awfully."

"So it would, you little wiseacre. You can touch me on the elbow and then put your finger on your lip, and I will understand, and I will do the same when you say it."

Marian was perfectly satisfied at this. "I am so glad you are here," she sighed. "I feel lots more faith growing. I shall soon be very—is it faithful I ought to say?"

"Well, not exactly in the sense you mean, though really it ought to be that faithful means full of faith; as it is it means trustworthy and devoted to the performance of duties and things. I think the old meaning when one wanted to say that a person was full of faith was faithful, but the original sense of many words has been lost."

"When shall I begin with the typewriter?" asked Marian, changing the subject.

"We can begin this afternoon. I have unpacked and oiled it, so it is all ready to use."

"How soon do you think I can send a letter to papa?"

"If you are industrious and painstaking I should say you could do it in a week."

"Oh, that's not long, and he will get it long before Christmas, won't he?"

"Yes, indeed! I should think in ten days or two weeks at the furthest."

"I should like to send him something for Christmas. I never did send him anything. Don't you think it would be nice to do it?"

"I think it would be awfully nice."

Marian gave her teacher's arm a gentle shake and put her finger to her lip.

Miss Dorothy looked at her a little puzzled, then she understood. "Oh, I said awfully, didn't I? Thank you, dearie, for reminding me. What should you like to send your father?"

"I don't know. I'll have to think. You'll help me to think, won't you?"

"Indeed I will, if you want me to. I should think almost anything you could send would please him, for, after all, it is the thought that counts, not the thing itself."

"Oh, but I do think things count, and—Miss Dorothy, you won't tell if I ask him not to send me money."

"Not money? I think that it's rather a nice thing to have, for then you can buy whatever you like."

"You couldn't if you were I."

"Why not?"

"Because. You won't say anything about it to the grans?" Marian's voice dropped to a whisper. "When papa sends me money it always goes to the missions; it is my sacrifice, Grandma says. As long as I don't have the money really in my hands, it doesn't so much matter, but it would

matter if I had to go without butter or perhaps sweet things, like dessert or cake for a whole month. That is what would happen if I said I would rather have the money myself than let the missionaries have it. Oh, I suppose it is all right," she added quickly, "and no doubt I am a hardened sinner, but I would like a real Christmas gift."

"Did you never have one?" asked Miss Dorothy, with pity and surprise in her voice.

"Not a really one, except from Mrs. Hunt; she gave me a sweet little pincushion last year, and a whole bag full of cakes and goodies. I enjoyed them very much."

"Did your grandparents give you nothing at all?"

"Oh, yes. I had a new hat, and gloves and handkerchiefs. I was pleased to have them of course, but I would like something real Christmassy and—and—foolish."

"You blessed child, of course you would," and Miss Dorothy mentally determined that the next Christmas should provide something real Christmassy for her little companion.

Marian was silent for a while then she asked, "Do you have a Christmas tree at your house?"

"Why, yes, always, and we all hang up our stocking from father down to Patty. Don't you?"

"No, I never did, and I never had a tree."

"Why, you poor dear child," exclaimed Miss Dorothy surprised out of discretion.

"There doesn't any one know how much I want it," said Marian in part excuse, "but I do. That is what I meant about moving mountains and faith. Do you believe if I had a great deal of faith, as sharp and strong as a mustard seed that the Lord would send me a tree? I never told any one before about it, but you understand better than Mrs. Hunt. I thought once or twice I would ask her, but she might laugh and I don't want any one to laugh, for it is very solemn." She peered anxiously up into Miss Dorothy's face to see if there were a suspicion of amusement there, but Miss Dorothy looked as grave as any one could wish.

"I think faith can do a great deal, my dear little girl," she said gently.

"It can move mountains, the Bible says. I heard grandpa and grandma talking about it, and Mrs. Hunt showed me some mustard seed. I tasted one and it was very strong, so I know now it doesn't mean the bigness but the strongness."

Miss Dorothy looked down with a smile. "You little theologian," she exclaimed. Then to herself she said: This comes of shutting up a child

with staid old people. The dear thing needs a whole lot of frivolity mixed up in her life; Christmas trees and things. She shall have them if I can do any of the mixing. "Well, dear," she said aloud, "I think we will hold on to all the faith we can muster, and see what will come of it, but you must realize that just sitting still and believing isn't all of it. We must work, too, for the Bible says faith *and* works, not faith *or* works. So now you work hard over your writing, and send letters to your father so he will know what his little girl likes and longs for, then you will be doing your part in that direction, and at the same time put your trust in his love for you, and no doubt something beautiful will come of it all. You can come up to my room as soon as you want to, and we will start the little typewriter."

Marian's satisfaction was too deep for words, but she gave her teacher's arm a little squeeze and laid her cheek against it.

It was not long before she was tapping at the door of Miss Dorothy's room, but before she began the work she was so eager for, she asked, "Do you think I ought to ask grandma's permission?"

"I don't see why you need to, for there is nothing wrong about it," Miss Dorothy replied. "But if you feel as if you should, you can run down and tell your grandmother what you are going to do. You can say that I am going to teach you to use my little machine, and surely she will not object."

But Mrs. Otway was off upon some charity bent, and Marian returned feeling that she had done her duty in making the attempt to tell. Then she and Miss Dorothy had great fun over the little machine which seemed so complicated at first, but which gradually grew more and more familiar, so that at the end of an hour under Miss Dorothy, Marian was able to write out several lines quite creditably. These she took down and proudly showed to her grandfather.

"First-rate," he exclaimed. "Keep on, my child, and after a while you will be able to copy out my papers for me; a great assistance that would be. I shouldn't wonder but in time you would make me an excellent secretary." Under this praise Marian's qualms of conscience were eased. If grandpa approved, that was enough. Her next impulse was to run to Mrs. Hunt's to show off her new accomplishment, but she decided to wait till she could manage the typewriter entirely alone, so would the credit be greater.

She sought out Tippy and Dippy to tell her secret to. They were her confidants always, and to-day she had almost forgotten them in the novelty of having so sympathetic a friend as Miss Dorothy. It would never

do to forsake old and tried comrades, and so Tippy was roused from her nap, and Dippy was captured in the act of catching a grasshopper, then the two were borne to the end of the garden to a sheltered spot where Marian always had her "thinks." She took the two in her lap. Tippy settled down at once, but Dippy had to have his head rubbed for some minutes before he began to purr contentedly.

"You see, my dears," began Marian, "I am going to have a great deal to do, almost as much as grandma has with her clubs and societies and meetings. First there is school. I think I like Alice Evans the best of the girls, for she has such pretty hair, but I am not quite sure about it. She was not quite as nice to me at recess as Ruth was, so maybe I shall like Ruth best. I am sure I shall love Patty. I wish she had come here with her sister. It must be lovely, Tippy, to have a sister, though I suppose you don't think as I do, for you had a sister once and now you don't care anything about her, for you fizzed at her the other day when she came in our garden. I saw you and heard you, too, and I was very much shocked. What was I talking about? Oh, yes, about so much to do. I'll have lessons to study at home after this, I suppose. We didn't have any real lessons today, just trial things, and I did such awful—I mean really awful writing on the blackboard that the girls all giggled. I just hated that, and I felt like crying or like running away and never going back, but I realized that it wouldn't do to do either, so that is another thing I must do.

"I must practice writing at home. I wonder where I shall get paper and things to do it on. I'll have to ask Miss Dorothy about that. She is such a dear, Tippy, and she likes cats; she said so. I never used to think that any one could be as nice as Mrs. Hunt, but Miss Dorothy is nicer in some ways, for she understands just how you feel about everything, and Mrs. Hunt doesn't always. She is as kind as can be, but she thinks that when you ask questions if she answers with a cookie or a doughnut you will be satisfied. It does satisfy your mouth, of course, but it doesn't satisfy the thinking part of you. Sometimes I go down there just bursting with things I want to know, and when I ask her, she says: 'Oh, don't bother your little head about such things; there is a plate of cakes in the pantry; go help yourself.' Now, Miss Dorothy isn't that way at all. She just reaches her thinks down to yours and they go along together till you come out all clear and straight like coming out of the woods into an open sunshiny place where there is a good path.

"Now, Tippy, we've got to think of something to send papa for a present. I don't suppose you are interested in such things, but I think every one ought to be. Maybe Patty can help me out. She must be a very

bright child; Miss Dorothy says she is. There! I hear Heppy clattering the milk-pan; it is time to see about your supper." So saying, Marian put down the two cats and started for the house, her pets following at her heels, knowing the sound of a milk-pan as well as she.

Chapter 4

Companions

The first week of school passed very rapidly, and by the time Friday afternoon came, Marian felt quite at home with her schoolmates. She had finally decided that Ruth would be her best friend next to Patty, whom she always held in reserve as filling her needs exactly, when they should meet. Miss Dorothy had written to her little sister and Marian was daily expecting a letter herself from Patty, a letter which should mark the beginning of their friendship. She was rather shy of the girls at first, for she had scarcely known childish comrades, and her old-fashioned ideas and mature way of speaking often brought a laugh from the others, but her shyness soon wore off and she quickly acquired a style of speech at which her grandparents sometimes frowned, for it included some bits of slang which had never found their way into the brick house before.

It was Miss Dorothy's doing which made the way easier for the little girl, for she argued nobly in behalf of Marian's needing young companions to keep her like a normal child. She even appealed to the family doctor who promptly sided with her, and maintained that Marian would be better bodily, if she lived a more rough and tumble life. So, because her grandparents really did care for her, absorbed as they were in their grown-up affairs, Marian was allowed more freedom than ever before and was ready to take advantage of it.

Miss Dorothy had gone up to town to do some shopping this first Saturday of the term, and Marian bethought herself of its being baking day at Mrs. Hunt's, so, as this was always one place she could always go without asking permission, she simply stopped at the sitting-room door and announced: "I am going down to Mrs. Hunt's, grandma."

Mrs. Otway, at work upon a financial report, did not look up from her columns of figures, but merely nodded in reply and Marian ran on down the street between the double rows of trees, till she came to Mrs. Hunt's. This time it was the odor of baking which greeted her as she advanced

toward the kitchen, and Mrs. Hunt was in the act of taking a pan of nicely browned cookies from the oven as her visitor appeared.

"Well, well, well," she exclaimed. "Just in time. Seems to me school keeps some folks amazingly busy. I've not seen you for a week, have I? But there, I'm glad enough you're turned out at last. Let me see how you look. School agrees with you; I can see that. Sit down there on the step and eat a cookie; it's warm inside the kitchen with the fire going. Now tell me all about it. How do you like Miss Robbins? I hear she's liable to be as popular as any teacher we've had. How do the grans take to her?" Marian and Mrs. Hunt always spoke of Mr. and Mrs. Otway as the grans.

"They like her," returned Marian between bites of cookie. "She is perfectly fine, Mrs. Hunt, and she's got a little sister just my age; her name's Martha, but they call her Patty, and she's going to write to me, and, oh, Mrs. Hunt, I have a secret to tell you, but you mustn't breathe it. Cross your heart you won't."

"Cross your heart," repeated Mrs. Hunt. "Where did you get that? I never heard you say that before."

"All the girls say it."

"Of course they do, and you're getting to be one of the girls, I see. Well, I'm glad of it. And what's the mighty secret?"

"You won't tell?"

"Not I." Mrs. Hunt emphasized her promise by bringing down her cake-cutter firmly on the dough she had spread on the board before her.

"Well, it's this: I'm learning to write on the typewriter, and I'm going to write a letter to papa myself."

"Well, I vow to man! Isn't that a trick worth knowing? Won't he be pleased?"

"Do you think he really will? I didn't know, for you see he has written to me only once a year just as he does to grandpa and grandma, and I have never been sure that he really cared very much about me."

"Listen to the child," exclaimed Mrs. Hunt, shaking her head. "Who'd have thought she gave it any thought one way or the other. Don't you believe that he doesn't care. I knew Ralph Otway before you were born, and I can tell you that when he gets to knowing that you've thought enough about him to want to write to him he will write to you often enough. He's got it into his head that you are as well off not hearing from him oftener, and besides he feels that as a lone widower he can't take as good care of you as his mother, a woman, can do, and he's just steeled his heart to endure what he thinks is best for you without thinking of

what he would like for himself. Don't you suppose he would a thousand times rather have you with him than to live off there by himself?"

"No, I didn't think so," replied Marian, with the idea that somehow she had said something she ought not. "But, Mrs. Hunt, if he does care, why doesn't he come over and get me?"

"Just as I told you; because he thinks you are better off here with your kith and kin. What would you do all day alone, with him off at his business and you by yourself in lodgings or a boarding-house, I'd like to know. He wouldn't want to send you to boarding-school, for then you'd not be so well off as where you are. Oh, no, don't you be getting it into your head that your father doesn't care for you." Mrs. Hunt made decided plunges at the yellow dough at each attack leaving behind a scalloped circle. "How I talk," she said as she deftly lifted the cookies into a pan, "but my tongue runs away with me sometimes. When do you think you'll be smart enough to get that letter off?"

"Oh, in another week, perhaps. Miss Dorothy thinks I will."

"Humph! that's quick enough work. Here, don't you want to go down into the garden and get me a few tomatoes? I thought I'd stew some for dinner, and I can't leave my baking very well."

This was something Marian always liked to do, so she took the little round basket Mrs. Hunt handed her and was soon very busy among the tomato vines. She was watching a big yellow butterfly bury itself in an opening flower when she heard a voice on the other side of the fence, say: "Hello!" and looking up she saw Marjorie Stone and Alice Evans smiling at her.

"What are you doing?" asked Marjorie. "I didn't know you lived here."

"I don't," said Marian going toward her. "I just came to see Mrs. Hunt and I am getting some tomatoes for her. Most everything else has gone. There used to be lovely currants and raspberries over there, and there were a few blackberries."

"We know where there are some blackberries still, don't we, Alice?" said Marjorie.

"Yes, they have ripened late; they're not so very big, but we are going to get them. We're going to take our lunch with us and gather all we can find."

"If you bring some lunch you can go too," said Marjorie amiably to Marian.

"Oh, is it a picnic?"

"Just a little one. Three or four of us were going, but two of the girls can't go. One has to stay at home and take care of the baby, and the other

has gone to town with her mother, but maybe Alice's big sister, Stella, will go with us."

"Is it very far?"

"Not so very. We've often been there. You go get your lunch and put it in a tin bucket, or a basket, so you will have something to carry your blackberries home in. We'll wait here for you if you hurry."

Much excited, Marian ran back to the house. This came of having schoolmates. A picnic this very first Saturday, and the blackberrying thrown in. She set down the little basket on the kitchen table and exclaimed, "Oh, Mrs. Hunt, what do you think? Marjorie Stone and Alice Evans want me to go on a picnic with them. They're going blackberrying and it isn't very far, but I'll have to take my lunch in something to gather the blackberries in, and——" She paused for breath.

"Just those two going?"

"No, Alice's big sister, Stella, is going."

"Oh!" Mrs. Hunt nodded her head in a satisfied way.

"Do you think I would have time to go home?" Marian asked anxiously. "They said they were in a great hurry."

"What is the use of your going home? I can put you up a little lunch easy as not. Here's these cookies, and I've baked turnovers, too. There's a basket of nice good apples in the pantry; you can have one of those, and I'll whisk together some sandwiches in the shake of a sheep's tail."

"Oh, that would be perfectly fine. Do you think grandma would mind?"

"She oughtn't to. She's done the same thing lots of times herself."

"Oh!" This fact certainly set things all right, for surely no grown person could be so absolutely unjust and inconsistent as to blame a child for doing what she had done, not once, but often herself. So Marian was quite assured, and smilingly watched Mrs. Hunt's kind hands pack a lunch for her.

"There now," said the good woman when she had tucked a red napkin over the top of the basket. "Run along and have a good time. I guess all the quarts of blackberries you get won't make many jars of jam, but you'll have just as much fun. If I get the chance I'll run up to your grandma's or send word that you won't be home to dinner. Maybe I'll see your grandpa as he comes back from the post-office."

And so, well content, Marian sped forth to join the girls who were waiting.

"Are you going?" they asked. "You didn't have to go home, did you?"

"No, Mrs. Hunt put up a lunch for me. She is always so very kind."

"What have you got?" asked Marjorie eagerly.

"Three sandwiches, ham ones, and six cookies, two turnovers and an apple." Marian enumerated the articles with pride.

"I guess that will be enough," said Marjorie, condescendingly. "But you will have to cut the turnovers in two so they will go around; we haven't any, you know."

Marian felt somewhat abashed, and thought that Marjorie was not very polite. She would not have inquired into the contents of their lunch baskets for the world. However, she trotted along very contentedly till they reached Alice's home where Stella was to join them. "I found some crackers and cheese, and there are two slices of bread and jam," announced this older girl as she came out. "I think perhaps we can find an apple tree along the way. Did you bring anything, Marjorie?"

"Yes, I have something in here." Marjorie swung her tin bucket in air.

"Then we'd better start," continued Stella. "Who is that with you? Oh, I see, it is Marian Otway. Hello, Marian."

"How do you do?" said Marian. She had never seen Stella except from across the church. She considered her quite a young lady, although she was only fourteen, but she was tall for her age and had an assured air.

The weather was warm, as it often is in early September, and as they trudged along the dusty road with the noonday sun beating down upon them, Marian thought it was anything but fun. Stella, however, kept encouraging them all by telling them it was only a little further, and that when they came to a certain big tree they would sit down and eat their lunch. The tree seemed a long way off, but at length it was reached, and the four sat down to rest under its shade.

"Oh, I do wish I had a drink," sighed Alice. "I am so thirsty."

"So am I," exclaimed the others.

"Maybe there is a spring near," said Stella. "There is a house over yonder; perhaps they could let us have some milk."

"But we haven't any money to pay for it," said Alice.

"So we haven't. Well, we'll have to ask for water. It was very stupid to think of only being hungry and not of being thirsty. We could have brought some milk as well as not. Let us have your tin bucket, Marjorie, and you and Alice go over and ask for some water."

"I'm too tired," complained Marjorie. "If I lend you my bucket I think some one else ought to go for the water."

"Oh, all right," said Stella with a disdainful smile. "I am sure Marian will be accommodating enough to go with Alice, although you have walked no further than they did. You will go, won't you, Marian?"

At this direct appeal, Marian could not refuse to go, and arose with alacrity to do Stella's bidding.

"Empty your bucket into my basket," said Stella to Marjorie, at the same time taking off the lid. Marjorie made a dive into the bucket and hastily secured a small package wrapped in paper, consenting to Stella's putting the two biscuits and the one banana that remained, into her basket.

"Don't begin to eat till we come back," called Alice as she and Marian started off.

"We won't," promised her sister.

The way through the open field was quite as hot, if not as dusty as the road, and Marian agreed with Alice that it was harder to walk through the stubble than the dust, so they were glad enough to reach the shade of the trees surrounding the little farmhouse. A woman was scouring tins on the back porch.

"Could we have some water from your pump?" asked Alice timidly.

The woman looked up. "Why, yes, and welcome. Where did you drop from? I ain't seen any carriage come up the road."

"We walked from Greenville," Alice told her.

"All the way this warm day? Well, I should think you would want water. You two didn't come by yourselves, did you?"

"No, my sister and another girl are over there by that big chestnut tree."

"Lands! then why didn't you go to the spring? 'T ain't but a step, just a ways beyond the tree down in that little hollow. I think the water's better and colder than the pump water, but you can have either you like. Perhaps, though, you'd like a glass of milk. But there, you just wait, I know something better than that. Just set down and cool off while I fetch something for you to take back. Don't take a drink till you set awhile; you're all overheated."

"What do you suppose she's going to give us?" whispered Alice.

Marian shook her head. "I'd like water better than anything, but she said we'd best wait and I'm going to."

"Then I will," said Alice, not to be outdone.

Presently the woman returned with a pitcher upon which stood cool beads of moisture, while the clinking sound of ice from within suggested deliciousness to the thirsty. Setting down a glass the woman poured something into it, and then handed the glass to Marian who politely offered it to Alice. It was quickly accepted and Alice took a satisfying

draught. "It is lemonade," she said, "and it is, oh, so good. I never tasted anything so good."

The woman laughed. "You never were more thirsty, maybe. Take your time; I'll get another glass." She stepped inside to supply Marian with the same treat. "I'll pour the rest into your pail," she said; "it will go good with your lunch. I made a whole bucketful this morning thinking maybe my husband's folks might come over for Sunday and would be thirsty after their long drive, but it's too late for 'em now. They always start by sunup and get here before dinner. They won't be here this week, so you come in for what they don't."

"I'm glad they didn't come," said Alice setting down her glass.

The woman laughed. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, they say. Here's your pail; there's ice enough to keep it cool for some time."

"Thank you so very, very much," said Marian earnestly. "If I get enough blackberries I'll surely bring you some."

"Bless the child! You needn't, for I have had all I need, and have put 'em up till I'm sick of the sight of 'em. Keep all you get and I'm sure you're welcome; their time is about over and what you get won't be worth much. I'm sure you're welcome to your drink." She fell to scouring again, and the girls departed bearing the bucket carefully.

"Wasn't she kind?" said Marian, in grateful remembrance, "and isn't it nice to know about the spring?"

"Be careful," cried Alice in alarm, for just here Marian struck her foot against a stubbly growth and came near falling, but recovered her footing.

"Let me take it," said Alice, grasping the handle of the bucket.

"I'm sure I shall be glad if you will," replied Marian in a relieved tone, "it would be too dreadful to spill any of that delicious stuff."

However it was borne safely the rest of the way, and it is needless to say that it was appreciated by the waiting pair, though Marjorie complained that they had been such a long, long time in getting it.

"I should think it was worth being long to get what we did," said Alice severely.

"Well, anyhow, I think Stella and I ought to have the most," said Marjorie, "for you each had a glassful up at the house and we haven't had any."

"That was to pay us for going, wasn't it?" and Alice appealed to her sister.

"Certainly it was," returned Stella. "If you couldn't have that much after your doing the errand I should think it was a pity."

Then they fell to eating their lunch, although the division of this did not turn out as Marjorie intended, for Stella declared it was only fair that each should eat what she brought for herself, and maintained that Marjorie's biscuits and banana must be her share. Marian protested, however, for she felt that she had the lion's share, and that she would be uncomfortable if she ate her good things without giving so much as a taste to the others. At last it was decided that each child should contribute to the general supply one article from her lunch, so a turnover went from Marian's basket, a biscuit from Marjorie's pail, while Alice and Stella contributed some crackers and cheese and a slice of their bread and jam. No one caring for Marjorie's biscuit it was left untouched while its owner fell upon the turnover without a question. Marian chose the crackers and cheese, but insisted upon exchanging some of her cookies for the slice of bread and jam, and later gave Alice half her apple. The lemonade was quaffed to the last drop, and then Marjorie volunteered to go to the spring for water. She was gone some time, and as they all started forth to find the blackberry patch, Alice whispered to Marian, "She had candy in that package; that's why she wanted to go to the spring alone. I saw her take out the candy and eat it." Then Marian began to realize that her eyes were being opened to other than pleasant things in that outside world of companionship.

Chapter 5

Blackberries

Fortunately the blackberry patch was not much further on, and after being refreshed by their luncheon the children did not mind crossing a field and climbing a fence or two. But what a thicket it was! Such thorns and briars as Marian had never imagined. There was a story in verse, in one of the books which had belonged to her grandmother when she was a little girl; this story was about Phebe, the Blackberry Girl, and it was one in which Marian delighted, but never before had she realized to the full extent Phebe's trials; yet, like her, she

> "Scratched her face and tore her hair,
> But still did not complain,"

and furthermore, like Phebe, when she came to a promising bush, she "picked with all her might," and really had a creditable amount to show when Stella said time was up. But alas, she had other things to show besides blackberries and scratches, for she had worn a frock of light material, and by the time they were ready to leave the thicket, it was in slits and tears all over. Marian had been so excited over her novel employment that she had not seen what damage the briars were doing till Marjorie laughed out: "Oh, what a rag-bag you are!"

Then Marian looked down at the fringe of muslin which hung from her waist, at the stained waist itself, from which the trimming fell in festoons, and she was aghast. "Oh, what shall I do?" she breathed helplessly.

"You certainly do look a sight," said Stella, none too comfortingly, "but I wouldn't mind my clothes so much as my hands; just see how they are all scratched up, and your face isn't much better. You were too reckless; you ought not to have plunged in so far that you got caught in the worst of the brambles; we didn't any of us plunge around so as to get all mixed up that way."

"I know," returned Marian meekly, "I got too excited."

"I should think you did."

"I can't go into town this way," said Marian miserably. "I look like a beggar girl."

"Anybody could see that you had been picking blackberries," said Alice consolingly.

"But with such a looking frock they will laugh at me," said Marian tearfully. "Oh, dear, I wish I had worn something that didn't tear."

"As the rest of us did," remarked Marjorie complacently.

"If you had only been careful and had kept on the edge of the thicket," Stella said, then seeing how distressed Marian really was, she went on: "You might take off your frock; I really think you would look better without than with it."

"Oh!" Marian's cheeks flamed. To appear before the world half-dressed was not to be thought of.

Stella looked her over critically. The frock she wore was a white muslin spotted with pink, too frail a garment for such an expedition.

"The waist isn't so terrible," said Alice examining it. "If we had some pins we could fasten the trimming on so it wouldn't show the tears much."

"Take off your frock, Marian," decided Stella; "I know what we can do."

Marian obeyed the assured voice, and presently Stella was tearing the ragged skirt from the waist, afterward pinning the trimming of the waist in place. "Now come here," she said to Marian.

"What are you going to do?" the others asked in chorus.

"I am going to match your petticoat to your waist," said Stella, addressing Marian. "I will dot it with pink, and it will never be observed. You can wear the waist as it is, and have a skirt to match."

"What are you going to spot it with?" asked Alice curiously.

"You'll see," answered her sister, taking a blackberry from her basket and squeezing a little of the juice on Marian's petticoat. "It isn't exactly the color, but it is near enough, and will never be noticed unless you were very near. Now stand quite still, Marian."

The little girl obeyed and after some time Stella finished her work. "There!" she exclaimed with her head to one side to notice the effect; "that is not bad at all. Walk off, Marian, and let me see; the spots aren't quite even, but then, as Mrs. Hunt says, 'they will never be seen on a galloping horse.'"

"I am sure they look very well," remarked Alice admiringly, "and I think you were very clever to think of it, Stella." And Marian, though still a little shamefaced, felt more at ease.

"We'd better start back," said Stella, "for the afternoons are not so very long now, and we have quite a distance to go."

"If we didn't have blackberries in the two buckets we might get some of that nice cold water from the spring and carry it with us," said Alice, "and then if we were thirsty we should have something to drink."

"It wouldn't be a bad plan," agreed Stella. "I'll tell you what we can do: Marjorie can pour her berries in our bucket and we can use hers for the water. Our bucket is so big that it will easily hold ours and hers, too."

"I'd like to see me do it," spoke up Marjorie. "I'd be sure not to get back as many as I put in."

Stella curled her lip and lifted her eyebrows scornfully. "You needn't be afraid," she said; "nobody wants one of your old berries. If you are so particular, it is very easy to separate them by putting a layer of leaves on top of ours, and yours on top of that, and then there will be no mixing, and *we* shall be sure to get all that belongs to *us*."

Marjorie agreed to this arrangement, being quite ready to have a supply of water on hand, and so Stella carefully arranged the berries and said she would carry the bucket herself and that Marjorie and Alice could take turns in carrying the water. So, after everything was adjusted, they set off toward the town, following the dusty road by which they had come.

The way home did not seem as long as the morning's walk, and not a great deal of time had passed when the spires of the village churches appeared in the distance, then they reached the outlying houses, and finally the main street. "I'd just kite up the back way if I were you," said Stella to Marian; "it is a little bit shorter and you won't be likely to meet so many people. Good-bye. We turn off here, you know. I hope you won't get a scolding."

The fear of this, or worse, had been in Marian's heart all along, though she had not mentioned it, and as she stole in the back gate and up the garden walk she hoped she would meet neither her grandmother nor Heppy. The little bucket of blackberries no longer seemed worth while, and she set it down near the apple tree, ran in the side door, past her grandfather's study, and on up-stairs, hoping she could get by the sitting-room without being seen.

But her hopes were in vain, for on the landing appeared her grandmother. "Is that you, Marian?" she asked. "Where have you been all day? Come in here and give an account of yourself."

For a second it was in Marian's thought to say that her nose was bleeding and to make her escape to her room, change her frock and then reappear, but she knew it was only putting off the evil day, for the frock's condition would be discovered sooner or later; and then she was a truthful child, and could not have brought herself to make a false excuse, even though the outcome might have been better for her. So she entered the sitting-room timidly and stood with drooping head before her grandmother.

"Where have you been all day?" repeated her grandmother.

"Oh, didn't Mrs. Hunt tell you?" said Marian in a weak voice. "She said she would. I've been blackberrying."

"With whom?"

"Some of the girls."

"Who gave you permission?"

"Why—why—Mrs. Hunt didn't think you would mind, and—and——"

"Blackberrying! I should think so," exclaimed Mrs. Otway. "What a sight you are, all stained and scratched up. Go, wash your face and hands."

"I did try to get it off at the spring," returned Marian more cheerfully, hoping she was to be let off rather easily after all.

But she had not reached the door before her grandmother called her back. "What in the world have you done to your frock?" she asked, examining her costume in surprise.

"It got torn so and I was so ragged that Stella tore off the skirt," said Marian in faint explanation, "and—" she went on, "she thought she would try to make my petticoat look like a frock; the spots are blackberry juice; they aren't quite the same color, but we all thought they looked pretty well, better than slits and snags."

"Then you have ruined not only your frock but your petticoat. Go to your room and do not come out till I tell you. I will speak to your grandfather and we will see what is to be done about this," said her grandmother in such a severe tone that Marian felt like the worst of criminals and crept to her room in dread distress.

She had not often been seriously punished, but those few times stood out very clearly just now. Once she had been compelled to receive ten sharp strokes from a ruler on her outstretched hand. At another time she

had been shut up in a dark closet, and again she had been tied in a chair for some hours. Any of these was bad enough. The first was soonest over, but was the most humiliating, the second was terrifying and nerve racking, while the third tediously long and hard to bear. For some time the child sat tremblingly listening for her grandmother's footsteps, but evidently Mrs. Otway did not intend to use undue haste in the matter. After a while the whistle of the evening train announced that those who had gone up to the city for a day's shopping were now returning, and not long after Miss Dorothy's door opened and Marian could hear the teacher singing softly to herself in the next room.

A new humiliation filled the child's breast. They would tell Miss Dorothy, and she would think of her little friend as some one desperately wicked, too wicked, no doubt, to associate with Patty. The tears stood in Marian's eyes at this possibility. It was very, very wrong, of course, to go off without asking leave, and it was worse to spoil her clothes. She well knew her grandmother's views upon this subject, and that of all things she disapproved of wastefulness. She would say that the clothes might have done good to the poor; they might have been sent in a missionary box to some needy child, and it was wicked and selfish to deprive the poor of something that could be of use.

Oh, yes, Marian knew very well all about the probable lecture in store for her.

She sat dolefully, with clasped hands and tearful eyes. But presently a happier thought came to her. She would tell Miss Dorothy before her grandmother had a chance to do so, and perhaps Miss Dorothy would understand that she had not meant to do wrong in the first place, and that what came after was carelessness and not wilful wickedness. She had been ordered not to leave her room, and this she need not do to carry out her plan. So she softly crossed the floor and timidly knocked at the door between Miss Dorothy's room and her own. It was opened in a moment by her friend, who viewed the forlorn little figure first with a smile, and then with anxious interest. "Why, my dearie," she exclaimed, "what is the matter? Come into my room and tell me what is wrong."

"I can't come in," said Marian in a low tone, "for I mustn't leave my room till grandma bids me. But you can come in mine, can't you?" she added wistfully.

"To be sure I can," and suiting the action to the word, Miss Dorothy entered and sat down by the window, drawing Marian to her side and saying, "Now tell me all about it."

Marian poured forth her doleful tale, beginning with the visit to Mrs. Hunt and ending with the interview with her grandmother. "She wouldn't have minded so much except for the frock and petticoat," she said in conclusion, "but when she found out about those, I could see that she was very, very much put out."

"That was the worst part of it, of course," said Miss Dorothy. "Of course you told her how sorry you were, and that you were so excited over getting the biggest berries that you forgot about the briars. You are not the only one who has done that," she added with a half smile. "You never had been blackberrying before, had you?"

"No, Miss Dorothy, and it was very exciting. We really had a lovely time, only the walk was rather a hot one. Mrs. Hunt was so good; she gave me such a fine lunch. She didn't think grandma would mind, for she said she often used to go blackberrying when she was a little girl."

"She said that, did she?"

"Yes, Miss Dorothy. I ought to return the basket, but I can't go now, and I left the berries down under the apple tree."

"I will go out and bring them in, and I was thinking of going to Mrs. Hunt's to make a call. I may as well go this evening, and then I can return the basket for you. Mr. Hunt is one of our trustees, you know, and I want to see him on a little matter about the school."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Dorothy. I know she uses that little basket for all sorts of things, and she might want it."

"She shall have it," said Miss Dorothy. "Well, dear, I hope your grandmother will not be very hard on you. The only point I can see that needs blame, is your wearing that flimsy delicate frock, but as you had never been blackberrying before, you couldn't know the unkindness of briars."

"There wasn't time to change the frock."

"Yes, I know."

"And you won't think I am very, very, wicked, even if they punish me? You will let Patty be friends with me?"

"I understand all about it, my dearie, and it shall not make the slightest difference so far as Patty is concerned. I only wish I could take your punishment for you."

At this extreme kindness, Marian flung herself upon the floor at Miss Dorothy's feet and sobbed aloud, "You are so dear! you are so dear!"

Miss Dorothy lifted her to her lap, smoothed back her hair and kissed her flushed cheeks. "Cheer up, dear," she said. "One need not be unhappy forever, and I hope this will soon be all over. Now, I must go

down and get those berries, or it will be too dark to find them. Don't cry any more," and with a smile Miss Dorothy left her.

It was quite dark when Mrs. Otway at last appeared. "I have talked it over with your grandfather," she began without preface, "and we have decided to punish you by having you wear to school all next week the costume you came home in. That is all we shall do. It will teach you to be more careful next time. You may come down to supper now," and Marian meekly followed.

The blackberries were on the table, but Marian could not touch them. The horror of appearing before her schoolmates in the spotted petticoat filled her with dismay, and although her grandmother felt that she had been really very lenient, no punishment she could have devised would have been more humiliating to the little girl. She had always been a very dainty child, taking pride in her clothes and being glad that she could appear as well as any one she knew. How could she face nineteen pairs of wondering eyes upon Monday morning? She could see the amused countenances, hear the suppressed giggles, and imagine the laughing comments whispered with hands hiding mouths. If only she could fall sick and die so she might never go to school again.

No one paid much attention to her as she sat there barely tasting her supper, though she should have been hungry after her long walk and her early lunch. Miss Dorothy once or twice looked her way and nodded reassuringly, while Heppy slipped an extra large piece of cake on her plate as she was passing it around.

But after Marian had gone to bed and was lying forlornly awake, after an hour of trying to sleep, Miss Dorothy tiptoed into her room to bend over her, and seeing the wide eyes, to say: "I have been down to Mrs. Hunt's. She is a dear. Go to sleep, honey. Just have faith that it will all come out right. Don't worry. I am going to leave my door open so you will not feel that you are all alone." And with a kiss she left her to feel somehow quite satisfied that matters were not so desperate as they seemed, and that Monday's trial might in some way be set aside if she had faith.

Chapter 6

The White Apron

But Monday morning came and there seemed no prospect of any change in Mrs. Otway's decision. She came herself to see that Marian was clad in the costume of disgrace, and she was sternly sent out with the order not to be late. But lest she should shame Miss Dorothy the child lingered out of sight around the corner till her teacher should have passed by and then she ventured down the street by herself. No one imagined the agony each step cost her, nor how she avoided any familiar face, crossing and recrossing as she saw an acquaintance in the distance. She was even about to pass Mrs. Hunt's gate without looking up when some one called her.

"Marian, Marian," came Mrs. Hunt's pleasant voice. "Stop a minute, chickadee."

The first impulse was to run on, but that meant reaching the schoolhouse so much the sooner, so the child hesitated and presently was captured by Mrs. Hunt, who bore down upon her as one not to be denied.

"I've been watching for you," she said. "Come right along in. You have plenty of time. I have something to say to you. There, never mind, I know the whole story and I ought to have all the blame, for it was myself that urged you to go. Now your grandma never said you were not to cover up that ridiculous petticoat, did she? She said you were to wear it, I know, and wear it you must, of course.

"Now, look here, I have an apron that was my little angel Annie's; it's a real pretty one, and it is made so it will cover you all up. I hunted it out this morning early. Put your arms in the sleeves. That's it. Just as I thought; it covers you well up and hides all the spots, doesn't it? It is a little yellow from lying, but no matter, it is clean and smooth. I've two or three more the same pattern. I always liked 'em with those little frills on the shoulders.

"Now, never mind, I know just what you're going to say, but you needn't. I'm taking all the responsibility of this. Just you go along to

school and feel as happy as you can. I'm going to see your grandmother before you get home, and I'll make it all right with her, so you are not to bother yourself one little mite. Now trot along, and hurry a little, or you might be a wee bit late. You can wear the apron home. You look real nice in it."

Marian started forth as she was bidden, and then overwhelmed by her sense of relief, she raced back to throw her arms around her good friend's neck and say, "Oh, you are so good. I do love you, I do. What should I do without you and Miss Dorothy?"

"Bless her heart," murmured Mrs. Hunt, giving her a hearty hug. She stood in the doorway, looking after her till she was out of sight. "I never expected to be so happy in seeing another child wear anything of my Annie's," she murmured, wiping her eyes as she entered the house.

The girls were trooping into the schoolroom from the playground when Marian reached the spot, and Miss Dorothy was already at her desk. She looked across and gave Marian a bright smile and an understanding nod as she came in, as much as to say: "What did I tell you? Hasn't it all come out right?" As hers was not the only apron worn, Marian did not feel at all oddly dressed, and her relief was so great that she smiled every time any one looked at her.

Alice sought her out at recess and asked eagerly: "Was your grandmother awfully mad?"

"She didn't like it," returned Marian evasively.

"What did she do?"

"She didn't do anything. She sent me to my room."

"Was that all? Well, I'm glad you came off so easily," said Alice. "We all know how particular your grandmother is, and we were afraid she would do something awfully severe." Then Ruth came up and Marian went off with her to eat luncheon, so no more was said on the subject.

"Mrs. Hunt told me I could wear it home," said Marian to herself, as she went up street from school. She was alone, for Miss Dorothy had been detained and had told her not to wait. Marian paused at Mrs. Hunt's gate to see if she were there to give her further encouragement, for as she was nearing home, the child felt her spirits oozing. What would her grandmother say? She remembered, however, that Mrs. Hunt had charged her not to worry, so, finding all silent and deserted at her friend's house, she plucked up courage, believing that Mrs. Hunt had not failed her, and that she was probably at that very moment, closeted with her grandmother.

She was not disappointed, for as she entered the sitting-room she saw the two having a lively chat. "Here comes the child," cried Mrs. Hunt cheerily. "We were just talking over old times, Marian. I was reminding your grandmother of the time we all went nutting to Jones's lot, and she fell into a mud-hole and was plastered to her ears. She had to sit in the sun till she dried off, and then I took her home. My mother rigged her up in some of my clothes, and she went home with her heart in her mouth." Marian smiled. She understood the method Mrs. Hunt was taking to smooth matters over for herself.

"Another time," Mrs. Hunt turned to the other lady, "do you remember, Maria, when we all went to Perryman's Beach and waded in the water? You'd had a cold or something, and were afraid your mother would find out you'd gone with us. She did find out, I remember, because you didn't dry your feet well, and your bed was full of sand the next morning. Dear me, dear me, that was a good while ago, wasn't it?"

Mrs. Otway was smiling with a far-away look in her eyes. "I remember," she said.

"You can't put old heads on young shoulders," went on Mrs. Hunt, "and if our mothers had looked ahead and had seen what sober old matrons we would become, I guess they wouldn't have worried as much as they did over our little pranks."

Marian edged up to her good friend who put her arm around her. Mrs. Otway turned her eyes upon her granddaughter. "Where did you get that apron, Marian?" asked Mrs. Otway, a change coming over her face.

"I lent it to her," Mrs. Hunt spoke up. "It was my Annie's and I wasn't going to have Ralph Otway's daughter disgraced by going through the streets in a petticoat; I'm too fond of him and of her, too. I remember once how I made my Annie wear a purple frock she despised. It was the very week before she died," Mrs. Hunt's voice dropped, "and you can believe, Maria Otway, that if I had it to do over again, the purple frock would have gone in the fire before she should ever have worn it. Poor little darling, the girls made fun of it because it was so ugly and old-womanish. I could have spared her feelings and I didn't. I have that purple frock now," she went on. "I kept it to remind me not to hurt the feelings of one of His little ones when there was no need to." The tears were running down Mrs. Hunt's cheeks by now, but she went on: "You can think as you choose, but I have said my say."

"I don't think you would ever hurt any one's feelings if you could help it, Salome," said Mrs. Otway, melted by the childless woman's tears. Then turning to Marian, "Run along now, Marian," she said.

"Shall I take off the apron?"

"No, you needn't."

And that was all there was of it, but the next morning before breakfast said Mrs. Otway outside Marian's door: "You may put on your blue gingham for school, Marian."

So did Mrs. Hunt triumph and so did Miss Dorothy laugh in her sleeve when she saw Marian appear in the clean blue frock. It was after school when she and Marian were coming home together that she confessed to having had something to do with bringing about this pleasant state of things. "I went down to Mrs. Hunt's and told her all about it," she said, "and we hatched up the scheme between us, so our works and your faith brought about what we wished for. If you had been really disobedient, and had intended to do wrong we could not have been so eager to help you, but I think your punishment exceeded the offense and Mrs. Hunt thought the same. Isn't she a dear woman, Marian? I feel as if I had known her all my days, and as if I could go right to her in time of trouble."

"That is the way every one feels," Marian told her. "I stopped there this morning to take back the apron, and she said she knew Annie was glad I had worn it. She talks that way about Annie, so I almost feel as if I knew her and as if she knew me."

"Perhaps she does," returned Miss Dorothy quietly. "Now, when are you going to send the letter to your father? Don't you think it is most time you were getting it ready? And, by the way, I have not shown you my camera. I left it in the city to be put in order and it came this morning. Now, I was thinking it would be very nice to send your father a little book of snap pictures of his small daughter. I will take them, and can develop and print them myself. I have some gray paper that we can cut into sheets to be folded the proper size to mount the pictures upon, and it will make a very nice present, don't you think so?"

"Oh, Miss Dorothy!" Marian's face showed her delight. "I think that is the very loveliest idea that any one ever thought of. I think you have an angelic mind for thinking of things."

Miss Dorothy laughed. "I am so glad you are pleased with the idea. My plan is not to take the pictures all at once, but as I happen to catch you in a characteristic position, or an artistic one. For instance, one can be taken at school at your desk, or the blackboard; another in the garden, another in the sitting-room with your grandparents, another with Tippy and Dippy."

"More and more lovely," cried Marian. "Then he will feel almost as if he were here seeing me every day, and will get acquainted with me so much better in that way. I don't feel as if my father and I were very well acquainted."

"You poor little pet, of course you don't, but once you begin sending letters back and forth it will be quite different."

"Yes, I think so, too. Miss Dorothy, do you suppose my father will ever come home?"

"I don't know why he shouldn't."

"I do; it is because grandpa will not ask him to. I think grandma would like to, but grandpa won't let her; that is what I think, and I believe Mrs. Hunt thinks so, too."

Miss Dorothy was silent for a moment, then she said: "Perhaps we'd better not talk about it, dear, for I don't know the circumstances, and I might not judge correctly, but if it is right that he should come, I think your writing to him will be the surest way of bringing it about the sooner. Shall we write the letter this afternoon?"

"Oh, please."

"Then come to my room in about an hour and we'll try it."

Marian was promptly on hand when the hour arrived, and seated herself in a great twitter before the machine. She began bravely enough: "My dear father," and then she paused, but slowly went on till she had completed half a page of typewritten words. Miss Dorothy did not offer any suggestions, but sat at the other side of the room before her writing-table. At the pause in the clicking of the typewriter she looked up. "Well," she said, "you haven't finished yet, have you?"

"I don't know," responded Marian doubtfully. "Would you mind looking at what I have done?"

Miss Dorothy came over and read the few stiff lines:

"My dear father: I have learned to write upon the typewriter which belongs to my teacher. I hope you are well. I am well and so are the rest of the family. We have very pleasant warm weather at present. I hope you have the same in Berlin. I thought you might be pleased to receive a letter from me, although it is not the first of the year. I go to school now. There are twenty pupils in our room. They are all little girls."

"Oh, dear, dear," exclaimed Miss Dorothy, "is that the way you feel when you are writing? Why, you are talking to your father, remember. Just listen to the way I write to mine." She read from the sheet she held in her hand:

"Dear old daddy: Isn't this gorgeous weather? I wish you and I were off for a real old time tramp this afternoon. How we would talk and turn our hearts inside out to each other. I can see you with your eyes twinkling under that disreputable old hat of yours, and I can feel your polite hand under my independent elbow when there is a stream to jump or a wall to climb, the dear hand that I never need for that sort of help, but which you pretend I do because I am your girl still, if I am big enough to face the world by myself.

"Well, daddy, I have been teaching for more than a week, and haven't had one cry over it. Isn't that courage for you? Not that my pupils are all angels, oh, no, this is not heaven, dear dad, but it is really a very nice place, and there are some dear people here.

"Did you ever happen to meet a Mr. William Hunt and his wife? He is a very good sort, and she is a perfect darling, one of those rare flowers whose fragrance fills the air even on the highway; not one of the hothouse kind that has been forced to bloom out of season, for out of season and in season she is always blooming and shedding forth her sweetness." Miss Dorothy paused.

"Oh, but Miss Dorothy, I could never write like that," exclaimed Marian in an awe-stricken tone.

"Perhaps not just like that, but you can tell him about yourself and about the people you know, Mrs. Hunt, for instance, and your schoolmates, and Tippy and Dippy."

"And you?"

"Yes, and me, if you like."

"Oh, very well, I will try again. I didn't know we ought to write letters like that."

"That is the very kind we should write. I will finish mine while you do yours." So for the next few minutes the tapping of the typewriter drowned the scratching of Miss Dorothy's pen, which flew steadily over her paper.

At last Miss Dorothy looked up. "There," she exclaimed, "I have finished mine. How are you getting on?"

"Oh, much better. I have written ever so much. I am almost at the bottom of the page, and I think you will have to put another sheet in for me, if you will be so good."

"I'll do it with pleasure. May I see what you have written, or would you rather not?"

"Oh, please look. I have told him about school and about you and some of the girls. There is a great deal more I could say, but I will leave out Tippy and Dippy this time."

Miss Dorothy read down the page and at the end she stooped and kissed the child. "You have paid me a lovely compliment, dear," she said. "I am glad you feel that way," for Marian had written: "We have the loveliest teacher in the world. Her name is Miss Dorothy Robbins. She is like Mrs. Hunt, but can understand little girls better, for she is younger and prettier. I love her very much."

At last the letter was finished, folded and addressed, and Miss Dorothy promised to mail it herself. It had been a great undertaking for Marian, who was quite tired out by her afternoon's work, but who was very happy now that it was done, for the very act drew her nearer her father.

She went down that same evening to tell Mrs. Hunt about it. There was neither baking nor pickling going on this time, but she found her friend in her sitting-room, a basket of mending by her side. "You are always busy, aren't you, Auntie Hunt?" said Marian. Mrs. Hunt was called Auntie, by many of her friends.

"Yes, dear, I think most busy people are happy, and I am sure all happy people are busy about something. Well, how goes it up at the brick house?"

"Oh, very well, indeed. What do you think I have been doing to-day?"

"Can't guess. There is one thing I know you have not been doing. I'll wager a sixpence you've not been blackberrying," and Mrs. Hunt laughed.

The color flew into Marian's face. "No, indeed, I haven't been, and I shall not probably ever go again until I'm a grown lady, and can do as I please."

"Do you think all grown-ups do as they please?"

"Why, don't they?"

"Not a bit of it. But there, tell me what is the wonderful thing you have been doing?"

"I have written a letter to papa all by myself, and Miss Dorothy has mailed it. She put the stamp on and took it to the post-office just now with her letters."

"Well, well, well, but won't he be pleased to get it? That's a fine young woman, that Miss Dorothy of yours."

"Isn't she?"

"She is so. She made us a nice visit the other evening. She is a girl after my own heart, none of your vain, self-absorbed young persons, always concerned in her own affairs, but one of the real hearty kind that thinks of others as well as herself, and has her eyes open to what is best in life. I like her."

"And she likes you."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"I wish you could see the kind of letters she writes to her father, but then," Marian added thoughtfully, "he must be the kind of father it is easy to write that way to."

"I'll be bound he is the right kind to have a daughter like that. She has no mother, she tells me. Her aunt keeps house for them, and there is quite a family of children."

"Yes, and Patty is the youngest. She is going to write to me."

"Bless me, how you are blossoming out into a correspondent. Well, don't let it take up so much of your time that you won't be able to drop in as often as usual. There is a little basket of grapes in the pantry; you can take it to your grandma; the pear on top grew for you to eat right now."

Marian needed no second hint, but sought out the fruit and was not long in burying her teeth in the yellow juicy pear, and then because it grew dark early, she hurried away that she might be home "before the dark catches you," said Mrs. Hunt.

Chapter 7

Patty's Letter

One day a few weeks later Marian ran to Miss Dorothy with a letter her grandfather had just brought in, and when her teacher opened it, she saw her smile as she drew a sheet from within the longer letter. "This is for you, Marian," said Miss Dorothy.

"It is from Patty, I know," cried Marian delightedly, and she took the long-wished for letter over to the window while Miss Dorothy turned her attention to her own home news.

Patty's was a nice cordial little note which told about her lessons and her friends, and which said that she hoped Marian and she would soon meet and be very chummy. "I know I shall like you," wrote Patty, "because Dolly says so, and Dolly is nearly always right."

"I think so, too," said Marian aloud. She took much longer to read her letter than Miss Dorothy did to read hers, for she was not very expert in reading written pages. Miss Dorothy had laid down the closely written sheets which she had been holding, and was looking out of the window thoughtfully when Marian at last came to "Your affectionate friend, Patty Robbins."

"It was such a nice letter," she said looking up with a pleased sigh.

"I am very glad you found it so," returned Miss Dorothy with a smile.

"Was yours a nice one?"

"Yes, it is from my father, and he always writes delightful letters. I hope to see him and Patty both on Saturday. Dad has some business in the city, and Patty needs a new coat, so he is going to take her with him. I am to meet them there, for poor dad would never know how to buy a coat. Do you often go to the city, Marian?"

"I never have been but once."

"Really? I was just thinking how nice it would be if you could go with me and meet Patty; then we three could go shopping and have lunch somewhere together."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy!" Such a plan was beyond Marian's wildest dreams. She looked radiant for a moment, then her face fell.

"What is the matter?" asked Miss Dorothy.

"I am afraid grandma will not let me go. I never have been but that once, and then grandma had to go to the dentist; grandpa could not go with her and didn't want her to go alone."

"But what about your clothes and things? Don't you have to go there for them?"

"Grandma never gets me ready-mades. Miss Almira Belt makes everything I wear. Do you suppose she always will do it?"

"I hope not," returned Miss Dorothy gravely, then she laughed as she pictured a grown-up Marian arrayed in frocks of Miss Almira's make. They did very well for a little girl, for they were of good material and neatly made, if old-fashioned in cut.

"Do you think grandma would let me go?" asked Marian, a faint hope dawning within her.

"I shall find out."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, are you really going to ask her?"

"I certainly am."

"But I am afraid she will say it is too expensive. She doesn't believe in spending money in that way on little girls. She allows me to go to church fairs and such things when they are for a good cause, but she says journeying is not necessary, that it excites me and I am better off at home."

"But you would really like to go," said Miss Dorothy disregarding this last speech.

"It would be the most beautifullest thing that ever happened to me."

"Such a small pleasure," said Miss Dorothy half to herself. "Well, dear, if it is only a question of expense, that shall not stand in the way, I promise you. Fifty cents or so would do it, and that is not a large sum."

Here Marian took alarm. "But, Miss Dorothy, you mustn't pay for me. You must keep your money for Patty and the others. You mustn't spend it on me."

"Mustn't I?" Miss Dorothy looked over at her with a little knowing smile. "Then I won't do it since you are so particular, but I have a scheme of my own and we shall see how it will work out. Are you willing to earn it?"

"Indeed I am; I should like it above all things. I never earned any money for myself, but I have earned some for the heathen."

Miss Dorothy made a little grimace. "Very well, if you are willing to earn your way, you may consider yourself invited to make the journey at

your own expense. I guarantee sufficient work to pay for your ticket. I don't suppose you will object to being paid in advance."

Marian looked doubtful. "Well—if——"

"If—if——What an ifer you are. I don't mean all in advance, only a part. Do you agree to that?"

"I don't suppose it would be wrong to agree to that."

"You must have a Puritan conscience," said Miss Dorothy laughing.

"What is that?"

"It is something that is very unhealthy sometimes. I will see that you begin your work to-morrow."

"Do please tell me now what it is."

"No, no, you might back out," Miss Dorothy laughed. "I'll tell you when the time comes. In the meantime your grandma's consent must be had. Perhaps I'd better settle it at once. Will you go with me to ask her?"

Marian hung back. "Oh, if you don't mind," she said, "I'd rather not."

"You're no kind of a soldier. See me walk up to the cannon's mouth." And leaving the room, Miss Dorothy ran lightly down-stairs.

Marian followed slowly, but though she hesitated at the sitting-room door where she heard voices, she did not tarry, but went on down to the lower floor and into the garden where Tippy and Dippy lay asleep in the sunshine. Dippy opened one eye and stretched himself as Marian approached. She picked him up and carried him down to the apple tree.

"I've had a letter from Patty," she told him when she was settled in the crotch of the tree, "and maybe,—it is only maybe,—Dippy, I am going to the city on Saturday. I don't suppose you would care anything about it. I am sure you would much rather stay here and chase grasshoppers, but I want to go so powerfully that I think I shall cry my eyes out if grandma says I can't. I know she wouldn't consent if I asked her, but maybe she will if Miss Dorothy does." She sat still cuddling Dippy who had fallen asleep again. From her point of vantage she could look up and down the street. She had learned not to expect to move the mountain, but the mustard seeds were again in her mind.

Presently she saw Miss Dorothy come out the front door and turn down the street. She crept along the limb on which she sat, leaving Dippy to look out for himself, and gained the wall from which she could look directly down upon the pavement. She must ask Miss Dorothy what success she had had. "Miss Dorothy, Miss Dorothy," she called softly when her teacher came near. Miss Dorothy looked up. "What did she say?" asked Marian.

"She hasn't said yes yet," replied Miss Dorothy. "What are you doing up there?"

"Oh, just nothing but looking around and thinking, about the mustard seed, you know."

"Oh, yes. Very well, I'm about to do the works, so you stay there and exercise the faith, and perhaps between us we'll manage to get this settled to our satisfaction."

"Where are you going?" asked Marian as Miss Dorothy walked on.

"To attend to the works," called back Miss Dorothy mysteriously. "Faith and works, you know."

Marian crawled back again to the crotch of the tree. Dippy had jumped down, not being pleased at having his nap disturbed, so Marian did not go after him but sat looking off at the mountain. "I want to go, oh, Lord, I do want to go," she said wistfully, "and I believe you will let Miss Dorothy manage it, yes, I do." She sat with her eyes fixed upon the mountain for some time, then she gave a long sigh, and changed her position. "I believe I'll go get Patty's letter and read it over again," she said, beginning to climb down the tree.

In a little while she was back again in her old place, letter in hand. She had finished reading it and was looking off down street watching for Miss Dorothy's return when she saw Mrs. Hunt entering the front door; she had come down street this time, instead of up. "She's come to see grandma, I suppose," said Marian. Then a thought flashed across her mind; she wondered if Miss Dorothy's works had anything to do with Mrs. Hunt's coming. To be sure Miss Dorothy was not with her, but neither had she been that other time when Mrs. Hunt had managed so well about the apron. Marian could not resist the temptation of going in to hear what her grandmother and Mrs. Hunt were talking about. She paused at the door of the sitting-room. Mrs. Hunt sat rocking in one of the haircloth rockers, Mrs. Otway in the other.

"Yes," Mrs. Hunt was saying, "Dr. Grimes says she's not likely to be about again soon if she gets over it."

Mrs. Otway looked very grave. "I'm sorry for more reasons than one. Marian needs a new coat, and I had counted on Almira's making it."

It was Miss Belt, then, of whom they were talking. Marian crept softly in and sat down in a corner where she could hear more.

"They think she got it up there at Billing's," Mrs. Hunt went on. "She was sewing there a while ago, and Dr. Grimes says the water on that place isn't fit to drink; they ought to boil it. Like as not that is where she did get it. Typhoid is pretty slow, but she has a good nurse in Hannah,

and I don't doubt she'll pull through. Is that you, Marian? Come here, honey."

Marian went to her old friend. "I was telling about Almira Belt's being down with typhoid," said Mrs. Hunt.

"Oh, isn't that too bad?" Marian's sympathies were real. She liked Miss Almira, though she didn't enjoy having her cold scissors snipping around her shoulders, and her bony fingers poking at her when she stood up to be fitted.

"It is too bad," returned Mrs. Hunt, "for her work has to lie by; there's no one else to do it, for her sister Hannah has her hands full."

"I'm truly sorry," said Mrs. Otway shaking her head, "with the winter coming I am afraid it will go hard with them."

"Yes, winter isn't far off," said Mrs. Hunt. "William says he thinks we'll have early snow. We'll all have to keep the Belts in mind, and I guess they'll not suffer. Well, I must be going. I thought you'd want to hear about Almira; you're always so ready to look out for the sick, Maria."

"I certainly shall not let Almira want for anything I can do," returned Mrs. Otway with emphasis. "She has been a good and faithful worker all her days, and I hope her years of usefulness are not ended yet. Thank you for coming to tell us, Salome."

"Well, I knew you'd want to know," repeated Mrs. Hunt. "By the way, Maria, I hear Miss Robbins is going to town on Saturday, and I shouldn't wonder if there'd be something to get for Almira. I don't doubt Miss Robbins would attend to it."

"I am sure she would," returned Mrs. Otway. "She is always very ready to offer her services."

"You like her right well, don't you?" said Mrs. Hunt.

"Very much indeed; we are glad to have her with us."

"That's what I surmised. What was I going to say? Oh, yes, you were remarking that Marian needed a winter coat, and she will need it, cold as it is growing, for I remember you sent her last year's one in the missionary box. Why not let Miss Robbins get one for her in the city? Marian could go along, and she'd be glad of her company. It wouldn't be much trouble if the child were there to fit it on. You could tell her the kind you wanted, and I'll venture to say you'd pay less than for the cloth and making."

"Perhaps that would be a good plan," replied Mrs. Otway, as if it had not been presented before. "I'll see about it when Miss Dorothy comes in."

"Oh, may I go?" Marian breathed softly, but at that moment the door was shut after Mrs. Hunt, and her grandmother did not hear the question, which was just as well, as Marian on second thoughts decided, for if she thought the child wanted to go for a frolic she might withhold her consent. So Marian wisely held her tongue and went out to the garden again.

No more was said upon the subject until the next day and Marian was afraid it was forgotten, but in the afternoon Miss Dorothy called her. "Come in here, young woman, and earn your trip to town."

Marian obeyed with alacrity. Miss Dorothy was seated before her typewriter. "Come here and I will show you what you have to do," she said. "You are to make twenty copies of this little slip. You must make as many as you can upon one sheet of paper, about so far apart. You know now perfectly well how to put in the paper and how to take it out. Tomorrow you can make twenty slips more, twenty the day after, making sixty slips in all; you will be paid half a cent for each slip, and eventually you will earn sixty cents, just what a round trip ticket costs. Do you agree?"

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, of course, if you are sure I can do it."

"Of course you can do it, at first slowly, and then, as they are to be all alike, you will be able to do the last with your eyes shut. Now, I'll leave you to go ahead."

"Please——"

"Please what?"

"Wait till I have done one to see if it is all right."

"Very well, that is a small favor to grant."

"And, tell me, am I really to go?"

"The powers that be, have so decreed."

"And I can pay my own way?"

"Yes, that is one of the reasons. Your very wise and astute teacher remarked that it would teach you self-reliance and independence, help to make you resourceful, broaden your experiences. Oh, me! what didn't she argue?"

Marian turned adoring eyes upon her. "And Mrs. Hunt?" she said.

"Did you think she had something to do with it? Well, she did without knowing it, for I was on my way to her house when she came here with the news of Miss Almira's illness, and all unconsciously she did us a good turn by suggesting that you go up to the city with me to get a coat. Wasn't it funny that it should happen that way? I didn't mean about poor Miss Almira; that is anything but funny, but it is strange that Mrs.

Hunt should have come around with a piece of news that settled the whole matter. When your grandma told me you were to go, I came near laughing outright, but when I knew the reason I did look concerned, I hope. She said she had been thinking over the matter of your going to the city with me. Would it be too great a task, and would I have time to select a coat for you? No, I said it would be no task at all, for I should be doing the same for my little sister.

"Here I ran against a snag, for your grandmother said that perhaps I could get yours without your being there, for my little sister could be your proxy. 'Oh, but,' I said, 'Patty is short and chubby while Marian is tall and slender. I am afraid I could never select the proper garment unless she were there to try it on.' 'But the expense,' said grandma. 'Sixty cents would do much good in some other direction.' 'Perhaps,' I said, 'I can get a coat for less than the price you have fixed upon, if I get the two together.' She wasn't so sure of that. Then I said, 'I have a little work that I promised a friend of mine to do for her, typewritten slips, which Marian could do perfectly. If I go to the city on Saturday I cannot get them all done as promptly as they should be, but if Marian could help me, I could share the pay and she could then make her own expenses.' At this grandma succumbed, and so, my dear, we are going. Now, I must go, for you will never do twenty slips before dark if I stand talking. That looks very well. Keep on as you have begun and you have nothing to fear."

Left to herself Marian tapped away industriously till just as it was getting too dark to see, she finished her twenty slips and proudly showed them to Miss Dorothy when she came in. The first money she had ever really earned was placed in her hand.

"If you don't get your entire sixty done this week," said Miss Dorothy, "you can hitch some of them on to next week's number, for we agreed to square this matter. So you needn't go to town with the feeling that you haven't earned the trip, whatever happens."

Marian smiled back her reply and ran down to show her precious dime to her grandfather. He actually patted her on the head and called her a good child while her grandmother looked over her spectacles and nodded approval.

The next day the second twenty slips were finished, but the third day only ten were done as Miss Dorothy had to use her typewriter for some school work, yet with only ten remaining of the first sixty, Marian felt that she had no right to feel aggrieved, especially as it had become very easy work. So it was a very happy little girl who went to sleep Friday night to dream of the next day's pleasures.

Chapter 8

A Trip to Town

The morning dawned bright and fair, a little cool, to be sure, but so much the better, thought Marian, for now grandma will be all the more ready for me to get my coat. The leaves danced in red, yellow and brown array, along the side-walk as Marian and Miss Dorothy stepped out of the house to take the early train. It was such an important occasion that Marian felt as if every one must be wondering where she was going so early, dressed in her best. But no one took any special notice of her except one of the schoolgirls whom she happened to meet, and who said: "Are you going to town, Marian?"

"Yes, Miss Dorothy and I are going shopping," returned Marian with beaming face.

"I thought you must be going; you're so dressed up," returned the child, and Marian smiled up at her companion with an air of conscious delight. Everything was so interesting; the starting of the train, the movements of their fellow passengers, the outlook from the car windows, the masses of red and yellow foliage which meant forests, the brown bare spaces which were fields, the little isolated houses, the small villages stretching away from the stations. There was not one moment of the journey when Marian was not entertained by what she saw along the way.

At last they reached the city and such a noise and confusion as met their ears, made Marian cling to Miss Dorothy. "Is it always like this?" she asked.

"Like this? How?"

"So noisy and crowded and everybody rushing about in such a hurry."

"Yes, I think it is. We notice it more, coming from our quiet little village. This is the car we take. We are to meet Patty at the library. Father has to go there to look up some references, and it seemed the best place to meet. Have you ever been there, Marian?"

"No, I never have."

"Then it will be something for you to see. A good library is a good lesson in many directions."

But Marian's eyes were not taking in rows of books or library appointments when they reached the reading-room. She was searching for a dark-haired, rosy-faced, plump little girl who should answer to the name of Patty. "I believe there she is," she whispered to Miss Dorothy, and nodded toward a corner where sat two whom Marian decided must be those they were looking for.

"Why, so it is," returned Miss Dorothy. "The idea of your seeing them first. How did you know them?"

"From the photographs you showed me, and from what you told me about them."

Patty had been on the lookout, too, and spied them at once. She hurried forward, threw her arms around her sister and gave her a fervent hug, then she turned to Marian. "I am so glad you could come," she said heartily. "I was so afraid maybe you couldn't and I did so want us to be together to-day."

"Dad is so absorbed he hasn't seen us yet," said Miss Dorothy, making her way to the corner where her father sat. "I wonder if I can steal up behind him and take him unawares." She had almost reached him when he caught sight of her. Down went the book, he jumped up and had her in his arms in a minute. "Come, come," he said, "let us get out where we don't have to whisper. I'll come back later," and he hurried them into the corridor where they could speak freely. He was not a very tall man, but was broad-shouldered and a little inclined to be stout. "Now," he said with a pleasant smile at Marian, "I am willing to bet a cookie, that I can tell who this is. You look like your father, my dear. I knew him very well when I was younger, for I will venture to say you are a Miss Somebody Otway."

"Her name is Marian," said Patty, "and we are going to be great friends."

"You are? Isn't it early in the day to make such predictions?" said Mr. Robbins.

"No." Patty shook her head. "I knew the minute I saw her that we were going to be. I like her, don't you, daddy?"

"If she is as nice as she looks, I do," was the reply, and Marian felt much pleased at being made of such consequence. She was not used to being noticed and these friendly people pleased her. She wondered if her father would be as cheery, and as affectionately disposed as Mr. Robbins.

She would ask this pleasant man about her father some day when they were better acquainted.

"Now, let me see, what is the programme?" said Mr. Robbins to his elder daughter.

"We three females are going shopping. I am to buy Patty a coat. Is there anything else I am to get for the family?"

"Dear me, yes. I have a long list that your Aunt Barbara gave me; she said you would know. I have it somewhere about me." He felt in his pockets and presently brought out the list which Miss Dorothy looked over.

"Oh, these will not be much trouble," she assured him. "They are all little things. I can easily see to them all."

"That is good; I am glad to have that responsibility removed," said her father. "You will want some money, I suppose."

"Yes, but not very much," Miss Dorothy smiled encouragingly. She knew too well the many demands upon that none-too-well-filled pocket-book, and when her father took out a roll of bills and handed them to her she gave some back to him. "I shall not need all that," she told him. "Patty's coat is the only really expensive thing I shall have to get."

"Very well, then," said her father, "but you must be sure to have enough. Now, where shall we meet for lunch?"

"Oh, are we all to lunch together?" said Miss Dorothy in a pleased voice. "Suppose we go to Griffin's; it is a nice quiet place."

"What time?"

"About one, I think."

"All right, one sharp, then. Sure you've enough money?"

Miss Dorothy nodded. "Quite enough. Dear dad," she said as he moved off, "he is so generous. I don't believe he has a mean bone in his body."

This set Marian to wondering if one had a mean bone which it would be; she thought possibly an elbow; they could be so sharp, but before she had settled the question Patty began to talk to her and they were then so busy getting acquainted that there was no time to think of mean bones or anything else but themselves.

It was a most delightful experience to go around the big shops, and look at the pretty things. Patty had such a pleasant way of making believe which added to the fun. "Now you say what you are going to buy," she began, "and I'll say what I am. I think I'd like that pretty shiny, pinky silk hanging up there."

Marian looked at her in amazement. "Oh, have you enough money to buy that?" she asked in surprise.

Patty laughed. "Not really, I am just pretending I have."

"Oh," Marian's face cleared. "I'd like to pretend, too. Are you going to buy it for yourself?"

"Dear me, no. I am going to get it for Dolly; she would look dear in a frock of it. I shall not get much for myself. It's much more fun to get for other people, for they don't know it and it doesn't make them feel bad if they don't get the things. When I get things for myself, sometimes I am a little wee bit disappointed because I am only make-believing. I think Dick would like one of those neckties, the red one, I think."

Marian felt suddenly very poverty-stricken; there were no Dollies or Dicks for her to buy make-believes for. She sighingly mentioned the fact to Patty.

"Oh, that doesn't make any difference," said Patty cheerfully; "you can buy for some one else. I think I'll get you that Roman sash."

"Oh, lovely, and I'll get you the blue one. Would you like it?"

"I'd love it."

"I might get Miss Dorothy one of those pretty lacey things in the case."

"That would be fine; she'd be so pleased." Patty spoke so exactly as if Marian really intended to buy it, that the latter laughed outright. Patty was really great fun.

"I'll get something for dear Mrs. Hunt," Marian went on.

"Oh, do. I know about her. Dolly wrote us how kind she was to her. She must be awfully nice."

Marian overlooked the "awfully." She was not going to criticise anything about Patty if she could help it. "I think I ought to get something for poor Miss Almira," she went on. "It is because she is so ill and couldn't make my coat that I could come to-day. What do you think would be nice for her, Patty?"

Patty's eyes roved around the big store. "See, those soft-looking wrappers hanging up way over there? I think one of those would be just the thing for a sick person. Let's go look at them and pick one out. We'll tell Dolly we are going. She will be at that counter for some time."

They left Miss Dorothy while they went upon their interesting errand of selecting a proper robe for Miss Almira. They decided upon one of lavender and white, and then they returned to find that Miss Dorothy had finished making her uninteresting purchases of tapes, thread and the like, so they went to another floor to look at coats. Marian's was

chosen first and Patty was so pleased with it that she begged to have one like it, "If Marian doesn't mind," she said.

Marian did not in the least mind, in fact she would be delighted to know that she and Patty had coats alike, for then they could think of one another whenever they put them on. So one as near like Marian's as possible was selected for Patty, and then they went to a place Patty had been talking of all morning. This was an exhibition of moving pictures which Patty doted upon and which Miss Dorothy, herself, confessed she dearly liked. To Marian it was like exploring a new country, and she was filled with awe and delight, so they remained till the last minute and had to hurry in order to reach Griffin's by one o'clock.

Mr. Robbins was there, watch in hand. "Ten minutes late," he cried.

"It was that funny man trying to get his hat that kept us," declared Patty. "We had to see the end."

"She means the moving pictures," Miss Dorothy explained. "We were so absorbed we didn't realize how the time was going."

"Oh, well, well, never mind," said Mr. Robbins good-naturedly. "I have ordered lunch and we'll go eat it."

"Good!" exclaimed Patty. "I always like what dad orders much better than what I get myself. What did you get, daddy dear?"

"Beefsteak and French fried potatoes, hot rolls, chocolate for you ladies, coffee for myself. Would you like a salad, Dolly? We can have some ice-cream and cake, or whatever sweet you like, later."

Miss Dorothy declined the salad for them all, and her father led the way to a table near the windows where one could look out upon the street or in upon the room in which they were sitting. It was all very exciting and unusual to Marian who had never enjoyed such a high event in all her life as lunching at a restaurant with grown-ups. Everything was a matter of curiosity and pleasure from the garnished dish of beefsteak to the chocolate with whipped cream on top. The shining mirrors, the dextrous waiters, the music played by an orchestra, seated behind tall palms, made the place appear like fairy-land to the little village girl. "I'd like to do this every day," she confided to Patty.

"So should I," agreed Patty.

"No, you wouldn't," put in Mr. Robbins overhearing them. "You'd grow so tired of it that you would long for plain bread and butter in your own home. Nothing palls upon one so much as having to dine at a restaurant every day. I have tried it and I know."

Marian could scarcely believe this possible, but she supposed that such things appeared very different to men, and she was sure that it

would be many, many years before she would grow tired of it. After luncheon there came more shopping, and the time arrived all too soon when they must start for home. At parting Patty slipped a little package into Marian's hand. "It's for you," she whispered. "It isn't the Roman sash, but I hope you will like it. Dolly is going to ask your grandma if she can't bring you to make us a visit some day."

"How I should love to do that," was the fervent answer. Marian felt very badly that she had nothing to give Patty in return for her gift. "If you were a heathen," she said gravely, "I might have something to give you, too. I hope grandma will let me make the visit. I mean to think of the mustard seed very hard and maybe she will let me." Then before she could explain this strange speech to the puzzled Patty, Mr. Robbins said they must hurry to the train, and she had to leave Patty on the platform waiting till her train should be called, and wondering what sort of girl Marian could be to say such very unusual things.

Marian waited till the train was fairly under way before she opened the package Patty had given her. She found it contained a little doll. On a piece of paper was scribbled: "You said you didn't have any little dolls, so I got you this one. It cost only five cents. I hope you will think of me when you play with it." The doll was one which Marian had admired in the Five Cent store, and which she had wished she could buy. "I don't see when she got it," she said to Miss Dorothy, turning the doll around admiringly.

"Don't you remember when you ran to the door to listen to the street band that was playing outside?"

"Oh, yes. Was it then?"

"It was then. Patty was so pleased to get it so secretly."

"I shall call it Patty," said Marian. "I shall love her very much; she is so cunning and little, and I can do all sorts of things with her that I can't do with my big doll." This tiny Patty was company all the way home, and in a measure took the place of her lively namesake. Marian had been obliged to rely upon her own invention and imagination so much in her little life, which had lacked childish comrades, that she couldamuse herself very well alone or with slight things.

Miss Dorothy watched her as she murmured to the wee Patty and at last she said: "Have you had a good day, girlie?"

Marian cuddled up to her in the familiar way she had seen Patty do. "Oh, it has been a wonderful day, and I am so thankful for Patty," she said.

"Big Patty or this little one?" Miss Dorothy touched the doll with her gloved finger.

"For both. There is so much that is pleasant in the world, isn't there? Every little while something comes along that you never knew about before and it makes you glad. First you came, then there was school and the girls, and to-day came Patty and your father. He makes me feel very differently about fathers."

"He is a dear dad," said Miss Dorothy lovingly.

"Do you think mine will be like him? I've always thought of him as being like grandpa, not that grandpa isn't very nice," she added quickly, "but he doesn't think much about little girls, and never says funny jokey things to them as your father does. He never seems to notice the things I do, and your father talks to Patty about the little, little things I never knew grown up men were interested in."

"That's because he has to be father and mother, too. Our mother died when Patty was a baby, you know. Yes, daddy is a darling."

"I hope mine will be," said Marian earnestly. "I haven't any mother either, so perhaps he will feel like being father and mother, too. I wonder when I shall see him. I didn't use to think much about it, but since I have written to him, and all that, I think much more about him."

"That is perfectly natural, and I have no doubt but that when he finds out that you want to see him he will want to see you, and he will be crossing the ocean the first thing we know."

"Oh, do you really think so?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised, only you mustn't count too much on it. We must be getting those photographs ready pretty soon."

"I would like one of Patty and me together, I mean Patty Robbins, this is Patty Otway," and she held out her doll.

"We'll see if that can be arranged."

"How can it when we don't live in the same place?"

"I have a little plan that I cannot tell you yet. If it works out all right I will let you know."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, you are always making such lovely plans. What did I ever do without you? Has the plan anything to do with my going to visit Patty some time?"

"Maybe it has and maybe it hasn't. But, dear me, we are slowing up for Greenville. We must not be carried on to the next station. Have we all the things? Where is the umbrella? Oh, you have it. All right. I hope Heppy will give us hot cakes for supper, don't you?" So saying she led the way from the train and in a few minutes they were making their way up the

familiar street which, strange to say, had not altered in the least since morning, although Marian felt that she had been away so long something must surely have happened meanwhile.

Chapter 9

A Visit to Patty

After all it was not so very long before Marian and Patty met again, for a little cough which developed soon after the trip to town in course of time grew worse, and in course of time the family doctor announced that Marian had whooping-cough. Mrs. Otway was aghast. She had a horror of contagious diseases and kept Marian at a distance. "She must not go to school," she said to Miss Dorothy, "for the other children might take it."

This was a great blow to Marian, for it meant not only staying away from school, but from her schoolmates upon whom she had begun to depend, so it was a very sorrowful face that she wore all that day, and time hung heavily upon her hands. She wandered up-stairs and down, wishing for the hour to come when Miss Dorothy would return. Finally she went out to the garden, for her grandmother had told her to keep in the open air as much as possible, and it was still pleasant in the sunshine. "I don't suppose Dippy and Tippy will get the whooping-cough if I play with them," she remarked to Heppy, feeling that if these playmates failed her she would be desolate indeed.

Heppy laughed. "They're not likely to," she said, "though I have known plenty of cats to have coughs, and I have known of their having pneumony, but I guess you can risk it."

So Marian and the cats spent the morning in the garden and it was there Miss Dorothy found them when she came in to dinner. She had an open letter in her hand which she waved as she walked toward Marian. "What do you think?" she said. "Patty has the whooping-cough, too, though not very badly. Your grandmother was right when she said you probably got it the day we all went shopping."

"Oh, poor Patty! I wish she were here with me."

"And she wishes you were there with her. She is going to have lessons at home for a little while each day, and I think it would be a good thing if you could have them together. In fact, it struck me as such a good plan that I have spoken to your grandmother about it. Your grandfather has

taken up some work this winter which will keep him very busy, and he could not give you any time. I would be glad to, but my work grows more and more absorbing and your grandparents will not listen to my teaching you out of school hours, so as it seems a pity for you to lose all these weeks, I proposed that you should go to our house to keep Patty company. You will not have to study so very hard, for the whooping-cough must have plenty of outdoor air, and it would not do for you to be cooped many hours a day. What do you think of it?"

For a moment Marian looked pleased, then her face fell. "I should miss you so," she said.

"You dear child," returned Miss Dorothy, drawing her close. "So should I miss you, but I think I can arrange to come home every week now. It will mean very early rising on Monday morning in order to get here in time for school, but I can manage it, and I shall be able to reach home by six on Friday afternoon, so you see——"

"Oh, I do see, and I think that would be fine."

"My little Patty misses me, too, and so does Father. Aunt Barbara is an excellent housekeeper and a good nurse when any one is ill, but she is not much of a companion for daddy nor for Patty. Then, too, I hate to be out of it all. I long to keep up with the college news and the home doings, so I shall try going home at the end of the week, for awhile, anyhow."

"And did grandma say I could go?"

"She actually did. I think she is a little afraid of taking whooping-cough herself, for she asked me yesterday if I had ever known of any grown person having it, and I do know of several cases. I had it myself when I was three years old, but your grandma cannot remember that she ever had."

"I'm glad she can't remember," returned Marian with a laugh. "Who is going to hear our lessons, Miss Dorothy?"

"My sister Emily. She is two years younger than I, and is still studying. She is taking special courses at college, but thinks she can spare an hour or so a day to you chicks, especially as she expects to teach after a while, and she will begin to practise on you."

"I will take little Patty with me," declared Marian, picking up that person from where she was seated on a large grape leaf under a dahlia bush.

"So I would. I am sure she will like to visit Patty's dolls."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, you are so nice," exclaimed Marian giving her a little squeeze. "Grandma never says such things. She doesn't ever like to make believe. She says the facts of life are so hard that there is no time to

waste in pretending." Marian's manner as she said this was so like her grandmother's that Miss Dorothy could but smile. "I am glad you took some of the photographs for papa before I got the whoops," Marian went on; "the one at school and the one at Mrs. Hunt's. Oh, dear Mrs. Hunt will be sorry to have me go."

"She will, I know. She told me this morning that she was going to ask you to stay with her a while during the time you must be away from school. Should you like that better than going to Revell?"

"I'd like both," answered Marian truthfully.

"That is often the way in this world," returned Miss Dorothy. "It is frequently hard to choose between two equally good things. I will bring you all the home news every week, and can tell you whether Ruth knew her lessons, whether Marjorie was late, how Mrs. Hunt's fall chickens are thriving, and what Tippy and Dippy do in your absence. I shall be quite a newsmonger."

"What is a monger?"

"One who deals or sells. You can look it up in the dictionary when you go back to the house."

The preparations for her departure went forward quickly, and by Friday morning, Marian's trunk was packed, and all was in readiness. Her grandfather actually kissed her good-bye and gave her five cents. As her grandmother did not happen to be on hand at that moment to require that Marian should deposit the nickel in her missionary box, the child pocketed it in glee, and, at Miss Dorothy's suggestion, bought a picture postal card to send her father, giving her new address. Miss Dorothy wrote it for her, addressed and mailed the card, so Marian was satisfied that her father would know where she was. "I don't like to have him not know," she told Miss Dorothy. Mrs. Otway gave her granddaughter many charges to be a good girl and give no trouble, to take care of her clothes properly and not to forget to be obedient.

"As if I could forget," thought Marian.

Heppy had no remarks to make, but only grunted when Marian went to say good-bye to her. However as the child left the kitchen Heppy snapped out: "You'd better take along what belongs to you as long as you're bound to go."

"Take what?" asked Marian wonderingly, not knowing that she had left anything behind.

Heppy jerked her head in the direction of the table on which a package was lying.

"What is it?" asked Marian curiously.

"Something that belongs to you," said Heppy turning her back and taking her dish-towels out to hang in the sun.

Marian carried the package with her and later on found it contained some of Heppy's most toothsome little cakes. "It is just like her," Marian told Miss Dorothy. "She acts so cross outside and all the time she is feeling real kind inside."

Miss Dorothy laughed. "I am beginning to find that out, but I shall never forget how grim she seemed to me when I first came."

Mr. Robbins' house was very near the college, and Marian thought it the prettiest place she had ever seen. As they walked up the elm-bordered street, the college grounds stretched away beyond them. The gray buildings were draped in vines bright with autumn tints, and the many trees showed the same brilliant colors. In front of the Robbins' door was a pretty garden where chrysanthemums were all a-bloom, and one or two late roses had ventured to put forth. A wide porch ran along the front and one side the house, and on this Patty stood watching for them. She was not long in spying them and hurried down to meet them. "I am so glad you have whooping-cough," she called out before they came up. Then as they met and embraced she went on: "Isn't it fine, Marian, that we both have whooping-cough and winter coats alike? We're most like twins, aren't we? Come right in. There is a fire in the library, Dolly, and Emily has tea there for you."

"Good!" cried her sister, "that will go to the spot this chilly evening. Where are Aunt Barbara and dad?"

"Oh, puttering around somewhere."

"And the boys?"

"They went to practice for the game, but they ought to be home by now."

They entered the house and went into the library where a tall, dark-eyed girl was brewing tea. She looked up with a smile and Marian saw that she was a little like Miss Dorothy. "Here she is. Here is Marian," cried Patty.

Emily nodded pleasantly. "Come near the fire," she said. "It is quite wintry out. How good it is to see you, Dolly. I am so glad you are coming home every week."

"Oh, what are those?" said Miss Dorothy as her sister uncovered a plate.

"Your favorite tea cakes, but you mustn't eat too many of them or you will have no appetite for supper. It will be rather late to-night for the

boys cannot get back before seven and they begged me to wait for them. I knew you would be hungry, though, and so I had tea, ready for you."

The two little girls, side by side, comfortably sipped some very weak tea and munched their cakes while the older girls chatted. But Patty made short work of her repast. "Hurry up," she whispered to Marian, "I have lots of things to show you and we shall have supper after a while. Is your cough very bad?"

"Not yet."

"They say mine isn't but I hate the whooping part. I hope it won't get worse."

"I'm afraid it will, for we've only begun to whoop and they say it takes a long time to get over it."

"Oh, those old they-says always are telling you something horrid. Come, let me show you the boys' puppies before it gets too dark to see them; they're out in the shed."

"Oh, I'd love to see them." Marian despatched the remainder of her cake and was ready to follow Patty out-of-doors to where five tiny fox terriers were nosing around their little mother. They were duly admired, then Patty showed the pigeons and the one rabbit. By this time it was quite dark, so they returned to the house to see the family of dolls who lived in a pleasant room up-stairs.

"This is where we are to have lessons," Patty told her guest. "Isn't it nice? Those two little tables are to be ours, and Emily will sit in that chair by the window. We arranged it all. These are my books." She dropped on her knees before a row of low book shelves.

"Oh, how many," exclaimed Marian. "I have only a few, and most of those are old-fashioned. Some were my grandparents' and some my father's."

"Doesn't your father ever get you any new ones?"

"He might if he were here," Marian answered, "but you see I don't know him."

"Don't know your father?" Patty looked amazed.

"No. He lives in Germany, and hasn't been home for seven or eight years."

"How queer. Isn't he ever coming?"

"I hope he is. I wrote to him not long ago."

"Why, don't you write to him every little while?"

"No, I haven't been doing it, but I am going to now," she said, then, as a sudden thought struck her, she exclaimed: "Oh, dear, I am afraid I can't."

"Why not?" asked Patty.

"Because I used Miss Dorothy's typewriter at home. I don't write very well with a pen and ink, you know, though I can do better than I did."

"Oh, I expect you do well enough," said Patty consolingly, "and if you don't, dad has a typewriter, and maybe he will let you use that, and if he won't I know Roy will let you write with his. It is only a little one, but it will do."

"I think you are very kind," said Marian. "Is Roy your brother?"

"My second brother; his name is Royal. Frank is the oldest one and Bert the youngest of the three. There are six of us, you know; three girls and three boys. First Dolly and Emily, then the boys and then me."

"I should think it would be lovely to have so many brothers and sisters."

"It is, only sometimes the boys tease, and my sisters think I must always do as they say because they are so much older, and sometimes I want to do as I please."

"But oughtn't you to mind them?"

"Oh, I suppose so. At least when I don't and they tell daddy, he always sides with them, so that means they are right, I suppose."

There was some advantage in not having too many persons to obey, Marian concluded, and when the three boys came storming in, one making grabs at Patty's hair, another clamoring to have her find his books, and the third berating the other two, it did seem to Marian that there were worse things than being the only child in the house.

However, the boys soon subsided, so the two little girls were left in peace and Patty displayed all the wonders in her possession; the delightful little doll house which the boys had made for her the Christmas before, the dolls who inhabited it, five in number, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Montgomery, their two children and the black cook. "The coachman and nurse have to live in another house, there isn't room for them here," Patty informed Marian. "Which do you like best, hard dolls or paper ones?"

"Sometimes one and sometimes another," returned Marian. "I don't know much about paper dolls, though. Mrs. Hunt gave me some out of an old fashion book, but they got wet, and I haven't any nice ones now."

"Emily makes lovely ones," Patty told her, "and I'll get her to do some for us; I know she will."

"How perfectly lovely," exclaimed Marian, beginning to feel that she had been very lucky when Dame Fortune sent the Robbins family her way.

"There is Emily calling now," said Patty. "I suppose supper is ready and we must go down. I will show you the rest of my things to-morrow. Coming, Emily," she answered as she ran down-stairs.

But it was because Marian's trunk had come that Emily wanted the little girls, and when this was unpacked and Marian felt that she was fairly established supper was announced. It was a plain but well cooked and hearty meal such as suited the appetites of six healthy young persons, three of them growing boys. As she saw the bread and butter disappear, Marian wondered how the cook managed to keep them supplied.

True to her promise Patty asked Emily about the paper dolls that very evening and she smilingly consented to make them two apiece. "Just a father and a mother and a little child," Patty begged her sister.

"Very well," said Emily. "I think I can throw in the child."

"Marian, do you want the child to be a baby?" asked Patty.

"Oh, a tiny baby," said Marian. "If I may have that, I should be delighted."

"You shall have it," promised Emily and straightway fell to work to fill the contract for paper dolls, Marian watching her with a happy face. To see any one actually drawing anything as lovely as these promised to be was a new pleasure, and her ohs and ahs, softly breathed as each was finished, showed her appreciation.

The two little girls took themselves to a corner of the library where they could play undisturbed, making houses of the lower book shelves. "Oh, may we do that?" asked Marian in surprise as she saw Patty stacking the books on the floor.

"Oh, yes," was the answer, "if we put the books back again when we have finished. You take that corner and I'll take this, then we'll have plenty of room."

Such liberties were never allowed Marian at home, and she grew so merry over Patty's funny make-believes that more than once Miss Dorothy and her sister exchanged pleased glances, and once Miss Dorothy murmured: "I'd like her father to see her now. She has been starved for just that sort of cheerful companionship."

"She seems a very nice child," said Emily.

"She is," returned Miss Dorothy. "She has never had a chance to be spoiled."

Bedtime came all too soon, and the books were reluctantly put back on their shelves, the dolls safely stowed away in a large envelope, and Miss

Dorothy piloted the way to Patty's pretty little room which she was to share with Marian.

As Miss Dorothy stooped to give the two a good-night kiss, Marian whispered: "I've had such a lovely time. I'd like to live here always. I hope my whooping-cough won't get well for a long time."

Chapter 10

Running Away

The days for the most part went happily for the two little girls. They spent much time out-of-doors, lessons taking up only two hours a day. Beside the many outdoor plays which all children love there were others which Patty invented, and these Marian liked best. The two had some disagreements and a few quarrels, for Patty, being the youngest child in her family, was a little spoiled, and liked her own way. She was an independent, venturesome little body, and led Marian into ways she had never tried before. She loved excitement and was always planning something new and unusual.

One morning after the two had raced around the lawn till they were tired, had climbed trees, jumped from the top step many times, gathered chestnuts from the burrs newly opened by the frost, Patty was at her wits' end to know what to do next. "Let's run away," she said suddenly.

"Oh, what for?" said Marian to whom such adventures never suggested themselves.

"Oh, just because; just to do something we haven't done," was the reply.

"But where shall we run?"

"Oh, anywhere. Down there." Patty nodded toward the road which led from the college grounds.

Marian looked dubious. "But where would we stay at night, and where would we get anything to eat?"

"Oh, along the way somewhere."

"We haven't any money to buy food."

"No, but some one would give it to us if we asked."

"Why, then we would be beggars."

Patty nodded. "I've always thought I would like to try what it would be like not to mind your clothes, nor your face and hands. It would be rather fine, don't you think, not to have grown-ups say to you: Be careful

of your frock. Don't get your shoes wet. No lady ever has such a face and hands."

"Ye-es," doubtfully from Marian. "Suppose we should get lost and never find our way back."

"We couldn't if we kept a straight road. We might meet a princess in disguise, riding in her carriage and she might take us in with her. I should like to see a real princess."

"My father has seen one."

"I don't believe it."

"He has. Cross my heart. He wrote to grandma about her and said she looked like any one else."

"Then she couldn't have been a real princess," said Patty triumphantly.

"My father doesn't tell stories, I thank you," said Marian indignantly.

"You don't know whether he does or not; you don't know him," retorted Patty.

Marian gave her one look, arose from where she was sitting, and stalked into the house. Patty was at her heels in a moment. "Oh, please don't get mad," she begged.

Marian made no reply for a moment, then she said in a low voice, "I'm not exactly mad, but my feelings hurt me."

Patty was too warm-hearted to let this pass. She flung her arms around her friend's neck. "I was horrid to say that," she said, "when I have a father close by and you haven't any mother."

"Neither have you," returned Marian mollified.

"I know, but I have brothers and sisters, and live with my father. I think, after all, Marian, we won't run away, but we might go down that road a little way and see what it looks like."

"Haven't you ever been there?"

"No, we always go in the other direction." She did not say why, nor did she tell Marian that she had been warned of a rowdy neighborhood in the vicinity of some factories further on. "You see," she continued, "it would be fun to pretend we were running away. We could stay till it gets dark and we began to be afraid."

"Not till it is really dark," Marian improved on the suggestion, "but just till it begins to be."

"Well, yes, that would do. Come on, let us start."

"Don't you think we ought to take some lunch?"

"Well, maybe, though I would rather trust to luck; it would be much more exciting. I think I will take five cents that I have, and then if we don't see any chance of getting something to eat we can buy enough

to keep us from getting very, very hungry." So saying, she ran toward the house.

"Bring Patty Wee," called Marian after her.

"All right," answered Patty the Big from the door-step. She came out again directly with the money clasped in her hand, and bearing Patty Wee.

"I suppose we mustn't go near any children," said Marian as they started off, "for we might give them the whooping-cough."

"I'm sure I don't want to go near any," replied Patty independently. "See, the road we are going to take leads right past the chapel and down that hill."

"What are those chimneys sticking up there at the foot of the hill, where all that smoke is coming out?"

"They are the chimneys of the factories."

"What kind of factories?"

"Oh, some kind. I don't know. We can ask when we get home if you would like to know." She hurried Marian past the big factory buildings from which issued the clattering noise of machinery, and from whose chimneys black smoke was pouring. At the foot of the hill there was a little bridge spanning a rapid stream. Further up, the stream was bordered by willows, and a meadow beyond seemed an inviting playground. "Let's go up there," said Marian; "it looks so pleasant."

"We might fish if we had a hook and line," said Patty, bent on some new diversion.

"Oh, do you suppose there are any fish so near the factory?"

"There might be," returned Patty, "but as we haven't anything to catch them with they are perfectly safe."

Marian laughed, then added, "I think I am glad they are, for I don't believe it would make me very happy to see the poor things struggling and gasping."

"Then it is just as well we can't catch them, for I don't want to make you unhappy," said Patty. "See that big tree over there with that flat rock near it? I think it looks as if it would be a nice place to play."

"So it does. I wonder if we can reach it easily."

"I'll go and see. If it is all right I will call you. Just wait here for me."

Marian sat down on the stump of a tree near the bridge to wait. It was pleasant to hear the murmur of the water, and to watch the little eddies and ripples. It was a true Indian summer day, warm and hazy. The squirrels were whisking their tails in the trees near by, and the crows were cawing in a corn field not far off. Marian was enjoying it all very

much when Patty called, "Come, Marian, come. I've found something. Come around by the fence and creep under."

Marian obeyed and was soon by Patty's side. "What have you found?"

"Just see here," said Patty excitedly. "Some one has been playing here before us."

Marian stooped down to look where, in a little cave made by the large stone, was a small doll, a table made of a block of wood, some bits of blue china for dishes, a row of acorns for cups, and a bed of green moss. Outside stood a small cart made of a box with spools for wheels.

"Isn't it cunning?" said Patty, appealed to by the unusual. "Now we can play nicely."

"Do you think we ought to touch them?"

"Why not? They are out here where anybody could get them. I shouldn't wonder if some child had been playing here and forgot all about it. There's no telling how long they have been here." This quieted Marian's scruples and they took possession. Patty Wee, as they now called Marian's little doll, just fitted in the cart, so she was brought in state to visit the cave doll, whom Patty called Miggy Wig, neither knew just why.

It was much more interesting to serve grass and acorn kernels from broken bits of china than it was to have a real tea-party in an orderly nursery with real cups and saucers, and the strange doll added to the zest of the play because she was an unknown. The children speculated upon who might be her possible owner, and wondered if she were mourned and missed, or only forgotten. A fat toad, tempted out by the warm sunshine, hopped from under the stone and sat blinking at the children in such a funny way that they laughed so loud as to send him away.

Everything was going on merrily when presently the shrill whistle of the factory announced that it was noon, and pretty soon crowds of men, women, boys and girls trooped down the road toward a group of small houses further along. It was a noisy, jostling crowd and the two children were glad they were not nearer. They cowered down behind the big rock to wait till the factory hands had passed by.

In a few minutes Patty peeped forth. "They've gone," she whispered. "I don't believe they would have noticed us anyhow. Let's play that the fat toad is an enchanted prince, and that Miggy Wig is going to liberate him from his enchantment."

"All right," agreed Marian. "What shall Patty Wee be?"

"If Miggy Wig is the fairy, Patty Wee can be the princess who will wed the prince. Now Miggy Wig and I are going to gather three kinds of herbs to make the charm," said Patty.

Marian was delighted. She had but lately entered the wonderful region of fairy-land, but under Patty's guidance was becoming very familiar with its charms and enchantments.

Patty and Miggy Wig hied forth to gather the three kinds of herbs while Marian kept watch with Patty Wee. It was now so quiet that the toad ventured out again. Patty had dubbed him Prince Puff, a very fitting name the girls agreed. Marian was watching him as he did his funny act of swallowing, shutting his eyes and looking as if he meant to eat his own head, Patty said, when suddenly voices sounded behind her, angry voices.

"Well ain't that cheek?" cried some one.

Marian looked up and saw two shabby looking girls about her own age. She quickly rose to her feet, letting Patty Wee slip to the ground. The other Patty was some distance away.

"What business have you got here?" said the taller of the strange girls, stepping up.

"Why, we're just playing," replied Marian.

"Just playing," mimicked the girl. "Do you hear that, Pearl? Just playing with our things. Ain't that cheek for you? Let's show her what we think of folks that steal our belongings."

"I haven't taken a thing," said Marian indignantly. "I am not a thief."

"Where's my doll, then? Call me a liar, do you?" said the girl fiercely, and stepping still nearer she gave Marian a sounding slap on the cheek.

By this time Patty had seen the newcomers and had hurried up. "Don't you dare touch my friend," she cried. "We're not doing any harm to you and your things."

"Well, you've meddled with them, and you were going to take my doll; you've got it now. Give it to me," and the girl snatched Miggy Wee from Patty's hand. "They meddled, didn't they, Pearl?"

"Yes, they did," chimed in the younger girl. "They meddled, so they did."

"Well, they've got to hustle off pretty quick or I'll set my father's big dog on them. Get out, you thieves," she said to Patty and Marian.

"We are not thieves," replied Patty indignantly.

"What were you doing with my doll, then?"

"I didn't know it was yours. I didn't know it belonged to any one."

"Oh, you didn't," in sarcastic tones. "Perhaps you thought it grew here like that there weed; you look green enough to think that."

Patty clenched her hands and bit her lip to keep from making an answer which she knew would only aggravate matters. She drew herself up and gave the girl a withering look, then she turned to Marian. "Come, let us go," she said.

"Oh, you think you're very grand, don't you," said the girl teasingly. "Well, you're not, and I can tell you we're not going to let you off so easy. You've got to pay for the use of our playhouse. I'll take this in pay," and she grabbed Patty Wee from Marian.

"Oh, no, no," cried Marian in distress, "you can't have my doll."

"I can't, can't I? I'll show you whether I can." And the girl faced Marian so threateningly that she shrank away.

Then Patty thought of a device. "You'd better not come too near us," she cried, "for we've got the whooping-cough," and indeed just then by reason of the excitement she did have a paroxysm of coughing which plainly showed that she spoke truly.

The girl backed away, and as soon as Patty had recovered, she grasped Marian's hand and hurried her away. "Never mind Patty Wee," she said; "I'll get you another just like her. Let's get away as fast as we can."

Marian realized that this was the wiser plan, and they hurried off, their two enemies calling after them mockingly.

Their breathless flight set them both coughing, and when they recovered breath they both walked soberly on without saying a word, their object being to get as far away as possible from the scene of trouble. Up hill and down again they trudged, and presently saw ahead of them a house and garden at the junction of two roads.

"I never saw that place before," said Patty, looking at it with a puzzled air. "I'm sure I don't know where we are."

"Oh, Patty," exclaimed Marian in dismay, "are we lost?"

"Well no, not exactly. We'll stop at that house and ask the way."

As they approached they saw that the front of the house was a small country store, so they went around to the door and opened it. A bell jangled sharply as they entered, and from somewhere in the rear a woman came forward. "What's wanting?" she asked.

"Will you tell us how far we are from Revell?" said Patty. "We want to go there, to the college."

The woman looked at her with some curiosity.

"It's about three miles," she said. "You go up this road and turn to your left about a mile on, just before you come to the factories. You pass by them and keep straight on."

"Thank you," said Patty. Then seeing piles of rosy apples, boxes of crackers, and such eatables, she realized that she was very hungry. "Will you tell me what time it is?" she said.

The woman looked up at a big clock over the door. "It is after two," she said, "about quarter past."

"Oh, dear," Patty looked at Marian, "we can't get back to dinner." Suddenly all the joys of a gypsy life faded away. She looked at the apples, felt in her coat pocket for her five cents, and fortunately found it. "How much are those apples?" she asked.

"Ten cents a quarter peck," the woman told her.

"Oh, I meant how much apiece."

"I guess you can have 'em for a cent apiece. There'll be about ten in a quarter, I expect."

"Then I'll take two." The woman picked out two fine red ones and handed them to her. "I have three cents left," said Patty. "What shall I get, Marian?" Her eyes roved along the shelves.

"That soft mixture's nice," said the woman, "and it's right fresh."

"Can I get three cents' worth?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then I'll take it."

The woman took down a box of mixed cakes and weighed out the necessary amount. Patty gave the five cents and the two little girls left the store.

"I never was so hungry," said Patty, her teeth immediately seeking the apple.

"Nor I," said Marian, following her example. And they trudged along munching the apples till they reached the top of the hill. They could see the factory chimneys in the distance and knew they could find their way, though both dreaded to pass the neighborhood of the rude girls who must live near the factory. They almost held their breath as they approached the spot, but they got by safely, and toiled on toward home, two thoroughly weary, disgusted little girls.

"It wasn't much fun," said Marian plaintively, as they neared the house.

"I shall never, never want to go that way again," said Patty contritely. "We haven't had any real dinner; I've spent my five cents, and you've lost Patty Wee."

At the thought of this last disaster Marian's eyes filled. "Don't feel so," said Patty in distress. "I'll buy you another the very first time I go to the city. I know Dolly will give me five cents."

"But it won't be Patty Wee," said Marian mournfully.

Patty was honest enough to go straight to her sister Emily with the whole story of the morning's trouble. "You knew you were disobedient, didn't you, Patty?" said Emily gently. "Now you see why daddy always forbade your going down that way. He knows those factory people are a rough set."

Patty hung her head. "I know I was as bad as could be, Emily, but I'll never do it again."

"The worst part is that you led Marian into it, for she didn't know, as you did, that you mustn't go that way. You say those girls struck her, and took her doll away from her. I think she had the worst of it, and yet it was all your fault, Patty."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, I am wickeder than I thought," sobbed Patty. "What can I do, Emily, to make up for it? I will do anything you think I ought. I spent my five cents and I haven't any more to get another Patty Wee."

"If you will go without dessert for a week I will give you five cents to buy another doll. I think you have had punishment enough otherwise, but you can't make up to Marian for having those girls treat her so."

Patty's tears flowed afresh, but she agreed to give up what meant a great deal to her.

However, the five cents did not go toward buying another Patty Wee, for when Patty told her brothers of the morning's adventure, they looked at each other knowingly, and a little later on plotted together in the shed. So a few days after they triumphantly appeared with the lost Patty Wee which they restored to the delighted Marian. They would never tell how they recovered the doll, but Pearl and Evelina have memories of three big determined boys bearing down upon them when they were playing under the big tree, boys who demanded a doll taken by force, and having great respect for manly strength the girls gave up Patty Wee without a word.

Chapter 11

A Letter's Reply

The lovely Indian summer was over, and Thanksgiving Day passed happily. It was a great time for Marian, for Miss Dorothy was home for several days and together they planned the book of photographs to be sent to Marian's father. "I think it would better go in ample time," said Miss Dorothy, "for at Christmas time there will be such budgets going that we must be sure to get ours in before the rush begins. I should give it two or three weeks anyhow, and even if it does get there too soon, that will be better than too late."

"Don't you think it is time I was getting an answer to my letter?" asked Marian.

"It is high time, but perhaps your father has been away, and has not had his mail forwarded."

And indeed that was exactly the way of it as was proved the very next day when the morning's mail brought Marian her long-looked-for letter. She trembled with excitement when Mr. Robbins placed it in her hands, and her eyes eagerly sought Miss Dorothy. "Won't you go with me somewhere and read it to me?" she whispered.

Miss Dorothy hesitated. "Perhaps your father has written it for your eyes alone."

"But suppose I can't read it."

"Well, then we'll go to my room and you can open it there. If you can't read it I'll help you out. Will that do?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, dearest Miss Dorothy." Marian had learned from Patty to use many endearing terms.

They went up-stairs to the pleasant front room with its pretty paper and hangings of roses on a creamy ground, and by the window they sat down while Marian carefully opened the envelope. As she unfolded the sheet of paper it held, something fell out in her lap. "It is a photograph of papa," she cried as she picked it up. "I never had one of my very own,

and see, Miss Dorothy, the letter is typewritten so I can read it quite easily, but please sit by me while I see what he says."

It was a long, loving letter in which the writer spoke of the pleasure it had been to him to hear from his little daughter, of how her accounts of her daily life had taken him back to his own childhood, and of how often he thought of her and longed to see her. "If I thought it best, my dear little daughter," he said, "I should not let the ocean roll between us, though some day I hope you can come to me if I may not go to you." There were many more things, entertaining descriptions of the places to which he had lately been, accounts of his doings and his friends, the whole ending with a request that Marian would write as often as she could. As she finished the closing lines Marian held out the letter to Miss Dorothy. "Do read it," she said. "I know he would not care. There isn't anything in it that you mustn't see. I'd like you to read it out loud to me, Miss Dorothy; I can't quite get the sense of it myself." So Miss Dorothy did as she was requested and agreed with Marian that it was a very nice letter, that her father did love her, and that the reason he did not come home was because he felt he would not be welcome.

After this it was an all-important matter to get the photographs ready to send and to write a letter in answer to the one Marian had just received. Patty was very much interested in the photographs, for besides those taken in Greenville of Marian and the cats in the garden, of Marian at school, in the sitting-room with her grandparents, in her own room and in Mrs. Hunt's kitchen, there were a number taken in Revell where various members of the Robbins family appeared and where Patty herself was always a conspicuous figure. But the very last one was of Marian alone with arms outstretched and face upheld for a kiss. Under it was written, "A hug and kiss for you, dear papa, when you come back to your little Marian." This was the child's own idea, and Miss Dorothy carried it out as well as she could.

"Just think," Marian said to Patty, "how much better I know my papa, and I shall keep on knowing him better and better."

"Shall you show your grans the photographs, and the one of him?" asked Patty.

"Yes," returned Marian thoughtfully, "Miss Dorothy thinks I ought to, and that I shall have to tell about my writing to him. I think grandma will be glad, and maybe grandpa will be, too, though he won't say so."

Miss Dorothy overhearing this wise remark, smiled. She quite believed that both Mr. and Mrs. Otway would be glad.

As the days were getting both colder and shorter Miss Dorothy decided that, for the present at least, she must give up coming home every week, and must wait till the Christmas holidays before seeing her family again. On the day she announced this she said also that Mrs. Otway had said that Marian had stayed away long enough. Miss Almira Belt was getting better and her sister could now help with the sewing, especially as a niece was coming to help her, so as Marian needed a new frock she must come home the following Monday with Miss Dorothy. Mrs. Hunt had said she was longing for a sight of her chickadee, Mr. Otway had remarked that it would be pleasant to hear a child's voice in the house once again, and so Marian must go.

Patty was in tears at this news, and Marian herself looked very sorry. "Don't you want to go?" asked Miss Dorothy. "Tippy and Dippy are very anxious to see you and so is Rosamond. I saw her sitting in your room all alone the other day, and she looked very forlorn." Rosamond was Marian's big doll. "I told Ruth you were coming back, and she said: 'Good, good. Give my love to her and tell her I am crazy to see her. I've had the whooping-cough and I'm not a bit afraid of her.' Then, too," Miss Dorothy bent her head and whispered: "Some one who has the room next yours misses you very much and longs for her little neighbor."

Marian smiled at this, but at sight of Patty's tears grew grave again. "If I could take Patty with me," she said, "I should not mind it a bit."

"Maybe Patty can come some time. Mrs. Hunt asked me to bring her and to let her make a little visit there at her house, so we will think of it later on."

This was so pleasant a prospect that Patty brightened up, and though at parting she could not be comforted, Marian went away rather happier than she expected. There would be some excitement in getting back. She would go to see Mrs. Hunt very often, and perhaps Ruth Deering would come to see her, or her grandmother would let her spend an afternoon with Ruth sometimes. Mrs. Otway approved of Ruth, she remembered. But here the thought of Patty came up, and Marian realized that no one could take Patty's place, dear, bright, funny, affectionate Patty, who had been so generous and loving, though she did fly into a temper sometimes and say things she was sorry for afterward. She had tried to help Marian with her writing and had encouraged her so that now Marian could form her letters very well and need not be ashamed when she went back to school. Then, too, Patty had pressed upon her a favorite book of fairy tales which they had read together and which had been the

groundwork of many delightful plays. Oh, no, there was nobody like Patty.

Yet as Marian walked with Miss Dorothy up the familiar street, she felt that it was not bad to get back again. There was Mrs. Hunt watching out for her at the gate, to give her a tremendous hug and many kisses. There was Miss Hepzibah Toothacre, "pleasant as pie," at the door to welcome back the child. "Here she is," cried Heppy, and from his study rushed grandpa, from the sitting-room issued grandma, both eager to get to Marian first. "Heigho, heigho, little girl," said grandpa, "it is good to get you back again."

"Well, my dear, how are you? Come kiss grandma," came from Mrs. Otway, and Marian, pleased and surprised, felt that home was not such a bad place after all.

Then there were Dippy and Tippy, and also a surprise, for Heppy mysteriously led the way to the wood-shed which was just outside the kitchen, and what should Marian see there but three new baby kittens with Tippy proudly rubbing and purring around. Marian was on her knees before them in a minute, and had picked out the prettiest to cuddle. "Oh, if I might only keep this one," she said, "and perhaps we could find homes for the others."

"I guess Mis' Otway ain't goin' to allow three cats under foot," said Heppy discouragingly. And indeed when Marian made her request to keep one of the kittens she was straightway denied.

"You may keep two cats," said Mrs. Otway, "but no more will I have. If you choose to get rid of one of the larger ones and keep the little kitten I have no objection, but you will have to decide that for yourself."

But here, as usual, Mrs. Hunt came to the rescue. "Now, chickadee," she said, when Marian told her the dilemma she was in, "you just let me have that nice big gray cat of yours. Our house cat got so he wouldn't live anywhere but in the stable, and grew so wild that I scarcely ever saw him; finally he went away altogether. You bring Dippy here and then you can see him as often as you want to."

Although Marian hated to give up Dippy, she knew he would have the best of homes with Mrs. Hunt, and she did yearn so for the new kitten that she finally decided to turn Dippy over to her good friend. This seemed wise for more reasons than one, for his mother was rather cross to him since her new family had arrived and so Dippy settled down quite content to be petted and made much of by Mrs. Hunt while Marian adopted the new kitten which she called Muff. As Tippy's real name was Tippet, she thought Muff and Tippet went rather well together. One of

the other kittens found a home with Ruth Deering, but the third was still unprovided for.

Lessons did not stop, although there was no Miss Emily to hear them. Miss Dorothy told Marian every day what her class would have the next, and Mrs. Otway heard her granddaughter recite whenever she had time; when she did not, Miss Dorothy gave up a half hour in the evening to the child, so she managed to keep abreast with her schoolfellows and made great progress with her writing, now that she had more time for practice, and since the weather housed her more than formerly.

The photographs were sent off a good three weeks before Christmas, and a duplicate set was made for the grans as well as one for Mrs. Hunt. "For," said Marian, "if the grans don't care about Christmas gifts, I do, and I like to give."

As for Miss Dorothy and Patty, Marian was at her wits' end to know what to bestow upon them. She consulted Miss Dorothy as to Patty. "Miss Dorothy," she said, "I shall be very unhappy if I can't give Patty a Christmas gift, and I haven't a thing in the world she would like."

Miss Dorothy, who was busy with some fancy work for Christmas, did not reply for a moment and Marian could see that she had on her thinking cap. "Yes, you have something," presently said Miss Dorothy, "you have the third kitten."

"Oh, Miss Dorothy, do you think she would like him?"

"I am sure she would be delighted."

"But won't the dogs eat him up?"

"No, they're not allowed in the house and Jip is so intelligent that she will understand that neither she nor her puppies must touch the kitten."

"How will I get the kitten to her?"

"I can take it in a basket when I go home for the holidays."

"You always do what I hope you will," confessed Marian. "If all the thank-yous I feel were piled up they would reach to the skies."

"I am sure," laughed Miss Dorothy, "nothing could express your gratitude more perfectly. What shall you name the kitten? I think it would please Patty if he came to her with a name already attached to him, a name that you had given him."

Marian sat thinking, then she smiled and her smile grew broader and broader till she broke out with: "I know what to call him; Prince Puff, and I will tell her that he is the fat toad in a new form; he is still under enchantment."

Miss Dorothy laughed, for she knew all about the play under the big tree near the factory. "I think that would please Patty mightily," she told Marian.

"And, isn't it funny," Marian went on, "his name rhymes with Muff. Patty will like that, too. She likes us to have things alike, so I will have Muff and she will have Puff, Muff's brother. I am so relieved to have Patty's present all settled."

But for her beloved Miss Dorothy there was still nothing, so Marian racked her brains to devise some gift. At last she decided that nothing was too good for one she loved so well, and that as the most precious thing she possessed was her father's photograph she must give that to her teacher. So, just before Miss Dorothy took her departure for the holidays she went to her to slip a small package in her hand. On the outside was written: "I am giving you this because I love you so much. A Merry Christmas from Marian.""You mustn't open it till Christmas day," she said earnestly.

"I will not," Miss Dorothy assured her. "Thank you now, dearie, for I am sure whatever it is I shall be pleased to have it. I wish you were going to spend the day with us."

"I wish so, too, but grandma said I had already been at Revell long enough to wear out my welcome."

"I didn't see a sign of its being threadbare when you came away," Miss Dorothy told her. "Now, have we Puff all safe?"

"Yes, he is asleep in his basket. You won't forget to tie the card around his neck with the red ribbon."

"No, I'll not forget. You must be sure to look on the inside knob of my clothes-press door the first thing Christmas morning."

"I won't forget that. I think it is fine to have a secret waiting in there for me."

"Here is the key. I know I can trust you not to open it till then."

"Indeed you can trust me."

"I am sure of it. Now give me a good hug and a kiss for Patty, for I must be off."

Marian needed no second bidding, and in a few minutes was watching Miss Dorothy go down the street carrying the basket that held Puff, and walking swiftly to catch her train. There were big tears in Marian's eyes as she turned from the window, for it seemed as if the sunshine had faded away with Miss Dorothy's going, and that Christmas would be only a gray every-day sort of time with no Patty to make it merry, and no Miss Dorothy to add to its cheer.

However, when her grandmother called her it was to do rather an interesting thing, for a Christmas box for the poor minister of a distant parish was to be packed, and Marian enjoyed handing her grandmother the articles to be put in and to talk over them. Grandma knew the circumstances of the family to whom the box was going and that there was a little girl somewhat younger than Marian to whom her out-grown clothes would go. Marian thought she would have enjoyed sending something more personal, and said so.

"Is there nothing you can make a sacrifice of, my child?" asked her grandmother solemnly. "Christmas is the time for that, you know. Our Lord gave His best to us and that is why we also give."

Marian turned over in her mind her various possessions. She simply could not give up Patty Wee after all the dangers she had been through, neither could she part with her big doll, for that had been Annie Hunt's, and had been given to herself only because Annie's mother was so fond of Ralph Otway's daughter. Muff was out of the question for he would smother in that box. But there were the paper dolls Miss Emily had made. She could give them. So she went up-stairs, took out the envelope which contained these treasures, softly kissed each painted face and said, "You are going to a new home, my dears, and I hope you will like it. Good-bye, Mr. Guy Mannering, good-bye, Mrs. Mannering, good-bye, little baby." She put them all back in the envelope and carried it down-stairs. "I am going to send these to Mary Eliza," she said steadily. "They are the paper dolls Miss Emily made me."

"That is my good girl," said her grandmother. "Your gift will come back to you in some other form, some day. I am much pleased that my little granddaughter is so disposed to be generous with the bounties the Lord has bestowed upon her." And Marian really felt quite light-hearted the rest of the day.

Her spirits, too, were further lightened that afternoon when she was made the special messenger to carry to Miss Almira Belt the very lavender and white wrapper which she and Patty had picked out that day when they were doing the make-believe shopping. Marian, of course, told Mrs. Hunt all about it, and as one of the Guild which looked after such things, it had been voted to give Miss Almira some such present, and Mrs. Hunt had gone with Mrs. Perkins to select it. They had all agreed that Marian's choice was such a good one that it must be bought if possible, and fortunately Mrs. Hunt was able to get the very wrapper she wanted. On account of Marian's part in the matter she was asked to

carry the gift to Miss Almira, and thus one of her make-believes actually came true.

Chapter 12

The Christmas Tree

Christmas morning Marian awoke very early. She slipped out of bed and went to the window. A few stars were still in the sky, though the gray dawn was stealing up the land. In a few minutes the church bells pealed out upon the wintry air. Marian folded her hands and thought of the shepherds and the wise men, the little infant Jesus in the manger and all the rest of the beautiful story. But it was cold by the window and she determined to get back into bed till she should be called. Then she suddenly remembered that this was "first thing in the morning" and that she need not wait to open Miss Dorothy's locked clothes-press. She could find out what was there.

So she softly struck a match, lighted her candle and tiptoed across the floor, first taking the key from its place on the mantel. For a moment a wild hope came to her that it might be a Christmas tree, a little one, behind that locked door, but that idea faded away for she remembered that Miss Dorothy had said, "I would like to set up a Christmas tree for you, dearie, but it is your grandma's house and I would not have the right to do it if she disapproves," and so it could not possibly be a Christmas tree.

She set down her candle, unlocked the door and felt for what should hang on the knob inside. As she did so she smothered a little cry of delight for her hand grasped a well-filled stocking. Quickly unfastening it, she skurried back to her room with the treasure. In another moment she was snuggled down under the warm covers examining the contents of her stocking. It held all the foolish and pleasant things which such stockings usually hold, and to these were added sundry little gifts. A note pinned on the outside read:

"Dearest Marian:
"I hope you will like your stocking. It is exactly such as Patty will have, and I know you will be pleased to have it so. A Merry Christmas from all of us at Revell.
"Lovingly yours,

Dorothy Robbins."

A stocking just like Patty's! What joy! Perhaps at that very moment Patty was looking at hers. It was so delightful to open the small packages, to find a beautiful paper-doll from Miss Emily, a funny cheap toy from each of the boys: a silly monkey, a quacking duck and a jumping jack; a little fairy tale book from Patty, and oh, wonder! the Roman sash from Miss Dorothy. Even Mr. Robbins and Aunt Barbara had contributed, the former a little purse with a ten cent piece in it, and the latter a box of her famous nut candy. Surely never was a stocking more appreciated and more gloated over.

It was broad daylight and her grandmother was calling her before Patty realized that her candle had burned down to its socket and that it was time to get up. She huddled her gifts back into the stocking and hurried to get bathed and dressed, for a day beginning so delightfully must surely have more happiness in it. And indeed this did seem to be so, for though her presents from her grandparents were, as usual, useful, among them was a set of furs, just what Marian had longed for since she saw Patty's, and there was also a little typewriter for her very self from her grandpa. Marian's mustard seeds were surely doing their work.

There were buckwheat cakes for breakfast, too, and Heppy beckoned Marian to the kitchen afterward. A row of mince pies stood on the table, and at the end of the row was a little scalloped one, "for you," said Heppy. There was a pair of queerly shaped figures, too, among the ginger-snaps. Heppy gave a funny chuckle as she picked them out. "I guess nobody'd know what they're intended for," she said. "I guess I won't go into the sculping business, for I find I'm no hand at making figgers."

But Marian was as delighted with these as if they had been perfect and bore them with the rest of her things to show Mrs. Hunt.

Her grans had smiled indulgently when she showed her stocking, but had not seemed to think very much of it. Mrs. Otway said she supposed Miss Dorothy had paid a pretty penny for the sash, and it was more than she ought to have done. Mr. Otway thought Marian must be too big a girl to care for jumping-jacks and such foolishness, but that was the most that was said.

One of the events of Christmas day had always been the visit to Mrs. Hunt, for this usually meant the best of the day's doings, and Marian was always in a hurry to get off, but this time she was not in such haste, for she liked to linger over her delightful stocking, and enjoyed trying

her typewriter while her grandfather showed her how to use it. So it was not till her elders set out for church that she was ready. Her cough shut her out of any churchgoing for a while, but she begged to wear her new furs to show Mrs. Hunt, and was given consent.

The church bells were all ringing as she entered Mrs. Hunt's door. "I thought you wouldn't get here at all," said Mrs. Hunt in response to Marian's "Merry Christmas!" "I was getting real anxious about you. Come right in out of the cold. What made you so late, chickadee?"

"Because it has been such a glad morning," Marian answered. "I don't care anything about moving mountains any more, though it would have been nice to have a tree, too."

"It would, would it? Well, I don't know. Is that for me?" as Marian presented the book of photographs. "Well, I declare, isn't that you all over? This is a Christmas gift worth having. What a Miss Dorothy it is. Come, kiss me, dearie, you couldn't have given me anything I like better. Now tell me what has made you so glad."

Then Marian displayed her stocking and her furs, and was describing her typewriter when Mrs. Hunt said: "Then I suppose you won't care about what I have for you."

"Oh, Auntie Hunt, you know I always care," returned Marian reproachfully. "I never had a Christmas stocking before, and I did so want furs."

"Bless her dear heart! Auntie Hunt was only teasing you a little. Well, I don't believe what I have will wait much longer, so perhaps we'd better go look at it." And she led the way to the parlor.

Marian wondered at this, for she was not such a stranger as to be taken there even upon such a day as Christmas. What could Mrs. Hunt have in there that she couldn't bring into the sitting-room? She had always had Marian's present and her little basket of goodies set on a side table and why must they be in the parlor to-day? She wondered, too, why Mrs. Hunt fumbled at the door-knob and rattled it a little before she went in, but when she saw at the end of the room a bright and dazzling Christmas tree, she forgot all else. It was such a glittering, shining affair, all wonderful ornaments and gleaming tinsel, and was a joy to look upon, from the flying angel at the tip-top to the group of sheep on a mossy pasture at the foot. The impossible had happened. Faith and works had triumphed. The might of the mustard seed's strength had been proved, and Marian dropped on her knees before the marvelous vision. "Oh, I am so happy, Lord. I am so much obliged to you for your loving-kindness," she breathed.

"That's just like her," said Mrs. Hunt nodding her head as if to some one behind her. "You are pleased, aren't you, chickadee? Well, now, who do you think gave you all those pretty things? Mr. Hunt cut the tree and brought the moss, I'm ready to confess. I helped with the trimming, but who did the rest?"

"Miss Dorothy," promptly replied Marian.

Mrs. Hunt shook her head. "Wrong guess," she said laughing. "Stand right there and shut your eyes while I count ten, then see if you can make a better guess."

Marian did as she was told, squeezing her eyes tight together lest she should be tempted to peep at the tree. As "ten" fell from Mrs. Hunt's lips her eyes opened, not upon the tree, for between her and it stood the figure of a tall man who held out his arms to her. Marian stood stock still in amazed wonder, gazing at him fixedly, then in a voice that rang through the room she cried: "Papa! Papa!" and in an instant his arms were around her and she was fairly sobbing on his breast.

"It's almost more than the child can bear," murmured Mrs. Hunt wiping her eyes. "I don't know that it was right to surprise her so. Maybe it would have been better to prepare her." But Marian was herself in a little while, ready to hear how this wonderful thing happened.

"It was all on account of that little book of photographs," her father told her. "My longing to see my dear little daughter grew stronger and stronger as I turned over the pages, and when I came to the last picture I simply could not stand it. I rushed out, looked up the next sailing, and found I could make a steamer sailing from Bremen the next morning, and before night I was on my way to that city. I found I had a couple of hours to spare in Bremen, and I remembered that my little girl had said that she had never had a Christmas tree, so I went up town, bought a jumble of Christmas toys, and took them to the steamer with me. I reached here last night, and my dear old friend Mrs. Hunt took me in. Between us all we set up the Christmas tree, and arranged the surprise. I felt as if I could not spend another Christmas day away from my dear little daughter when she wanted me so much. Do you think they will let me in at the brick house, Marian?" he asked holding her close.

"I am sure they will," she answered with conviction. "I've found out that nobody is as cross inside as they seem outside. Even Heppy is just like a bear sometimes, but she has the most kind thinkings when you get at them."

It was hard to leave the beautiful tree, but even that was not so great and splendid a thing as this home-coming of Marian's father, and when

the churchgoers had all gone by, the two went up street together, hand in hand. At the door of the brick house they paused.

"Tell them I am here and ask them if I may come in, Marian," said her father, as he stood on the steps.

Marian went in, and entered the sitting-room. Her grandmother was taking off her bonnet. "It was a good sermon, my dear," she was saying to her husband. "Peace and good-will to all men, not to some, but to all, our own first." She smoothed out her gloves thoughtfully. "Eight years," she murmured, "eight years."

Marian stood in the doorway. "Papa has come," she said simply. "He is on the door-step, but he won't come in till you say he may."

With a trembling little cry her grandmother ran to the door. Mr. Otway grasped the back of the chair behind which he was standing. His head was bowed and he was white to the lips. "Tell him to come in," he said.

Marian ran out to see her grandmother, her grave, quiet, dignified grandmother, sobbing in her son's arms, and he kissing her bowed head and murmuring loving words to her.

"Grandpa says please come in," said Marian giving the message with added politeness, and with one arm around his mother and the other grasping Marian's hand, Ralph Otway entered his father's house to meet the hand clasp of one who for more than eight years had forbidden him entrance.

The remainder of Marian's day was spent in making visits to Mrs. Hunt's parlor and to her grandmother's sitting-room. When the grown-ups' talk began to grow uninteresting and herself unnoticed she would slip away to gloat over the Christmas tree, then when she had firmly fixed in her mind just what hung on this side and on that, she would go back to the sitting-room to nestle down by her father, or to turn over the contents of her stocking.

It was during this process that she heard part of a conversation which interested her very much. "Herbert Robbins wrote me not long ago to ask if I could suggest a fitting man for one of the engineering departments of the college," said Grandpa Otway. "I told him I would consider the matter, and if any one occurred to me I would let him know. How would you like the work, Ralph?" he went on in his measured tones. "Revell is not far away; it is a progressive college in a pleasant community."

Marian laid down her stocking and came nearer.

"I should like to look into the matter," said her father thoughtfully.

"I would advise your seeing Robbins," said his father. "He can give you the particulars." Then he added somewhat hesitatingly, "I should like—I should be pleased to have my son one of the faculty of my own college."

Marian's father looked up brightly. "Thank you, father; that settles it. If it is as good a thing as now appears I shall not hesitate to accept if I am given the opportunity."

"Are you going to see Patty?" whispered Marian, "and couldn't I go, too?"

Her father looked down at her with a smile. "I'd like you to go if your grandmother is willing."

Therefore before the holidays were over Marian had the pleasure of showing off her new furs as well as her dear papa to Patty and the rest of the Robbinses, and before she came back it was settled that her father was to go to Revell to live. Beyond that nothing of much consequence was decided at that time.

Patty and Marian were jubilant over the arrangement. "Perhaps you will come here to live some day," Patty said to her friend.

"I wish I could," said Marian. "Do you think papa will need me more than the grans, Patty?"

"Of course," returned Patty, "for your grandfather has a wife to take care of him and she has a husband, and it isn't fair they should have you, too; besides a father is a nearer relation than a grandfather, so of course he has a right to you." And this quite settled it in Marian's opinion.

The little girls had two happy days together when Marian enjoyed Patty's tree and her Christmas gifts only in a little less degree than her own. She was pleased to find that Puff was already a great pet, and that Patty had all sorts of mysterious things to tell about him; of how he would steal out at night and become a real prince between midnight and dawn, and of how Miggy Wig had deserted the cave and was no longer a doll, but that she had worked her enchantments only so far as to turn Puff from a toad into a kitten during the day, so the little cat did actually appear to be more than an ordinary animal to both children.

It took only a short time for Marian and her father to become great chums, and they had many good times together sharing many secrets which they did not tell the grans.

Miss Dorothy did not go home very often during the winter, so on Saturdays and Sundays when her father came home from Revell, Marian took many pleasant walks with the two. Sometimes they made an excursion to the city, when real shopping took the place of make-believes.

Marian went back to school after the holidays and never failed to stop every day to see Mrs. Hunt. It was in the spring that she learned from this good friend that her father did not tell her all his secrets, for one day when they were talking of that happy Christmas day Marian said, "What do you suppose Miss Dorothy did with the Christmas gift I gave her? I have never seen it anywhere and she has never said a word about it."

"What was it?" asked Mrs. Hunt.

"The photograph of papa that he sent me. I wanted to give her something very precious and that was the best thing I had."

To Marian's surprise Mrs. Hunt threw back her head and laughed till the tears came, though Marian could not see that she had said anything very funny.

When Mrs. Hunt had wiped her eyes she remarked: "We shall miss Miss Dorothy next year."

"Why, isn't she coming back to teach?" asked Marian in dismay.

Mrs. Hunt shook her head.

"Oh, why not?"

"Ask your papa; he knows," said Mrs. Hunt laughing again.

But before Marian had a chance to do this, Patty came to make Mrs. Hunt the long-promised visit, and it was Patty who guessed the secret. "Did you know that Miss Dorothy is not coming back here next year?" was one of Marian's first questions.

Patty nodded. "I heard her say so to Emily."

"Then you will have her and I shall not," returned Marian jealously.

"Oh, yes, I think you will have her as much as I," returned Patty, "for she is making all sorts of pretty things and I think she is going to be married."

"Be married?" Such a possibility had never occurred to Marian. "Oh, dear," she began, then she brightened up as she thought perhaps it might be the new rector Miss Dorothy was going to marry; in that case she would be living in Greenville. She remembered that the young man often walked home with her teacher. It would be a very nice arrangement, Marian thought. "Is she going to live in Greenville?" she asked, feeling her way.

"No," Patty laughed. "I don't think so."

Then perhaps the young rector was going to another town. "Has she told you where she is going to live and who she is going to marry?" asked Marian coming straight to the point.

"No, but I know she is going to live in Revell, and I hear her and Emily talk, talk, talk about some one named Ralph." Patty put her hand over her mouth, and looked at Marian with laughing eyes.

"Why—why——" Marian looked at Patty for further enlightenment, but Patty was only laughing. "Why, that's my papa's name," said Marian.

Patty nodded. "That's just who I think it is." And that was precisely who it was.

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Excerpt:
Ta-ra! ta-ra! ta-ra-ra-ra! ta-rat!
Professor Krenner took the silver bugle from his lips while the strain echoed flatly from the opposite, wooded hill. That hill was the Isle of Hope, a small island of a single eminence lying half a mile off the mainland, and not far north of Freeling.
The shore of Lake Huron was sheathed in ice. It was almost Christmas time. Winter had for some weeks held this part of Michigan in an iron grip. The girls of Lakeview Hall were tasting all the joys of winter sports.

The cove at the boathouse (this was the building that some of the Lakeview Hall girls had once believed haunted) was now a smooth, well-scraped skating pond. Between the foot of the hill, on the brow of which the professor stood, and the Isle of Hope, the strait was likewise solidly frozen. The bobsled course was down the hill and across the icy track to the shore of the island.
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The Adventures of Don Lavington
Lindon, known as Don, is a boy in his late teens who has left school, and who lives with his mother and uncle Josiah, his father being dead, and works as a clerk in the office, the business being sugar and tobacco importation, in Bristol, England, which he does not much like.
One day some money is missing from the office. It's pretty obvious who the thief is, but Uncle Josiah continues to accuse Don. Another worker has a row with his new young wife, and Don and he (Jem) decide to go away for a bit, both feeling rather ill-used. Unfortunately they are taken that night by the press-gang, and after some attempts to get away, they sail away to New Zealand. Here they manage to escape from the ship, though the search for them is keen. They fall in with some Maoris, among whom lives an Englishman, who is actually an escaped convict, but a good chap nonetheless. They assist the Maoris in their own battles against other tribes.
The scene turns to some English settlers. They become friendly with our heroes. A Maori tribe attacks then, having been set up to do so by three villains, who have also escaped from the convict settlement at Norfolk Island. They hold their own, but there is a timely intervention by the police. One of the three villains turn out to have been the man who actually stole the money from Uncle Josiah's office. From this point things begin to turn out for the better, and the two heroes return to England, and all is forgiven.
Lawrence J. Leslie

Afloat On The Flood
Excerpt:
"What's the latest weather report down at the post office, Max?"
"More rain coming, they say, and everybody is as gloomy as a funeral."
"My stars! the poor old town of Carson is getting a heavy dose this spring, for a fact; nothing but rain, rain, and then some more rain."
"Never was anything to beat it, Bandy-legs, and they say even the oldest inhabitant can't remember when the Evergreen River was at a higher stage than it is right now."
Florence L. Barclay

The Upas Tree
A Christmas Story for all the Year.