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Title: Honey-Sweet

Author: Edna Henry Lee Turpin

Release date: March 1, 2006 [EBook #17892]

Language: English

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HONEY-SWEET ***

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HONEY-SWEET

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · SAN FRANCISCO
MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA · MELBOURNE
THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO



Anne sat pale and wordless

HONEY-SWEET

BY

EDNA TURPIN

ILLUSTRATED BY

ALICE BEARD

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1914

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Set up and electrotyped. Published September, 1911. Reprinted June, 1913; August, 1914.

Norwood Press

J.S. Cushing Co.—Berwick & Smith Co.

Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

To
ANNE WOOLSTON ROLLER

AND
MARY ADAMS MITCHELL

HONEY-SWEET

CHAPTER I

Anne and her uncle were standing side by side on the deck of the steamship *Caronia* due to sail in an hour. Both had their eyes fixed on the dock below. Anne was looking at everything with eager interest. Her uncle, with as intent a gaze, seemed watching for something that he did not see. Presently he laid his hand on Anne's shoulder.

"I'm going to walk about, Nancy pet," he said. "There's your chair and your rug. If you get tired, go to your stateroom—where your bag is, you know."

"Yes, uncle." Anne threw him a kiss as he strode away.

She felt sure she could never tire of that busy, changing scene. It was like a moving-picture show, where one group chased away another. Swift-footed stewards and stewardesses moved busily to and fro. In twos and threes and larger groups, people were saying good-bys, some laughing, some tearful. Messenger boys were delivering letters and parcels. Oncoming passengers were jostling one another. Porters with armfuls of bags and bundles were getting in and out of the way. Trunks and boxes were being lowered into the hold. Anne tried to find her own small trunk. There it was. No! it was that—or was it the one below? Dear me! How many just-alike brown canvas trunks were there in the world? And how many people! These must be the people that on other days thronged the up-town streets. Broadway, she thought, must look lonesome to-day.

Every minute increased the crowd and the confusion.

There came a tall, raw-boned man with two heavy travelling bags, following a stout woman dressed in rustling purple-red silk. She spoke in a shrill voice: "Sure all my trunks are here? The little black one? And the box? And you got the extra steamer rug? Ed-ward! And I dis-tinct-ly told you—"

"The very best possible. Positively the most satisfactory arrangements ever made for a party our size." This a brisk little man with a smile-wrinkled face was saying to several women trotting behind him, each wearing blue or black serge, each lugging a suit-case.

A porter was wheeling an invalid chair toward the gang-plank. By its side walked a gentlewoman whom fanciful little Anne likened to a partridge. In fact, with her bright eyes and quick movements, she was not unlike a plump, brown-coated bird.

She fluttered toward the chair and said in a sweet, chirpy voice: "Comfortable, Emily? Lean a little forward and let me put this pillow under your shoulders. There, dear! That's better, I'm sure. Just a little while longer. How nicely you are standing the journey!"

A man in rough clothes stopped to exchange parting words with a youth in paint-splotted overalls.

—"Take it kind ye're here to see me off. I been a saying to meself four year I'd get back to see the folks in the ould counthry. And here I am at last wid me trunk in me hand—" holding out a bulging canvas bag. "Maybe so I'll bring more luggage back. There's a tidy girl I used to know—"

Beyond this man, Anne's roving eyes caught a glimpse of a familiar, gray-clad figure. She waved her hand eagerly but it attracted no greeting in return. Her uncle looked worried and nervous. Indeed, he started like a hunted wild creature, when a boy spoke suddenly to him. It was Roger, an office boy whom Anne had seen on the holiday occasions when she had met her uncle downtown. Roger held out a yellow envelope. Her uncle snatched it, and—just then there came between him and Anne a group of hurrying passengers—a stout man in a light gray coat and a pink shirt, a stout woman in a dark silk travelling coat, and two stout, short-skirted girls with good-natured faces, round as full moons. The younger girl was dragging a doll carriage carelessly with one hand. The doll had fallen forward so that her frizzled yellow head bounced up and down on her fluffy blue skirts.

"Oh! Poor dollie!" exclaimed Anne to herself. "I do wish uncle—" she caught a fleeting glimpse of him beside the workman with the canvas bag—"if just he hadn't hurried so. How could I forget Rosy Posy? I wish that fat girl would let me hold her baby doll. She's just dragging it along."

Presently the Stout family, as Anne called it to herself, came sauntering along the deck near her. She started forward, wishing to beg leave to set the fallen doll to rights, and then stopped short, too shy to speak to the strange girl.

A lean, sour-faced man in black bumped against her. "What an awkward child!" he said crossly.

Anne reddened and retreated to the railing. Feeling all at once very small and lonely, she searched the dock for her uncle but he was nowhere to be seen.

Then a bell rang. People hurried up the gang-plank. Last of all was a workman in blue overalls, with a soft hat jammed over his eyes. Orders were shouted. The gang-plank was drawn in. Then the *Caronia* wakened up, churned the brown water into foam, crept from the dock, picked her way among the river vessels, and sped on her ocean voyage.

CHAPTER II

It was eight o'clock and a crisp, clear morning. A stewardess was offering tea and toast to Mrs. Patterson, the frail little lady whom Anne had observed in a wheel-chair the afternoon before. Seen closely, her face had a pathetic prettiness. With the delicate color in her soft cheeks, she looked like a fading tea rose. Yet one knew at a glance that she and bird-like Miss Sarah Drayton were sisters. There was the same oval face—this hollowed and that plump; the same soft brown hair—this wavy and that sleek; the same wide-open hazel eyes—these soft and sombre, those bright as beads.

"If you drink a few spoonfuls, dear, you may feel more like eating," Miss Drayton's cheery voice was saying. "And do taste the toast. If it's as good as it looks, you'll devour the last morsel."

Mrs. Patterson sipped the tea and nibbled a piece of toast. "It lacks only one thing—an appetite," she announced, smiling at her sister as she pushed aside the tray. "Did you hear that? I thought I heard—is it a child crying?"

The stewardess started. "Gracious! I forgot her! A little girl's just across from you, ma'am—an orphan, I guess. She's travelling alone with her uncle. And he charged me express when he came on board to look after her. Of course I forgot. My hands are that full my head won't hold it. It's 'Vaughan here' and it's 'Vaughan there,' regular as clockwork. Why ain't he called on me again?"

She trotted out and tapped on the door of the stateroom opposite. There was a brief silence.

Vaughan was about to knock again when the door opened slowly. There stood a slim little girl struggling for self-control, but her fright and misery were too much for her, and in spite of herself tears trickled down her cheeks.

"She's an ugly little lady," thought Vaughan to herself.

Vaughan was wrong. The child had a piquant face, full of charm, and her head and chin had the poise of a princess. She had fair straight hair, almond-shaped hazel eyes under pencilled brows, and a nose "tip-tilted like a flower." Peggy Callahan, whose acquaintance you will make later, said she guessed it was because Anne's nose was so cute and darling that her eyebrows and her eyes and her mouth all pointed at it. But now the little face was dismal and splotted with tears, the tawny hair was tousled, and the white frock and white hair-ribbons were crumpled.

"Were you knocking at my door?" Anne asked in a voice made steady with difficulty.

"Yes, miss. I thought you might be sick. We heard you crying."

"Oh!" The pale face reddened. "I didn't know any one could hear. The walls of these rooms aren't very thick, are they?"

"No, miss." In spite of herself, Vaughan smiled at the quaint dignity of the child. "Don't you want me to change your frock? Dear me! I ought not to have forgot you last night! And breakfast? You haven't had breakfast, have you?"

"No. Are you the—the—" Anne drew her brows together, in an earnest search for a forgotten word.

"I'm the stewardess, miss."

"Oh, yes!—the stewardess. Uncle said you'd take care of me. Where is he? I want Uncle Carey."

"Have you seen him this morning, miss?" asked Vaughan.

"No. Not since a long time ago. Yesterday just before the boat sailed. When Roger was handing him a piece of yellow paper. I waited on deck for him hours and hours. Where is he now?"

"In his stateroom, maybe—or the smoking-room—or on deck. Maybe he's waiting this minute for you to go to breakfast. We'll have you ready in a jiffy."

Anne's face brightened. "I can bathe myself—almost. You may scrub the corners of my ears, if you please. And I can't quite part my hair straight. Will you find Uncle Carey? and see if he is ready for me?"

"Oh, yes, miss. If you'll tell me his name."

"Uncle Carey? He's Mr. Mayo. Mr. Carey Mayo of New York."

"Yes, miss. I'll find him. Just you wait a minute. I forget your name, miss."

"Anne. Anne Lewis."

The good-natured stewardess bustled about in a vain effort to find Mr. Carey Mayo. He was not in his stateroom, nor in the saloon, nor in the smoking-room, nor on deck. In her perplexity, she addressed the captain whom she met at the dining-room door.

"Beg pardon, sir; I'm looking for a Mr. Mayo, sir, and I can't find him anywheres."

"Well?" Captain Wards was gnawing the ends of his mustache.

"It's for his niece, sir, a little girl. She ain't seen him since yesterday, sir. Been crying till she's 'most sick."

"My word!" exclaimed Captain Wards. "I had forgotten there was a child. She's not the only one that wants him. I've had a wireless from New York—the chief of police," the captain explained to a gentleman at his elbow. "This Mayo is one of the bunch down in that Stuyvesant Trust Company. They've been examining the books, but his tracks were so cleverly covered that he was not even suspected at first. Yesterday they found out. But their bird had flown. He's on our register all right,—self and niece,—but we can't find him anywhere else."

They looked again and again in the tidy, empty little stateroom, as if it must give some sign, some clew to the missing man. There were his travelling bags strapped and piled where the porter had dumped them. The steward who had shown Mr. Mayo his stateroom remembered that he had come on board early, more than an hour before sailing time. Oh, yes, the man had taken good notice of Mr. Mayo. Could tell just how he looked. Slender youngish gentleman. Good clothes, light gray, well put on. Clean shaven. Face not round, not long. Blue eyes—or gray—perhaps brown. Darkish hair—it might be some gray. Nothing remarkable about his nose. Nor his complexion—not fair—not dark. Anyway, the steward would know him easy, and was sure he wasn't aboard.

A deck steward said he had looked for Mr. Mayo not long before the vessel sailed. A boy had brought a telegram for him. But a first-cabin lady had called the steward to move her chair.

The chap said he was Mr. Mayo's office boy and could find him if he were on the *Caronia*.

No one had seen Mr. Mayo after the boy brought this telegram. Evidently, some one had warned him that his guilt was discovered and he had hurried away to avoid arrest. Where was he now? And what was to become of his little niece?

CHAPTER III

During the search for her uncle, Anne awaited the stewardess's return with growing impatience and hunger. In that keen salt air it was no light matter to have gone dinnerless to bed and to be waiting at nine o'clock for breakfast. At last she heard approaching steps. She flung her door open, expecting to see her uncle or at least the stewardess. Instead, she stood face to face with a strange boy, a jolly, freckle-faced youngster of about thirteen.

"Good-morning," he said cheerily. Then he beat a tattoo on the opposite door.

"Mother! Aunt Sarah! Aunt Sarah! Mother!" he called. "Must I wait and go to breakfast with you? I am starving. Aren't you ready? Please!"

Anne was still standing embarrassed in her doorway when the opposite door opened and facing her stood the bird-like lady whom she had seen the afternoon before. Miss Drayton kissed her nephew good-morning, straightened his necktie, and smoothed down a rebellious lock of curly dark hair. She smiled at the sober little girl across the passage as she announced to the impatient youngster that she was quite ready for breakfast and would go with him as soon as he had bade his mamma good-morning. As he disappeared in the stateroom, the stewardess came back, looking worried.

"I—I—can't find your uncle, miss," she said.

Anne's eyes filled with tears. She swallowed a sob and steadied her voice to say: "He—must have forgotten—'bout me. I—don't have breakfast with him 'cept Sundays."

"The captain said I'd better show you the way to the dining-room, miss. A waiter will look after you."

The shy child shrank back. "I saw the dining-room yesterday," she said. "There—there are such long tables and so many strange people. I—I don't think I want any breakfast. Couldn't you bring me a mug of milk and one piece of bread?"

Miss Drayton came forward with a cordial smile. "Come to breakfast with me, dear. My sister is not well enough to leave her stateroom this morning, so there will be a vacant seat beside me. I am Miss Drayton and this is my nephew, Patrick Patterson, who has such an appetite that it will make you hungry just to see him eat. After breakfast we'll find your uncle and scold him about forgetting you. Or perhaps he didn't forget. He may have wanted you to have a morning nap to put roses in those pale cheeks. Will you come with me?"

"If you would just take charge of her, ma'am," exclaimed the stewardess.

Anne's sober face had brightened while Miss Drayton was speaking. Indeed, smiles came naturally in the presence of that cheery little lady. With a murmured "Thank you," the child slipped her hand in Miss Drayton's and together they entered the dining-room.

While breakfast was being served, Pat Patterson gave and obtained a good deal of information. He told Anne that he was from Washington, the finest city in the world. He learned that she called Virginia home, though she lived now in New York. Pat was going to spend a year in France with his mother and Aunt Sarah. Uncle Carey, with whom Anne was travelling, had told her nothing of his plans except that he and she were going "abroad" and were to "have a grand time" on "the Continent." Pat's father was to come over later for a few weeks; he was down south now, helping build the "big ditch"—the Panama Canal. "Where is your father?" he asked Anne.

"Dead."

"Oh!" with awkward sympathy.

"Long time ago, when I was little."

"Do you remember him?"

"If I shut my eyes tight. It's like he was walking to meet me, out of the big picture."

"And your mother—" Pat hesitated.

"I remember her real well. I was seven then. That was over a year ago. Sometimes it seems such a little while since we were at home—and then it seems a long, long, long time."

"You've been living with your uncle since?" asked Miss Drayton, gently.

"Yes. Uncle Carey. Where is he? I do want Uncle Carey so bad." The child's voice trembled.

"Don't worry, dear. We'll find him," said Miss Drayton, as they left the dining-room.

The captain, who had kept his eyes on the little party, anticipated Miss Drayton's questioning.

Drawing her aside, he explained the situation. "The scoundrel is probably safe in Canada by this time," he ended. "He'll take good care to lay low. This child's other relatives will have to be hunted up and informed. I'll send a wireless to New York. The stewardess will take care of the little girl."

"Oh, as to that," Miss Drayton answered, "it will be only a pleasure to me. She's a dear, quaint little thing."

"That's good of you," said Captain Wards, heartily. "I was about to ask you—you're so kind and have made friends with her, you see—to tell her that her uncle isn't here."

"Oh!"—Miss Drayton shrank from that bearing of bad tidings. "How can I?"

The captain looked uncomfortable. "It is a good deal to ask," he admitted. "I suppose I—or the stewardess—"

"But no. Poor little one!" Miss Drayton took herself in hand as she thought of the shy, lonely child. "She must be told. And, as you say, I've made friends with her, so it may come less hard from me. Leave it to me, then, captain." And she went slowly back to Anne whose face clouded at seeing her new friend alone.

"I thought Uncle Carey would come back with you," she said. "Please—where is he?"

"Anne, when was the last time that you saw Uncle Carey?" inquired Miss Drayton.

"A little while before the steamer left New York," answered Anne. "He said he was going to walk around. And he was down there on the—the platform below."

"The dock? On shore, you mean, and not on the steamer?"

"Yes, on the dock; that's it. And Roger—Roger that stays in Uncle Carey's office—gave him a letter—a yellow envelope. Then some people got in the way. And I haven't seen him any more."

"Let's you and I sit down in this quiet corner, Anne," said Miss Drayton, "and I'll tell you what I think. That yellow letter was a telegram. It was about business, and it made your uncle go away in a hurry. Such a great hurry that he didn't have time to see you and tell you he was going."

"Didn't he come back? Isn't he on the steamer?" Anne asked anxiously.

Miss Drayton shook her head. "I think not, dear. They've looked everywhere."

Tears were trickling down the child's pale cheeks. "And he left me—all by myself?"

"No, dear; no, little one." Miss Drayton drew the little figure into her lap. "He left you with good friends all around you. We'll take such care of you—Captain Wards, that kind stewardess, and I. Isn't it nice that you and I are next-door neighbors? Bless your dear heart! Of course it's a disappointment. You miss your uncle. Snuggle right down in my arms and have your cry out."

Anne winked back her tears. "It hurts—to cry," she said rather unsteadily. "But you see it's—it's lonesome. I wish Rosy Posy was here."

"Is Rosy Posy one of your little friends at home?" asked Miss Drayton, wishing to divert Anne's thoughts.

"Yes, Miss Drayton. She's my best little friend. And so beautiful! Such lovely long yellow curls. She sleeps with me every night. And I tell her all my secrets. I've had her since I was a little girl."

"Oh! Rosy Posy's your doll, is she?" questioned Miss Drayton.

Anne nodded assent. "Uncle Carey gave her to me. I make some of her clothes. Louise makes the frilly ones. We were getting her school dresses ready. Uncle Carey said I really truly must go to school this year. Then yesterday he came home in such a hurry. Louise thought he was sick. He never comes home that time of day; and his face was pale and his eyes shiny. He said he had to go away on business and was going to take me with him. Louise packed in such a hurry. And I left my dear Rosy Posy." The child's lip quivered. "Uncle kept saying, 'We ought to be gone. We ought to be gone. Hurry up. Hurry up.' And we drove away real fast. Then we got out and got in another carriage. It was so hot, with all the curtains down! I was glad when we came on the boat. But I do miss Rosy Posy so bad—and Uncle Carey."

Miss Drayton spoke quickly in her cheeriest tone. "Aren't you glad that Louise is there to take good care of Rosy Posy? I expect she'll have a beautiful lot of frilly frocks when you get home. Some time I must tell you about my pet doll, Lady Ann, and her yellow silk frock."

"I'd like to hear it now," said Anne.

"And I'd like to tell you," smiled back Miss Drayton. "But I must leave Pat to play ring toss with you while I go to see about my sister. She isn't well and I want to persuade her to take a cup of broth."

Miss Drayton explained her prolonged absence by relating to her sister the story of their little fellow-voyager. Mrs. Patterson's languid air gave way to attention and interest. It was pitiful to think that so near them a deserted child had sobbed away the lonely hours of the long night. A faint smile came as the lady listened to the tale of Rosy Posy, Anne's "best little friend" with the "such lovely long yellow curls." Then her eyes grew misty again.

"Poor all-alone little one!" she exclaimed. "With no friend, not even a doll." Then at a sudden thought her eyes sparkled. "Sarah," she said, "I'll make her a doll. And it shall be a darling. You remember the baby dolls I used to make for church bazaars?"

"What beauties they were!" said her sister. "Like real babies, instead of just-alike dolls that come wholesale out of shops. I remember one I bought to send out West in a missionary box. You had given it the dearest crooked little smile. I wanted to keep it and cuddle it myself. But, Emily dear, it is too great an undertaking for you to make a doll now. You'll overtax your strength. And, besides, you've no materials. We'll buy a doll in Paris for this little girl."

"Paris! With all these lonesome days between!" objected Mrs. Patterson. "Indeed, it will not hurt me, Sarah. Why, I feel better already. And you'll help me. If you'll get out your work-basket, I'll rummage in this trunk for what I need."

A muslin skirt was selected as material for the doll's body and her underwear, and a dainty dressing-sacque was chosen to make her frock. Mrs. Patterson pencilled an outline on the cloth, then rubbed out, redrew, changed, and corrected the lines, with painstaking care. At last she threw back her head and looked at her work through narrowed eyelids.

"She is going to be a very satisfactory baby," she announced; "just plump enough to cuddle comfortably."

"Surely you will stop now, dear, and finish another time," urged Miss Drayton, after the pieces were cut out and sewed together with firm, short, even stitches. "You may not feel it, but I am sure you are tired—and how tired you will be when you *do* feel it!"

"Indeed, no, Sarah," said Mrs. Patterson. "This rests me. I've not thought about myself for an hour. Why did you mention the tiresome subject? That skirt must have another tuck, please. And it needs lace at the bottom. Just borrow some, dear, from any of my white things. Now I must have some sawdust."

The stewardess came to their help, and persuaded a steward to open a case of bottles and give her the sawdust in which they were packed. Mrs. Patterson received it with an exclamation of delight and held out a silver coin in return. But Vaughan put her hands behind her.

"Please'm," she said, "it ain't much. But I wanted to do something for that poor little orphan."

Mrs. Patterson smiled her thanks, then she pushed and shook and crammed the sawdust in place, taking a childlike eager interest in seeing the limp form grow shapely and firm. This done, she consented to take luncheon and a nap, after which Miss Drayton brought Anne to make her acquaintance. When Mrs. Patterson sent them out "for a whiff of fresh air," she thrust into her sister's hand a workbag with frilly white things to tuck and ruffle. Then she drew out her box of colors. Under her deft touches, now fast, now slow, the baby face grew life-like and lovable.

"She's to be a comfort baby for a troubled little mother," said Mrs. Patterson to herself. "She must be one of the happy-looking babies that one always smiles at."

And she was. Her mouth curved upward in a smile that brought out a dear little dimple in the left cheek, and her big blue eyes crinkled at the corners with a smile climbing upward from the lips. There were two shell-like little ears and some soft shadowy locks of hair, peeping out from under a lace-edged cap with strings tied under the chin.

When she was fitted out in the garments that Miss Drayton had fashioned, that lady exclaimed: "Why, Emily, Emily! You never painted a picture that was more beautiful. That darling smile! And the dimple!"

There was some debate as to when the doll should be presented and it was finally decided to give her as bed-time comfort. Promptly at eight o'clock, Mrs. Patterson insisted on undressing Anne, while Miss Drayton and Vaughan hovered outside the open door. Anne submitted rather unwillingly and took a long time to brush her teeth. Then she knelt down to say her prayers. After the

"Now I lay me down to sleep"

there followed silence. Indeed, she remained so long on her knees that Miss Drayton whispered to Mrs. Patterson a warning against standing and Vaughan moved to get a chair. The whisper brought Anne to her feet.

"I oughtn't kept you waiting," she said; and then she explained shamefacedly, "I wasn't saying my prayers for good. I was just saying them over and over for lonesome. It's—it's such a big night in here all by myself."

Mrs. Patterson gave her a good-night kiss and turned the covers back for her to snuggle in bed. And there—wonder of wonders!—there lay in the bed a whiterobed figure—a dear, beautiful, smiling baby doll. Anne looked at it for one breathless minute and then clasped it close.

"You precious! you lovely!" she exclaimed. "Is—is she my own baby?"

"Yes, she's yours," Mrs. Patterson assured her. "She came to take the place of Rosy Posy who had to stay at home. She hasn't 'long yellow curls' like Rosy Posy, but you see she's young yet—only a baby in long dresses. I think maybe her hair will grow."

Hugging the baby doll tight in one arm, Anne threw the other around Mrs. Patterson's neck, and kissed her again and again.

"You are so good. You are so good," she said over and over.

"What are you going to call your new baby?" asked Miss Drayton.

"I'd like to name her for you," Anne said, looking at Mrs. Patterson.

Mrs. Patterson smiled. "My name is Emily," she said.

"Then that's her name. Mrs. Emily Patterson. Only—" there was a thoughtful pause—"that does sound sorter 'dicalous for a baby in a long dress."

"Call her Emily Patterson," suggested the doll's namesake.

But Anne shook her head. "That wouldn't sound 'spectful," she objected; "and Patterson is your 'Mrs.' name." Then her face brightened. "Oh! Her name can be Mrs. Emily Patterson, and I'll call her a pet name. I don't like nicknames, but pet names are dear. She shall be what Aunt Charity used to call me—'Honey-Sweet.' I can sing it like she did:—

"Honey, honey! Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Honey, honey! Honey-Sweet!"

As Anne crooned the words over and over, her voice sank drowsily. When Miss Drayton went a few minutes later to turn out the light, Anne was fast asleep, smiling in her dreams at Honey-Sweet who lay smiling on the pillow beside her.

CHAPTER V

The shipboard day passed, uneventful and pleasant. Anne had made for herself an explanation of her uncle's absence, which no one had heart to correct.

"He's nawful busy, Uncle Carey is," she explained. "I reckon he stayed there talking to Roger—he always has so many things to tell Roger to do!—and the boat was gone before he knew it. So he just had to wait. I 'spect he'll come on one of those other boats. Wouldn't it be funny if one of them would come splashing along right now and Uncle Carey would wave his hand at me and say 'Hello, Nancy pet! Here I am.'"

Mrs. Patterson put a caressing hand on the child's head but did not speak. Lying back in her steamer chair, she looked across the gray-green water and thought and wondered. Presently Anne crumpled her steamer rug on the deck and nestled down in it. She chirped to Honey-Sweet and wiggled her finger at the smiling red mouth, playing she was a mother-bird bringing a fat worm to her nestling. Hour after hour, while Miss Drayton and Mrs. Patterson read or talked together, Anne would sit beside them, sometimes chattering and 'making believe' with Honey-Sweet, sometimes prattling to her grown-up friends about her old home in Virginia or her life in New York.

Mrs. Patterson petted her and made dainty frocks for Honey-Sweet. Brisk, practical Miss Drayton gave Anne spelling lessons and set her problems in number work, protesting that she was too large a girl to spend all her time playing and looking at fairy-tale books, blue, red, and green. Why, she did not even read them except by bits and snatches, but made up tales to fit the pictures, and told over and over the stories that were read to her.

She was always ready to drop a book for a romp with Pat Patterson. Bounding about the deck together, they looked like a greyhound and a St. Bernard—she slim and alert, he with his rough hair tumbling over his merry, freckled face. Often their games ended by her stalking away with Honey-Sweet, in offended dignity. Pat was such a tease!

"Isn't that a pretty doll?" he said one day, with suspicious earnestness. "I say, lend her to me awhile, Anne."

Anne objected.

"Oh, you Anne! You wouldn't be selfish, would you?" wheedled Pat. "Didn't I lend you my bow and arrows yesterday? And I always give you half my macaroons. Just hand her over for a minute. Let me see the color of her eyes."

"You know they are blue—like the story-book princess,—'her eyes were as bright and as blue as the sky above the summer sea,'" quoted Anne, reluctantly letting him take her pet.

"Blue they are. D'ye know, Anne, I think she'd make a capital William Tell's child. Don't believe she'd be afraid for me to shoot the apple off her head. Let's see."

Before Anne could interfere, Pat had suspended Honey-Sweet to a hook out of her reach. A ball of string was fixed on her head by means of a wad of chewing-gum.

Then Pat stepped back, drew his bow, and made a great show of aiming his arrow at the pretended apple.

"How brave she is! She does not wink an eyelid," he said solemnly. "To think! to think! If me aim be not true, I'll ki-ill me child," he exclaimed, shaking with mock fear and dismay.

"Oh, Pat, Pat, don't!" implored Anne, grasping his arm.

"Away, away!" said Pat, drawing back. "Me heart failed but for a moment. William Tell is himself once more. Behold!" And he took aim again.

"Stop him! stop him! Don't let him shoot Honey-Sweet!" cried Anne.

Miss Drayton looked up quickly from her book.

"Patrick Henry Patterson!" she said severely. "Shame on you! Stop teasing that child. Give her the doll this instant—this instant, sir!"

Anne hugged her regained pet and walked away, carefully avoiding Pat's mischievous eyes. A few minutes later, a bag of macaroons slipped over her shoulder, and a merry voice announced: "William Tell gives this to his br-rave, beloved child." And before Anne could speak, Pat was gone to join some other boys in a game of ring toss.

With a forgiving smile at him, she sauntered on and stood gazing over the railing at the motley crowd in the steerage. She was looking for the Irish mother with three curly-haired children. She wanted to share her macaroons with them. They always looked hungry, and it was really as much fun to throw them bonbons as to feed the greedy little squirrels in Central Park. The children were not in sight, however, and Anne loitered, leaning on the rail. She felt rather than saw some one watching her. Looking down, she met for a fleeting second the dark, intent eyes of a steerage passenger, a man in a coarse shirt and blue overalls. His face—as much of it as she could see under the broad soft hat pulled over the eyes—was covered with a dark scrubby beard.

On a sudden impulse, Anne leaned forward and called in her clear little voice: "Here, you man in blue overalls! catch!"

The man started violently, and the macaroons rolled on the deck. He leaned forward and seemed intent on picking up the fragments, but his hand shook so that it was slow work. "Thank you, little lady," he said after awhile, in a gruff voice. "I hope you have good friends."

"Indeed, I have. Have you?"

Perhaps he did not hear her. At all events, he moved quickly away, without raising his head. Then Pat came, calling Anne. He wanted her to hear what a man was telling about the headlands that were beginning to take form on the horizon. Their voyage was almost over. In a few hours, they would reach Liverpool.

The dock was entered at last and with as little delay as possible Mrs. Patterson's party drove to the Roxton Hotel. No one noticed that the carriage was followed closely by a shabby cab. Unseen, its passenger—a man in blue overalls with a soft hat pulled over his eyes—watched the little party enter the hotel. Then he alighted, paid his fare, shouldered his canvas travelling bag, and disappeared down a dingy street.

CHAPTER VI

"What news for Anne?" wondered Miss Drayton as they drove to their hotel. Captain Wards had sent a wireless message to the New York chief of police, asking that Anne's relatives be informed of her whereabouts and that tidings of them be sent to Miss Drayton at the Roxton Hotel in Liverpool. Awaiting her, there were two cablegrams. Both were from the New York chief of police. One was in these words: "No trace Mayo. Will find and notify child's other relatives." The other cablegram read thus: "No trace any relatives of child. Letter will follow."

Miss Drayton handed the cablegrams to her sister resting in an easy chair before the sea-coal fire which chased away the gloom of the foggy morning.

Mrs. Patterson read the messages thoughtfully. "It is her disappointment that grieves me," she said, looking at Anne who was sitting in a corner teaching Honey-Sweet a spelling lesson. "For myself, I should like to keep her always. A dear little daughter! I've always wanted one."

"Ye-es," said Miss Drayton, doubtfully, "but—we know so little about this child. Her uncle a felon! Who knows what bad blood is in her veins?"

"That child?" Mrs. Patterson laughed, glancing toward Anne. "Why, she carries her letters of credit in her face. Look at that earnest mouth, those honest eyes. I'd trust them anywhere."

"Oh, well!" Miss Drayton put the subject aside. "Her people will turn up and claim her. There are lots of them, it seems. She's always talking about Aunt This and Uncle That and Cousin the Other.

Why, Emily! You ought to have had your tonic a quarter of an hour ago. And a nap."

That evening the subject of Anne's relatives was brought forward at the dinner table by the child herself. Seeing her eyes rove shyly around the room, Miss Drayton said, "You look as if you were watching for somebody or something. What is it, Anne?"

"I was thinking," replied the child, "maybe—there are so many people in this big room—maybe Uncle Carey is here and can't find me."

The truth—as much of it as was necessary for her to know—might as well be told now and here. "Anne," said Miss Drayton, "we telegraphed back. There is no news of your uncle. He—he missed the boat. We don't know where to send a message to him. Try to be content to stay with us until some of your home people claim you."

"I don't want to be selfish, Anne dear, but I'm not longing for any one to claim you," said Mrs. Patterson, with a caressing smile. "I didn't know how dreadfully I needed a little daughter till you came. I don't want to give you up. How nice it will be some day to have a big daughter to take care of me!"

Anne looked up with shining, affectionate eyes. "I'm most big now, you know, Mrs. Patterson," she said. "I'm eight years old and going on nine. I love to be your girl, but—" her lip quivered—"I do wish I knew where Uncle Carey was."

"Suppose, Anne, you write to some of your relatives," suggested Miss Drayton,—"any whose addresses you know. The Aunt Charity you speak of so often—where does she live? Is she your mother's sister or your father's?"

Anne's laughter shook the teardrops from her lashes. "Why, Miss Drayton," she replied, "I thought you knew. Aunt Charity is black. She was my nurse. She and Uncle Richard—he's her husband—lived with us from the time I can remember."

"Oh!" said Miss Drayton. "But cousins? Those people you talk about and call cousin—Marjorie and Patsy and Dorcas and Dick and Cornelius and the others—they are real cousins, aren't they? Do you know how near? First? or second? or third?"

Anne looked perplexed. "There are a lot of cousins. Yes, Miss Drayton, they're real. I don't know what kin any of them are. I call them 'cousin' because mother did. They lived near home—five or six or ten miles away. And they'd spend a day or week with us. And we'd go to see them."

"Oh! Virginia cousins!" Mrs. Patterson laughed. "Some time you and I'll go to see them and take Honey-Sweet, won't we?—Sarah, Sarah! Let's not make any more investigations. Wait, like our old friend, Mr. Micawber, for 'something to turn up.'"

The mails were watched with interest for the promised letter from the New York police, but day after day passed without bringing it. The American party lingered at the Liverpool hotel. Mrs. Patterson pleaded each day that she needed to rest a little longer before making the journey to Nantes. The doctor, called in to prescribe for her, looked grave and suggested that she consult a certain famous physician in Paris.

Miss Drayton was so disturbed about her sister's illness that she paid little attention to Pat and Anne. The children, left to their own devices, wandered about the streets in a way that would have been thought shocking had any one thought about the matter.

Once when Anne was walking with Pat and again when she was driving with Mrs. Patterson and Miss Drayton, she caught a glimpse of the steerage passenger who had spoken to her on the dock, and felt that he was watching her. And then he spoke to her. It was one morning when she had gone out alone to buy some picture postcards. She stopped to look in a shop window, and when she turned, there at her elbow stood the man in blue overalls.

"Wait a minute," he said, in a strained, muffled voice, as she started to walk on. "Do you want news of your uncle?"

"Of course I do," she answered in surprise.

"I can give you news. Walk this afternoon to the bridge beyond the shop where you buy lollipops. Tell no one what I say. No one. If you do, some great harm will come to your uncle. Will you come?—alone?"

"If I can."

"If you do not, you may never hear of your uncle again. Never."

"Who are you? Do you know Uncle Carey? Tell me—"

"Not now. Not here," he said hurriedly, glancing at the people coming and going on the street. "This afternoon. Will you come?"

"Yes."

"Tell no one. Promise."

"I promise."

He hurried away, and Anne stood quite still, with a strange, bewildering fear at her heart. Then she turned—picture postcards had lost all their charm—and went back to the hotel.

CHAPTER VII

That afternoon Pat went sight-seeing with a new-made friend, Darrell Connor, and his father. While Anne was hesitating to ask permission to go out, fearing to be refused or questioned, the matter was settled in the simplest possible way. Miss Drayton coaxed her sister to lie down on the couch in the pleasant sitting-room.

"I will draw the curtains," she said; "perhaps if it be dark and quiet, you will fall asleep. Anne, you may sit in your bedroom or take your doll for a walk."

"Honey-Sweet and her little mother look as if they needed fresh air," said Mrs. Patterson, smiling faintly.

Excited and vaguely troubled, but walking straight with head erect, Anne went to the bridge. Against the railing leaned a familiar figure in blue overalls and slouch hat. No one else was near. The man turned.

"Nancy pet—" it was her uncle's name for her and it was her uncle's voice that spoke. "Those people are good to you? They will take care of you till—while you are alone?"

"Uncle Carey, Uncle Carey! It *is* you!"

"Yes, it is I. Don't come nearer, dear. Stand by the railing with your doll. Don't speak till those people pass. Now listen, little Anne. I am hiding from men who want to put me in prison. I can't tell you about it. Some day you will know. Oh, Lord! some day you must know all. Think of Uncle Carey sometimes, dear, and keep on loving him. Remember how we used to sit in the sleepy-hollow chair and tell fairy tales. My Nancy pet! Poor little orphan baby! It is hard to leave you alone—dependent—among strangers. Here! This little package is for you. Lucky I forgot and left it in my pocket after I took it out of the safety deposit box. Everything else is gone. What will you do with it? No, no! you can't carry it in your hand. Here!" He tore a strip from his handkerchief, knotted it around the little package, and tied it under her doll's skirts. "Be careful of it, dear. They're not of great value, but they were your mother's."

While he was speaking, Anne stood dazed. The world seemed upside down. Could that rough-bearded man in shabby clothes be handsome, fastidious Uncle Carey? Ah! there was the dear loving voice, there were the dear loving eyes. She threw her arms around her uncle and he pressed her close while she kissed him again and again.

"Uncle Carey," she cried, "I've wanted you so bad. But why do you look so—so different? What makes all that hair on your face? It—it isn't pretty and it scratches my cheek." She rubbed the reddened skin with her forefinger.

"You must not tell any one that you have seen me. Not any one. Do you understand?" her uncle spoke hurriedly. "If people find out that I am here, they will hunt me up and put me in prison."

"Not Mrs. Patterson, uncle, nor Pat, nor Miss Drayton. They are too good. Mayn't I tell them?"

"No, no!"

"Uncle! they wouldn't hurt you. And it's such hard work to keep a secret."

"Ah, poor child! And it may be a long, long time," considered Mr. Mayo. Then he asked suddenly, "Where are you going from here? Do you know these ladies' plans?"

"To spend the winter in France. The name of the place is like mine. Nan—Nan—No! not Nancy."

"Nantes?"

"Yes, uncle. Nantes. That's it."

"When you get to Nantes, then, you may tell your friends about seeing me."

Through the fog a policeman loomed in view, coming leisurely down the quiet street.

"I must go," Mr. Mayo said hurriedly. "Good-by, Nancy pet."

Anne caught his hand in both of hers. "Oh, uncle!" she cried. "Don't go. I want you. I want to go with you."

"Dear little one! What a fool I was! oh, what a fool! Good-by!"

He kissed her and was gone. Anne stood motionless, silent, looking after him as he hurried down a by-street.

"Did 'ee beg off you, my little leddy?" asked the friendly policeman, as he came up. "'As that dirty fellow frightened you?"

"Oh, no. He didn't beg. I am not frightened," Anne answered quickly. "I'm going home now."

"If so be folks worrit you on the streets, a'lays holler for a cop," said the guardian of the peace. "We'll take care of you. That's what we're here for. And I've chillen of me own and a'lays look out partic'lar for the little ones."

"Thank you, thank you! Good-by."

Anne's disturbed looks would have excited comment, had her friends not been occupied with troubles of their own. The doctor in his visit that afternoon had urged Miss Drayton to go to Paris as soon as possible and put Mrs. Patterson under charge of the physician whom he had before recommended.

"If any one can help her, he is the man," said Dr. Foster.

"'If!' Is it so serious?" faltered Miss Drayton.

The doctor hesitated. Then he said: "We must hope for the best. Your sister may get on nicely."

"Is her throat worse?" asked Miss Drayton.

"I—er-r—I prefer to have you consult Dr. La Farge," replied the doctor.

It was resolved, then, to go to Paris at once. While Miss Drayton was packing, the American mail came in, and brought a letter from New York police headquarters. The officer, whose interest in the case had led him to push his inquiries as far as possible, wrote at length. In the investigation of the Stuyvesant Trust Company, accused of violating the Anti-Trust Law, certain business papers had been secured which proved that Mr. Carey Mayo had taken trust funds, speculated in cotton futures, lost heavily during a panic, and covered his misuse of the company's funds by falsifying his accounts. Evidently it had been a mere speculation not a deliberate theft. Mr. Mayo had been refunding larger or smaller sums month by month for a year. Had it not been for this investigation of the company's affairs, he might and probably would have replaced the whole amount and his guilt would never have been known. When the investigation began, he made hasty plans to escape to Europe with his niece. Being informed that he was about to be arrested, he left the child on the steamer, as we know, and escaped—to Canada, the police thought.

A number of his acquaintances in the city had been interviewed. They had known Mr. Mayo for years, but only in the way of business and knew nothing of his family; one or two had heard him mention a sister and a niece.

The servants in his Cathedral Parkway apartment had been found and questioned. The cook had been with Mr. Mayo two years. He was "an easy-going gentleman, good pay, and no interferer." The year before, she said, he had gone to Virginia, summoned by a telegram announcing his sister's death, and had brought back his orphan niece, Anne Lewis. The cook had never seen nor heard of any other member of his family.

The police officer suggested that the child should be put in an institution for the care of destitute children. He gave information as to the steps necessary in such a case and professed his willingness to give any further help desired.

Miss Drayton and Mrs. Patterson read and reread the letter.

"Well?" asked Miss Drayton.

"We'll not send her to an asylum, you know," said Mrs. Patterson, decidedly. "Unless her own people claim her, we will keep her. Anne shall be my little daughter."

So it was settled, and the family party went on to Paris. The great physician made a careful examination of Mrs. Patterson. He, too, was unwilling to express an opinion about her condition. He would prefer, he said, to have madame under treatment awhile at his private hospital, a quiet place in the suburbs.

It was promptly decided to accept Dr. La Farge's suggestion. Mrs. Patterson's health being the object of their journey, there was no reason why they should winter in Nantes if in Paris she could secure more helpful treatment. It was resolved, therefore, to send Pat and Anne to boarding-schools while Mrs. Patterson and Miss Drayton put themselves under the doctor's orders.

"Oh! Aren't we going to Nantes?" asked Anne, when Miss Drayton informed her of the changed plans.

"No, Anne. I've just told you, we are all going to stay in or near Paris."

"Not going there at all? ever?" the child persisted.

"I don't know; probably not." Miss Drayton was worried and this made her tone crisp and impatient.

"O—oh!" wailed Anne, her self-control giving way before the sudden disappointment. "I want to go. I want to go to Nantes."

Miss Drayton was amazed. What ailed the child? Why this passionate desire to go to Nantes, a city of which, as she owned, she had never even heard until she was told that it was their destination?

"Anne, Anne! For pity's sake!" said Miss Drayton. "Why are you so anxious to go to Nantes?"

But Anne only rocked back and forth, sobbing, "I want to go to Nantes! I want to go to Nantes!"

She had been counting the days till, according to her uncle's permission, she might tell her friends about seeing him. She felt sure they would explain the puzzling change in his appearance, and tell when she would see him again. Now, after all, they were not going to Nantes, and she must keep her secret alone, forever and forever. It was too dreadful!

CHAPTER VIII

Pat was sent to a boarding-school near Paris, and it was decided that Anne should attend St. Cecilia's School, a select institution where American girls continued their studies in English and had lessons in French and music. Mrs. Patterson herself went to enter Anne as a pupil.

St. Cecilia's School faced a little park on a quiet street. It was a red-brick building, with balconies set in recesses between white stuccoed pillars. Everything about the place was formal and dignified. The lower floor was occupied by parlors, offices, class-rooms, and dining-rooms. Through wide-open doors at the end of the hall, Mrs. Patterson and Anne had a pleasant view of the long piazza at the back of the house. It opened on a grass-plot edged with flowerbeds. The neat gravel paths ended in short flights of steps, under rose-covered archways, that led down a terrace to the playground.

While they waited in a handsome, formal parlor for Mademoiselle Duroc, Mrs. Patterson chatted pleasantly to Anne about the swings and arbors and pear-trees on the playground. But Anne sat silent, with a lump in her throat, and clutched her friend's hand tighter and tighter, while she watched for the principal's entrance as she would have watched for an ogre in whose den she had been trapped. At last—it was really in a very few minutes—Mademoiselle Duroc entered the room. While she talked with Mrs. Patterson, Anne regarded her with awe.

Like her surroundings, Mademoiselle was formal and handsome. She was of middle height, but she carried herself with such stately grace that she impressed Anne as being very tall. Her glossy hair, of which no one ever saw a strand out of place, was arranged in elaborate waves and coils supported by a tall shell comb. She wore a very long, very stiff black silk gown trimmed with beads and lace, and she had a purple silk shawl around her shoulders. When she moved, her skirts rustled in a stately fashion and sent forth a stately odor of sandalwood.

"I shall have to do whatever she tells me," Anne knew at once. "If she tells me to walk in the fire, I shall have to go."

That was the impression Mademoiselle Duroc always made on people. She was a born general, and if she had been a man and had lived a century earlier, she would have been one of the great Napoleon's marshals and led a freezing, starving little band to impossible victories;—so Miss Morris said. Miss Morris, a stout, middle-aged, New England lady, was Mademoiselle's assistant. She had a kind heart, but the girls thought her cross because she was always making a worried effort to secure the order and attention which came of themselves as soon as Mademoiselle entered the study-hall. When Miss Morris scolded—which was often, as Anne was to learn—her face grew very red and her voice very rough, and she flapped her arms in a peculiar way. Anne did not like to be scolded but she liked to watch Miss Morris when she was angry; it was strange and interesting to see a person look so much like a turkey-cock.

Anne usually watched people very closely with her bright, soft, hazel eyes. Now, however, she was too frightened and miserable to raise her eyes above Mademoiselle's satin slippers, even to look at Miss Morris who came in to take charge of the new pupil.

"This is my borrowed daughter, for the winter at least," Mrs. Patterson explained, with her arm around the shy, excited child. "You will find her studious and you will find her obedient. I shall expect you to give her back to me next summer a very learned young lady."

Anne clung to Mrs. Patterson's hand like a drowning man to a raft. "Don't leave me," she whispered imploringly. "Please take me back with you. Oh, please!"

"Dearie, I wish I could," her friend answered with a caress. "But I can't. My little girl must stay here now—and study—and be good."

Anne watched the carriage start off, feeling that it must, must, must turn and come back to get her. But it rolled out of sight under the archway of trees. Then Miss Morris took her by the hand and led her into a small office. She read a long list of things that Anne must do and a still longer list of things that she must not do. She called on Anne to read in two or three little books, and questioned her about arithmetic and history and geography.

Finally she escorted the new pupil to the dormitory. It was a large, spotless apartment which Anne was to share with five other American girls, some older, some younger, than herself. Each girl had her own little white bed, her own little white dressing-table and washstand, her own little white box with chintz-cushioned top, in which to keep her private belongings. Miss Morris called Louise, one of the maids, to unpack Anne's trunk. As the articles were put in her box and drawers and on her shelves and hooks in the dormitory closet, Miss Morris said: "Now remember where

your shoes are, and keep them there."

"Do not forget to put your aprons always in that corner of the third shelf."

"The left-hand drawer of the dressing-table is for your handkerchiefs, and the right-hand drawer is for your hair-ribbons."

Anne sat by, with Honey-Sweet clasped in her arms, and meekly answered, "Yes, Miss Morris," or "No, Miss Morris," as the occasion demanded.

It was luncheon-time when the unpacking was finished and in the dining-room Anne met her five room-mates. Fat, freckle-faced, stupid Amelia Harvey and clever, idle Madge Allison were cousins in charge of Madge's older sister who was studying art. Annette and B  b   Girard were pretty, dark-eyed chatterboxes whose father was consul at Havre. Fair, chubby, even-tempered Elsie Hart was the daughter of a clergyman who was travelling in the Holy Land.

Anne, who had never in her life had to do a certain thing at a certain time, did not find it easy to adjust her habits to the routine of school life. Her morning toilette was especially troublesome. She tumbled out of bed a little behind time at Louise's summons and during each operation of the dressing period she fell a little farther behind. In vain Louise reproved and hurried her.

One Wednesday morning, Anne was especially provoking. Not that she meant to be. It just happened so. She dawdled over her bath, and when Louise tried to hurry her, she stopped quite still to argue the matter.

"You want me to be clean, don't you?" she asked.

"But yes! Not to the scrub-off of the skin," protested Louise.

Anne continued to rub her ears. "It's a—a 'sponsibility to wash my own corners. And Mrs. Patterson says it's a disgrace to be dingy," she explained.

Then she sat down on the floor and proceeded to put on her stockings,—that is, she meant to put them on, but she became so absorbed in trying to spell her name backwards that she forgot about the stockings. Louise caught her by the shoulder.

"You will dress instant, Mees Anne," she threatened, "or I report you to Mademoiselle."

Anne had heard that threat too often to be disturbed by it. She went to get a fresh apron, then, seeing that Honey-Sweet's frock was soiled, she selected a fresh frock for her doll whom she reproved severely for being so untidy and so slow about dressing. Louise, who was wrestling with Annette's curls, turned and saw Anne devoting herself to her doll's toilette when she ought to have been finishing her own. The much-tried maid snatched away Honey-Sweet and shook her heartily.

"Don't, don't, Louise!" cried Anne. "Don't you hurt Honey-Sweet. I'll dress. I'll hurry. I'll be quick."

Louise looked keenly at Anne's flushed, earnest face. Then she gave poor Honey-Sweet a smart little smack. "The wicked *b  b  !*" she exclaimed. "She does not permit that you make the toilette. If you are not dressed in six minutes exact, I give the spank once more to the bad *b  b  !*"

Anne's fingers hurried as she had not known they could hurry and in exactly four minutes she presented herself for Louise to tie her hair-ribbons, while she cuddled and pitied her rescued baby.

"Oh, ho! Mees Anne," said Louise, her eyes sparkling with satisfaction at having found a way to enforce promptness. "Each morning that is tardy, I give the spank to the wicked *b  b  * that makes you to delay."

To save Honey-Sweet from punishment, Anne sprang up the next morning at Louise's first call and dressed at once. To her surprise, she found that it was really pleasanter than dawdling over her toilette, and Louise good-naturedly gave her permission to take Honey-Sweet for a before-breakfast stroll to the arbor in the playground.

From the first, Anne got on well in her classes. She did not like to study lessons in books—she was always getting tangled up in long sentences or stumbling over big words—but where she once, in spite of the printed page, understood a subject, she made it her own. The scenes and events described in her history, geography, and reading lessons were vivid to her mind's eye and she pictured them vividly to others. Her classmates soon found that they could learn a lesson in half the time and with half the effort by studying it with Anne.

"I speak to study the hist'ry with Anne to-day," Amelia would say.

"Anne, if you'll go over the g'og'aphy lesson with me, I'll work your 'zamples for you," Madge would promise.

The girls found, too, that Anne could tell the most delightful stories. And she was always inventing charming new ways to play. Instead of keeping her paper dolls limp and loose, like the other girls, she pasted them on stiff cardboard, pulled them about with threads, and had a moving-picture show to illustrate a story that she made up. The admission price was five pins, those not too badly bent being accepted.

CHAPTER IX

Through all these days and weeks, Anne and Honey-Sweet were bearing about the secret which her uncle had intrusted to her. Sometimes it perplexed her and weighed heavy on her mind. Sometimes she forgot all about it for days together. Then with a start there would come, like a black figure stalking between her and the sunlight, the thought of her uncle's strange appearance, of the danger which he said was hanging over him if she told that she had seen him—told anywhere except at Nantes.

One night she dreamed that she told the secret. And the words were hardly off her lips before she saw her uncle pursued by a crowd, ragged, loud-voiced, wild-eyed people, like those she and Annette had seen that day when, falling behind their schoolmates out walking, they had taken a hurried short-cut and had run frightened along a dingy street. Anne dreamed that she saw her uncle running—running—running—almost spent—mouth open—panting breath. A moment more and the outstretched hands would catch him. They were not hands, they were sharp, cruel claws about to seize him. She wakened herself with a scream.

"No, no, no!" she sobbed, "I will never, never, never tell!"

The little package was still hidden where Mr. Mayo had put it. Once or twice when she was alone Anne had opened it, but she always felt as if some one was looking at her and about to question her, and she put it hastily away. There were three rings,—one a plain heavy band of yellow gold, one set with a blazing red stone, one with a cluster of sparkling white gems. There was a bead purse with a gold piece and a few silver coins in it. And there was a gold locket containing the portrait of a high-bred old gentleman with soft, dark hair falling in curls about his shoulders.

One gray morning early in November, Anne was wakened by an uncomfortable lump against her side. Sleepily she put her hand down to find out what it was. Her fingers closed on something hard, and opening them she saw rings, locket, and purse. The string around the packet had worn in two, the packet had come open and spilled its contents. Anne started up in bed, wide awake now, and glanced fearfully around. Honey-Sweet, snuggled down under the pillow, lay peacefully unaware that she had lost the treasure intrusted to her. All the girls were asleep. But at any moment one of them might wake. And it was almost time for Louise to come, bringing water and towels. Anne sprang out of bed, and with hurrying, trembling fingers tied the trinkets in the corner of a handkerchief and thrust them in the bottom of her box.

Her thoughts wandered many times during the long routine of the long day—recitations, practice, exercise, study periods. Suppose Louise should open the box to put away clothes or to set its contents in order, find the packet, and report her to Mademoiselle. The rules required that all jewelry be given in charge to one of the teachers. How would she—how could she—explain having these things? In the afternoon play-time, Anne ran to the dormitory, took out her workbox, and began with hurried, awkward stitches to sew a handkerchief into a bag to contain the jewels. How the thread snarled and knotted! How slowly the work progressed!

And then all at once, "Anne!" said a surprised voice.

Anne gave a great start and tried to hide her work.

"Anne, it is forbidden to come to the dormitory at this hour." It was Mademoiselle Duroc that spoke. "Report for a demerit this evening. But what is it that you do there?"

Anne was silent.

"Anne Lewis! Answer!"

"I was just making a little bag," she murmured.

"For what purpose?" asked the awful voice.

Anne faltered. "To—to put some things in."

"What things?"

Anne clasped her hands imploringly. "I cannot tell you, Mamzelle. I cannot. I cannot."

"You cannot tell?" repeated Mademoiselle Duroc. "I like not the mysteries. But I like the less to see you excite yourself into hysterics. Go downstairs and do not permit yourself to be found here again at this hour."

Anne dropped the unfinished bag into her box and went slowly downstairs. Mademoiselle Duroc followed her into the hall, stood there an undecided moment, then returned to the dormitory and paused beside Anne's box. She raised the lid, then dropped it, shaking her head.

"It is the most likely some child's nonsense about a string of buttons or such a matter. It suits not with the sense of dignity for me to search her box like a dishonest servant maid's," she said and returned to her room.

That night Anne tossed restlessly about until the other girls were asleep, then rose with sudden resolve to finish the bag by the moonlight which poured through the muslin curtains. She laid the trinkets on the pillow beside Honey-Sweet and stitched away on the bag. A little more, a very

little more, and her work would be done. She would tie the bag around Honey-Sweet's waist and then surely the troublesome jewels would be safe. Suddenly there came a piercing scream from the bed beside hers. Mademoiselle Duroc's door across the hall flew open, admitting a broad stream of light.

"What is the matter?" demanded Mademoiselle. "Who screamed?"

For a moment no one spoke. Mademoiselle turned on the electric lights and her sharp black eyes searched the room. B  b   and Annette, wakened by the turmoil, sat up in bed, blinking at the light. Madge rolled over and grunted. Elsie continued to snore serenely. But Amelia and Anne were wide awake. Amelia was sitting bolt upright, staring about her. Anne had not moved; she held the needle in her right hand, the unfinished bag in her left; beside her on the pillow gleamed the jewels. Mademoiselle's eyes took in every detail.

"I demand to know who screamed," she repeated.

Amelia spoke sheepishly. "I was so sound asleep," she said. "And then I waked up. I can't help being 'fraid of ghosts and burglars and things. I saw—it's Anne—but I didn't know. I just saw something between me and the window, and the hand went up and down—up and down. It frightened me. I screamed."

"It is the misfortune to be a so fearful coward," commented Mademoiselle, dryly. "And you, Anne Lewis, you also are due to explain."

Anne sat pale and wordless.

"You will have the goodness to give me those things from your pillow which belong not there," said Mademoiselle, taking possession of them. "Now you will please to put on your slippers and your dressing-gown, and we will have the interview in my room. This dormitory needs no more disturbance. I commend you to sleep, young ladies. I suggest, Amelia, that you cultivate repose and courage."

Anne entered Mademoiselle Duroc's room with one thought in her bewildered brain. "I must not tell. I must not tell," she said over and over to herself. She stood with downcast eyes before Mademoiselle Duroc who examined the trinkets one after another.

"These rings are, I judge, of considerable value," she said. "This is an exquisite little ruby. The locket is quaintly enamelled. The miniature is of masterful workmanship; whose portrait is it?" she asked, raising her eyes to Anne's frightened face.

Anne shook her head. Her voice failed her. And she did not know that the stately old gentleman was her mother's grandfather.

"And you so disregard the rules as to have jewels in your open box—and money of this value," continued Mademoiselle, emptying the coins out of the bead purse and putting her finger on the gold piece.

"Is that money?" asked Anne, in amazement.

Mademoiselle looked up. "Do you mean to tell me that you were unaware that this is a twenty-dollar coin?" she asked.

"I never thought," answered Anne. "Of course I ought to have known. It was stupid. But I had never seen gold money before."

"Where did you get it?" demanded Mademoiselle. "And the other things?"

It was the question that Anne dreaded.

"I cannot tell you, Mamzelle," she answered, in a low voice.

"Anne! I demand to know whose things these are," said Mademoiselle, in her most awful voice.

"Mine, mine," cried Anne. "But I cannot tell you about them, Mamzelle. Indeed I cannot—not if you kill me. I promised. I promised."

In vain did Mademoiselle Duroc question. At last she dismissed Anne who crept back to bed, and, holding Honey-Sweet tight, sobbed herself to sleep.

CHAPTER X

The next morning Anne was summoned to the office; there she was coaxed and threatened by Miss Morris and questioned keenly by Mademoiselle Duroc. All to no purpose. She said in breathless whispers that she didn't mean to be disobedient, she didn't want to refuse to answer, but she could not, could not tell anything about the jewels. She confessed that Miss Drayton and Mrs. Patterson did not know that she had them.

"She must answer." Miss Morris's voice was rougher than it had ever been in Mademoiselle Duroc's presence. "Permit me to whip her, Mademoiselle, and make her tell."

Mademoiselle shook her head slowly. Her voice was like spun silk as she replied: "If she does not answer when I speak, it is not my thought that she would answer to the rod. Anne!" She fixed her clear, commanding eyes again on the little culprit.

"Oh, Mamzelle, don't ask me," sobbed Anne. "I would tell you if I could. I will do anything else you want me. But I cannot—cannot—cannot tell."

Mademoiselle Duroc rose, looked over Anne's head as if she were not there, and spoke to Miss Morris. "For the present, certainly, it is useless to persist," she said. "Unless Anne Lewis makes the explanation of this matter, for a month she may not go on the playground, she may not take any recreation except a walk alone in the yard, she may have double tasks in the three studies in which her grade marks are lowest. I should send the full account of the matter to Madame Patterson and request that this child be removed from St. Cecilia's School, were it not that Miss Drayton writes her sister is very ill. Therefore I will wait until the visit which Miss Drayton proposes to make to the city before the holidays and then I will place this matter before her. Anne is now excused from the room. I do not desire to see longer that which I have not before seen—a pupil who does not obey me."

Neither Mademoiselle Duroc nor Miss Morris mentioned the subject and we may be sure that Anne did not, but somehow the girls got hold of enough to gossip over and misrepresent the matter. It was whispered that Anne had a great heap of jewels and money and was being punished because she would not tell from whom she had stolen them. Perhaps she was to be sent to prison. Her classmates stared at her with curious, unfriendly eyes and even when she was allowed again to go on the playground, they kept away from her. Poor little Anne was very lonely.

Several days after the jewels were discovered, Miss Morris was exceedingly cross. It was impossible to please her, even with perfect recitations, and those Anne had, for she was studying more diligently than she had ever done—even the hated arithmetic—partly to occupy the long, lonely hours and partly to make up for her unwilling disobedience. By degrees Miss Morris became less stern. Anne ought to be punished and that severely, she thought; no pupil had ever before dared disobey Mademoiselle. But Miss Morris hated to see a child so lonely and miserable. She grew gentler and gentler with Anne, crosser and crosser with the other girls. It was certainly no affair of theirs to punish a classmate for—they knew not what.

She saw and approved that sweet-tempered little Elsie Hart smiled and nodded to Anne at every quiet chance. Elsie would have liked to go on being friends, but that, she knew, would make the other girls angry and she prudently preferred to be on bad terms with one rather than with four. But she always offered her Saturday bonbons to Anne as to the other girls; she couldn't enjoy them herself if she were so mean and stingy as not to do that, she declared stoutly.

One afternoon—Anne was looking especially dejected as she took her lonely walk in the west yard—Miss Morris thrust into Elsie's hands a bag of candies and whispered hurriedly: "When you go to divide—yonder is Anne under the grape arbor and I do believe she's crying."

Elsie trotted straight to Anne with her smiles and bonbons. Anne was so cheered that she came in, sat down at the study-table, and took up her history with whole-hearted interest.

Amelia, on the other side of the table, looked up and frowned. "That's an awful hard hist'ry lesson," she said.

Anne was disinclined to speak to Amelia—Amelia had been so hateful!—but finally she said rather curtly: "I don't think it's hard."

Amelia twirled a box that she held in her hand. "I do. I can't remember those old Mexican names, or who went where and which whipped when."

That made Anne laugh. "Of course you can," she said. "Just play you're there, marching 'long with the 'Merican soldiers. There's General Taylor, sitting stiff and straight on a white horse. Up rides a little Mexican on a pony. 'Look at our gre't big army and see how few men you've got,' he says. 'S'render, General Taylor, s'render, before we beat you into a cocked hat.' General Taylor looks at him—no, he doesn't, he looks 'way 'cross the hills,—mountains, I mean—and says, 'General Taylor never s'renders.' And the Mexican whips his pony and gallops away. Then General Taylor he draws up his little army of five thousand br-rave Americans right here—" Anne put her finger on an ink-spot.

"Let me get my book, Anne, and you go over all the lesson, won't you?" pleaded Amelia. "I used to know my lessons when you did that. And Miss Morris says if I don't do better she is going to drop me out of class and give me review work in recreation hour. Please, Anne."

"I don't care if I do," responded Anne. She was lonely enough to feel that she would even enjoy studying a history lesson with stupid Amelia.

"I'll leave my box here." Amelia started off, but came back a moment later. "I forgot I left my purse in my box," she said. She opened the purse and counted the money. "I had another two-franc piece," she said, with a sharp look at Anne. Anne glanced from the dominoes that she was drawing up in line of battle on the table.

"Did you?" she asked unconcernedly.

Her indifference provoked Amelia. "Yes, I did," she asserted. "I had two two-franc pieces in my

purse. One of them's gone. Did you take it, Anne Lewis?"

"Take it?" Anne repeated. Was Amelia really suspecting—accusing her of taking the money? That was impossible!

"Yes, take it," cried Amelia, flushed and angry. "You stole those jewels and money from no one knows who. Now you've stolen my money. You've got to give it back."

Every drop of blood seemed to ebb from Anne's face, leaving it as pale as ashes, while her narrowed eyes blazed like live coals.

"If you say that I—that word—again, Amelia Harvey," she said slowly, "I will strike you."

"Why, Anne Lewis!" exclaimed the shocked voice of Miss Morris who was sitting at her desk, correcting exercises. "What a wicked speech!"

Anne was unrepentant. "She shall not say—that," she said. "She is wicked to tell such a falsehood."

"I want my money," persisted Amelia.

"How much money did you have in your purse, Amelia?" asked Miss Morris. "Think now. Be sure."

"I had two two-franc pieces," insisted Amelia, "and one is gone."

"You had two yeth'day," lisped Elsie Hart, who had just come in. "And you bought a boxth of chocolath."

Amelia reddened. "I—I'd forgot," she muttered.

"Forgot! Amelia! You spent your money and then accused your schoolmate of taking it!" Miss Morris exclaimed indignantly. "You are a careless, careless, bad, bad girl. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You must beg Anne to forgive you."

"I'll not forgive her, not if she asks me a thousand years," stormed Anne.

"Anne, Anne," reprovved Miss Morris. "What a bitter, revengeful spirit! It makes me unhappy to hear you speak so."

"I don't care. I'm unhappy. I want everybody else to be unhappy," said Anne, as she left the room, sobbing as if her heart would break.

CHAPTER XI

The long days dragged by and brought at last the Christmas holidays. Mrs. Patterson was stronger. She was able to join the shopping excursion, waiting in the carriage while Miss Drayton came in to get Anne.

Miss Drayton exclaimed at sight of the pale little face.

"What is the matter with her, Mademoiselle Duroc?" she inquired anxiously. "She has not been ill? Has she been studying too hard?"

"She studies," answered Mademoiselle; "but she thrived till the month ago. There is a matter which I must beg leave to discuss with you and madame your sister."

The little hand which lay in Miss Drayton's twitched and clung tight. Miss Drayton smiled protectingly at the child, who looked like a quivering rabbit cowering before hunting dogs. "If it be a matter of broken rules—or anything unpleasant—let us pass it by, Mademoiselle Duroc. If you please! This is Christmas, you know."

"The matter is too serious to ignore," protested Mademoiselle.

"If it must be," Miss Drayton yielded reluctantly. "But we must not spoil our Christmas. And, really, my sister is still too unwell to be annoyed. After Christmas, if it must be."

"After Christmas, then," Mademoiselle submitted.

Anne threw herself into Mrs. Patterson's arms in an ecstasy of delight. "I'm so glad that it hurts," she exclaimed. "I'd forgot what good times there are in the world."

"Let me hold Honey-Sweet. She's too heavy for you," urged Pat.

"No, I thank you," laughed Anne. "She doesn't want to be a William Tell's child or a Daniel in the lions' den. I was so glad you sent me word to bring Honey-Sweet, Mrs. Patterson," she continued joyously. "I wanted to bring her, and it's so much nicer when she's invited."

"I want you to lend her to me a little while," Mrs. Patterson answered. "I'll not make her a William Tell's child or a Daniel in the lions' den. I—let me whisper it so she'll not hear—I want to get her a Christmas present and it is one I can't select in her absence."

They made the round of the shops, gay with Christmas decorations and thronged with merry shoppers. Anne was full of eager excitement. Mrs. Patterson gave her a little purse full of shining silver pieces, which she was to spend as she pleased.

Anne clapped her hands with delight. "I'll buy a present for Elsie," she said, "and perhaps I'll get something for Miss Morris and Louise."

"I would buy a gift for each of my classmates, if I were you," Mrs. Patterson suggested. "It is pleasant to remember every one."

"O—oh!" Anne's face clouded. "But if they haven't been nice—"

"Those are the very ones to remember at Christmas time," interrupted Mrs. Patterson. "Peace and good will! If there is any one who has been especially un-nice to you, this is such a good time to be specially nice to that person."

"But I'm not going to forgive Amelia," Anne asserted quietly but positively.

"Well, well, dearie! we'll not talk about anything disagreeable to-day," said Mrs. Patterson. "But do you know, I think it would be fun to give Amelia the nicest present of all?"

"Mademoiselle Duroc was pretty bad, too," said Anne.

"Then what about a nice present for Mademoiselle?" inquired Mrs. Patterson. "But just as you like, dear. This is do-as-you-please day for you and Pat. Now Honey-Sweet and I are going to do a little shopping alone and then we'll rest and wait for you in the ladies' room."

"I like to do what you say," said Anne, thoughtfully. "Maybe I won't hate so bad to give them presents if I make a play of it. I'll try."

She counted out her silver pieces and decided on the price of the gifts that she would choose for each of her teachers and classmates. Then she shut her eyes and when she opened them she 'made pretend' she was Mademoiselle Duroc, moving slow and stately like a parade or a procession, and she chose a stiff little jet-and-gold hair ornament. Next Anne was Miss Morris. For a minute she puffed out her cheeks and flapped her arms, imitating the turkey-cock mood. Then she thrust out her chin, drew down her brows, and hurried along, with her fingers clenched as if she held a handful of exercises. That was the busy, hard-working, kind-hearted Miss Morris for whom she selected a silver-mounted ink-stand. There was an enamelled belt pin for finery-loving Annette, a gay set of paper dolls for little Béb , a new story book for book-loving Madge, a silver stamp-box for Elsie, and for Amelia a pretty blue silk workbag fitted with needles, thimble, and scissors. There was a box of bonbons for Louise and for the cross cook a gay fan which displayed the red, white, and blue of the American flag,—for I shouldn't be so cross if I were not so uncomfortable in my hot, hot kitchen," Anne said, waddling along with arms akimbo, "and I'm sure I can keep cooler with such a be-yu-tiful fan."

"Now I've bought my duty presents, I'll buy my love ones," announced Anne, gayly. "I'm going to buy Elsie another present—a big box of 'chocolate creamth'—she does adore them. These three wise monkeys are for Pat. There isn't anything good enough for dear Mrs. Patterson, but I'll get her a lovely big bottle of cologne. Don't you peep, Miss Drayton, while I choose your present," Anne charged, as she tripped about the shop, selecting at last a pretty silver hat pin.

Miss Drayton laughingly asserted that Anne, chattering away in her assumed characters, was as good as a play and exclaimed that she had no idea it was so late and they must go at once to Mrs. Patterson who would be worn out waiting for them. So Pat was dragged from the display of sporting goods, and they hurried to the ladies' room where Mrs. Patterson was resting in an easy chair. She was pale but smiling.

"I'm like you, Anne," she said; "I had forgotten what good times there are in the world. Before we go to luncheon, I want to know if Honey-Sweet's mother approves of her. I told you that her hair would grow, you know. See!" She untied the strings and took off Honey-Sweet's cap. Instead of a bald head with a few painted ringlets, there were wavy golden locks of real hair. It is no use to try to express Anne's delight. She couldn't do it herself. She laughed and cried and hugged first Honey-Sweet, then Mrs. Patterson, then both together.

A soft wet snow was falling, and amid its whiteness and the glittering lights and the merry bustle of the holiday crowds, the carriage turned homeward. After such a happy day, nothing could ever be so bad again, it seemed to Anne, as she kissed her friends good-by and ran light-heartedly up the steps.

The gift-giving and gift-receiving and merry-making of the Christmas holidays brought Anne back into the circle of her schoolmates. But her troubles were not over. One afternoon early in the new year, Mrs. Patterson and Miss Drayton came for the promised interview with Mademoiselle Duroc. She showed them the purse and jewels discovered in Anne's possession, and told them the whole story. Mrs. Patterson and Miss Drayton were amazed. They had never before seen any of the articles. Miss Drayton had packed Anne's trunk on the steamer and had unpacked and repacked it at the Liverpool hotel and she was sure that the things were not in the child's baggage. Two of the rings were of considerable value. The locket was handsome and looked like an heirloom.

"The child does not know whose portrait it contains,—that she confesses," said Mademoiselle

Duroc. "And there is the money—the gold piece."

Perplexed as she was, Mrs. Patterson's faith was unshaken in the child who had always seemed so straightforward and honorable. Miss Drayton wanted to believe in Anne, but she remembered the uncle whose story they had not told Mademoiselle; after all, they knew little of the child; nothing of her family, except that her uncle had used his employer's money and had fled from justice. Was the taint of dishonesty in her blood? For all her candid appearance, Anne had been keeping a secret. But perhaps there was some explanation which she would make to her friends, though she had withheld it from Mademoiselle Duroc.

Anne was summoned and came tripping into the room. Her face clouded when she saw the jewels in Mademoiselle Duroc's hand and the grave, questioning faces of her friends.

"Don't ask me about those, please, dear Mrs. Patterson," she entreated. "I can't tell you anything now. I'll tell you all about it then."

"Then? when?" asked Miss Drayton.

"Wh-when we get to Nantes—if ever we do go there," sobbed Anne.

"What nonsense is this, Anne?" inquired Miss Drayton. "Of course you must explain the matter. Did you have these things on shipboard?"

"No, Miss Drayton."

"Where did you get them?"

The child did not answer.

"Whose are these things, Anne?" asked Miss Drayton, more sternly.

"Mine, mine, mine!" cried Anne. "Indeed, I'll tell you all about them when we get to Nantes."

"Anne! What do you mean? Nantes! What has Nantes to do with it? You are making my sister ill. See how pale she is!—Emily, dear Emily, don't look so troubled. If only I had taken the matter up with you alone, Mademoiselle Duroc!"

"I wish I could tell. I do wish I could," moaned Anne.

Entreaty and command were in vain.

"We shall have to let the matter rest for the present," said Miss Drayton, at last. "It has overtaxed my sister's strength."

"Never mind me," protested Mrs. Patterson. "I am troubled only for the child's sake. Oh, there must be some reasonable, right explanation of it all!"

"I hope so," said Miss Drayton, hopelessly.

Mademoiselle Duroc had taken no part in the conversation with Anne. Now she spoke: "Permit me to suggest that I prefer not to retain charge of a pupil that has the secrets and mysteries. Will madame be so good—"

"No, no, Mademoiselle Duroc!" interrupted Miss Drayton. "You will—you must—do us the favor to keep the child for the present, until my sister is stronger—until we are able to make other arrangements."

There was a pause. Then Mademoiselle said inquiringly, "These jewels, you will take charge of them?"

"No, oh, no!" said Miss Drayton, hastily. "Something may turn up—there may be some claimant—but she insists they are hers.—Oh, dear! oh, dear!—We will come back, Mademoiselle, when my sister is better and we will discuss the matter again."

But week after week passed without bringing the promised visit. Instead, Anne received kind but brief and worried notes from Miss Drayton, enclosing the weekly pocket money. Now and then, there was a picture post-card from Mrs. Patterson, with a loving message to Anne or two or three lines to Honey-Sweet. The invalid was not improving. In fact, she was growing worse. So the days wore on till February.

One crisp frosty morning found Mrs. Patterson lying on a couch beside her window. In the foreground was a park-like expanse with trees showing their graceful branching in exquisite tracery against the clear blue sky. Beyond lay Paris, its red and gray roofs showing among the bare trees, with domes, spires, and gilded crosses cresting the irregular line.

"The view here is beautiful, is it not?" said Miss Drayton.

Mrs. Patterson did not move her eyes from the horizon line. "I was thinking of home," she said. "How beautiful it is there these February mornings! Our noble rows of elms and oaks and maples! Up the avenue, the domes of the Capitol and the Library are shining against the gray or gold or rosy sky. And there is the monument pointing heavenward. Oh, the broad streets, the merry, busy throngs of our own people! I should like to see it all again. Sarah, let us go home. I want—to be there—my last days."

Miss Drayton's eyes filled with tears, but she kept her voice steady: "It shall be as you wish, sister. We will go home," she said.

Leaving Pat and Anne at school, they made the home-going voyage, and Mrs. Patterson spent her last weeks in her beloved homeland.

CHAPTER XII

After her sister's death, Miss Drayton went with a cousin for a quiet summer in the Adirondacks. Before leaving, she had meant to talk to her brother-in-law about Anne, to tell him of her sister's wish to keep the child, and to say that she herself would take charge of the little orphan. But she was so tired! Life seemed very empty and yet she shrank from any new responsibility. So day after day passed, and she went away without saying a word about Anne. After all, it would be time enough, she thought, when the children were brought back to America.

In his great new loneliness, Mr. Patterson's heart turned more than ever to his son; and he put aside business engagements and went, by the swiftest boat and the fastest train, to join Pat in Paris and bring him home.

Father and son met with a formal but hearty handshake.

"Howdy, dad."

"Hello, son. How's your health?"

The French man-servant, looking on at this greeting, shrugged his shoulders. "My son and I would have given the kiss and the embrace," he commented to himself. "But they—how very American!"

'Very American' they both were. Mr. Patterson was a slim, alert business man, with a firm chin cleft in the middle, mouth hidden by a tawny, drooping mustache, deep-set gray eyes under a broad brow from which the brown hair was rapidly receding at the temples. Pat had his father's cleft chin, straight nose, and square forehead; but his mouth curved like his mother's and like hers were the hazel eyes and curly dark hair. He was a sturdy, well-set-up young American, who played good football and excellent baseball and studied fairly well—not that he had any deep interest in books, for he meant to be a business man like his father, but his mother wished him to get good reports and a certain class-standing was necessary to keep from being debarred sports.

Mr. Patterson was glad that Pat liked his school, glad that he did not like it so well as to regret going home. "After all, there is nothing like an American school for an American boy," he said.

"And baseball the way we play it at home is the thing," declared Pat.

They made plans for their voyage the next week, and then Mr. Patterson rose to go, saying he'd be in again, but couldn't tell just when, as he'd be pretty busy, examining some new motor machinery.

"Have you been to see little sister, father?" inquired Pat.

Mr. Patterson looked at his son without replying. How he had hoped there would be a little sister—that his home would ring with the music of young, happy voices! How sad and silent it was now! He pulled himself together as Pat impatiently repeated the question.

"Father, have you been to see little sister?—Anne Lewis, you know. Mother said she was to be my little sister—and I must be good to her. She's a number one little chap. Can throw a ball straight and can reel off dandy tales that she makes up herself. Don't you think she's cute-looking?"

"I haven't seen her, son," answered Mr. Patterson. "Fact is, I had really forgotten that child. I must see about her."

Anne, shy and silent always with strangers, entered the drawing-room slowly. She put her hand timidly into Mr. Patterson's, then sat down, very prim and uncomfortable, with her legs dangling from the edge of the chair and answered his questions in a shy undertone and the fewest possible words. Mr. Patterson was hardly less embarrassed than she.

After he asked about her health and her studies, and how she liked school, and if she would be glad to go back to America, and told her that he had seen Pat and Pat had asked about her, there seemed really nothing else to say. It was a relief when Mademoiselle Duroc entered the room and asked if Anne might be excused to practise a marching song.

"I beg ten thousand pardons for the interruption," she said. "But monsieur understands, I am quite sure. The finals of school approach so rapidly and we would not have the pupils fail to do credit to the kind patrons."

"Of course, of course. That's all right," answered Mr. Patterson. "I wished to talk to you, anyway—about this child—" as Anne accepted the excuse and gladly departed. "Can you give me a few minutes now? Thank you.—I cannot say. I suppose the child has improved. I had not seen her before. She was alone on shipboard and my wife took charge of her.—Oh, no! there was no formal adoption. I shall take her back to America, of course. Her people may turn up or—or—I haven't

decided what I'll do about her. I haven't really thought about it. Tell me what you can about the child, please."

Mademoiselle Duroc answered with careful details. Anne was clever, fairly studious, well-mannered, amiable, rather quick-tempered. The session marks had not been made out but they would show her standing good in most of her studies. Department excellent. "Her mark in that would be almost perfect were it not for the one affair. I refer to the jewel episode. One has informed monsieur of that?"

Mr. Patterson confessed his ignorance and Mademoiselle Duroc related the incident which we already know. No light had ever been thrown on the matter.

"Do you suppose she stole the things?" asked Mr. Patterson, bluntly.

Mademoiselle shrugged her shoulders and thrust the question from her with a sweeping gesture of both hands. "There has been nothing to prove—nothing to disprove. Absolutely. I look at that slim, small child sometimes and raise my hands to heaven in amaze."

Mr. Patterson rose. "Thank you. I have taken a great deal of your time. You understand it was important for me to know about this child. My wife wished to adopt her. If she had lived—but without her I should hesitate under any circumstances; under these, I cannot undertake the responsibility. I will put the little girl in an orphanage in her native state. That is the best place for a child that needs oversight and—er—probably severe discipline. I have engaged passage for the twelfth. I will send a cab for the child. You will have her ready? Thank you. If you will mail me your bill to Hotel Amitié, it shall have prompt attention."

"Thank you, monsieur. If I am not to see you again, you will now take charge of the small packet, the jewels?"

"No, no, indeed." Mr. Patterson drew back.

"But madame directed me to keep them for the child if there arose no claimants," said Mademoiselle.

"Then turn them over to the child. You got them from her," said Mr. Patterson. "I have nothing to do with them. Good-morning."

Awaiting the sailing-date set by Mr. Patterson, Anne lingered some days after the other pupils. One morning Louise came in to pack her trunk and to say that Mademoiselle Duroc wished to see her in the small study.

"I sent for you to bid you farewell and to return to you these jewels," Mademoiselle said. "It is grief to me that you have been so secret about the matter and made the distress for your friends."

Anne's eyes filled with tears. It hurt her to remember that she had refused to answer Mrs. Patterson's questions. How pale and troubled the dear face had looked! And now she could never, never explain. Could she ever tell Miss Drayton or Pat? Probably not. What a dreadful thought! "I am so sorry, Mamzelle," she faltered. "Indeed, it is not my fault. I had to promise. I was not to tell any one till we went to Nantes. I kept hoping we would go. Now we never shall. And I do want to tell them."

Here was a clew and Mademoiselle's quick wit followed it. "Is it that you mean, Anne," she asked, "that some one—a person whose wish had the right to be regarded—told you that you might explain the matter to your guardian when you went to Nantes?"

"Yes, Mamzelle, that was it," Anne responded eagerly. "He said I might tell then."

"He," mused Mademoiselle. "Who, Anne?"

Anne did not answer.

"Where were you when he told you this?"

Anne hesitated, debating with herself whether her uncle would wish her to tell. Mademoiselle changed the question.

"When he had you to promise that, were you expecting to go to Nantes?"

"Yes, Mamzelle." Anne was sure she might answer this. "And then seeing Dr. La Farge changed all the plans, you know."

Mademoiselle nodded her head. Yes, she knew. "I begin to understand some of the affair, Anne," she said, thinking intently and putting her thoughts into slow English. "I think you have been making the mistake. This person he wished you to let a certain time lapse before the telling by you. For some reason. One week or two weeks or three. It was known to him that you expected to go to Nantes? Ah! so he did tell you to promise to await that time? So it was!"

"I haven't told you anything I ought not to, have I, Mamzelle?" inquired Anne, anxiously. "He said if I told—before we reached Nantes, you know—it would bring him dreadful harm."

"Indeed, no," laughed Mademoiselle Duroc. "You have told me nothing but that you are the so faithful, so stupid promise-keeper. Take my word for it, Anne," she continued gravely, "the time

has long passed to which the 'he' wished to defer the telling about the jewels. It is due your friends and you that you make the matter clear. As soon as possible. I regret that we did not understand. I have much of interest for the secret. But I see that it is not for me."

Louise tapped at the door and said that Miss Anne's trunk was ready and the cab was waiting.

Mademoiselle gave Anne a stately salute and put the little package in her hand. "Ask Mr. Patterson to take charge of this packet for you," she said. "Good-by, my child. *Bon voyage!*"

Anne followed Louise who straightened her ribbons and tied on her hat.

"Louise," she said, in her halting French, "I've not been very much trouble to you, have I?"

"Not more than the usual. Young ladies are born to be the trouble-makers," responded Louise.

"Because I didn't want to. And I should like some one to be sorry I am going," said Anne. "Here is the silver piece Mr. Patterson gave me. You take it, Louise. Would you mind—won't you kiss me good-by, Louise, and can you miss me one little bit?"

"A thousand thanks, little one!" exclaimed Louise. "How droll you are! I will give you many kisses with all the good will. Yes, and I do grieve to see you go, you alone little one!"

The return voyage was rough and stormy. Mr. Patterson was half-sick and wholly miserable all the way. He lay pale and silent in his steamer chair, trying to rouse himself now and then to talk with Pat about subjects of schoolboy interest. But it was an effort and Pat felt it so; after a few restless minutes, he was apt to say:—

"Excuse me, father, I've thought of something I want to tell Anne."

"Please tell me when it's ten o'clock, father; Anne and I are to play ring-toss."

"Anne has been telling a ripping story. I'll go and hear some more of it, if you don't mind."

Mr. Patterson did mind. He was, though he did not confess it to himself, jealous of Anne for whom his son was always so ready and eager to leave him. He justified to himself his dislike of the child by recalling the jewel episode.

Anne had not given him even the half-way explanation that Mademoiselle Duroc had obtained. She was going to tell Miss Drayton—how she longed to see that good friend and pour forth the story! But Mr. Patterson asked no questions and it never occurred to her to offer him any information. She had given him her precious packet and asked him to take charge of it, according to Mademoiselle's suggestion. He had accepted the charge reluctantly, as a matter of necessity. As soon as they passed the custom-house in New York, he sealed the articles in an envelope which he handed to Anne, saying curtly: "You had these before; take them again."

Mr. Patterson, Pat, and Anne took the first south-bound train, and a few hours later found them in Washington. Passing from the noble Union Station, they took an Avenue car and whirled past Peace Monument, between the shabby buildings on the right and the Botanical Gardens on the left. Mr. Patterson sat in frowning silence. A sorry home-coming this. How eager he had been in former days to reach the old home in Georgetown, which now was closed and silent. Ah! he must try not to think about that. He pulled himself together and rang the bell.

"We are going to stop at the Raleigh," he said, in answer to Pat's surprised look. "Our house is shut up, you know. I'll have you children sent to your rooms. I must get off some telegrams and attend to some business. We'll get out of this hot hole to-morrow."

Pat pleaded and was allowed to take Anne for a sight-seeing ride. What a gay time they had! Everything delighted Anne—the stately Capitol, the gold-domed Library of Congress, the noble-columned Treasury Building, the sky-pointing Washington Monument, the broad streets over-arched with stately trees, the grassy squares and flower-bordered circles dotted with statues.

"Oh, isn't it beautiful? Isn't it beautiful?" Anne exclaimed over and over. "I told them America was the best. I told them so. I do wish Mademoiselle Duroc could see it and Louise and cook Cochon."

Mr. Patterson was waiting for his son in the hotel lobby. "Here, Pat, come here," he said. "Orton, this is my boy.—Pat, here's a streak of luck for us. I've just run across this friend of mine who's instructor at George Washington University. He's taking a party of boys to a camp in the Virginia mountains—fine boating and swimming, all the fun you want. Starting to-night. Says he can manage to take another boy. How would you like to go with him instead of to your Aunt Sarah?"

"Fine!" said Pat, eagerly. "I've always wanted to go camping. Good fishing, too?"

"Great. You trot along with Mr. Orton, and let him help you get the things you need. He kindly says he will."

"There's Anne, father," said Pat, looking toward the little figure hovering shyly on the outskirts of the group. "Is Anne going, too?"

"This is just a boy's camp, Pat," laughed Mr. Orton. "There isn't any room for girls in our rough-and-tumble gang."

Mr. Patterson summoned a maid to take Anne to her room. "I'm going to take Anne to Richmond to-morrow," he explained curtly. "I'll try to run up and see you, Pat, before I get back to work."

Time's getting pretty scarce, though. Run along and get your rig. Draw on me, Orton, for what you need. Fit him out O.K."

CHAPTER XIII

Leaving Anne at a Richmond hotel, Mr. Patterson drove to an orphanage on the outskirts of the city. He had wired the superintendent that he was coming and had brought letters and papers from the Washington office of the Associated Charities. He told Miss Farlow, the superintendent, the story of the child, without mentioning the jewel affair.

"Let them find her out for themselves," he reflected. "I'll not start her off with a handicap."

As he went out of the bare, spotless sitting-room into the bare, spotless hall, the children of the 'Home' filed past, two by two, for their afternoon walk. There were twenty-six sober-faced girls in blue cotton frocks and broad-brimmed straw hats.

"They take exercise regularly, sir," said the superintendent. "We're careful with them in all ways. They're well-fed, kept neat, taught good manners, and have all pains taken with their education and training. We do our best for them and try to get them good homes."

"I am sure of that." Good heavens!—how he would hate his child to be one of the twenty-six! Poor little Anne! Mr. Patterson caught himself up impatiently. He was no more responsible for her than for any, or all, of the others. If his wife had lived—but he—a widower, whose job kept him thousands of miles away from home most of the time,—it was unreasonable to expect him to keep an orphan girl whom his family had picked up. Ugh! How he'd hate to trot along in that blue-frocked line! "I'm a dawdling idiot," he said irritably to himself. "What am I worrying about? I've done the sensible thing, the only possible thing. Her own people deserted her. I've secured her a decent home and honest training. Whew! It's later than I thought. I'll have to rush to make that four-ten train."

An hour later, having given hurried explanations to Anne and started her off in a cab, he was on a north-bound train.

And Anne?

The bewildered child gathered only one fact from his speech. She was not going to Miss Drayton, as she had expected—dear Miss Drayton, to whom she longed to pour forth her secret. Instead, she was going to strangers—people, Mr. Patterson said, who took care of little girls that had no fathers and mothers.

She hugged Honey-Sweet tight in her arms and walked up the steps of the square brown house.

If you have never seen the 'Home for Girls,' you will wish me to describe Anne's new abode. Let me see. I have said that the house was square and brown, haven't I? with many green-shuttered windows. The grounds were large and well-kept—almost too spick and span, for one expects twenty-six children to leave behind them such marks of good times as paper dolls and picture-books, croquet-mallets and tennis balls on trampled turf.

The brick walk led straight between rows of neatly-clipped box to the front door. In the grass plot on the right, there was a circle of scarlet geraniums and on the left there was a circle of scarlet verbenas. On one side of the porch, there was a neatly-trimmed rose-bush with straggling yellow blossoms, and on the other side there was a white rose-bush.

The front door was open. Anne saw a long, narrow hall with whitewashed walls and a bare, clean floor. A curtain which screened the back of the hall fluttered in the breeze, and disclosed a long rack holding twenty-six pairs of overshoes, and above them, each on its own hook, twenty-six straw hats. Anne counted them while she waited and her heart sank—why, she could not have told. She knew that no matter how long she might live, she would never, never, never want a broad-brimmed straw hat with a blue ribbon round it. A subdued clatter of knives and forks came from a room at the back. Anne reflected that this place seemed more like a boarding-school than a home. How odd it was to have a sign over the door saying that it was a 'Home!' And 'for Girls.' How did the people choose that their children were to be just girls?

While she was thinking these things, the cabman put her trunk down on the porch, rang the bell, and stamped down the steps. No use waiting here for a fee. A door at the back of the hall opened, and there came forward a girl with a scrubbed-looking face and a blue-and-white gingham apron over a blue cotton frock. She fixed her round china-blue eyes on Anne, and waited for her to speak.

Anne opened her mouth and then shut it again. She did not know what to say. The blue-aproned girl caught sight of the trunk.

"Oh, you're a new one!" she exclaimed.

She was so positive that Anne did not like to disagree with her. "I—I reckon I'm newer than I'm old," she said politely.

The girl grinned. "You come to stay, ain't you? That your trunk?"

"Yes," stammered Anne. "Mr. Patterson says—there's a lady here—"

"You want to see Miss Farlow. She's the superintendent," explained the girl, still grinning. "Just you wait in the office till she comes from supper—" and she opened a door on the right. "My! didn't that cabman leave a lot of mud on the steps?—and tracks on the porch? Mollie'll have to scrub it again. She'll be so mad!"

The next day there was a new pair of overshoes on the rack, and instead of twenty-six, there were twenty-seven broad-brimmed, blue-ribboned hats.

After all, Anne was not unhappy in her new surroundings. She missed cheery Miss Drayton and mischievous Pat, of course, but they seemed so far away from the sober life of the institution that she accepted without wonder the fact that she heard nothing from either of them. The past year was like a dream. Anne felt sometimes as if she had been at the 'Home' forever and forever. She soon solved, to her own satisfaction and Honey-Sweet's, the meaning of the name 'Home for Girls.' "It's one of the words that means it isn't the thing it says," she explained. "Like butterfly. That isn't a fly and it doesn't make butter. And 'Home for Girls' means that it isn't a home at all, but a schooly, outside-sort-of place."

The girls lacked mothering, it is true, but they were governed kindly though strictly. The simple fare was wholesome and the daily round of work, study, and exercise brought the children to it with healthy appetites. It being vacation time, the schoolroom was closed. But each girl had household tasks, which she was required to perform with accuracy, neatness, and despatch.

"The world is full of dawdlers and half-doers," said Miss Farlow, wisely. "Their ranks are crowded. But there is always good work and good pay for those who have the habit of doing work well—be it baking puddings or writing Greek grammars. I want my girls to form the habit of well-doing."

Anne always listened with respect to Miss Farlow. She was one of the grown-ups that it seemed must always have been grown up. You would have amazed Anne if you had told her that Miss Farlow was still young and, with her fresh color, good features, and soft, abundant hair, really ought to be pretty. But there were anxious lines around the eyes and mouth, and the hair was always drawn straight back so as to show at its worst the high, knobby forehead. Poor, patient, earnest, hard-working Miss Farlow! She was brought face to face with much of the world's need and longed to remove it all and was able to relieve so little. She had at her disposal funds to support twenty homeless girls. Because she could not bear to turn away one needing help, she was always saving and scrimping so as to take care of more. One cannot wonder that she found life serious and solemn. Yet if only she had known how to laugh and forget her work sometimes, she might have done more good as well as been happier herself.

From the first, Anne was a puzzle to the sober-minded lady. A few days after Anne entered the home, she was sent into the office to be reproved. Slim and erect in her short blue frock, she stood before the superintendent. Miss Farlow looked at the slip of paper from the pupil teacher: "Anne Lewis; disorderly; laughed aloud in the Sunday study class."

"Why did you laugh during the Bible lesson, Anne Lewis?" asked Miss Farlow. She always called each girl by her full name. "You knew that it was naughty, did you not?"

"I did not mean to be naughty," said Anne, penitently. "I just laughed at myself."

"Laughed at yourself?" Miss Farlow was puzzled.

"I was thinking," Anne explained. "My eyes were half-shut and—it was the way the light was shining—I could see us all from our chins down in the shiny desk. Then I thought, suppose all the mirrors in the world were broken so we could never see our faces! We'd never know whether we were ourselves or one of the other girls—we're so exactly alike, you know. And I thought how funny it would be not to know whether you were yourself or some one else, and maybe comb some one else's hair when you meant to get the tangles out of your own—and I laughed out loud."

Miss Farlow did not smile. "What a queer, foolish thing that was for you to think!" she said. "I will not punish you this time, since you did not mean to be naughty. But if you do such a thing again, I must take away your Saturday afternoon holiday."

That would be a severe punishment, for the girls dearly loved the freedom of the long Saturday afternoons. From early dinner until teatime, they amused themselves as they pleased, indoors or on the 'Home' grounds, under the general oversight of a pupil-teacher.

CHAPTER XIV

One Saturday afternoon in July, while the other girls were playing and chattering on a shady porch, Anne slipped with Honey-Sweet through a hole in the hedge and sauntered toward an old brown-stone house set in spacious grounds near the 'Home.' Anne had long been wanting to explore the place. She had never seen any one there—the house was closed for the summer—and in her stories it figured as an enchanted castle. As she walked ankle-deep in the unclipped grass under the catalpa and elm-trees, she looked around with eager interest.

She liked everything about the place, even the clump of great rough dock which had grown up around the back door. A frog hopped under the broad leaves as she passed. She almost expected to see it come forth changed to a fairy. Of course she didn't believe in fairies now, but this looked like a place where they would stay if there were any.

At last she wandered toward a great clump of boxwood near a side gate. It made such a mass of greenery that Anne pulled aside a branch to see if it were green inside too. She gave a gasp of delight. The tall, close-growing stems were thickly leaved on the outside and bare within; in the centre there was a hollow space, like a little room. There must be fairies, after all, to make such a beautiful place as this.

Anne pulled aside a branch and crept in. One might have passed a yard away and never suspected that she was there. After a while, she put Honey-Sweet down and set to work as a tidy housekeeper should. With a broom of twigs, she swept up the dead leaves. Then she went out and pulled handfuls of grass to make a carpet, which she patterned over with blue stars of periwinkle. For chairs she brought two or three flat stones. How time flew! While she was looking for green moss to cover these stones, she was startled to see the sun setting, a red ball on the horizon. She hurried back to the 'Home.' As she slipped through the hedge, Emma, the pupil-teacher in charge, hurried across the yard.

"Where on earth have you been, Anne?" she asked crossly. "The supper-bell rang long ago. I've looked for you everywhere. Where've you been, I say?"

"Over there," Anne answered, nodding vaguely toward the lawn.

"Out of bounds!" exclaimed Emma. "You knew better, Anne. That you did. You come straight to Miss Farlow. She was dreadful worried when I told her I couldn't find you."

Miss Farlow, too, reproved Anne sharply. She was to have a bread-and-water supper, and then go straight to bed. And she must never again go out of bounds alone—never. That was strictly forbidden.

Anne ate her bread and drank her water with a downcast air. She was not thinking about the scolding and her punishment. She was troubled because Miss Farlow had forbidden her to go off the 'Home' grounds again. Must she give up her dear secret playhouse? She and Honey-Sweet had had such a good time! And they were planning to spend all their Saturday afternoons there. Finally she asked Emma what would be done if she disobeyed Miss Farlow and went outside bounds again.

Emma knew and answered promptly and cheerfully. She would be whipped, and that severely.

Anne turned this over in her mind. She was very much afraid of the rod which had seldom been used to correct her—but a whipping did not last long, after all, and it would be far worse to give up her beautiful new playhouse. If Miss Farlow wished to whip her for going there, why, Miss Farlow would have to do it. Grown-up people had to have their way. But she wondered if Miss Farlow would not just as lief whip her before she went as after she came back. It would be a pity to spoil the beautiful afternoon with expectation of punishment.

After prayers next Saturday morning, Anne lingered near Miss Farlow's desk.

"Do you wish to speak to me, Anne Lewis?" asked that lady, frowning over a handful of bills.

"If you please—wouldn't you as soon—won't you please whip me before I go out of bounds?" she requested.

"What's that you're saying, Anne Lewis? What do you mean?" asked Miss Farlow.

Anne explained.

"Pity sake!" the bewildered lady exclaimed. She looked at Anne over her spectacles, then took them off and stared as if trying to find out what kind of a queer little creature this was. "Do you mean," she inquired solemnly, "that you'd rather be a bad girl and go out of bounds and be whipped—rather than be good and stay in bounds?"

"If you please, Miss Farlow." Anne stood her ground bravely though her knees were shaking.

"Anne Lewis, if whipping will not make you obey, we must—must try something else," Miss Farlow said severely. She considered awhile, then she asked: "Why are you so anxious to go out of bounds?"

Anne went a step nearer. "It isn't far," she said. "Just across the hedge. It's a secret. A beautiful place. I take Honey-Sweet—she's my doll—and we play stories. It's just my private property." Anne used the words she heard often from the larger girls.

"You mean that you play it is," Miss Farlow corrected gravely. "You don't get in mischief—or go where it's unsafe?"

"Indeed I don't, Miss Farlow," said Anne, earnestly. "I just sit there and play with Honey-Sweet."

"It's safe and near, and the Marshalls are away—they wouldn't care," considered Miss Farlow. "I'll allow you to go there this one afternoon. Tell Emma I say you may play beyond the hedge."

Anne skipped away with a radiant face. On hearing her message, Emma scowled and said: "I

think you oughtn't to have any holiday at all for making so much trouble last Saturday. I could have crocheted dozens of rows on my mat while I was looking for you. I tell you what, missy, if you're naughty and disobedient, you'll be sent away from here."

"Sent where, Miss Emma?" asked Anne.

"Oh, away. Back where you came from," answered Emma.

Anne ran away, happier than ever. Being sent away, then, was the "something else" that Miss Farlow said they must try if she were naughty and disobedient. "Back where she came from!" That meant to Miss Drayton and Pat. Anne resolved that she would be very naughty so they would send her away as soon as possible. That evening she began to carry out her plan and let a cup fall while she was washing dishes. Jane, who was helping her, looked frightened, but Anne only smiled. That was one step toward Miss Drayton. During the days that followed, Anne was a very naughty girl. She came late to breakfast, with rough hair and dangling ribbons; she tore her aprons; she rumbled her frocks; her usually tidy bed was in valleys and mountains; her tasks were neglected or ill done. She was reprov'd; she was punished. But she accepted each reproof and punishment calmly.

"Next time," she thought, "they will think I am bad enough to send me away—back to dear Miss Drayton."

The punishment she disliked most was that on Saturday afternoon, instead of being allowed to go out, she was sent to her room in disgrace. She was sitting doleful by a window, neglecting the task assigned her, when Milly came in. Milly was one of the larger girls who went out as a seamstress.

"You kept in, ain't you?" she said, sitting down and beginning to make buttonholes.

Anne nodded.

"What's come over you?" Milly asked. "You don't act like the same girl you used to be. Why, you're downright bad."

Anne smiled knowingly. "That I am," she agreed.

"How come?" Milly inquired.

Anne hesitated, then she poured out the whole story. 'She wanted so much to go back to Miss Drayton. And didn't Milly think she was 'most bad enough now?'

Milly threw back her head and laughed till she cried.

"Oh, you Anne! you Anne!" she exclaimed. At last she got breath enough to explain that Emma had only said that because she was provoked. It was not true. Anne would not be sent away. Indeed, there was nowhere to send her. Miss Farlow took charge of her and would keep her because there was no one else to care for her. She would stay there till she was large enough to go out and work for herself, as Milly did.

Anne was much disappointed. She had set her heart on going back to Miss Drayton. Still it was disagreeable to be naughty and in disgrace all the time. Louise used to say, too, that no one loved naughty girls, and Anne loved to be loved. She didn't care to be large if she had to make dresses like Milly, when she went away from the 'Home.' She did hate to sew! She cried a little while, then she washed her face, brushed her hair, learned the hymn set her as an afternoon task, and went downstairs to tea, a meek, well-behaved girl again.

CHAPTER XV

The weeks went by, one as like another as the blue-clad children. A September Saturday afternoon found Anne, with Honey-Sweet clasped in her arms, in a secluded corner near the boundary hedge. She had told Honey-Sweet all the happenings of the week—that she was head in reading, that she would have cut Lucy down in spelling-class if the girl next above her had not spelt 'scissors' on her fingers—that Miss 'Liza had not found a wrinkle in her bed-clothes all the week. She cuddled and kissed Honey-Sweet to her heart's content, crooning over and over her old lullaby:—

"Honey, honey! Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Honey, honey! Honey-Sweet!"

Then she wandered into her world of 'make believe.' Once upon a time, there was a fair, forlorn princess on a milk-white steed. She was lost in a forest. It was, though the princess did not know it, an enchanted forest. And there was a cruel giant who had seized twenty-seven fair, forlorn princesses whom he had made his serving-maids. They could be freed only by a magic ring worn by a gallant knight who did not know about their danger. Anne stopped in the middle of her story, keeping mouse-still so as not to frighten a robin beside the hedge.

She gave a start when a voice near her piped out, "Tell on, little girl, tell on; I like that story."

Anne looked around. No one was in sight.

"If you don't tell on, I'll cry. Then mother will punish you," said the shrill little voice.

Anne stood up and looked all about. At last she discovered the speaker. He was a small boy who had climbed a low-branching apple-tree on the other side of the hedge. A smaller boy was walking beside a white-capped, white-aproned nurse at a little distance. Anne had made believe that the brown-stone house was the castle of the wandering knight who was to return and rescue the enchanted princesses. It had been closed all the summer and Anne was surprised and grieved to see now that it was open and occupied by everyday people.

As his command was not obeyed, the small boy made good his threat and wailed aloud. The white-capped nurse came running to him.

"What is the matter, Master Dunlop? Have you hurt yourself on that naughty tree? I'll beat it for you. Don't you cry."

Dunlop paused in his wailing to say: "It's that girl over there. She stopped telling a story. And I told her to keep on. And she didn't."

"Oh, Master Dunlop! A-talking to them charity chillen!" exclaimed the nurse. "You're in mischief soon as my back's turned. Come away, Master Dunlop, come along with me and Master Arthur. You'll catch—no telling what."

"I've had fever," announced Dunlop, proudly. "And I'm not to be fretted. Mamma told you so. I won't go, Martha. I'll cry if you try to make me. I want to hear that story.—Tell it, girl," he commanded.

"We don't answer people that speak to us like that, do we, Honey-Sweet?" said Anne, turning away. "We'll go under the elm-tree in the far corner.—And the fair, forlorn princess got off her milk-white steed to pick some berries—and whizz! gallop! off he went and left her. So the princess walked on alone through the forest—" as Anne spoke she was walking away from the hedge.

Dunlop began to scream again.

Martha spoke hastily. "If you'll hush, I'll ask her to tell you the story. If you scream, Master Dunlop, your mother'll call you in and she'll make you take a spoonful of that bitter stuff."

"You call that girl, then," he commanded.

Martha raised her voice. "Little girl, oh, little girl!—I don't know your name. Please come back."

Anne paused, but did not turn her head.

"This little boy has been ill," Martha continued. "He's just getting over fever. And he's notiony. Won't you please tell that story to him?"

Anne walked slowly back. "I do not mind telling him the story," she answered with grave dignity. "I'm always telling stories to the girls. But he must ask me proper. I don't 'low for to be spoken to that way."

"Martha said 'please' to you," mumbled Dunlop, digging his toe in the turf.

"You want me to tell the story," said Anne.

There was a brief silence.

"I'll cry," he threatened.

"I don't have to keep you from crying," said Anne, with spirit. "Come on, Honey-Sweet."

"Please, you little girl," said Dunlop, hastily.

"And the princess walked on and on," continued Anne, as if the story had not been interrupted. "The low briars tore her dress, the tall briars scratched her hands and pulled her hair. It was getting da-a-rk so she could hardly see the path. Then all at once she saw a bright light ahead of her. It got brighter and brighter and it came from a little cabin in the woods."

And in the happy land of 'make believe' Anne roamed until the tea-bell called her back to the real world.

Where, meanwhile, were Anne's old friends, Miss Drayton and Pat? Let me hasten to assure you that Pat was not so unmindful of his little adopted sister as he seemed. He hated to write letters and never wrote any except the briefest of duty letters to his father and his Aunt Sarah. He took it for granted that the separation from Anne was only for a time. She could not come to a boys' camp and she would have to attend a girls' school. Later, she would be with them—father, Aunt Sarah, and himself. Of course she would, always. Mother had said she was his adopted sister. And she was a jolly dear little thing.

Miss Drayton knew better. She was disturbed at learning from one of Mr. Patterson's brief, matter-of-course letters that Anne had been sent to an orphanage. If she had known the plan beforehand, she would have had Anne sent to her. But as the step was taken, she accepted it and Anne slipped out of her life.

Pat had a jolly summer. Camp Riverview was on New River, where, a clear mountain stream, it

begins its journey to the ocean. The boys' tent was pitched on a level, grassy glade with rolling hills, cleared or wooded, behind it. Across the river rose rocky bluffs where dwarfed oaks struggled for a foothold. There were seven boys in the camp and the wholesome young man who had them in charge was like a big brother. There were two or three hours of daily study in which the boys were coached for their autumn examinations. The remainder of the day was free for sport—boating, fishing, swimming, tramps, and rides. One good time trod on the heels of another.

The boys took walking tours through the picturesque country, following the narrow, roundabout mountain roads, or scrambling up steep paths, or making trails of their own. They visited Mountain Lake, set like a clear, shining jewel on the mountain-top. They climbed Bald Knob and gazed down on lovely valleys and outstretched mountains, range rising beyond range. Time fails to describe the varied pleasures and interests of the holiday, the close of which sent Pat, brown and sturdy, to Woodlawn Academy. There he remained until the passing days and weeks and months brought again vacation time. In June his father would return from Panama, and after a few weeks at home Pat was to go with his Aunt Sarah to the Adirondacks.

CHAPTER XVI

But we must go back to Anne, whom we left telling fairy tales to an audience across the hedge. A rainy afternoon a few days later, a trim nurse-maid brought a note to Miss Farlow. It was from Mrs. Marshall who lived in the brown-stone house next door, asking that a little girl whose name she did not know, a child with a big rag doll called Honey-Sweet, might come to spend the afternoon with her children. Her little boy, just recovering from typhoid fever, was peevish at being kept indoors. He begged to see the girl who had entertained him a few days before by telling fairy tales. A visit from her would be a kindness to a sick child and an anxious mother.

"It is Anne Lewis that is wanted," said Miss Farlow. "I don't know about letting her go. Visiting interferes with the daily tasks. I think it better not to—"

"Please'm," entreated the bearer of the note, hastening to ward off a refusal, "do, please'm, let the little girl come. He's that fractious he has us all wore out. And he do say if the little girl don't come he'll scream till night."

"Why doesn't his mother punish him?" asked Miss Farlow.

"Punish him! Punish Dunlop!" exclaimed Martha, in amazement.

"Oh, well! the child's ill. I suppose I must let her go," Miss Farlow consented reluctantly. Anne was sent up-stairs to scrub her already shining face, to brush her already orderly locks, to take off her gingham apron and put on a fresh dimity frock. She returned to the office, twisting her hat-ribbon nervously.

"If you please, Miss Farlow," she said appealingly, "Honey-Sweet—my baby doll, you know—was in the note, too. Mayn't I take her with me?"

Miss Farlow nodded consent and Anne tripped away with Honey-Sweet in her arms. What a contrast 'Roseland' was to the 'Home' next door! Anne followed Martha across a great hall with panelled walls and glass-knobbed mahogany doors and tiger-skin rugs on a well-waxed floor. Martha led the way up broad, soft-carpeted stairs and turned into a room at the right. What a charming nursery! It was a large room with three big windows, which had a cheerful air even on this gray, bleak day. It had soft, bright-colored rugs and chintz-cushioned wicker chairs. There was a dado of Mother Goose illustrations on the pink walls. And there were tables and shelves full of picture-books and toys of all kinds.

Dunlop stood in the middle of the room, frowning, with hands thrust in his pockets. He had just kicked over a row of wooden soldiers with which his small brother was playing and the little fellow was crying over their downfall.

"Martha! thanks be that you've come!" exclaimed the maid in charge.

"Here she is! here she is!" cried Dunlop. "I thought you weren't coming, girl. You were so slow.—I was just getting ready to begin to scream," he warned Martha.

"How do you do, Dunlop?" said Anne, putting out her hand.

"Say 'howdy' and ask your visitor to take off her hat," Martha suggested.

"You come on and tell me a story," said Dunlop, seizing Anne's hand.

She resisted his effort to drag her to a chair. "I said 'how do you do' to you. And you haven't said 'how do you do' to me," she reminded her host. "I want to do and be did polite."

"Aw! come on," persisted Dunlop.

Anne stood silent.

The memory of his former encounter with her stubborn dignity came back to Dunlop. He said, rather sullenly, "How do you do? and take off your hat. But I don't know your name."

"My name is Anne Lewis," said his guest. "And this is Honey-Sweet. I know your name. Martha told me. You are Dunlop Marshall. Your little brother's name is Arthur. What a soft, curly, white little dog!"

"At's my Fluffles," explained Arthur.

"Do you know any more stories, Anne Lewis?" inquired Dunlop. "Martha said she 'spected you didn't."

"Yes, I do."

"How many?"

"O—oh! I don't know. Many as I want to make up. I'm playing a story now while I wash dishes—this is my dining-room week. I pretend that a funny little dwarf climbed the beanstalk with Jack—and when the giant tumbled down he stayed up there in the giant's castle. Do you want to hear that story?"

"You bet! Tell on," said Dunlop—and then added, as an afterthought, "please."

"'Please!' Ain't that wonderful?" commented Martha. "Why, you make him have manners!"

An hour or two later, Mrs. Marshall came into the nursery to see the little girl whom her son had insisted on having as his guest. Martha was serving refreshments—animal crackers and cambric tea.

"Anne has to go at five o'clock," Dunlop explained. "It's nearly that now. So we're having a party."

"Anne—what is the rest of your name, little one?" asked Mrs. Marshall.

"I know. Let me tell," exclaimed Dunlop. "She's named Anne Lewis and she lived in a big white house on a hill by the river at—at—you tell where, Anne."

"'Lewis Hall,'" said Anne.

"You are a Lewis of 'Lewis Hall!'" exclaimed Mrs. Marshall. "Is it possible? Was your father—could he have been—Will Watkins Lewis? He was such a dear friend of my Bland cousins. I remember seeing him at 'Belle Vue' when I was a girl. I never saw him after he married and settled down at his old home. Let's see. Your mother was a Mayo, wasn't she?"

"I am named for her. Anne Mayo Lewis."

"To think you are Will Watkins Lewis's child! He is dead?—and your mother?"

"I can't hardly remember him. But I can shut my eyes and see mother. I was a big girl—seven when she died."

"You poor little thing! And where have you been since?"

"In New York with Uncle Carey. He's mother's brother. Then I was in Paris at school. Mr. Patterson brought me back to Virginia. I've been here ever since."

"Dear, dear! Will Watkins Lewis's child!" repeated Mrs. Marshall. "Where are all your kins-people and friends?"

"I don't know 'bout kinfolks. But I have lots and lots of friends," said Anne, brightening. "All the girls—and the cook—and the 'spress man—and there used to be Miss Drayton and Pat. And there's always Honey-Sweet," continued Anne, giving her doll a hug. "Oh, I must hurry! It's beginning to strike five—and Miss Farlow said five o'clock pre-cise-ly. Good-by. And thank you."

CHAPTER XVII

That Saturday afternoon was the first of many that Anne spent at the brown-stone house next door. The 'Roseland' family became so fond of her that Mr. and Mrs. Marshall talked about adopting her. 'It was too important a matter to decide offhand,' Mr. Marshall said; 'too great a responsibility to undertake lightly. They would wait awhile. Of course the child would like to come.'

Mrs. Marshall was sure that she would be overjoyed. She asked one afternoon, "How would you like to stay with us all the time, my dear?"

Anne was not prepared to say. "It's lovely to visit you and I always want to stay longer," she responded. She considered the question on her way to the 'Home,' and arrived at a positive conclusion.

"I don't believe I'd like it, Honey-Sweet," she said,—"not at all. I like them every one and it's a lovely visiting-place. I'm glad I'm going to spend to-morrow night there. But Dunlop—he's much nicer to be company than home-folks with."

The next day was Christmas Eve. When Anne entered the 'Roseland' nursery, snow was beginning to fall, fluttering down in big wet flakes.

Dunlop, his stocking in his hand, was prancing about the room. He wished it would be dark and time to hang up his stocking—and he did wish it was to-morrow morning and time to get his presents. He wanted a nail driven in front of the fireplace; he was afraid Santa Claus wouldn't think to look at the end of the mantel-piece. His own stocking was too small. He had told Santa to bring him a football and an express wagon and lots of other things. He was going to borrow a big fat stocking from the big fat cook. Off he ran.

Little Arthur was sitting beside a low table on which lay two picture-books, one less badly torn than the other, and one of his favorite toys, a woolly white dog, now three-legged through some nursery mishap. Arthur regarded them thoughtfully. He had a pencil clenched in his chubby fist and on the table before him was a piece of paper.

"What are you doing, Artie dear?" asked Anne.

He looked up at her with big round blue eyes. He was a quiet, good-tempered little fellow, now perplexed with serious thoughts.

"I'm going to hang up all two my socks," he announced.

"Why, Arthur-boy! that sounds selfish—not like you," exclaimed Anne. "You don't want more than your share of Santa Claus's pretty things, do you? Don't you want him to save some toys and books and candies for other little boys?"

Arthur followed his own course of thought, without regard to Anne's questions. "One sock is for me," he said. "I hope Santa'll 'member and give me what I asked him."

"What did you ask him to bring you, honey?" inquired Anne.

Arthur looked at her gravely. "I'se forgot. Was so many fings. And one sock is for Santa C'aus. I'm going to fill it all full of fings. A apple. And popcorn balls—Marfa made 'em. And my dear woolly dog's for Santa. Will he care if it's foot's bwoke?"

"But, Arthur darling," suggested Anne, "I wouldn't give the woolly dog away. You love it best of all your toys."

"Yes, I do," agreed Arthur. "Old Santa'll love him, too. And I'll give him my wed wose. Mamma wored it to her party las' night. Smell it, Anne; ain't it sweet? And see here,"—he opened his chubby fist. "Fahver give me five cents. I'm goin' to give it to Santa C'aus. And tell him to buy him anyfing he wants wif it."

Anne hugged him heartily. "You dear, cute, generous, precious darling!" she exclaimed.

Arthur drew away with sober dignity. Anne's caresses interfered with his serious occupation. "I was w'iting Santa a letter," he explained. "But I can't w'ite weal good. I'm fwead he can't wead it. Wouldn't you w'ite my letter, Anne?" he asked, gazing doubtfully at his scribbling.

"That I will. I'll write just what you tell me," said Anne. "Give me the pencil. And you may hold Honey-Sweet while I'm writing."

This was the letter:—

"DEAR SANTA CLAUS,—I thank you for the presents you gave me last Christmas. I thank you for the presents you are going to give me this Christmas. Santa Claus, the things in this sock are for you. I give you a red rose. And a woolly dog. He can stand up if you prop him with his tail. And five cents to buy you anything you want. I asked Martha to put out the fire so you won't get burnt coming down the chimney. Santa Claus, I wish you and Mrs. Santa Claus a merry Christmas. And good-by.

"Your loving friend,

"ARTHUR MARSHALL."

Arthur breathed a sigh of relief when the letter was sealed and the sock containing it and the chosen gifts was hung by the mantel-piece. He lay down on a goatskin rug and looked into the flickering fire, prattling about what Santa Claus would say when he found the gifts. Presently he dropped asleep.

Twilight fell. From the gray skies the snow came down steadily. The small, hard flakes tinkled against the window-panes. A northeast wind shook the elm-tree branches, rattled the windows, and moaned around the house. Anne sat staring out into the gathering night. How bleak it was! how lonely-looking! She shivered and hugged Honey-Sweet close.

"I'm terrible late," said Martha, bustling in and hurrying to draw the curtains and light the gas. "We had to finish putting up the greens. And Master Dunlop did bother so. Nothing would do but he must 'help.' 'Help,' I say! He's one of them chillen that no matter where you turn he's in the way. You shall have tea now, Miss Anne. I know you're starving. And my blessed baby's fast asleep on the floor! Why, Miss Anne! You been crying! What's the matter, dear? Did that Dunlop —"

"Nobody. Nothing," said Anne, turning her reddened eyes from the light. "Perhaps my eyes are sore. Maybe the snow hurts them."

"Oh, ho! You just ought 'a' been with me," said Dunlop, strutting in. "I hanged a wreath in the

parlor window. I did it all to myself. Martha she just held it straight and mother tied the string. Martha said I bothered. Martha don't know. Mother says I'm her little man.—Come along, you old Santa Claus! Hurry! Or I'll come up that chimney and take all your toys and your reindeers, too," he shouted up the chimney.

"Don't, 'Lop," remonstrated Arthur who was sleepily rubbing his eyes and opening his mouth, bird-like, for spoonfuls of bread and milk. "Don't talk that way. It's ugly. And Santa C'aus'll get mad and not come. Or he'll bring you switches."

"Mother won't let him," blustered Dunlop. "Mother says she told him to bring me a heap of things—a gun and a 'spress wagon and a engine that runs on a track and lots more things.—Say, Anne, is there really truly a sure-'nough Santa Claus? George Bryant says there isn't not. Tell me, Anne. Does Santa Claus really come down the chimney?"

"You stay awake and see," advised Anne.

"I'm going to. I'm not going to shut—my—eyes—all—night—long," he said emphatically.

"Marfa, don't put on any more coal," begged Arthur. "I so fwead Santa C'aus'll get burnted."

The Christmas saint accepted Arthur's offering in the loving spirit in which it was made and there was a letter of thanks in the sock around which were heaped more pretty things than he had remembered he wanted. Dunlop examined his many gifts with shrieks of delight. His one regret was that he didn't see Santa Claus—if there was a Santa Claus. He knew he didn't go to sleep last night—but he didn't remember anything till Martha was kindling the fire this morning.

By Anne's breakfast plate were several dainty packages,—a copy of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, a box of dominoes, an embroidered handkerchief, a box of chocolate creams. And Martha gave Honey-Sweet pink-flowered muslin for a new dress.

Breakfast passed in wild confusion. Martha was imploring Dunlop not to eat any more candy or raisins or oranges or figs or nuts. "You'll be sick," she said. "And goodness knows, Master Dunlop, you're hard enough to live with best of times when you're well. Do—don't blow your horn, Master Dunlop—or beat your drum—or toot your engine—your poor mamma has such a headache."

Mrs. Marshall protested, however, that the dear child must be allowed to enjoy his Christmas. "He is so high-strung," she said, "not like ordinary children. He can't be controlled like them. I can't bear to cross him and break his spirit."

CHAPTER XVIII

Before the early dinner at the 'Home,' Miss Farlow assembled the girls and gave them a Christmas talk. Christmas, she reminded them, is the time for generous thoughts, for kindly memories, for opening our eyes to the needs of others and opening our hands to aid those needs. There is no one so poor, so lonely, that he cannot find some one more needy that he may help.

"Kind friends have remembered you this holiday season," she said. "Each of you has received gifts. Now I hope you want to pass the kindness on. There is a negro orphanage in town, and I happen to know that its funds are so limited that after providing needfuls, food, fuel, and clothing, there is nothing left this year for Christmas cheer. Aren't you willing to share your good things with those poor children? Won't each of you bring some of your old toys to the sitting-room at four o'clock and help fill a Christmas box to send the little orphans?"

The children responded eagerly, Anne among the first. They hurried to their rooms and rummaged busily through their boxes and drawers, collecting old dolls, ragged picture-books, and broken toys.

Anne opened her drawer and then shut it quickly and sat down dolefully on the bed-side, swinging her feet.

"What are you going to give, Anne?" asked one of the other girls.

"Dunno," was the brief answer.

A mighty struggle was going on in her heart. She had no old picture-books, games, nor toys. She had nothing to give—unless—except—there were the gifts she had received at 'Roseland' this morning—the shining dominoes, the dainty handkerchief, the ribbon-tied candy box, the book with fascinating pictures and pages that looked so interesting. It was so long since she had had any pretty, useless things that it put a lump in her throat merely to think of giving them up. But she had promised and she must give something to those poor little black orphans. Which of her treasures should it be? When she tried to decide on any one, that one seemed the dearest and most desirable of all. At last in despair she gathered all her gifts—dominoes, handkerchief, book, candy—in her apron, ran with them to the sitting-room and dumped them on the table before Miss Farlow, with "Here! for the old orphans."

Miss Farlow opened her mouth but before words could come Anne was gone. She crouched down with Honey-Sweet between her bed and the wall and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"I wouldn't mind so much," she explained to Honey-Sweet, "I wouldn't mind so much if I could have taken out one teeny piece of chocolate with the darling little silver tongs. I haven't had a box of candy for months and months. And, oh! Honey-Sweet, I read just three chapters in that beautiful book, and now I'll never, never know what became of that dear little boy."

At teatime Anne, red-eyed and unsmiling, met Miss Farlow on the stairs.

"Ah! Anne Lewis," said the lady, looking over her spectacles. "You are a generous child. I only asked and expected some old toys. It was generous of you to bring your pretty new gifts. But I hardly feel that you ought to give away the Christmas presents your friends selected for you to enjoy. I think you'd better take them back." Anne's face shone like the sun coming from behind a cloud. "Instead, you can give—oh! some old thing—give that rag doll to put in the box for the little orphans." The sun went under a dark cloud.

"Oh!" Anne faltered. Then she hurried on: "Can't no old orphans have Honey-Sweet. You keep the dominoes and the book and the handkerchief and the candy. And they may have my gold beads, too. But not Honey-Sweet. I'd rather have her than Christmas. There—there's a lonesome spot she just fits in."

"You'd rather give away your pretty new things than that old rag doll?" Miss Farlow was amazed.

"A million times!" cried Anne, hugging her baby fondly.

"What a queer child you are, Anne Lewis!" said Miss Farlow. "Well, well! keep your doll, of course, if you wish."

Anne gave her an impulsive kiss. "Thank you, Miss Farlow! You are so good," she said.

The holidays over, the routine of daily life was resumed. The days and weeks and months passed, busy with work and study. Anne welcomed the mild spring days which came at last and allowed out-of-door games. During the autumn, the boxwood playhouse had been a place of delight to her and Dunlop and Arthur. Now, after a spring cleaning patterned after Mrs. Marshall's, she and Honey-Sweet again took up quarters there.

One Saturday afternoon, however, Dunlop came strutting out in an Indian suit which his mamma had just bought him and announced that he was "heap big chief" and was going to have the boxwood for his wigwam.

Anne objected. She had found the treehouse and it was hers; the others were to play there all they pleased; but she would go straight home unless the boxwood was to remain, as it had always been, her "private property," as she proudly said.

For answer, Dunlop fitted an arrow on his bow and rushed in, yelling, "You squaw! This is my papa's place. You get out of my wigwam. Get out, I say."

Without a word, Anne gathered up Honey-Sweet and marched off, with her chin in the air. For a whole long week she did not come to 'Roseland.' Worst of all, on Saturday she played all afternoon with the other girls on the 'Home' grounds, without once looking over the hedge.

Arthur threw himself into Martha's arms. "I want my Anne," he sobbed, "I want her to come back. 'Lop's a bad, bad boy to make my Anne go 'way."

Shortly before teatime, Anne left the other girls and without seeming to see any one beyond the hedge, sat down just out of earshot and began to tell Honey-Sweet a story. This was more than could be borne. Arthur wailed aloud.

Suddenly Dunlop broke his way through the hedge, stopped just in front of Anne, and screamed: "It's your old house. You come on."

Anne looked at him but did not move.

He stamped his foot. "Please!" he shouted fiercely.

"Good and all? Private property?" asked Anne.

Dunlop nodded.

Anne rose. "We better go through the gap," she said in an offhand way. "Miss Emma'll try to have me whipped if we break down the hedge."

Dunlop trotted by her side in silence. As they crossed the hedge, he slipped his grimy hand in hers. "Mamma says we are going to the country next week," he announced; "and I told her you'd have to go, too."

Indeed, Dunlop flatly refused to go away without Anne. He would not yield to coaxing and he scorned threats. His wishes finally prevailed and it was decided that Anne should go with them to spend the week-end and return to town with Mr. Marshall.

The little party left 'Roseland' one warm afternoon in June, and sunset found them all dusty and tired. Dunlop, sitting by his mother, absorbed her attention. Martha was on the seat behind, with Arthur on her lap. Anne, beside her, was looking out of the window with a puzzled air. The willow-bordered river, the meadows and rolling hills, had a familiar appearance; this fresh, woody, evening fragrance was an odor she had known before; surely she had heard the names of

the stations called by the porter.

"Lewiston!" he shouted at last.

Anne started. It was her own home station. As in a dream, she saw in the twilight the familiar red road shambling over the hills, the dingy little station with men and boys loafing on the platform, the houses scattered here and there among trees and gardens. It all came back to her. This was the route she and her mother had often travelled. A little way off was the water-tank set in a clump of willows by the roadside. 'Lewis Hall' was on the hill just beyond. In the deepening twilight, she could not see the square house among the trees.

A great longing for home possessed her. She slipped past Martha dozing with Arthur asleep in her lap; hardly knowing what she did, she ran to the rear of the car. The train was about to stop at the tank. Anne put her hand on the door-knob. It resisted. A lump came in her throat. Again she tried the knob. This time it yielded to her pressure. She stepped on the platform and closed the door behind her. As the train jerked and stood still, she almost fell but she quickly recovered herself and scrambled down the steps.

She stood in a well-remembered thicket of willows. A few steps away was a footpath—how it all came back to her!—winding among the willows. Claspings Honey-Sweet close, Anne walked a little way down the path. Then she turned and looked back. The train was puffing and panting, lights were gleaming from its windows. There sat Mrs. Marshall, coaxing Dunlop, and there was Arthur cuddled in Martha's lap.

As Anne looked, the train moved slowly away, gathering speed as it went. Its lights gleamed and faded in the darkness. It was gone. She gazed after it, with a queer tightness about her throat. Then she walked steadily down the footpath, across the meadow, through a gate, and along the hillside. On top of that tree-clad hill was her old home. From one well-remembered room, flickered lights that seemed to beckon and summon the homesick child.

CHAPTER XIX

Meanwhile, Anne was the innocent cause of trouble between Pat and his father. Mr. Patterson came back in the early summer to spend a few weeks with his son at the old home in Georgetown before midsummer heat drove them to mountains or seashore.

The mansion was a roomy, old-fashioned house which his grandfather Patterson had built when Georgetown was a fashionable suburb of the capital. As Washington grew, fashion favored other sections, and the stately homes of Georgetown were stranded among small shops and dingy tenements. Some old residents, the Pattersons among the number, clung to their homes.

Mr. Patterson had been little at home since his wife's death. Every nook and corner of the house, her pictures on the walls, her books on the shelves, her easy-chair beside the window, called her to mind. How lonely and sad he was! His son was little comfort to him in his loneliness. Except on their ocean voyage, Pat and his father had not been together for three years and they had grown apart. Pat was no longer just a merry little chap, ready for a romp with his father. He was a tall, overgrown lad, absorbed in the sports and work of his school-world, at a loss what to say to the silent, reserved business man who made such an effort to talk to him.

One day, as they sat together at a rather silent dinner, a sudden thought made Pat drop his salad fork and look up at his father. "When is Anne coming, father?" he asked. "Where's her school? and when is it out?"

"Anne? Anne who?" asked Mr. Patterson, blankly—for the moment forgetful of the child who had been a brief episode in his busy life.

"Why, Anne Lewis, of course—our little Anne," said Pat.

"Oh, that child," answered Mr. Patterson, carelessly. "She is in an orphan asylum in Virginia. I put her there the week we landed."

Pat started to his feet. "In an orphan asylum?" he gasped. He knew asylums only through the experiences of *Oliver Twist*, and if his father had said "in jail," the words would not have excited more horror.

"Of course," replied his father, viewing his emotion with surprise. "That was where she belonged. We couldn't find any of her own people. Why, son! You didn't expect me to keep her, did you?"

"Mother intended that. She said Anne was my—little—sister." The boy found it difficult to speak.

"Your mother! If she had lived—but without her—be reasonable, Pat. How could you and I—we rolling stones—take charge of a little girl? And now—"

"There is Aunt Sarah," interrupted Pat, refusing to be convinced. "Or school. I thought you had her in boarding-school like me. Where is she?"

Mr. Patterson was just going to tell Pat about Anne and her whereabouts. But now he was provoked that his son put the question, not as a request, but as a demand. He spoke sternly. "You

forget yourself, Patrick. It is not your place to take me to task for pursuing the course that I thought proper in this matter. We will drop the subject, if you please."

"But, father, Anne—"

"Patrick!" Mr. Patterson interrupted. "Either sit down and finish your dinner quietly or go to your room."

Pat turned on his heel and went up-stairs, but not to his chamber. Instead, he made his way to a little attic room with a dormer window. There was a couch which his mother had covered with chintz patterned in morning-glories, his birth-month flowers. The book-shelves and the chest for toys were covered with the same design, applied by her dear hands. How many a rainy Sunday afternoon his mother and he had spent in this den, reading and talking together! In the months since his mother's death, he had never missed her as he did now—in these first days at home. There was no one to take away the loneliness. Aunt Sarah was with Cousin Hugh. And now Anne was away—not just for a time but for always. There was no one left but his father, who seemed like a stranger and whom—he said it over and over to himself—he did not love.

The boy threw himself face downward on his couch and sobbed as he had not done since the first days after his mother's death. Where was Anne? Was she with people who were good to her? If only he had written to her long ago! Father would have sent the letter, or given the address. He had begun a letter telling about a big baseball game but he had blotted it; it was in his portfolio still, unfinished. Poor little Anne! The tears came afresh. He could see his mother stroking Anne's fair hair, as she had done one day when he was teasing about Honey-Sweet.

"My son," the gentle voice had said, "you must be good to our little girl. Remember, she has no one in the world but us."

Dear little Anne! What a jolly playmate she was,—brave, good-tempered, affectionate! and what a generous little soul! How she always insisted on dividing her fruit and candies with him when he devoured his share first.

An hour passed. Mr. Patterson came up-stairs, went from his room into Pat's, and then walked down the hall.

"Pat!" he called. "Patrick!" The voice sounded stern but really its undertone was anxiety.

Pat did not speak. He scrambled to his feet and descended the stairs. With set mouth and downcast eyes, he stood before his father.

"Did I not tell you to go to your room, Pat?"

"Yes, father." Pat paused in the doorway. "I want to know where Anne is," he said.

"Patrick!" Mr. Patterson spoke sternly now. "You forget yourself strangely to address me in this way. I refuse to answer."

He turned on his heel and left his son. And he left a breach between them which the days and weeks widened instead of closing. Pat, feeling that it would be useless to question his father any more, did not mention Anne's name again. He picked up his old comrades and went walking, swimming, and canoeing, keeping as much away from his father as possible. Mr. Patterson busied himself with office affairs, looking forward with relief to the end of the so-longed-for vacation. In a few days, Miss Drayton would join them to take Pat with her to the Adirondacks.

At this very time, Miss Drayton, too, was bearing about a disturbed heart. She was fond of Anne and had always regretted her being sent to an orphanage, but the feeling was not strong enough to make her reclaim the child. Anne's uncle was a criminal, after all, and she herself had a strange secret. How could she have acquired those jewels but by theft? Miss Drayton shrank from the responsibility of such a child. Perhaps the strict oversight of an asylum was best for her.

This course of thought was abruptly changed by the receipt of a letter forwarded from Washington to the Maryland village where Miss Drayton was visiting. It was a many-postmarked much-travelled letter, that had journeyed far and long before it reached her. Mailed in Liverpool, it was sent to Nantes, in care of the American consul. It had been held, under the supposition that the lady to whom it was addressed might come to the city and ask for mail sent there for safe keeping. Finally, the unclaimed letter was sent to the American embassy at Paris. There it tarried awhile. Then it fell into the hands of a secretary who knew Miss Drayton, and he sent the letter to the Washington post-office, requesting that her street and number be supplied.

This was done, and the ten-months-old letter reached Miss Drayton one July afternoon. She glanced curiously from the unfamiliar handwriting to the signature. Carey G. Mayo. Anne's uncle!

With changing countenance, she read the letter hastily.

Then she reread it once and again.

"Liverpool, England,

"20 September, 1910.

"MISS SARAH DRAYTON,

"DEAR MADAM,—I write to you on the eve of leaving the city, to commend my niece to your care.

You have been so good to the child that I venture to hope you will care for her till I can relieve you of the burden. She has no near relative and I am in no position to hunt up the cousins who might take charge of her.

"I told Anne not to tell you about seeing me till you reached Nantes, for by that time, if ever, I shall be beyond the reach of officers of the law. Please keep her mother's rings that I gave to her, unless it becomes necessary to dispose of them to provide for her. If I live, I will replace her money that I squandered.

"Will you leave your address for me with the consul in Nantes? For God's sake, madam, do not betray me to the hands of the law. I am a guilty man, but I am putting myself in your power for the sake of this innocent child. Be very good to her, I implore you. Deal with her as you would be dealt with in your hour of need.

"Respectfully yours,

"CAREY G. MAYO."

This was the secret then, this the mystery. How she had misjudged poor little Anne! She would hasten to take the child from the asylum and would do all possible to make up for the lonely, neglected past. She wrote at once to the consul at Nantes, asking him to forward to her Washington address any letters which came for her. Then she hastened her departure to Washington.

"I came before the time I set," she said to her brother-in-law as soon as they were alone together, "because I wish to talk to you about Anne Lewis." Mr. Patterson's brow clouded. "She is in an orphan asylum in Virginia, is she not? We must get her out. At once. Read this letter."

Mr. Patterson held the letter unopened in his hand. "The subject is an unpleasant one," he said. "I've been wanting to tell you about a conversation I had with Pat. It showed me in a startling way how the boy is developing. I don't know what to do with him. In my young days, boys were different. We submitted to our fathers. A year or two of school and camp life has changed my little Pat into a sullen, self-willed, unmanageable youngster." He repeated the conversation between Pat and himself about Anne.

"And you did not tell him where Anne is?" asked Miss Drayton.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Patterson. "His manner was disrespectful. If he had asked properly, I should have answered him. Of course I had no objection to telling him."

"Ah," murmured Miss Drayton. "I hope he didn't think you meant to keep him ignorant of Anne's whereabouts."

"Of course not," said Mr. Patterson, indignantly.

"Children get queer little notions in their queer little heads sometimes," said Miss Drayton. "I confess, brother, I think you've done wrong. And I've done wrong. We could have given this orphan child a home and care—and we did not."

Her brother-in-law replied that orphan asylums were established to relieve such cases.

Miss Drayton did not argue the question. She said softly: "We failed in the trust that Emily left us—our duty to her little adopted daughter."

Mr. Patterson was silent. He opened and read Mr. Mayo's letter. Then he folded it carefully and handed it back. "I will go to-morrow and get this child from the asylum," he said.

"Suppose you let me go—with Pat," suggested Miss Drayton. "And, brother, talk to him. Explain matters."

But he shook his head. "There is nothing for me to explain. You and I misunderstood things. I am sorry we did not know all this at first. Then we would have acted differently. But it is not for Pat to judge my course. I refuse to defend myself to a young cub."

CHAPTER XX

"What are you smiling at, Pat?" Miss Drayton asked her nephew sitting beside her in the parlor car. They had passed through the tunnel and crossed the beautiful Potomac Park and the shining river. Washington Monument, like a finger pointing skyward, was fading in the distance.

"What amuses you, Pat?" repeated his aunt.

"Can't help grinning like a possum," answered Pat, with a chuckle. "Every mile is taking us nearer Anne. How she'll jump and squeal 'oo-ee'—when she sees us! And—look here, Aunt Sarah—" he glanced cautiously around to be sure that he was not observed, then opened his travelling-bag and displayed a doll's dress—blue silk with frills and lace ruffles. "I bought it in an F Street shop yesterday—for Honey-Sweet, you know," he explained. "Gee! It'll tickle Anne for me to give that doll a present. She'll—" he whistled a bar of ragtime.

Miss Drayton laughed heartily. The gift set aside so completely the lapse of time that she could fancy she saw Anne running to meet them, her tawny hair flying in the wind and Honey-Sweet clasped in her arms.

According to its habit, the Southern train was behind time. Instead of early afternoon, it was twilight when Miss Drayton and Pat reached their station. Dusk was deepening into drizzling night when their cab set them down at the gate of the 'Home.' They were ushered through the prim hall into the superintendent's office. Miss Farlow rose from her desk.

"You are in charge of this institution?" asked Miss Drayton.

"I am Miss Farlow, the superintendent."

"I am Miss Drayton from Washington City. This is my nephew, Patrick Patterson. We are friends of Anne Lewis."

"You have news of her?" asked Miss Farlow, starting eagerly forward.

"News? We have come to see her—to take her home with us—to give her a home," explained Miss Drayton.

Miss Farlow sank back on her chair, and buried her face in her hands. The quiet, reserved woman was weeping bitterly. "If we only had her, if we only had her!" she moaned. "Poor little motherless, fatherless one! Oh, it was my fault. I failed in my duty. I tried to do right by her. God knows I did."

"What is the matter? What do you mean?" Miss Drayton was frightened. Was the child dead? injured? She dared not ask. "Anne—where is she?" she faltered at last.

"I don't know." Miss Farlow was recovering her self-control and struggling to speak steadily. "She started on a holiday trip with some friends. On the way she disappeared. Absolutely disappeared. No one knows where nor when. The nurse saw her last at Westcot, a few stations from Lynchburg. The train was in the city before she was missed."

"We will find her. We must," cried Miss Drayton.

Miss Farlow was hopeless. "Not a stone has been left unturned. That was two weeks ago. The trainmen were all questioned. Telegrams were sent to every station. Mr. Marshall has spared neither trouble nor expense. No one saw her get off. There is no trace of her. None. If the earth had opened and swallowed her, she could not have disappeared more completely. When you came in—strangers—and mentioned her name—my one thought and hope was that you had found her." Miss Farlow sobbed. "I think of her day and night. A little lost child! homeless! friendless! all alone!"

"Don't, don't!" Pat put up his hand as if to ward off a blow. He hurried from the room and crouched down in a corner of the cab, staring out into the wet night. Somewhere in the darkness—in the rain—homeless—friendless—all alone—was little Anne.

Surely there was some clew that they might follow to reach the child. Miss Drayton and Pat went to 'Roseland' to hear the story from Mrs. Marshall's own lips. She could give them no help. She and her husband had done all that was possible. They would have done this for the child's own sake. They were doubly bound to do it for the sake of their sons who were heart-broken about Anne. Arthur was always begging them to let Anne come back to see him. Dunlop understood that she was lost and refused to be comforted.

Miss Drayton and Pat went into the nursery and found the children at supper.

"I know, it's late, ma'am," said Martha, helplessly; "but Master Dunlop he wouldn't let me have it afore. Do eat now, Master Dunlop. Here's this nice strawberry jam."

Dunlop took up the spoon, then paused to ask, "Do you reckon Anne has any strawberry jam for her supper?"

Pat shook his head.

Dunlop's lip quivered. "Then I don't want any. Take it away, Martha," and he pushed aside the spoon.

"Do with Anne wath here," lisped Arthur. "I got her thweater yolled up smooth to keep for her. Whyn't she come?"

No one could tell him.

Miss Farlow wished Miss Drayton, according to Mr. Mayo's request, to take charge of the child's jewels. But Miss Drayton refused.

"You keep them, please," she urged. "If—when Anne comes back, it will be to you. She does not know where we are. Oh, I cannot bear the sight of those miserable jewels," she exclaimed. "The mere thought of them reminds me how I misjudged our poor child."

There was nothing she could do in Richmond and she hurried back to Washington to consult her brother-in-law. How unlike the merry journey of the day before was the silent, miserable trip!

"Don't take it so hard, dear boy," Miss Drayton said, clasping Pat's hand which lay limp in hers a minute and was then withdrawn. "We may find her yet,—well and happy."

She spoke in a half-hearted way and Pat shook his head hopelessly. "She's been gone two weeks," he said, "and no sign of her. I think about her—like that woman said—homeless—friendless—all alone—a little lost child—in the wet and dark, like last night." There was a moment's silence. Then Pat spoke again: "Aunt Sarah, I shall never feel the same to father. It is his fault. He ought not to have put her there. He ought to have told me where she was. If he had told me when I asked him—that was three weeks ago, you know."

Miss Drayton reasoned, coaxed, entreated. "Think of your mother, Pat," she said gently. "How you would grieve her!"

"I do think of her," returned Pat. "She would never have acted so. And she would never have let father send Anne away."

Miss Drayton sighed. Was it not sad and pitiful enough to have that poor little orphan lost? Must her dead sister's husband be estranged from his only son?

Pat stood silent while Miss Drayton told his father the story of their journey. Mr. Patterson listened—surprised at first, then vexed. Now and then, he interrupted with brief, pointed questions. The answers left him anxious, distressed. Presently he took off his eyeglasses and put his hand up as if to shade his eyes from the light. When the tale was finished, there was a brief silence. A gentle breeze rustled the elm-tree at the window. A carriage clattered past. A newsboy shouting "Papers!" ran down the quiet street.

Mr. Patterson dropped his hand. His lashes were wet with tears. "Lord!" he said in a broken voice. "Can I ever forgive myself?"

Pat started forward with tears in his eyes. "Father!" he cried. "Dear—old—dad! We'll find her yet."

Mr. Patterson seized the outstretched hand and held it close. "God grant it," he said. "My son, my son!"

CHAPTER XXI

Meanwhile, where was Anne? Was she as forlorn and miserable in reality as her friends fancied? Let us see.

After she slipped unobserved from the railway coach, she followed the familiar footpath in its leisurely windings across meadow and up-hill. It led her to a tumble-down fence, surrounding a spacious, deep-turfed lawn, with native forest trees—oak, elm, and chestnut—growing where nature had set them. On the crest of the hill, rose a square, old-fashioned house, dear and familiar. Home, home at last!

Anne pushed through the gate, hanging ajar on one hinge, and hurried across the lawn. Even in the twilight, she could see that the microfila roses by the front porch were still blooming—they had been in bloom when she went away—and the Cherokee rose on the summer-house was starred with cream-white blossoms. From the windows of the old sitting-room, a light was shining and Anne hastened toward the latticed side-porch which opened into the room. As she approached the steps, a lank, clay-colored dog came snarling toward her. Two or three puppies ran out, barking furiously. Anne stopped, too frightened to cry out.

The sitting-room door opened and a thick-set man in shirt-sleeves came out on the porch. He peered into the darkness.

"Who's that?" he asked. Anne, fearfully expecting to be devoured by the yelping curs, could not answer. "Who's out there, say?" repeated the man. Anne took two or three steps toward the protection of the light and the open door. The man answered a question from within. "Don't know. It's a child," he said, catching sight of Anne, and going to meet her. "Them pups won't bite. Get away, Red Coat. She'll nip you if she gits a chance. Come right on in, honey. Whyn't you holler at the gate?"

Anne followed the strange man through the door that he opened hospitably wide. It was and was not the dear room that she remembered. There were the four big windows, the panelled walls, the bookcase with diamond-paned doors, built in a recess beside the chimney. But where was the gilt-framed mirror that hung over the mantel-piece? And the silver candlesticks with crystal pendants? And the old brass fender and andirons? And the shiny mahogany table with brass-tipped claw feet? And the little spindle-legged tables with their burdens of books, vases, and pictures? And the tinkly little old piano? And the carved mahogany davenport? And the sewing-table, ebony inlaid with mother-of-pearl, that stood always by the south window? And the quaint old engravings and colored prints? All these were gone. Instead of the threadbare Brussels carpet patterned with huge bouquets of flowers, there was a striped rag carpet. There were a few rush-bottomed chairs, a box draped with red calico on which stood a water-bucket and a wash-pan, a cook-stove before the fireplace, and in the middle of the room a table covered with a red cloth, on which was set forth a supper of coffee, corn-cakes, fried bacon, and cold cabbage and

potatoes. A fat, freckle-faced girl, a little larger than Anne, and two boys of about twelve and fourteen were seated at the supper-table. Beside the stove stood a stout, fair woman in a soiled gingham apron. Their four pairs of wide-open, light-blue eyes stared at Anne.

"Where you pick up that child, Peter Collins?" demanded the woman, neglecting her frying cakes.

"She jes' come to the door," responded Mr. Collins.

"My sakes!" exclaimed his wife. "Whose child is you? Whar you come from, here after dark, this way?"

"Where's Aunt Charity?" asked Anne.

"Aunt Charity? Don't no Aunt Charity live here. This is Mr. Collins's house,—Peter Collins. Is you lost?—Peter, you Peter Collins! I want know who on earth this child is you done brung here. You always doing some outlandish thing! Who is she?"

"How the thunder I know?" muttered her husband, pulling at his beard.

Anne stood bewildered. This was home and yet it was not home. Her lips quivered, she clasped Honey-Sweet tighter, and turned toward the door to go—where? Everything turned black around her, the floor seemed to give way under her feet, and in another moment she and Honey-Sweet were in a forlorn little heap on the floor and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

"I want home! I want somebody!" she wailed piteously.

Mrs. Collins sat down on the floor and drew the weeping child into her arms.

"Thar, thar, honey! don't you cry! don't you cry!" she said soothingly. "Po' little thing! Le' me take off your hat! Why, yo' little hands is jest as cold! Lizzie, set the kettle on front of the stove. Jake, you put some wood in the fire. Now, honey, you set right in this rocking-chair by the stove and le' me wrap a shawl round you. I'll have you some cambric tea and fry you some hot cakes in a jiffy. A good supper'll het you up. I'd take shame to myself, Peter Collins, if I was you"—she scowled at her husband as she bustled about—"a gre't big man like you skeerin' a po' little thing like that! What diff'rence do it make who she is or whar she come from? Anybody with two eyes in his head can see she's jest a po' little lost thing. You gre't gawk, you!"

"What is I done, I'd like to know?" inquired Mr. Collins, helplessly.

Anne had not realized that she was hungry until Mrs. Collins set before her a plateful of hot crisp cakes. The good woman spread them with butter and opened a jar of 'company' sweetmeats,—crisp watermelon rind, cut in leaf, star, and fish shapes. While serving supper, Mrs. Collins chattered on in a soft, friendly voice.

"I see how 'twas. You knowed this place before we come here. We been here two year come next Christmas. Done bought the place. Fust time any of our folks is ever owned land. Always been renters and share-hands, movin' to new places soon as we wore out ol' ones. I tell my ol' man it's goin' to come mighty hard on him now that he's got a place of his own that's got to be taken care of."

By this time, the color had come back to Anne's face and she was smiling and stroking the sleek black-and-white cat that had jumped in her lap.

"What is the little girl's name, mammy?" asked Lizzie. Having finished her supper, she was standing at her mother's side, staring with wide eyes at Anne and shyly rolling a corner of her apron in her fingers.

"Sh-sh-sh," whispered Mrs. Collins. "'Tain't perlite to ask questions. You make her cry again.—But, Peter, I'm worried to think maybe her folks is missed her and lookin' for her. You have to take the lantern presen'ly and go and tell 'em she's here."

"Whar is I gwine? And who I gwi' tell?" asked Mr. Collins.

"Peter Collins, you is the most unreasonable man I ever see in my life! You sho ain't goin' to worry the po' little thing and make her cry again, askin' all kinds of questions. You jest got to hunt up her folks. They'll be worried to death, missing a child like this, and at night, too."

But Anne was now ready to explain cheerfully. "I haven't any folks—not any real folks of my own now," she said. "Mother is dead and father is dead. Uncle Carey got lost, I reckon. I used to live here. Mr. Patterson took me to a—a orphan 'sylum, Mrs. Marshall calls it. The name over the door is 'Home for Girls.' This evening I was on the train with Mrs. Marshall and I knew the place when we came to the water-tank. And I wanted to be here. So we came, Honey-Sweet and I. I thought the dog was going to bite me."

"You hear that, Peter Collins?" exclaimed Mrs. Collins. "Now wasn't that smart of her? She knowed the place and got off the train by herself and come right up to the house. And Red Coat might 'a' bit the po' child traipsin' 'long in the dark. You got to shut that dog up nights," she said, as if every evening was to bring a little lost Anne wandering into danger. "To think of puttin' a po' little motherless, fatherless thing in a 'sylum," she continued. "Many homes as thar is in this world!—Le' me fry you another plateful of nice brown cakes, honey, and get you some damson preserves—maybe you like them better'n sweetmeats. Or would you choose raspberry jam?" She had thrown open the diamond-paned doors of the bookcase, now used as a pantry, and was

looking over the rows of jars.

"I couldn't eat another mouthful of anything; indeed, I couldn't," insisted Anne.

"I wish you would," sighed Mrs. Collins. "It gives me a feelin' to see yo' po' thin little face—no wider'n a knitting needle."

Anne laughed. "I ate ever so many cakes. They were so good—as good as Aunt Charity's. Please—where is Aunt Charity?"

"Aunt Charity who?" asked Mrs. Collins.

"Our old Aunt Charity and Uncle Richard that used to live here."

"Oh! You mean them old darkies. They moved away the year we come here. They—"

"Mammy, I want to know her name," insisted Lizzie, in an undertone. "And I want to see her doll in my own hands."

"My name is Anne Lewis," Anne informed her. "My doll is named Mrs. Emily Patterson but I call her Honey-Sweet."

"That's a mighty pretty dress," said Lizzie, admiringly.

"I made it, all but the buttonholes," Anne answered proudly. "Martha did those."

"Do her shoes really, truly come off?" asked Lizzie.

"Yes, they do. And her stockings, too. Look here."

The two girls played happily together with Honey-Sweet until Mrs. Collins declared that Anne was tired and tucked her away with Lizzie in a trundle-bed.

"I dunno when I've set up so late," the good woman said to her husband, as she wound up the clock. "It's near nine o'clock. But one thing I tell you, Peter Collins, afore I get a mite of sleep—Nobody's going to send that po' child back to the 'sylum she's runned away from. Tain't no use for you to say a word."

"Is I said a word?" asked Mr. Collins.

"That po' thing ain't goin' to be drug back to no 'sylum," pursued his wife. "She shall stay here long as she's a mind to—till her folks come for her—or till she gets grown—or something. And she shall have all she wants to eat, sho as my name's Lizabeth Collins. I've heard tell of them 'sylums. They say the chillen don't have nothin' to eat or wear but what folks give 'em. Think of them with their po' little empty stomachs settin' waitin' for somebody to think to send 'em dinner! I'm goin' to make a jar full of gingercakes fust thing in the mornin' and put it on the pantry shelf where that child can he'p herself.—Anne, uh! Anne!—She's 'sleep. I jest wondering if she'd rather have gingercakes or tea-cakes dusted with sugar and cinnamon. Peter Collins! I tell you, you got to work and pervide for yo' chillen. I couldn't rest in my grave if I thought one of them'd ever have to go to a 'sylum. I see you last week give a knife to that Hawley boy.—What if he was name for you?—I don't keer if it didn't cost but ten cent. You'll land in the po' house and yo' chillen in 'sylums if you throw away yo' money on tother folks' chillens.—Peter, fust thing in the morning you catch me a chicken to fry for that po' child's breakfast. And remind me—to git out—a jar of honey," she concluded drowsily.

CHAPTER XXII

The next morning, after Anne insisted that she could not possibly eat any more corn-cakes or biscuits or toast or fried apples or chicken or ham or potato-cakes or molasses or honey, Mrs. Collins picked her up and put her in a rocking-chair by the south window.

"Now, you set thar and rest," she commanded, "till Lizzie does up her work and has time to play with you. You Lizzie! Hurry and wash them dishes and sweep this floor and dust my room and then take the little old lady's breakfast to her. It's in the stove, keeping warm."

"Let me help Lizzie," begged Anne. "I know how to sweep and dust and wash dishes. We had to do those things—turn about, you know—at the 'Home."

"You set right still," repeated Mrs. Collins, "and let some meat grow on yo' po' little bones. I know how they treat you at them 'sylums, making you work day in, day out. Oh, it's a dog's life!"

"But, Mrs. Collins, they were good to me, and kind as could be. I didn't have to work so hard. I just did the things that Lizzie does."

"Uh! Lizzie!" was the response, "that's diff'rent. She's at home. She works when I tell her—if she chooses," Mrs. Collins concluded with a chuckle, for Lizzie had dropped her broom and was sitting in the middle of the floor pulling Honey-Sweet's shoes and stockings off and on.

Anne went outdoors presently to look around the dear old place. 'Lewis Hall,' a roomy frame-house built before the Revolution, was on a hill which sloped gently toward the corn-fields and

meadows that bordered the lazy river beyond which rose the bluffs of Buckingham. Back of the house, a level space was laid out in a formal garden. The boxwood, brought from England when that was the mother country, met across the turf walks. Long-neglected flowers—damask and cabbage roses, zinnias, cock's-comb, hollyhocks—grew half-wild, making masses of glowing color. Along the walks, where there had paced, a hundred years before, stately Lewis ladies in brocade and stately Lewis gentlemen in velvet coats, now tripped an orphan girl, a stranger in her father's home. But she was a very happy little maid as she roamed about the spacious old garden on that sunshiny summer day, gathering hollyhocks and zinnias for ladies to occupy her playhouse in the gnarled roots of an old oak-tree.

When Lizzie came out to play, she and Anne wandered away to the fields. There was a dear little baby brook—how well Anne remembered it!—that started from a spring on the hillside, trickled among the under-brush, loitered through the meadow, and emptied into a larger stream that fed the river.

"Let's take off our shoes and stockings," said Anne, tripping joyfully along, "and wade to the creek. You've been there? Part of the way is sandy. Your feet crunch down in the nice cool sand. Part of the way there are rocks—flat, mossy ones. They're so pretty—and slippery! It's fun not knowing when you are going to fall down."

"There's bamboo-vines," objected Lizzie. "Mother'll whip me if I tear my dress."

"Oh, we'll stoop down and crawl under the vines." Anne was ready of resource. "And we'll dry our dresses in the sun before we go home. Oh, Lizzie! Look at all the little fishes! Let's catch them! Do don't let them get by. Aren't they slippery! Tell you what let's play. Let's be Jamestown settlers and catch fish to keep us from starving. We'll have our settlement here by the brook—the river James, we'll play it is."

"How do you play that? I never heard tell of Jamestown settlers," said Lizzie.

"A big girl like you never heard about Jamestown settlers!" exclaimed Anne; then, fearing her surprise at such ignorance would hurt Lizzie's feelings, she tried to smooth it over. "It really isn't s'prising that you never heard 'bout them, Lizzie. Mother always said this was such a quiet place that you never heard any news here. I'll tell you all 'bout them while we build our huts."

While Anne told the story of John Smith and played she was the brave captain directing his band, they dragged brushwood together and erected cabins. Stones were piled to make fireplaces on which to cook the fish they were going to catch and the corn they were going to buy from the Indians.

"You be the Indians, Lizzie," suggested Anne. "Paint your face with pokeberries and stick feathers in your hair. They're heap nicer to look at, but I want to be the Englishmen and talk like Captain John Smith. All you have to say is 'ugh! ugh!'"

The morning slipped by so quickly that they could hardly believe their ears when they heard the farm bell ringing for noon. After dinner, Jake and Peter went by the settlement, on their way to the tobacco-field, to help build Powhatan's rock chimney. The boys made bows and arrows and became so interested in playing Indian that Mr. Collins came for them. He scolded them roundly and said that no boy who didn't work in the tobacco-field would get any supper at his house that night.

"I'm the play Captain Smith," laughed Anne, looking up at the rough-speaking, soft-hearted man; "but you talk like the real captain. 'I give this for a law,' he said, 'that he who will not work shall not eat.'"

Mrs. Collins said that night that the girls must not play Jamestown settlers any more. They might get ill or hurt or snake-bit; and who ever heard of such a game for little girls? they ought to stay in the house and keep their faces white and their frocks clean and play dolls. Anne and Lizzie, however, teased next day until she relented and even waddled down the hill to see their settlement.

"I told them chillen they shouldn't put thar foots in that ma'sh on the branch, gettin' wet and draggled and catchin' colds and chills," she explained to her husband. "But they begged so hard I told 'em to go on and have a good time. Maybe it won't hurt 'em. They're good-mindin' gals. And I never did believe in encouragin' chillen to disobey you by tellin' 'em they shouldn't do things you see thar heads set on doin'. Don't be so hard on the boys, Peter, for stoppin' awhile to play. If the Lord hadn't 'a' meant for chillen to have play-time, He'd 'a' made 'em workin' age to begin with."

The Jamestown colony, like the great undertaking after which it was patterned, had many ups and downs,—flourishing when Jake and Peter could steal off to be Indians and new settlers, and then being neglected and almost deserted. Anne and Lizzie found the most beautiful place to play keeping house. On the hillside, there were two great rocks, full of the most delightful nooks and crevices. One of these rocks was Anne's home, the other was Lizzie's. In the moss-carpeted rooms, lived daisy ladies, with brown-eyed Susans for maids. They made visits and gave dinner parties, having bark tables set with acorn-cups and bits of broken glass and china. They had leaf boats to go a-pleasuring on the spring brook where they had wonderful adventures.

Rainy days put an end to outdoor delights, but they only gave more time for indoor games with their neglected dolls.

After breakfast one rainy morning, Lizzie asked her mother for some scraps—she didn't want any except pretty ones—to make dresses for Honey-Sweet and Nancy Jane. Mrs. Collins replied that she had no idea of wasting her good bed-quilt and carpet-rag pieces on such foolishness as doll dresses. But when ten minutes later the girls went back to repeat their request, they found Mrs. Collins rummaging a bureau drawer. Thence she produced two generous pieces of pretty dimité, —Honey-Sweet's was buff with little rose sprigs and Nancy Jane's had daisies on a pale-blue ground.

While Lizzie was busy making doll dresses, Anne got a book with pictures in it and gave forth a story with a readiness that amazed Mrs. Collins.

"Ain't you a good reader!" she exclaimed. "You read so fast I can't understand half you say."

"I'm not reading all that," honesty compelled Anne to confess, as she beamed with pleasure at Mrs. Collins's praise. "I read when the words are short, and when they're long and the print's solid, I make it up out of my head to fit the pictures."

"Ah! you come of high-learnt folks," said Mrs. Collins, admiringly. "Now, my Jake and Peter, they can't read nothing but what's in the book and that a heap of trouble to 'em. And Lizzie here, she's wore out two first readers and don't hardly know her letters yet."

Lizzie soon tired of sewing and she and Anne pattered off through the halls to the bareness and strangeness of which Anne could not get used. Where, she wondered, were the people in tarnished gilt frames—slim smiling ladies and stately gentlemen with stocks and wigs—that used to be there? The two girls played lady and come-to-see in the bare up-stairs rooms awhile. Then Anne said, "Lizzie, I'm going up the little ladder into the attic and walk around the chimneys."

"Don't! It's dark up there," shuddered Lizzie.

"Dark as midnight," agreed Anne; "heavy dark. You can feel it. It's the only place I used to be afraid of. I have to make myself go there."

"Why?" asked Lizzie.

"I—don't just know—but I do. You wait here." She came back a little later, dusty, cobwebby, flushed. "I knew there wasn't anything there—in the dark more'n the light," she said. "I know it, and still I just have to make myself not be scared. Whew! It's hot up there. Lizzie, let's go in the parlor. I've not been in there yet."

"No," objected Lizzie. "The little old lady's in there—or in the room back of it. Them's her rooms."

"The little old lady? who is she?" inquired Anne.

"She's the one I take breakfast and dinner and supper to. She comes here in the summer and she sits in there and rocks and reads."

"Doesn't she ever go out?" Anne wanted to know.

"Oh, yes! she walks in the yard or garden every day. You just ain't happened to see her. We've played away from the house so much."

"What kind of looking lady is she?" asked Anne.

"Oh, she's just a lady. Ma says she's mighty hotty. What's hotty, Anne?" inquired Lizzie.

Haughty was a new word to Anne. But she hated to say "I don't know," and besides words made to her pictures—queer ones sometimes—of their meaning. "It means she warms up quick," she asserted. "Tell me about her, Lizzie. How does she look?"

"She ain't so very tall and she's slim as a bean-pole," said Lizzie. "Her hair's gray and her skin is white and wrinkly. And she wears long black dresses. That's all I know."

"I want to see her. Let's sit at the head of the steps and watch for her to come out," suggested Anne.

They sat there what seemed a long time but as the little old lady did not appear, they finally ran off to play with Honey-Sweet and Nancy Jane.

While they were thus engaged, Mr. Collins came from the mill. He shook his dripping hat, and hung up the stiff yellow rain-coat that he called a 'slicker.'

"I come by the station, wife," he announced. "And what you think? Thar's a gre't big sign up, 'Lost child.'"

"Sho! Whose child's lost?" inquired Mrs. Collins.

"It's Anne," was the reply. "The printed paper give her name and age and all. And it tells anybody that's found her or got news of her to let them 'sylum folks know."

"As if anybody with a heart in their body would do that!" commented Mrs. Collins. "I bound you let folks know she was here. If you jest had sense enough to keep yo' mouth shet, Peter Collins! That long tongue of yours goin' to be the ruin of you yet."

"I ain't unparted my lips," asserted her husband.

"Now ain't that jest like a man?" Mrs. Collins demanded of the clock. "'Stead of trying to throw folks off the track, saying something like 'What on earth's a lost child doing here?' or 'Nobody'd 'spect a lost child to come to my house!'"

"I wish you'd been thar, Lizbeth," said her admiring husband. "You'd fixed it up. Well, anyhow, I ain't said a word, so don't nobody know nothin' from me. All she's got to do is to lay low till this hub-bub's over."

In that out-of-the-way place there seemed little danger of Anne's being discovered. Mrs. Collins, however, made elaborate plans for her concealment.

"Anne," she said, "would you mind me callin' you my niece Polly?"

Anne looked at her in questioning surprise.

"If so be people from the 'sylum was to look for you, you wouldn't want to go back thar, would you?"

"Oh, no! I'd much rather stay here," answered Anne.

"Bless your heart! and so you shall," exclaimed Mrs. Collins. "I'll trim your hair and part it on the side and call you my niece Polly. And can't nobody find out who you are and drag you back to that 'sylum. You shall stay here forever."

"Goody, goody!" cried Anne. Then she said thoughtfully, "I do wish I had some of my things from there. It doesn't matter so much about my clothes. Lizzie's are most small enough and I s'pose I'll grow to fit them. But I do wish Honey-Sweet had her dresses, 'spressly her spotted silk and her blue muslin. And there are some other things. Uncle Carey said they were my mother's and I don't want Miss Farlow to keep them always."

"When you are grown up, you can go and get them," suggested Mrs. Collins.

"Oh, so I will," said Anne. "And please, may Lizzie go with me?"

CHAPTER XXIII

A day or two later, Anne wandered alone into the old-fashioned garden. She had just recalled—bit by bit things from the past came back to her—a damask rose at the end of the south walk that was her mother's special favorite. It was bare now of its rosy-pink blossoms and Anne gathered some red and yellow zinnias to play lady with. The red-gowned ladies had their home under the Cherokee rose-bush and yellow-froaked dames were given a place under the clematis-vine; then they exchanged visits and gave beautiful parties.

Presently a slim, black-robed lady sauntered down the box-edged turf walk and stopped near Anne.

"What are you doing, little girl?" she asked.

Anne looked up at the lady. "How do you do, cousin?" she said, scrambling to her feet and putting up her mouth to be kissed. It was one of the cousins, she knew, and it was the most natural thing in the world to see her come down the box-edged walk to the rose-arbor; but whether it was Cousin Lucy or Cousin Dorcas or Cousin Polly, Anne was not sure.

It was Cousin Dorcas and she stared at the child for a moment, too amazed to speak.

"It cannot be little Nancy!" she exclaimed at last. "Child, who are you?"

"Why, of course, I'm little Nancy," Anne laughed.

"What are you doing here? Where did you come from?"

"I am playing flower dolls." Anne answered the questions gravely in order. "I got off the train because I wanted to come home. I thought Aunt Charity and Uncle Richard were here."

Miss Dorcas Read sat down on a rustic seat and questioned her small cousin until she drew forth the story of the child's wanderings.

"I am glad I have found you," the lady said when Anne's story was finished. "You ought to be with your own people, of course, and I am your near kinswoman. Your great-grandmother and my grandmother were sisters. It is little that I have, but that little I shall gladly share with you. I must take you with me when I go home next week."

"Where is your home?" asked Anne.

"In Washington City. I am one of the little army of government clerks," Miss Dorcas explained. "I come back every summer to spend my vacation here. I walk in the dear old garden and read the dear old books and live again in the dear old days. You do not understand now, child; but some day, if you live long enough, you will understand."

Lizzie wailed aloud when she learned that Anne was to leave 'Lewis Hall,' and in her heart Anne

preferred her old home to her old cousin.

"You shouldn't never have gone to a 'sylum," said Mrs. Collins, wiping her eyes with her apron. "But when one of your blood-kin lays claim to you, that's diff'rent and I ain't got no call to interfere. I got sense enough to know my folks ain't like yo' folks. Yours is the real old-time quality folks and you ought to be brung up with your own kind. Now, we is a bottom rail that's done come to the top. My chillen's got to be schooled and give book-learnin'. Some day they'll forget they was ever anything but top rails, and look down on their old daddy and mammy."

"I ain't, mammy; I ain't never gwi' look down on you," declared Lizzie.

"That's all right, honey," answered Mrs. Collins. "I want you to be hotty and look down on folks. I never could l'arn to do it. I was always too sociable-disposed."

"No one can ever look on you except with respect, dear Mrs. Collins," Miss Dorcas insisted. "Certainly, Anne and I shall always regard you as one of her best friends. She will want to come to see you next vacation, if you will let her."

"Let her! and thank you, ma'am," exclaimed Mrs. Collins. "Now I'm going to unload them pantry shelves. You shall have sweetmeats and jam and preserves and pickle for yo' snacks, Anne, and I want you to think of Lizbeth Collins when you eat 'em."

Before Anne and Cousin Dorcas went to Washington, it was resolved that they should visit Aunt Charity and Uncle Richard, who lived on a plantation eight miles from 'Lewis Hall.' Mrs. Collins doubted the wisdom of the plan, fearing lest some of the 'sylum folks on the lookout for Anne would be met on the public road. Miss Dorcas, too, was a little uneasy. It was finally decided that Anne should wear one of Lizzie's frocks and her sunbonnet and that if they met any one on the road, Miss Dorcas was to say in a loud voice, "Lizzie!" and Anne was to answer, "Yes, ma'am."

Mr. Collins brought out an old buggy with an old horse called Firefly and helped Miss Dorcas in, explaining carefully, "This ain't no kicker and it ain't no jumper. It's jest plain horse with good horse-sense. If you don't cross yo' lines, you can drive him anywhere."

"I don't know much about driving," confessed Miss Dorcas. "That is, I've been driving a great deal but I've never held the lines.—Whoa! get up, sir!" She gave a gurgly cluck, and flapped the lines up and down on Firefly's back, with her elbows high in air. Firefly started meekly off on a jog trot. Mr. Collins looked after them.

"Dumb brutes is got heap more sense than humans," he exclaimed. "They understands women. Now, Miss Dorcas she's whoain' and geein' and hawin' that horse at the same time, but somehow he knows what she wants him to do and he's gwine to do it."

Firefly followed the winding of the river-road mile after mile, along meadows, fields, and wooded hills, fair in the hazy sunlight. How many times Anne had travelled this road on visits to the numerous cousins!

Firefly turned at last from the highway to a plantation road and stopped at a log cabin. It was a neat, whitewashed little house, with rows of zinnias and marigolds on each side of a walk leading from the road. Over the door, hung a madeira vine covered with little spikes of fragrant white blossoms. Charity, in a blue-and-white checked cotton gown, with a bandanna around her head, was working in her garden beside the house.

"Don't speak to her, Cousin Dorcas," whispered Anne. "Let me s'prise her." She jumped lightly out of the buggy and ran to Aunt Charity. "Boo!" she said.

Charity dropped her hoe with a scream. "Lawd 'a' mercy!" she exclaimed, backing toward the cabin. "My child's ghost in de broad daylight!"

Anne laughed till tears ran down her cheeks. "There!" she said, pinching Charity's fat arm. "Does that feel like a ghost, Aunt Charity?"

Charity seized Anne in her arms and jumped up and down, exclaiming, "My child in de flesh and blood! my child in de flesh and blood!" At last she recovered herself enough to "mind her manners" and help Miss Dorcas out of the buggy.

"You all ain' gwine away a step till you eat a snack," she insisted. "I got a chicken in dyar I done kilt to take to church to-morrow. Ain't I glad it's ready for my baby child! And I'll mix some hoecakes and bake some sweet taters and gi' you a pitcher o' cool sweet milk. My precious baby, you set right dyar in de do'. I can't take my eyes off you any more'n if dee was glued to you."

A table was set under the great oak and Charity, beaming with joy, waited on her guests. "Richard ain't gwi' forgive hisself for goin' to mill to-day," she said. "Dunno huccome he went, anyway. He could 'a' put it off till Monday. But if you gwi' be at de old place till Chewsday, me an' him will sho hobble up to see you."

As the afternoon shadows began to lengthen, Miss Dorcas and Anne started on their homeward journey. Miss Dorcas clucked and jerked the lines, and Firefly ambled homeward, now jog-trotting along the road, now pausing to nibble grass on the wayside.

CHAPTER XXIV

All too soon for Anne, came the day that was to take her to the city. Generous Mrs. Collins insisted on slipping into Miss Dorcas's trunk a liberal supply of Lizzie's clothes, and she gave Anne one of Lizzie's best frocks to travel in and a muslin hat that flopped over her face. Disguised in these, she was to be smuggled away on a night train to prevent her being discovered and taken back to the asylum. They were the more concerned about the matter because Mr. Collins heard at the blacksmith shop new inquiries about the lost child. Miss Dorcas charged Charity and Richard, who trudged the long eight miles to visit their "precious baby child," not to mention having seen Anne. Richard brought on his shoulder a great bag full of things "for Marse Will Watkins's child"—apples, popcorn, potatoes. For days Mrs. Collins had been baking cakes and pies and selecting sweetmeats, preserves, and pickles from her store. The supplies were so liberal that after a barrel was packed and repacked and re-repacked there were almost as many things left out as were put in. Mrs. Collins wanted to put them in another barrel, but Miss Dorcas said that the supply already packed would more than fill her tiny pantry.

Mrs. Collins consoled herself as best she could. "Christmas is coming," she said; "it's slow but it's on the way. And when it do get here, I'll send you a barrel packed to show you what a barrel can hold."

The morning after Anne's regretful farewell to her old home and her new friends, found her eagerly examining her cousin's small apartment in Georgetown. The house was a red-brick mansion built for the residence of an early Secretary of the Navy, and now made over into cheap flats. The stately, old-fashioned place was surrounded by small shops and cheap, dingy houses. "It makes me think," Miss Dorcas said with a sigh, "how Jefferson would look to-day in a Democratic party meeting or Hamilton among modern Republican politicians."

Anne didn't know who Hamilton was but she thought Jefferson, whose picture hung in the sitting-room, looked as if he might have lived here. It was a place still full of charm. In the rear of the mansion was an old-fashioned flower garden with box-bordered gravel walks dividing the formal beds and leading here to a stone seat, there to a broken fountain. In the centre of the garden, was a sun-dial which a century before told the shining hours; now, its days went in shadow under the crowding trees,—a coffee-tree from Arabia, a mulberry from Spain, and other relics of the wanderings of the long-ago secretary. Anne felt like a bird in a nest as she sat on the roomy, white-columned porch overlooking the garden, catching glimpses through a leafy screen of the broad Potomac and the wooded hills of Virginia.

"Ah! when the leaves fall it is beautiful, beautiful," said her cousin; but Anne was sure that it could never be more beautiful than now, in the green-gold glory of a late summer afternoon.

After a few idle days, Anne was enrolled in the city free school. Miss Dorcas mourned over the fact that she was unable to send her small cousin to a select private school, and urged her to study hard, behave well, and, above all, never to have anything to do with 'the common herd' of other children. Anne obeyed the last command very unwillingly. It would be dreadful to be "contaminated,"—which she supposed to mean infected with a bad kind of measles,—as Cousin Dorcas said she would be if she played with her grade-mates; but it was hard to sit primly alone instead of joining the recess games.

At first some of the children tried to make friends with her but, being met coolly, they left her to lonely dignity.

"It's goot," wonderingly explained Albert Naumann, a sturdy, blond little German, when she refused a bite of the crimson-cheeked winesap apple that he offered.

"Why not?" asked merry-faced Peggy Callahan, when Anne declined her dare to a foot-race. "You're not sick, are you?"

"No, indeed!" answered Anne.

"Oh! you look sorter like I feel when I've a pain in my stomach," said Peggy, running off in reply to a playmate's call.

Anne looked after her longingly. Peggy was a bright, merry, friendly child with whom she would have liked to play, but for being sure Cousin Dorcas would object. Peggy was certainly one of the 'common herd'—her clothes ragged or patched and her person rather dingy.

Anne was lonely.

"It's worse than being all by myself," she reflected soberly, "to see the other children's good times and be out of them all."

She consoled herself as best she could with Honey-Sweet, disagreeing stoutly with Miss Dorcas who thought that she was too large a girl to play with dolls.

"Honey-Sweet isn't just a doll—not like those in shops," Anne explained. "Dear Mrs. Patterson made her. And she's been everywhere with me. And, Cousin Dorcas, she really is useful. I study all my lessons with her. That's how I learn them so good—making believe I'm teaching them to Honey-Sweet. And she helps me keep still. You know you do like me to be quiet, Cousin Dorcas."

"Yes. I don't want to seem severe, but I cannot bear a noise. I am so worn out when I come from

the office. It seems each day my head aches worse than it did the day before." Miss Dorcas sighed. "And if it isn't a downright ache when I come home, it begins to pound as soon as I look at this book—" she eyed the account-book open before her—"I hoped you could have some new shoes this month. Those are downright shabby. But there isn't any money for them. I don't see how I am going to pay the gas bill unless we stop eating. It costs so much to live!"

"Perhaps Miss Santa Claus will give us something," suggested Anne.

"Perhaps so," answered Miss Dorcas, absently, poising her pencil above a column of figures in her account-book.

'Miss Santa Claus' was the name that Anne had given to a gentlewoman in the apartment below. Anne had a smiling acquaintance with her and was deeply interested in glimpses of her visitors. Miss Santa Claus's real name was Margery Hartman. Her fair hair was growing silvery, but her cheeks were pink and soft with lingering girlhood and the spirit of eternal youth looked from her clear blue eyes. She was the district agent of the Associated Charities, and worked untiringly with kind heart and clear head to aid and uplift the poor around her.

One September afternoon, Anne, running up-stairs, bumped against the Charities lady.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, Miss Santa Claus," she exclaimed.

The lady laughed. "That's a new name for me," she said.

Anne reddened. "It just slipped out. I don't know your other-folks' name. And I call you Miss Santa Claus to myself because you are always giving people things. I don't mean to listen," she explained, "but I can't help hearing them ask you for coal and shoes and grocery orders."

"You are my little neighbor on the floor above, aren't you?" asked the lady.

Anne assented.

"It's a nice name you've given me—very much nicer than my own real name which happens to be Margery Hartman. I know your name. I heard Albert Naumann call you Anne Lewis."

"You gave Albert shoes to wear to school," said Anne.

"Yes. That is my business—to give things to people who need them. Kind people provide money for me to help the poor. Isn't that good of them?"

"It's very good," said Anne, earnestly. "Do you give them—shoes, I mean—to all the children that need them?"

"Not all." Miss Hartman smiled and then she sighed. "I wish I could."

CHAPTER XXV

The new acquaintance soon ripened into friendship. Miss Hartman grew very fond of the quaint, affectionate child and Anne said Miss Hartman was "nice as a book." She would tell story after story about the children she met in her Charity work and then she would sit at the piano and sing old songs in a sweet, clear voice of the quality that reaches the heart.

Sometimes Anne went to the Charity office and sat mouse-like watching the people who came and went. One Saturday afternoon, Peggy Callahan hurried into the room, untidy as usual, her eyes shining with excitement.

"Are you the head lady of the Charity?" she asked the lady at the desk.

Miss Margery answered that she was.

"If you please, ma'am, we don't want to be put away," Peggy announced.

"Who wants to put you away? Tell me about it," said Miss Margery.

"The folks over there." The girl nodded her head vaguely. "They say as how mommer can't take care of us—popper he's got to go to the work'ouse again. He wa'n't so very drunk this time but the judge sent him there—mean old thing! And they say mommer can't take care of us and we'll have to be put away in 'sylums. And we don't want to go. She says if the Charity folks will help with the rent, we can get on. Don't none of us eat much and we can do with terrible little," Peggy concluded breathlessly.

"What is your name? where do you live? I shall have to see your mother and talk to her," said Miss Margery.

"My name's Peggy Callahan and we live out that way," waving her hand northward. "There ain't no number to the house. You go down this street till it turns to a road and you come to a gate marked 'No Thoroughfare' and you go straight through it and follow the path and you come to a little brown house with red roses on the porch. That's our house. Oh! there's two with roses! One is a colored lady's. Ours is the one with the so many children."

"I know your mother. And I remember the place," said Miss Margery, writing a few lines in her notebook. "I am going out that way this afternoon and we will see what can be done."

"Thank you, lady," said Peggy, and bounded away.

"I'd better send you home, Anne," said Miss Margery, with a little sigh, "and let you go with me some other time. This place is a long way off, much farther than I had expected to go this afternoon."

"Please, Miss Margery, let me go," pleaded Anne. "I never get tired. And I do want to go through the 'No Thoroughfare' gate, and see the little brown house with the red roses and the children."

Miss Margery hesitated, then consented, and she and Anne trudged through the dingy suburb of shabby, scattered houses.

"P'rhaps I oughtn't to have come," said Anne, rather doubtfully. "It's cobblestones. They skin shoes. Cousin Dorcas says she doesn't know where money's coming from to buy another pair. I asked her if we couldn't get you to give me some shoes, like you do Albert and those other children, and it made her cry. She said that would be a disgrace. Why, Miss Margery?"

"Miss Dorcas does not like to have people give her things," said Miss Margery.

"But Mrs. Collins gave me a dress and a hat and ever so many things. And I need shoes. I need them bad as Albert did. If I don't get some pretty soon, I can't go to school. Why mustn't you give them to me?"

Miss Margery did not undertake to explain. "Don't worry about shoes to-day," she said. "Be careful where you walk and don't stump your toes. Those shoes look pretty well still. Miss Dorcas crosses bridges sometimes before she comes to them. Why, there's Albert Naumann. Good-afternoon, Albert. Have you any pennies for the saving bank to-day?"

"No, madam, lady," answered Albert. "I have no time for to earn the pennies to-day. I have for to pick up the coal for mine Mutter. It makes the hands to be dirty"—looking at his blackened fingers—"but it saves the to buy coal."

"That is good, Albert," said Miss Margery, heartily, "better than earning pennies for yourself. Can you show me where the Callahans live? Anne tells me Peggy is your classmate."

"Yes, madam, lady," answered Albert, "it's the second house on the path back of those trees."

"There's the house," exclaimed Anne, a few minutes later. "I know that's it. It's little and it's brown and look at the roses—and the children! It's like the old woman that lived in a shoe."

Indeed, the little brown house was overflowing with children. Peggy, with a baby in her arms, sat in a broken rocking-chair on the porch. Two little girls were making mud-pies near by. A tow-headed boy, watched from an up-stairs window by two admiring small boys, was walking around the edge of the porch roof, balancing himself with outstretched arms. A neat negro woman, emptying an ash-can in the adjoining yard, caught sight of him and shrieked, "Uh, John Edward! is that you on the porch roof? or is it Elmore? Whichever you be, if you don't go right in, I'll tell yo' ma. You Bud and tother twin, you stop leanin' out of that window. Peg, uh Peg! thar's a boy on the porch roof and two leanin' out the window. They all goin' to fall and break their necks."

The boy on the roof stuck out his tongue, and said, "Uh, you tell-tale!" then walked on around the porch and climbed in the window.

"I done it," he shouted to his twin brother. "You dared me to and I done it. Now I double-dare you to climb the chimbley."

Peggy came out to reprove the reckless climber, and then, seeing the approaching visitors, came forward to greet them. She invited Miss Margery and Anne into the front room where her mother sat at a sewing-machine that was running like a race-horse. Mrs. Callahan shook hands and then took a garment from her work-basket and began to make buttonholes.

"My machine makes such a racket," she explained, "I always keep finger jobs for company work. There's so many fact'ries nowadays that Keep-at-it is the only sewin'-woman that makes a livin'. You'd be s'prised to see how much Peggy helps me. She can rattle off most as many miles as me on that old machine in a day."

"Peggy tells me you are in trouble, Mrs. Callahan," said Miss Margery, coming directly to the cause of her visit.

"Well, not exactly. Nobody ain't dead or sick," Mrs. Callahan answered cheerfully. "I told Peggy to tell you we could do with a little help. Pa—that's my old man—he's the best man that ever lived, ma'am. He'd never do nothin' wrong. It's just the whiskey that gets in him. He's kind and good-tempered and hard-workin'—long as he can let liquor alone. It's made him lose his place."

"Our books show that you had help from the Charity office last winter," Miss Margery reminded her.

"Yes'm," responded Mrs. Callahan, "that was after his Christmas spree. The man might 'a' overlooked that. But he got mighty mad. Some bad boys, they see pa couldn't take care of the dray and they stole some things offn it. Pa he couldn't get a job right away and I couldn't keep up

my reg'lar sewin'—the baby just being come—and so pa was up before the judge for non-support. And the judge made him sign the pledge for a year. Pa tried to keep it, ma'am, but his old gang wouldn't let him. They watched for him goin' to work and they watched for him comin' from work. He'd dodge 'em and go and come diff'rent ways. But they'd lay for him here and there, with schooners of beer in their hands. Next thing, he was drunk. The cops didn't catch him that time. But the pledge bein' broke, look like he give up heart. He kept on with the drink, and lost his job. Then the policeman nabbed him."

Mrs. Callahan did not tell that the drunken man had struck her and that the children—seeing her fall to the floor as if dead—ran out screaming, and that the frightened neighbors called a doctor and a policeman. She made the tale as favorable to 'pa' as she could. She went on to say that, having broken the pledge, he was sent to the workhouse for sixty days and she was left without money, with seven children to care for.

"They want me to put the children away to the 'sylums, but we want to stay together, ma'am. We can get on elegant with a little help with the rent and a teenchy bit grocery order now and then. Mine is helpful children, ma'am, and t'ain't as if they were all little. Peggy's near 'leven though she's small for her age. And even them twins, ma'am, they pick up sticks for kindlin' and help in ways untold."

"What have you to eat in the house?" asked Miss Margery.

"There's some potatoes, ma'am. They're mighty filling when they're cold."

Miss Margery knit her brows and considered. There were many calls on the limited fund at her command. "The money from the workhouse for your husband's labor will pay the rent," she calculated. "I will give you a small grocery order twice a week. You can manage with that?"

"Oh, yessum, splendid, and thank you kindly, ma'am," said Mrs. Callahan. "Don't put down meat—just a little piece onct a week so's not to forget the taste. And a leetle mite coffee. Put in mostly fillin' things—rice and beans and dried apples. You got to cram seven hearty children. Thank'e, thank'e, ma'am. Peggy, give the little lady some roses, the purtiest ones where the frost hasn't nipped 'em."

While Miss Margery talked with Mrs. Callahan, Anne was getting acquainted with the children. She chattered gleefully about them on her homeward way. "Peggy says a lady her mother sews for gave them a lot of clothes. Peggy has a pink velvet waist and a red skirt, and her mother has a lace waist and a blue skirt with rows and rows of blue satin on it. They're very int'resting children, Miss Margery, but do you think they always tell just the very exact truth?" asked Anne.

"I'm afraid they do not. I'm afraid their mother doesn't set them a very good example," answered Miss Margery who knew the Callahans of old.

"Peggy says it isn't harm to tell a fib that don't hurt anybody," said Anne.

"I hope you told her it was."

"Yes, Miss Margery. I told her we thought it was low-down to tell stories. And Peggy just laughed and said they wouldn't act so stiff as to tell the truth all the time.—Miss Margery, when are you going there again? I do want to go with you. The baby has a new tooth coming. You can feel it. I want to see it when it comes through. May I go with you another Saturday?"

"Perhaps."

CHAPTER XXVI

Two weeks passed. Peggy or John Edward or Elmore came duly on Wednesdays and Saturdays for the grocery orders and reported that the family was getting on "elegant" or "splendid." One Friday afternoon, a neighbor of the little brown house flounced into the office.

"It's my dooty to come to you, lady," said Mrs. Flannagan, "and I does my dooty when it's hard on other folks. You wouldn't give me a bit of groceries last week, but they tell me you rain down grocery orders on Mrs. Callahan, and she spendin' money like she was President Bill Taft or Johnny Rockefeller."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Flannagan? Please explain," said the long-suffering Charity lady.

"I mean this," said Mrs. Flannagan. "With my own two eyes I seen 'em yestiddy afternoon—Mrs. Callahan and them four biggest children walkin' down the street like a rainbow in silk and satin and lace, goin' past my house 'thout lookin' at me any more'n I was one of them cobblestones. 'Good-day,' I says, and Mrs. Callahan says, says she, 'Good-day. It's Mrs. Flannagan, ain't it?'—like she hain't been in and out of my house these two years! 'Whar's the kittle-bilin' of you goin' to-day?' I asked, and she tosses her head and says, says she, 'Oh, it don't agree with the children's health to stay at home so clost. I'm takin' 'em on a 'scursion down the river to see the shows.' And they ain't come back till dark, for I sat at my front window to see. There's where your Charity money goes, ma'am."

Miss Margery sighed as her informer flaunted away. She must look into the matter before giving

any more grocery orders, and if Mrs. Callahan was really wasting money, as Mrs. Flannagan declared, the Charities' aid must be withdrawn.

The next morning, Peggy entered the office, her usually smiling face very sober. Before Miss Margery had time to mention excursions and grocery orders, Peggy made a request.

"If you please'm, lady," she said, "mommer says won't you give us a help with the rent? It's due to-day and we're three dollars short."

"Didn't officer McFlaerty bring the money from your father on Monday?"

"Yessum, lady," confessed Peggy.

"Your mother told me she would put that aside for the rent—every cent of it—and that it would leave her lacking only one dollar of the rent money. Now you say she is three dollars short. Peggy, I am afraid your family has been wasting money." The Charity lady spoke severely, mindful of Mrs. Flannagan's tale. Peggy did not answer. She looked embarrassed, and twisted her toe under a loose strip of matting. Miss Margery continued, after a pause, "Mrs. Flannagan told me that you went on an excursion Thursday."

Peggy brightened and dimpled. "Yessum, lady. We told her we was a-goin'. It made her so mad. I wisht you could 'a' seen her flirt in and slam her door." Peggy's merry laugh pealed forth. "And we told her we was a-goin' to the shows, too."

"Peggy! do you think I ought to help you with the rent when you are wasting money on excursions and shows?" Miss Margery frowned on Peggy's mirth.

"Oh! why, ma'am!" Peggy seemed amazed that it was necessary to explain. "We didn't go to no shows or no 'scursions. We weren't thinkin' 'bout goin'. That was a lie. It was just to make Mrs. Flannagan mad. She put on so many airs 'bout goin' street-car-ridin' last Sunday."

"You really didn't go?" Miss Margery asked. "But Mrs. Flannagan says you passed her house—five of you—dressed for the excursion."

"Yessum, lady," Peggy agreed, dimpling. "I wisht you could 'a' seen us. It cert'ny is nice livin' when you can wear fussy-fixy velvet and silk clothes and lacey waists. John Edward and Elmore, bein' boys, couldn't get no good of them, so we give John Edward the little lace-flounced umberill to carry and Elmore a painted open-and-shut fan.—Them's the things the lady give us where mommer sews for," she explained, in answer to Miss Margery's bewildered look. "We went to see her like she asked us. 'Twas too far for the baby and Bud and Lois to walk, so we left them with Mrs. Mooney—she's the nice colored lady next door. We wisht they could 'a' gone. Mrs. Peckinbaugh gave us sandwiches and lemonade and little icin' cakes and street-car tickets to ride home on. I never did have such a good time. Oh," Peggy laughed merrily, "and when we came back by Mrs. Flannagan's, I said out loud 'twas most too cool on the boat up the river and John Edward he asked if the monkeys wa'n't cute!"

"Peggy, Peggy, my child!" said Miss Margery. "Don't you know it's sinful to tell lies?"

"Yessum—lies that hurt folks. Them's little white lies. They don't do no harm."

"There aren't any white lies, Peggy. They are all black. It is wrong, it is sinful, to tell a falsehood. Remember that, my child," Miss Margery urged. "Always speak the truth."

"Yessum, lady." Peggy's brow was unclouded and her clear blue eyes looked straight into the clear blue eyes of the Charity lady. "Can I tell mommer you'll come? or can't you give me the money? She's awful worried."

"I do not understand," said Miss Margery. "I know she had that money for the rent."

"Did she, ma'am?" Peggy looked surprised, then suggested, "I 'spect she lost it. She keeps the rent money in a china mug on the mantel-piece, and this might 'a' been paper money and blowed in the fire and got burnt up."

Miss Margery looked unconvinced. "Tell your mother I'll come there this afternoon," she said. Peggy, with an engaging smile, tripped away.

Anne was delighted to learn that another visit was to be paid to the Callahans. She ran home to get Honey-Sweet.

"I told them about her and they want to see her," she said. "I think she's taller than the baby. Oh! I hope that cunning baby has another tooth."

Miss Margery paused a moment at the door of the Callahans' neighbor, the 'nice colored lady.' "Do you happen to know," she inquired, "where Mrs. Callahan was last Thursday afternoon?"

"She was visitin', lady," was the ready answer. "She took the biggest children to see a lady she sews for that's give them a lot of things. I had them three youngest children under my feet all afternoon. Not but that I was glad to mind them for her to go visitin', for she's a splendid lady and they're real lovely children. She's to home now. The sewin'-machine's been rattlin' since daylight."

"I cert'ny am glad to see you at last, lady," said Mrs. Callahan, with rather an offended air, when Peggy and John Edward and Elmore and Susie ushered in the visitors. "I been lookin' for you to

bring me that rent-money. I told the agent's young man he should have it early this afternoon."

"I did not promise to let you have any money, Mrs. Callahan." Miss Margery's tone was crisp and firm. "On Monday you had all your rent-money except one dollar. You said you expected to get that this week for sewing."

"I ain't got no sewin' money," said Mrs. Callahan. "The lady she couldn't make the change and she told me to come back Monday. That's why I had to send and ask you to lend me the loan of three dollars."

"But it was one dollar you needed for the rent, Mrs. Callahan," said Miss Margery, resolved to get to the bottom of the matter.

"Well, I did have two dollars but I had to spend it," said Mrs. Callahan. "I was thinkin' I could get it somehow. And I knew you could let me have it. Ain't that what the Charity's for?"

That was what many of the 'poor things' thought, Miss Margery knew to her regret,—that the Charity was merely a reservoir for the wasteful and the thriftless to draw from at will. Could it ever be, she wondered, what it ought to be,—a crutch to be cast aside with regained health, a hand of brotherhood to lift the fallen and teach them to stand alone, to steady the weak and make them strong? How hard it was to give help, and at the same time to teach the poor to be self-helpful! Miss Margery sighed, but she knew it was useless to argue the matter, so she only answered reprovingly, "I fear you have wasted money, Mrs. Callahan. A neighbor told me you had been off with the children on an excursion."

When Mrs. Callahan dimpled and chuckled as she did now, she looked like Peggy's older sister. "Peg told me Mrs. Flannagan went to you with that tale. I cert'ny did fool her. Why, Miss Margery, I ain't been on no more 'scursions than this old machine settin' here. When I took Mrs. Peckinbaugh's sewin' home, I carried the children with me, like she told me, for her to see how I'd fixed the clothes she give me. She give us a reception like the president's,—sandwiches and lemonade and iced cakes and street-car fare back home. I laugh every time I think how I fooled Mrs. Flannagan. I told her that bundle of sewin' was our lunch and wraps. And she fool enough to believe me!" Mrs. Callahan laughed till tears stood in her eyes.

"Mrs. Callahan, aren't you ashamed to tell falsehoods—and before your little children, too? How can you expect them to believe you? And how can you expect them to tell the truth when you set them such an example?"

"Why, I wouldn't tell a lie to harm anybody for the world," said Mrs. Callahan. "But there wouldn't be no fun in livin' if you didn't tell white lies."

Miss Margery saw that it was useless to protest. "I think I ought not to give you any money, Mrs. Callahan," she said, rising to go. "You had it in your hand and you spent it. If we give in such cases as this, we will not have funds to meet real need."

"If you must know," said Mrs. Callahan, "I lent them two dollars to the colored lady next door. Her rent was due on Wednesday and she'll get the money for her wash to-night. I told Peggy not to tell you, for you'd told me so partic'lar not to spend a cent of that money—but if you must know, you must. She was needin' it worse than me."

"Is this the truth?" asked Miss Margery.

"It's the gospel truth, ma'am," declared Mrs. Callahan. "You ask Mrs. Mooney, ma'am."

As the two women promised faithfully to repay it on Monday, Miss Margery lent the lacking rent-money and then rose to go.

Meanwhile, Anne and Honey-Sweet were the centre of an admiring group. Anne allowed the little Callahans one by one to touch Honey-Sweet and the older ones were even permitted to hold her for a minute.

As Honey-Sweet made the rounds of the group, she was followed admiringly by the beadlike, black eyes of Lois, the second from the baby. She put out her chubby hand and solemnly touched the doll's dress with her fingertip, saying over and over, "Pretty sweet Honey! pretty sweet Honey!" When Miss Margery said they must go, Lois caught Anne's frock in her little fat hands and lisped, "Don't go away, sweet Honey. Stay here two, five minutes."

Miss Margery smiled and patted the tangled curls. "It is getting late, dearie, and we must hurry home," she said.

But Lois followed them down the path, crying, "Wait, lady, wait." She smiled up into Anne's face. "I dess want kiss sweet Honey one time," she said. "I ain't done kiss her yet." Then she pressed her lips on the lace-ruffled flounces and toddled back to the house.

CHAPTER XXVII

Several weeks passed during which Miss Margery saw nothing of the Callahans. Mr. Callahan came back from the workhouse and, with fear of another term before his eyes, he managed to

keep away from his old comrades and to provide for his family. Anne saw Peggy at school and, with Cousin Dorcas's permission, talked to her sometimes in recess and kept informed as to how many teeth the baby had and the new words Bud could say. All the children had bad colds, Peggy said one day, "terrible bad, and the doctor he says mommer must keep the windows open and she lets 'em stay up while he's there to pleasure him and shuts 'em soon as he goes away."

The next day and for several days thereafter, Peggy was absent from school. Anne looked eagerly forward to Saturday when she was to put on her old shoes—she had new ones now—and go with Miss Margery to inquire about the little Callahans.

Friday afternoon, however, brought Peggy to the door, asking for Anne. It was an anxious-faced Peggy. "I ain't been to school 'cause Lois is sick," she explained. "She been sick all week and she gets no better all the time. And she keeps on frettin' to see that doll of yours. She been talkin' 'bout it ever since you was there. And she say if she can just see that doll—she don't ask to touch it—she'll take her medicine. That's why she's so bad off. She won't take her medicine. And mommer sent word to know, won't you please come over and bring your doll for her to see."

"What is the matter with Lois?" asked Miss Dorcas.

"Doctor says she's threatened with the pneumony and she's terrible bad off," said Peggy.

As Miss Margery was not at home, Miss Dorcas herself went with Anne and Honey-Sweet to see the sick child. They walked down the dingy street, took short cuts across vacant lots, passed through the 'No Thoroughfare' gate, and followed the straggling path that led to the little brown house.

Their knock at the door was followed by a scrambling and scampering within, and a hoarse wail from Lois. Then a window was raised, a little face peeped out, and a relieved voice said: "'Tain't the doctor-man. It's Honey-Sweet's girl and a lady."

Peggy opened the door. "Come right in," she said. Then she explained: "We was tryin' to get Lois back in bed. The doctor says she must stay in bed and she hates it, so she will get up and have a pillow-pallet on the floor."

There the child was lying, tossing restlessly about, while Mrs. Callahan's machine rattled away as usual.

Lois gave a cry of delight when Anne came in with Honey-Sweet. "Pretty sweet Honey!" she exclaimed. "Le' me kiss her one time."

"You wait," said Mrs. Callahan. "That dolly ain't coming nigh you till you take your dost of medicine. Then I'll ask the lady to let her lay on the pillow."

Lois looked inquiringly at Anne.

"Take your medicine like a good girl," said Honey-Sweet's little mother, "and I'll let you hold my baby doll in your own hands."

Lois opened her mouth to receive the bitter draught and then stretched out her arms for Honey-Sweet. She touched shoes and dress and hair with light, admiring fingers.

"Pretty sweet Honey," she murmured.

Mrs. Callahan breathed a sigh of relief. "That's the first dost of medicine we've got her to take to-day," she said. "We've all been tryin' to worrit it down her. We've give her everything in the house she fancied. Pa he paid her a bottle of beer to take a spoonful last night. Bless you, no'm"—even in her distress she laughed at Miss Dorcas's shocked look—"she didn't drink a drop of it. She likes to see it sizzle, and she had him pull off the cap and let it foam and drizzle on the floor."

"I would whip her," said Miss Dorcas, drawing her mouth down at the corners.

"No'm, you wouldn't," said Mrs. Callahan, "not if you was her mother and she sick. But it do worrit me awful. These two days I been pourin' out a spoonful of her medicine every two hours—time she ought to take it—and a-throwin' it away. It's a dreadful waste. But I got to do something to make the doctor think she's took it. It makes him so mad when she don't."

Miss Dorcas exclaimed in dismay. "Aren't you afraid the child will die if she doesn't take the medicine?"

"Yessum, I am. But what can I do?" said Mrs. Callahan. "I try to get her to take it every time she ought to have a dost. And what's the use of worritin' the doctor if she won't? It makes him so mad."

Lois, meanwhile, was having a happy time with Honey-Sweet. Anne showed how her shoes came off and on and untied her cap to display her curls. "Here's how she goes to sleep at night," she said. "I put her to bed by me and I sing to her:—

'Honey, honey! Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Honey, honey! Honey-Sweet!'"

As she crooned the lullaby, Lois lisped it after her.

It grew late and Miss Dorcas rose to go.

"If you'll take your medicine to-night, like a little lady," said Anne, "we will come back to see you to-morrow—Honey-Sweet and I. Mayn't we, Cousin Dorcas?—Oh, oh! if you cry, we can't come! Will you promise to take your medicine?"

"I take it now if pretty Honey stay," said Lois.

"No, no! it isn't time now. But if you take it at the right time, we'll come back, and Honey-Sweet may lie on the pillow beside you."

The next afternoon, Anne brought Honey-Sweet, dressed in a blue muslin frock and a new hat that Miss Margery had made of lace and rosebuds and blue ribbon.

Lois's face beamed when she saw this finery. "Can I kiss her dwess?" she asked, gulping down the bitter draught. "Bad medicine gone now. Oh, the pretty flowers!" and she counted on her fingers the rosebuds on Honey-Sweet's hat: "One, two, free, five, seben, leben, hundred beauty flowers."

Mrs. Callahan was, as she said, 'flustered.' Her thread snarled and snapped as she sewed on buttons. "Doctor was here after you left yestiddy," she said. "You'd 'a' thought he'd been at that window peekin' in. He didn't believe me at all when I told him Lois was takin' her medicine reg'lar. He says she's gettin' worse every day since Choosday, and if she don't take her medicine reg'lar, he can't do her no good. She took it two—three times after you left with me a-tellin' her 'bout that beauteous doll that was comin' to-morrow. But she's little and to-morrow looked slow in comin', so after 'while when I'd hold out the spoon, she'd just shake her head and say, 'No, no, no! Mammy tellin' story! Sweet Honey ain't comin'.'"

"It is as I told you it would be, Mrs. Callahan," said Miss Margery. "Your child doesn't trust you. You have told her falsehoods and now she doesn't believe you."

"Ain't it smart of her to take that much notice and she so little!" said Mrs. Callahan, admiringly. "Well, glory be, she's got one more dost down her."

When it was time for Anne to go, Lois wailed aloud. "I don't want sweet Honey to go! I don't want sweet Honey to go!"

"If you'll take your medicine, she'll come back to see you," promised Anne.

"Don't want her to come back—want her to stay," sobbed Lois.

Anne tried to soothe her with promises that she would bring Honey-Sweet back soon, dressed in a pink hat and a pink-flowered muslin. But Lois would not be consoled and Anne left her at last in tears.

Monday morning before school time, Peggy and John Edward and Elmore came to Miss Dorcas's door and asked for Anne. Would she please lend them Honey-Sweet that day? They'd be ever and ever so careful.

"Lend Honey-Sweet!" exclaimed Anne.

They hated to ask it but Lois would not take her medicine. She had pushed aside and spilled dose after dose. "She says she won't take that nasty old bitter old stuff. And her cheeks are so red and she breathes so rattly. Mommer's scairt. And the doctor man'll be so mad. Mommer asked her if she'd take her medicine for Honey-Sweet and she said 'Yes.' So mommer say for us to run and beg you do please lend us your baby-doll to-day."

"If Lois is so sick,—oh, I suppose I must," said Anne; "but—Peggy, will you be careful of her every minute of the time and bring her back this afternoon—sure and certain?"

Peggy promised, and Peggy did. "Lois took her medicine fine," she said, smiling and dimpling. "Mommer give her a dost a hour before time so's I could bring your baby-doll and get home before dark. Here she is. See! I ain't even mussed her curls."

The next day, Lois was worse again. Her mother confessed that they had "worried half the night with her and not got a dost down her," but Honey-Sweet brought her to terms.

When Miss Margery rose to go, Anne hesitated a minute, then said, "Mrs. Callahan, if I let Honey-Sweet stay here to-night with Lois, can you take good, good care of her?"

Mrs. Callahan's face beamed. "That I can, and that I will. I been wantin' to ask you to let her stay and hatin' to do it, seein' how much you set store by her. I'll take care of her good as if she was my own baby."

The next afternoon, Anne found Honey-Sweet sitting in state on the mantel-piece beside the medicine bottle.

"She comes down with it and she goes back with it," said Mrs. Callahan. "The doctor was here this noon and he says she's better and if she takes her medicine reg'lar and keeps on the mend till Sadday he thinks she'll be all right. I hope she'll take it. She does every time for that doll." And the worried mother looked anxiously at Anne.

"I reckon I'll have to spare Honey-Sweet till Saturday," said Anne, with an effort. She missed her pet and the Callahan family was so big and so careless! "Please, Mrs. Callahan, be careful with her every minute. I love her so very dearly."

"Bless your heart, I wouldn't have harm come to her for the world. There she sits like a queen on her throne, and ain't took down but by my own hands with the medicine bottle. I've told the kids I'll skin 'em alive if they put finger on her."

Saturday morning brought Peggy to see Anne,—a sad Peggy with downcast eyes and red nose and croaking voice.

"You've a bad cold, Peggy, haven't you?" said Miss Dorcas.

Peggy nodded. "Yessum, lady. Terrible bad. Maybe so I'll have the pneumony, like Lois, and maybe so I'll die."

"Oh, I hope not!" exclaimed Anne who had hastened out when she heard Peggy. She hoped Honey-Sweet was in that bundle—though she knew it was too small.

"Mommer sent me," said the saddened Peggy with the downcast eyes, "to ask you ladies, please'm, not to come home to-day."

"Is Lois worse?" was Miss Dorcas's anxious question.

"No'm. The doctor says she's lots better, but"—Peggy hesitated—"he says she mustn't have no company and I think he says she mustn't have no company till Monday. And here's something for you." She thrust into Anne's hand a newspaper package which being opened revealed a gauze fan spangled with silver, soiled and frayed, but the pride of Peggy's heart. "And you won't come till Monday, ma'am?" she urged.

Miss Dorcas agreed, but Miss Margery, when she heard the tale, shook her head.

"That's one of Peggy's tales that I'm going to look into," she said. "I have to see a girl in that neighborhood and I'll go there this afternoon."

"And you'll let me go with you? Please," pleaded Anne. "I'm so homesick for Honey-Sweet. She's never been away from me before. You can hand her out the window and let me visit her, if I can't see Lois."

It was a raw December day and none of the Callahan children were playing, as usual, in front of the little brown house. The sewing-machine was rattling away at such furious speed that Miss Margery's knock at the door was unheard. The Charity lady hesitated a moment. "If Lois can stand that rattle-ty-banging, she can stand sight and sound of us. Let's go in," she said and she opened the door.

Anne's eyes went straight to the mantel-piece. Honey-Sweet was not there. Anne looked down at the pallet, where Lois lay asleep. No Honey-Sweet there. The child's questioning, appealing eyes turned to Lois's mother.

Mrs. Callahan dropped her face in her apron. "I wouldn't 'a' had it happen for the world!" she sobbed. "Not for all the world."

"What is the matter, Mrs. Callahan?" inquired Miss Margery.

"Where's Honey-Sweet?" asked Anne.

"I wouldn't 'a' had that doll ruint for nothin'," wailed Mrs. Callahan.

"Honey-Sweet? ruined?" stammered Anne.

"What has happened to Anne's doll, Mrs. Callahan? Will you please explain at once?" Miss Margery was at her sternest.

"Peggy done it—and she's cried herself 'most sick. 'Twas yestiddy. I'd gone to take home some sewin'. Peg she's been possessed to show that doll to the Flannagan children. Bein' as I was gone and Lois 'sleep, she slipped out. And while they were all mirationin' over the doll's shoes and stockin's, that low-down Flannagan dog grabbed the doll and made off with it. And they couldn't get it away from him—he tore it to pieces, worritin' it like 'twas a cat. He ought to be skinned alive, I say. It's low-down to keep such a dog."

"If Peggy had obeyed—" began Miss Margery.

"Yessum," interrupted Mrs. Callahan. "And nobody's got any business to keep such a dog! We wouldn't 'a' had it happen for the world, ma'am. I sent you that word 'bout Lois," she went on, addressing Anne, "so's you wouldn't come. We didn't want you to know 'bout it till Monday. Pa he draws his pay to-night and John Edward, too. John Edward he's errant boy for a grocer down on M Street. They're going to take all their money and buy you the finest doll in Washington, rent or no rent, victuals or no victuals."

"No, no, no," protested Anne.

"Don't you look so white and pitiful," sobbed Mrs. Callahan. "I wouldn't 'a' had it happen for the world. You shall have the finest doll—"

"I don't want a doll," Anne spoke with difficulty. "Tell them not to, Miss Margery. It wouldn't be Honey-Sweet. Please, oh, please, let's go home, Miss Margery."

Poor little Anne! Miss Margery had her downstairs to tea that evening, and gave her milk toast

and pink iced cakes and candy in a Santa Claus box that was to have waited till Christmas. Then she sang Anne's favorite songs. But the shadow did not lift. Anne kissed her friend good-night and crept away to bed before nine o'clock. An hour later, Miss Dorcas and Miss Margery tiptoed into her room. There she lay, her face swollen with weeping and her breath coming in sobbing gasps. She stirred and crumpled a pillow in her arms, and crooned in her sleep the old lullaby:—

"Honey, honey! Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Honey, honey! Honey-Sweet!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

All this time—so little is our big world—Miss Drayton was hardly a stone's throw from Anne. She was keeping house for her brother-in-law who was busy with office work in Washington. Pat was at home, having entered classes to prepare for George Washington University. It was strange that Anne and her old friends went to and fro, back and forth, so near together and yet did not meet. They must have missed one another sometimes by only a minute or two in a shop or on a street-car or at a street corner. But week after week passed without bringing them together.

One morning, as Mr. Patterson was glancing over his newspaper at breakfast, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. "This is something you'll want to hear," he said to Miss Drayton—and then he read aloud an article with these headlines:—

"Truth Stranger than Fiction

"Felon Gives himself up

"Returns to take his Punishment."

Mr. Carey Mayo of New York City, who had used funds of the Stuyvesant Trust Company and had disappeared two years before just as he was about to be arrested, had surrendered himself to the officers of the law. His trial was set for an early day. As he had given himself up of his own free will, it was thought that his sentence would be light.

Fuller explanation came in a letter to Miss Drayton, forwarded by the consul at Nantes. Mr. Mayo thanked her for her care and goodness to Anne—the words smote her heart. He had spent these two years at work in South Africa and had laid aside every possible penny of his earnings in order to keep his niece from being a burden on strangers. This money he was putting in a certain New York banking-house for Miss Drayton in trust for Anne. He requested her to use it to educate Anne and to buy back the child's old home. It would be better, when Anne was old enough to understand the matter, to tell her the truth about him. He asked Miss Drayton to say that his regret, his repentance, were as great as his sin. He had come to realize that the disgrace was in the deed he had done and not in its punishment. So, having righted affairs for Anne as well as he could, he was going to surrender himself to the officers of the law. He was tired of being followed everywhere by fear of discovery, tired of being an outcast from his own land and people. The worst hurt was to think that Anne must some day know that he was in a felon's cell.

Only one course lay open to Miss Drayton, and how painful that was! She must inform Anne's uncle that she had not taken care of Anne, as he thought, and that the child had been sent to an orphan asylum, from which she had wandered away, no one knew where. If only he need not be told! But he must.

Miss Drayton and Mr. Patterson resolved to go to see Mr. Mayo. But the proposed journey was never made. A day or two before they were to start, the newspapers announced that Mr. Carey Mayo had died in the prison to which he had been committed to await trial. He had heart disease, and strain and excitement had brought on a fatal attack.

What was to be done about the property left to Miss Drayton in trust for Anne? Mr. Patterson advised his sister-in-law to let the matter rest for the present. Anne might be found. Mrs. Marshall wrote that they had a clew which they were following. A little girl, answering in general the description of Anne, had been seen near Westcot with a gypsy band. They would continue the search and never give up hope.

Christmas was now at hand and Miss Drayton, always ready for deeds of charity, resolved to send holiday gifts and dinners to several poor families.

Telephoning to the district agent of the Associated Charities, she obtained the names of some 'deserving poor,' and a crisp, clear December morning found her driving from one home to another, talking with mothers and receiving children's messages to Santa Claus. On the ragged edge of the city, her coachman halted before a little brown house from the porch of which hung a leafless rose-bush. Miss Drayton consulted the card in her hand: "John Edward Callahan, wife, and seven children." Two or three smiling children, not yet of school age, were peeping out of the window and a woman left her sewing-machine to open the door.

Miss Drayton explained the purpose of her visit. "I understand you have several children," she said.

"Only seven, lady," said Mrs. Callahan. "Peggy and John Edward and Elmore and Susie and Lois

and Bud and the baby."

"Ah! Only seven! And their ages?"

"Peggy she's near on 'leven and the baby's a year old this last gone November and the others are scattered 'long between," explained Mrs. Callahan.

"And what—" Miss Drayton smiled back at Lois and Bud and the baby—"must I tell Santa Claus to bring you for Christmas, if I happen to see him?"

"A doll, lady, please," answered Mrs. Callahan, eagerly, "a gre't big doll—big as that baby—pretty as a picture—open-and-shut eyes—real hair and curly. Lady, they'd rather have a real elegant doll than anything in the world."

"Oh, but not the boys," protested Miss Drayton.

"Yessum—boys and girls and pa and me—all of us," insisted Mrs. Callahan. "Lump us so as to make it splendiferous. Oh, bless you, 'tain't for us. It's for the little girl that lent us the loan of her doll to get Lois to take her medicine. And the doll got ruint. Miss Margery—that's the Charity lady—she's awful cross sometimes—said we shouldn't buy a doll with the wages. But she couldn't fault a present. I never see a child love a doll like she did that Honey-Sweet."

"Honey-Sweet!" exclaimed Miss Drayton.

"Yessum, lady. Wasn't that a funny name for a doll? It was the purtiest rag baby I ever see."

"A rag baby, named Honey-Sweet!" repeated Miss Drayton. "Was the little girl—what was her name?"

"Anne. Anne Hartman. She's niece to Miss Hartman, the head lady of the Charity."

"Oh!" Could this be her little Anne? Or was there another child named Anne with another rag doll named Honey-Sweet? Anne Hartman? And her Anne had no aunt Miss Hartman. It was queer, very queer, and puzzling. "What kind of looking child is Anne Hartman?" Miss Drayton asked.

"She's a little girl," answered Mrs. Callahan. "Tall as my Peggy, but slimmer. Not pretty.—Well, I dunno. She's beautiful, times when she's happy-looking. She's got a perky little nose and long, twinkly eyes. Molasses-candy-colored hair. And her mouth—Peggy says it's like one of our red rosebuds when they begin to open."

Ah! Whatever name and kinswoman she had now, that was Anne.

"Where does she live?" inquired Miss Drayton, eagerly.

"At the corner of Fairview Avenue, in the big old house that's turned into flats. Was the doll too much to ask, lady?" asked Mrs. Callahan, as Miss Drayton rose to go.

"No, oh, no, indeed! You shall have the doll, and things for all the children besides," said Miss Drayton. "Good-morning, Mrs. Callahan. George, drive down Fairview Avenue. Drive fast. I'll tell you where to stop."

There was no one named Anne Hartman in that building, the janitor informed her. A little girl named Anne? Perhaps she meant Anne Lewis, that lived here with her cousin, Miss Dorcas Read. The top apartment. She was not at home now, he knew. She came from school about two o'clock. No, her cousin was not at home either. She was a government clerk and never came in before five.

Miss Drayton would wait. She wished to see the little girl the very minute that she came in. The janitor invited the lady into his dingy office but she shook her head. She would wait, if he pleased, in the pleasant old garden, of which she caught a glimpse through the open door.

Up and down, down and up, the gravelled walks she paced, restless and impatient. Suppose there was some mistake. Suppose this Anne Lewis was not her little Anne. Surely it was time for the child to come from school. Only one o'clock? Her watch must be wrong. No, it had not stopped. And the old dial, catching the sunlight through leafless trees, told the same hour. Drawing her furs about her, Miss Drayton sat down on a stone bench.

From below, came the street noises,—jangle of cars, rumble of wagons, clatter and clamor of passers-by. In the old garden, withered leaves drifted down on the still air or rustled underfoot, bare branches wavered against the clear blue sky, and purple shadows flickered on the leaf-strewn walk. How quiet it was! how peaceful! By degrees, the quiet and the peace crept into Miss Drayton's heart. She was content to wait. In this good world of ours, everything is sure to come out right in the end.

And then, in the mellow sunlight, down the box-bordered walk, past the sun-dial, toward the stone bench, came a little figure.

"Mr. Brown said that a lady—oh! oh! it's you!"

"Dear little Anne! dear little Anne!" She was clasped in the arms—dear, cuddly arms!—of her friend.

What laughter, tears, and chatter there were!

"But we must go home," said Miss Drayton, presently. "Pat will be there now. We'll come back to see your cousin."

As they entered the hall, they heard from above the click-click of dumb-bells. Miss Drayton put her finger on Anne's lips, and they tiptoed into the cozy sitting-room.

Then Miss Drayton called in an offhand way: "Pat, oh, Pat! There's a child in the sitting-room that wants to see you."

"Who is he?"

His aunt did not seem to hear. Anyway, she did not answer. Pat, whistling ragtime, sauntered into the sitting-room.

Anne flew into his arms.

"Why, what—" and then he realized that it was Anne. Anne! He gave her a bear's hug and danced about the room, holding her high in his arms. Miss Drayton laughed till tears came.

"Where did you come from? How did you get here? Did Aunt Sarah find you? Does dad know you've come? When—"

"There, there, Pat! Not more than three questions at a time, please," interrupted his aunt. "And you're not leaving Anne breath to answer one."

How much there was to ask and to tell! Anne gave an account of her wanderings. Pat told how they had searched for her, how grieved the asylum people and the Marshall family were at not being able to find her. "Why, there's that little chap Dunlop. He asked if you had any jam for your supper—and I told him 'No'—and he wouldn't touch it—said he didn't want it, if Anne didn't have any."

"Dunlop! Dunlop did that!"

"He and his small brother weep a little weep every time your name is mentioned."

"Oh, Pat! Why, I never thought they'd care so much," said Anne. "I miss them. But I was afraid to write to them. I didn't want to go back there. Can they make me go back, if I write and tell them where I am?"

"No, indeed," answered Miss Drayton.

"Bet your life they can't," said Pat. "You're coming to live with us. Isn't she, Aunt Sarah?"

"I'm so glad! I'm so glad!" Anne was radiant. "I love Cousin Dorcas," she hastened to explain. "She's just as kind to me as can be and she's awful good. But—she's one of the good people you don't want to live with. She has nerves, you know, and so many troubles. And her arms aren't cuddly. Not like yours, Miss Drayton. I think she likes me—a cousin-like, you know,—but I'm sure she'll be glad not to have me live with her. She hasn't much money and I cost so much. Shoes are the worst. I wear them out so fast."

"You can wear out all you want to now,—shoes and everything. And give Cousin Dorcas some, too," said Pat.

While they were chattering away, a measured step was heard in the hall. "There's father," said Pat. "Oh, dad, we've found Anne," he called. "Here she is."

Mr. Patterson hurried into the room. Anne rose timidly to shake hands, and was caught in a hearty embrace. "Welcome, little one! Welcome home," said Mr. Patterson.

"Hooray! hooray for the star-spangled banner!" Pat shouted so loud that the cook and both the maid-servants came running to see what was the matter. Whereupon Mr. Patterson told them that they were to have the Christmas turkey that day and the best dinner they could prepare on such short notice, to celebrate Miss Anne's coming home.

"We want your cousin to join us," said Miss Drayton. "Has she a telephone?"

"We use Miss Margery's," replied Anne. "Please, do you mind—would you ask Miss Margery, too?"

"Of course, dear. We shall be happy to have her. Before dinner let's write some little letters—really we ought—to let your other friends know that we've found you."

"Bully Mrs. Collins," said Pat.

"And poor Miss Farlow," added Miss Drayton.

"Don't forget our friend 'Lop," suggested Mr. Patterson.

"And—it's far away and long ago—" said Anne, "but I want Mademoiselle Duroc to know and to tell the girls, if any of the old ones are there, that you know about the jewels and it's all right."

"Time you youngsters were doing your Christmas shopping," said Mr. Patterson the next morning, laying a generous banknote by Pat's plate and two crisp notes by Anne's. "She has to have a double portion," he explained, "because she's a girl—and little—and has to make up lost time."

"Yep, dad," said Pat, nodding agreement to each of these reasons and adding another, "and she has such gangs of people to send things to. You'll have to go to the ten-cent shop, Nancy Anne, or borrow from my bank. Wherever you've been, you've picked up friends, like—like a little woolly lambie gathers burs."

They all laughed at Pat's speech; they were in the joyous frame of mind when laughter comes easily.

"I want to join you in Christmas remembrances to the people who have been so good to you," said Miss Drayton.

"I'll send Jake Collins a ball and Peter a pocket-knife," said Pat, "or would Jake rather have a knife, too?"

"Mrs. Collins shall have a silk dress," said Miss Drayton.

"Oo-ee! That will be glorious," exclaimed Anne. "Let it be the rusty kind. And red. She loves red."

"Mr. Collins shall have an umbrella with a gorgeous silver handle," said Mr. Patterson. "That will be silk. Must it be rusty and red, too?"

Anne laughed. "Lizzie would just love a pink parasol," she said. "And I know what Aunt Charity would like—a pair of big, gold-rimmed spectacles. I heard her say she'd rather have them than anything else in the world."

"Is her eyesight very bad?" asked Miss Drayton.

"Why—I don't know. I reckon not." Anne looked puzzled. "Oh! she just wants them for dress-up. She has a pair of steel-rimmed ones now. She pulls them down on her nose so she can see over them, you know."

Mr. Patterson threw back his head and laughed till he was red in the face. "She shall have them," he said, as soon as he could speak. "She shall have the very biggest pair of gold-rimmed spectacles with plain glass lens that Claflin's shop affords. May I live to see her wear them! And we'll send her a good warm shawl besides and Uncle Richard shall have—shall have a blue overcoat with brass buttons."

"Goody, goody, goody!" cried Anne, clapping her hands. "Oh, please, I just must kiss you."

"Good pay—and in advance," said Mr. Patterson. "But I charge two kisses," which he proceeded to take.

"What would Miss Farlow like?" inquired Miss Drayton.

"I know," said Anne. "Gloves. You just ought to see her shoe-polishing her rusty finger-tips. And she looks like she likes herself so much better when she has a new pair."

"She shall have a boxful," Miss Drayton declared; "and the girls—would they be allowed to wear red hair-ribbons and embroidered collars?"

"Oh, please, Miss Drayton—Aunt Sarah, I mean," said Anne, "don't let's send them a single useful thing. Just a box full of games and story-books and a box of candy for each one, with a ribbon round it and little silver tongs inside."

"Good! That's the thing," agreed Mr. Patterson, consulting his watch and jumping up from the table. "Here! can't you all join me in the Boston House to-day at twelve-thirty to select a gift for 'Lop? I want the noisiest mechanical toy there is."

"Poor Mrs. Marshall!" laughed Miss Drayton.

We may not follow the merry party on that shopping trip. But let me assure you that boxes were sent to all the Virginia friends and that there were generous gifts for Cousin Dorcas and Miss Margery. They were certainly well selected, for each person said that his or her gift was just exactly what was most desired.

The maid who opened the door that afternoon to the weary, happy, home-coming party of Christmas shoppers said, "Please, Miss Drayton, there's a lady and two little boys in the back parlor to see Miss Anne. They've been waiting an hour. The biggest boy's dreadful impatient and he stamped and screamed awful because I couldn't go and bring her home."

"Why, it must be 'Lop," exclaimed Anne.

Dunlop it was, with his mother and Arthur.

"He would come," said Mrs. Marshall. "He clamored to start as soon as we read the letter this morning. I feared he'd worry himself sick. He's so nervous and high-strung," she explained to Miss Drayton.

"Papa promised me a little automobile if I'd stay at home," said Dunlop, hanging to Anne's hand.

"I told him I'd rather see Anne."

"Oh!" Anne kissed him.

"Spect I'll get the automobile anyway," reflected Dunlop. "And, Anne, I know now 'bout Santa Claus," with a cautious glance at Arthur who was cuddled in her arms.

Mrs. Marshall produced a packet which Miss Farlow had asked her to deliver,—Anne's gold beads and coral pins, and the rings, locket, and purse given by her uncle. Miss Drayton looked thoughtfully at the jewels.

"These were your mother's, you know, Anne," she said. "You must keep and prize them always, dear. And I have a story to tell you some day, little Anne—some far-off, 'most-grown-up day."

The next morning was Christmas. When Anne awakened, she found around her wrist a red ribbon on which was a card bearing these words:

"Follow, follow where I wind,
Christmas tokens you will find."

After many wanderings about the chairs and tables, the ribbon led to the top shelf of the closet, where there was a box of games, "With love from brother Pat." Then it conducted Anne back to the bed and when she stooped to unwind it from the bed-post she touched a soft, furry thing and gave a squeal, thinking it was a live creature; she gave another squeal of delight when she found that it was a muff and a little fur coat from Mr. Patterson. From the bed, the ribbon guided Anne to the window-seat, and there "from Aunt Sarah" was a book-shelf with *Little Lord Fauntleroy* first in a row of beautiful books. Anne clapped her hands and danced and ran to hug and kiss Miss Drayton who was standing in the doorway, enjoying the gift-hunt. The red ribbon led to other nooks and corners where there were various other presents, including a silver toilet-set from Mrs. Marshall, a box of candy from Dunlop, a cup and saucer from Arthur, and a pair of pink and red slippers knit by Mollie, the cook at the Home.

Downstairs, Anne found a box which had been left at the door by Peggy and John Edward and Elmore and Susie. It contained a gorgeous big doll and a slip of paper on which was written: "For Miss Anne, with all our loves from her respectful friends, Mr. and Mrs. Callahan, Peggy, John Edward, Elmore, Susie, Lois, Bud, and Baby."

Anne was very grateful but very sure that she did not want a doll and that she would like Susie and Lois to have it. So Christmas afternoon, she and Pat, accompanied by Miss Drayton and Mr. Patterson, went to re-present the doll. The sewing-machine was silent for once, and the Callahan family was seated around a table spread with turkey, cranberry sauce, ham, pickles, mashed potatoes, baked sweet potatoes, cabbage, cake, mince pie, ice-cream, apples, and oranges.

"They say some folks put things on the table one by one, but we likes to have them where we can see them all one time," remarked Mrs. Callahan who was feeding the baby with turkey and pickle.

"We'se eated two dinners a'ready," said Lois.

"Mommer told all the ladies that asked us as how we wanted a Christmas dinner and we got three," explained Peggy.

"And et 'em, too," Mrs. Callahan declared. "The Charity lady told me just to ask for one—stingy old thing! I knowed my children's stomachs and I got 'em filled up good. Run around the table again now, you John Edward and Elmore, so's to jostle your victuals down and make room for the cake and ice-cream."

Miss Drayton presently heard a great smacking of lips from the corner where the twins sat. They had put their ice-cream together on one plate and were feeding each other. Elmore put a generous spoonful in John Edward's mouth.

"Smack your lips—loud—so I can taste it," he said. "Now it's your turn to give me a spoonful."

"M-m-m! ain't it good?" exclaimed John Edward. "I smacked my lips loudest—didn't I, Peggy?"

But Peggy, talking aside with Anne, did not heed him.

"It was very, very, very good of you all to send me the doll," said Anne; "but truly, I'd rather you'd keep it for Susie and Lois. I'm getting too big to play dolls, anyway."

Skipping homeward with her hands snuggled in her new muff, Anne confided to Miss Drayton, "I don't hate it near so bad about Honey-Sweet now. I love her just the same most dearly. And, just think! it was her being lost that made you find me. Peggy says they had a be-yu-tiful funeral for her. Mrs. Callahan covered the coffin with white paper and they shovelled in the dirt and put on the grave some real roses that John Edward found in an ash barrel. Wasn't that nice? Oh! this is such a nice world!"

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