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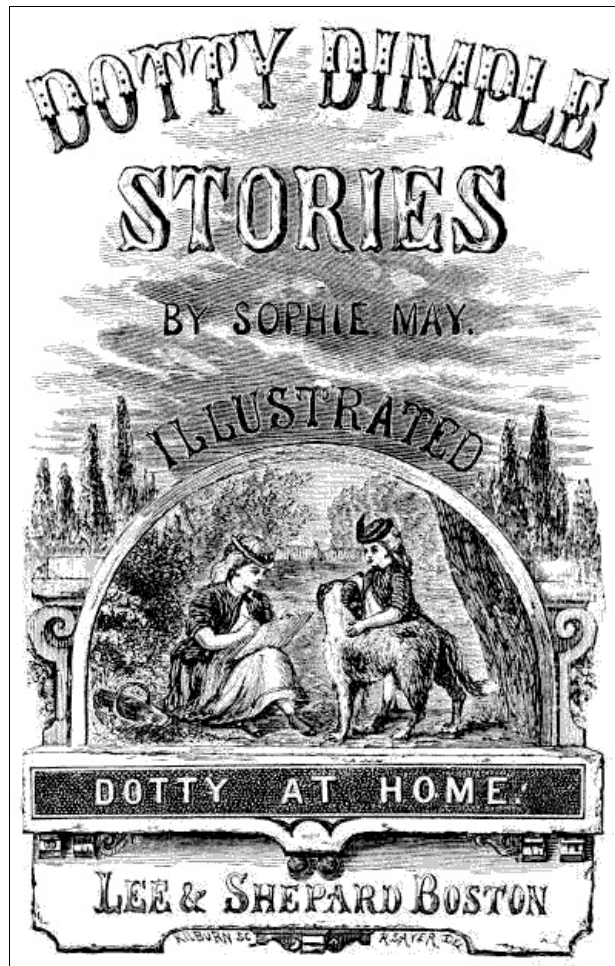
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JOHNNY'S REVENGE.—Page 163.



DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES.

DOTTY DIMPLE AT HOME.

By SOPHIE MAY,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES."

Illustrated.

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DOTTY DIMPLE AT HOME.

[7]

CHAPTER I.

THE LION AND THE LAMB.

Dotty Dimple, after a night of pleasant sleep, greeted herself in the morning with a groan. It was as if she had said,—

"O, dear! *you* here again, Dotty? Why didn't you sleep longer?"

Prudy noticed the cloud on her sister's face in a moment; she saw she had "waked up wrong."

Now I have never told you how peculiarly trying it was to live with Dotty Dimple. She seemed to

have, at the same time, the nature of a lion and a lamb. When the lion raged, then her eyes blazed, and she looked as if she belonged in a menagerie; but when nothing occurred to rouse her wild temper, she was as gentle and tender as a little lamb frisking by its mother's side on a summer's day. [8]

Indeed, if I were to describe the loveliness of her manners, and the sweetness of her face, I ought to dip my pen in liquid sunshine; whereas, the blackest of ink would not be at all too dark to draw her picture when she was out of temper.

In her earliest childhood it had been worse than it was now. Then she had not tried in the least to control herself, and the lion had had his own way. After one of her wild outbursts, she would follow her mother about the house, saying, in a soft, pleading voice,— [9]

"Say, mamma, is I your little comfort?"

Before answering Dotty, the poor mother had to call to mind all the good things the child had ever said or done, and fancy how dreadful it would be to lose her. Then she would reply,—

"Yes, Dotty, you are mamma's dear little girl; but mamma doesn't like your naughty, naughty ways."

This failed to satisfy Miss Dimple. She would cry out again, in heart-broken tones,—

"Is I your little comfort, mamma? *Is I?*"

So, sooner or later, Mrs. Parlin was obliged, for the sake of peace, to kiss the child, and answer, "Yes." Then, perhaps, for twenty-four hours the lion would be curled up, asleep, and out of sight in his den, and the lamb would be playfully frisking about the house, a pet for everybody. [10]

But often and often, when Susy and Prudy came in from school or play, they found their baby sister in disgrace, perched upon the wood-box in the kitchen, with feet and hands firmly tied. There she would sit, throwing out the loudest noise possible from her little throat. It was the young lion again, roaring in his cage.

Prudy, though her heart swelled with pity, dared not say,—

"Don't scream so, little sister! Please don't pound so with your feet!"

For when the lion fits were on, it was always safest to let the unhappy child alone. Prudy, who had no more temper than a humming-bird, and Susy, who was only moderately fretful once in a while, were made very unhappy by Dotty's dreadful behavior. At such times as I describe, they even looked guilty, and cast down their eyes, for they could not help feeling their sister's conduct as a family disgrace. They never spoke to any one about it, and bore all her freaks with wonderful patience. When the little one plucked at their hair or ears, they said, pitifully,— [11]

"It's worse for her than it is for us. It makes her throat *so* sore to scream so."

They were especially careful never to provoke her to wrath. Perhaps, for the sake of peace, they yielded to her too much. If there was anything Dotty dearly loved, it was her own way; and the thing she most heartily despised was "giving up."

At the time of which we now write she was no longer a mere baby, and her "reasons," as Prudy had said, were "beginning to grow." She was never placed on the wood-box now, with hands and feet tied; and as for pulling hair, she was ashamed of the practice. [12]

On this particular morning she had "waked up wrong." You all know what that means. Perhaps her dream stopped in the most interesting place, or perhaps some of the wonderful machinery of her body was out of order, and caused a twitching of the delicate nerves which lie under the skin. At any rate, when the cloudy sun peeped through the white curtains of Dotty's pleasant chamber, he found that little lady out of sorts.

"There, now, how long have you been awake, Prudy? Why didn't you speak?"

"O, it isn't anywhere near breakfast time, Dotty; Norah hasn't ground the coffee yet."

"Then I should think she might! She knows I'm hungry, and that makes her be as slow as a board nail!—I'll tell you what I wish, Prudy. I wish the whole world was a 'normous cling-stone peach, so I could keep eating for always, and never come to the stone." [13]

"I don't know," replied Prudy, pleasantly. "I believe I'd rather have it a Bartlett pear—dead ripe."

"H'm! You may have your old *Bartnot* pears, Prudy Parlin; nobody wants 'em but just you! The next sweet, juicy peach that comes into this house I'll eat it myself, 'cause you don't like peaches; you just said you didn't!"

Prudy was considerate enough to make no reply. By living with Dotty, she had learned many lessons in "holding her peace."

"Perhaps we'd better get up," suggested she, rubbing her eyes. [14]

Whereupon Dotty pursed her little red lips.

"Let's play keep house," answered she, for the sake of being cross-grained.

"Well, I don't care much," said Prudy, anxious to keep the peace.

They proceeded to make a tent of the upper sheet, and converse upon the trials of this troublesome life, as Mr. and Mrs. Carter, the two heads of a family.

"There's our Sammy," said Prudy, dolefully, "our poor Sammy. I don't see, Mrs. Carter, what we shall do with that boy. Within a day or two he has taken to stealing acorns!"

"Acorns!" responded Dotty, in a tragic tone. "O, Mr. Carter, I *sejest* the best thing we can do is to stand him up in the sink, and pump water on him!"

"I never thought of that, my dear wife! You are prob'bly correct!—prob'bly correct.—But what course *shall* we pursue with Mary Ann, and Julia Ann, and Anna Maria? They all bite their finger nails—bite 'em down to the double-quick." [15]

"I would sejest, sejest—why don't you give those children some *proxitude* of iron, my dear—through a knitting-needle? Hark!" continued she, as Prudy scratched the top of the tent with her forefinger. "There's a mouse in this house, Mr. Carter: you must set a trap as quick as you can spring!"

"Very correct," replied the obedient husband, "very correct, Mrs. Carter. I'll call Jerusha to toast some cheese. Je-ru-*shay*!"

"What do you mean by Jerusha, Mr. Carter? We haven't any in the house."

"O, she is our chambermaid, my dear." [16]

"But I won't *'low* her to be Jerusher, Mr. Carter!"

"But, my dear wife, Jerusha is a proper name; it belongs to her."

"No, it isn't a proper name either; it's a *very improper* name, Prudy Parlin; and if you call her Jerusher so, I'll get us both *dis-vozed*!"

Prudy saw it was useless to continue the game: Dotty was not in a mood to be satisfied. The two children arose and dressed themselves, Prudy taking peculiar care not to finish her own toilet first.

"I'm going to tell you something," said Dotty, grimly, "but you mustn't tell mamma. I've made up my mind to be naughty!"

"To be naughty?"

"Yes, that's what I said—naughty! I'm tired all out o' bein' good! First thing I thought was, I'd be bad all day. I want to fret, and I'm going to fret!" [17]

"O, Do-otty! Dotty Di-imple!"

"You needn't say anything, Prudy Parlin. You can talk as grand as a whale. But if I want to go and be naughty, *you* can't help yourself!"

Prudy's face took on a look of real distress. What this little queer mixture of a girl might do, if she really chose to be naughty, it was not pleasant to fancy.

The two went down stairs together. As they entered the cheerful dining-room, the joyous sun burst into a round smile, as if he had thrown off his yesterday's vapors, and never meant to be low-spirited again. But Dotty looked foggier than ever.

It was a delightful room. The wallpaper was the color of rich cream; the pictures were beautiful; the table, with its snowy cloth and white dishes, was pleasant to the eye; still, it was not so much the objects to be seen as it was the "air" of the room which made it seem so delightful. You knew at once, as you looked at the people who gathered around the table that morning, that they all loved one another; and family love makes any house seem like home. [18]

Grandma Read was there in her plain Quaker cap, with the nicely-starched kerchief crossed upon her bosom; Mr. Parlin in his drab dressing-gown, lined with crimson; Mrs. Parlin in a print wrapper, with a linen collar at the throat, her hair as smooth as satin; the three little girls all neatly dressed, and all happy but Dotty. Susy's mocking-bird hung in a cage by one of the windows, and "brother Zip" was lounging in an arm-chair, catching flies. [19]

After everybody was comfortably seated, and had said "Good morning," then a "silent blessing," according to the custom of the Friends, was asked upon the food. All sat with folded hands, and eyes reverently fixed upon their plates. Dotty knew very well they were asking to be made thankful for the excellent breakfast before them. She repeated to herself several times the sentence she had been taught; for, in spite of her intention to be naughty, she dared not omit it. When Mr. Parlin began to pass the butter, she was still looking at her plate, and startled the whole family by saying aloud, "Amen!"

Grandma looked at the little girl with surprise and disapproval. Dotty blushed painfully. She had not meant to be irreverent. Next moment she thought,—

"Now they all s'pose I did that *to purpose*! I don't care if they do! I'll act worse'n that! I wonder what my father'd say if I should jump right up and down, and scream?" [20]

It certainly was not safe to try the experiment. Dotty contented herself by scowling at her dry toast.

But after her father had gone away to his business, and her mother had begun to make preserves in the kitchen, she went down cellar, into the wash-room, and began to tease Norah. Norah, who was fond of the child, and in general very good-natured, was not in a mood this morning to be trifled with.

"Indeed, Miss Flippet," said she, indignantly, "I shall put up with no more of your pranks! It's not your sister Prudy who would go to hidin' my soap, and me in a hurry!" [21]

"She likes Prudy best. I always knew she did, and everybody else," thought Dotty, wrathfully,—"everybody else but me!"

And the temper which had been smouldering all the morning blazed up hotly.

"Call me Miss Flippet again, if you dare!" cried she, with battle-fires in her eyes. "What you s'pose the mayor'll do to you, miss? He'll put you in the lockup—yes, he will!"

At this foolish speech Norah's mouth assumed a mocking smile, which added live coals to Dotty's wrath.

"You mizzable Cath'lic girl! You—you—you—"

Words were choked in the smoke and flame of her anger. I mean to say that dreadful "lion," which had not come out in his full strength for years, suddenly sprang up, and shook his mane. Dotty could not speak. She lost her reason. Her head was on fire. Her hands and feet began to fly out. She danced up and down. Her terrific screams brought her mother down in haste, to see what was the matter. Dotty's face was crimson; her eyes shining fiercely; her voice hoarse from screaming. [22]

"Indeed, ma'am," said Norah, really alarmed, "I've no means of knowing what's put her in such a way, ma'am."

"She called me everything!" cried Dotty, getting her voice again. "I was Miss Flippet! I was all the wicked girls in this town!"

Norah looked a little mortified. She knew her mistress was very "particular," and did not allow any one in her house to "call names." But just now Mrs. Parlin had no time to give Norah a mild reproof, her whole attention being devoted to the half-insane Dotty, whose most unusual exhibition of temper filled her with dreadful apprehensions. [23]

"Alas," thought the good mother, "is this child going to live over again those dreadful days of her babyhood? The Lord give me wisdom to know what to do with her!"

Mrs. Parlin soon succeeded in quieting the turbulent Dotty; and deep silence fell upon the wash-room.

"My dear little girl," said she, very gently, "I desire you to spend the rest of the morning alone. You need not talk or play with either of your sisters. You may *think*. When the bell rings you may come to dinner; and after dinner I would like to see you in the nursery." [24]

In half an hour Dotty had such a look of heartache in her face that Prudy longed to comfort her, only speech was forbidden. The little creature was out in the front yard, poking dirt with a stick, and secretly wondering if she could make a hole deep enough to lie down in and die.

CHAPTER II.

 [25]

A SAD STORY.

After dinner, Mrs. Parlin was seated on the lounge in the nursery, looking very sad. Raising her eyes, she saw Dotty standing before her, twisting a corner of her apron. The child had entered as quietly as her own shadow, and her mother had not heard a footfall.

"My dear little girl, I am going to tell you a story."

"Yes, 'm."

Dotty looked steadily at her finger-nails.

"A true story about a child who let her temper run away with her." [26]

"Yes, 'm," replied Dotty again, giving her mother a view of her rosy right ear.

Mrs. Parlin saw that Dotty was very much ashamed. Her face did not look as it had looked in the early morning. Then

"There was a hardness in her eye,
There was a hardness in her cheek:"

now she appeared as if she would be very much obliged to the nursery floor if it would open like a trap-door and let her fall through, out of everybody's sight.

"The little girl I am going to tell you about, Dotty, lived in this state. Her name was Harriet Snow. Her father and mother were both dead. She had occasional fits of temper, which were very dreadful indeed. At such times she would hop up and down and scream."

Dotty tied the two corners of her apron into a hard knot. The story was rather too personal. [27]

"Was the little girl pretty?" said she, trying to change the subject.

"Not very pretty, I think. Her skin was dark; her eyes were black, and remarkably bright. When I saw her, she was thirteen years old; and you may know, Dotty, that by that time her face could not well be very pleasant: temper always leaves its marks."

Dotty looked at her little plump hands, as if she expected to see black spots on them.

"Sometimes Harriet beat her head against the wall so violently that there seemed to be danger of her dashing her brains out."

Dotty looked up quite bravely. This dreadful little girl was worse than *she* had ever been! O, yes!

"Wasn't she crazy, mamma?" [28]

Mrs. Parlin shook her head.

"No, I am afraid not, dear. Only, when she allowed anger to stay in her heart, it made her feel blind and dizzy. Perhaps she was crazy for the time."

Dotty hung her head again. She remembered how blind and dizzy she herself had felt while screaming at Norah that morning.

"This little girl had no mother to warn her against indulging her temper. When she had the feeling of hate swelling at her heart, nobody told her what it was like. *You* know what it is like, Dotty?"

Dotty's chin drooped, and rested in the hollow of her neck.

"I don't want to tell you, mamma."

"Like *murder*, my child."

Dotty shuddered, though she had known this before. Her mother had often read to her from the Bible, that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." [29]

"Well, there was no one to love this poor Harriet; she was not lovable."

"No, 'm, she was *hateable*!" remarked Dotty, anxious to say something; for if she held her peace, she was afraid her mother would think she was applying the story to herself.

"There was no one to love her; so a woman took her, and was paid for it by the town."

"Town? Town, mamma? A *town* is *houses*."

"She was paid for it by men in the town. I don't know whether this woman tried to teach Harriet in the right way or not. It may be she had so much to do that she thought it less trouble to punish her when she was naughty than to instruct her how to be good." [30]

"O, yes; I s'pose she struck her with a stick," said Dotty, patting her forefingers together—"just this way."

"Harriet had the care of one of Mrs. Gray's children, a lively little boy about two years old."

"Was he cunning? As cunning as Katie Clifford? Did he say, 'If you love me, you give me hunnerd dollars; and I go buy me 'tick o' canny'?"

"Very likely he was quite as cunning as Katie. You would hardly think any one could get out of patience with such a little creature—would you, my daughter?"

"No, indeed!" cried Dotty, eagerly, and feeling that she was on safe ground, for she loved babies dearly, and was always patient with them.

"I don't know but Harriet was envious of Mrs. Gray's little boy, because he had nicer things to eat than she had." [31]

"Well, it ought to have nicer things, mamma, 'cause it hadn't any teeth."

"And she got tired of running after him."

"No matter if she did get tired, mamma; the baby was tireder than she was!"

"And the parents think now it is very likely she was in the habit of striking him when nobody knew it."

"What a naughty, wicked, awful girl!" cried Dotty, her eyes flashing.

"She had a fiery temper, my child, and had never learned to control it."

Dotty looked at her feet in silence.

"The baby was afraid of his little nurse; but he could not speak to tell how he was abused; all he could do was to cry when he was left with Harriet. But one day Mrs. Gray was obliged to go away to see her sick mother. She charged Harriet to take good care of little Freddy, and give him some baked apples and milk if he was hungry." [32]

"With bread in?" suggested Dotty.

"Yes, I suppose so. Then she kissed her baby. He put his arms around her neck, and cried to go too; but she could not take him."

"I s'pose he cried 'cause he 'xpected that awful girl was a-going to shake him," said Dotty, indignantly.

"I cannot tell you precisely what Harriet did to him; but when the father and mother got home, that darling boy was moaning in great pain. They sent for the doctor, who said his spine was injured, and perhaps he would never walk again; and, indeed, he never did."

"O, mamma! mamma Parlin!"

"Yes, my child; and it is supposed that Harriet must have hurt him in one of her fits of rage." [33]

Dotty's face had grown very white.

"O, mamma, what did the folks do with Harriet?"

"They took her to court, and tried her for abusing the little boy. They could not prove that she was really guilty, though everybody believed she was."

"I know what 'guilty' means, mamma; it means *hung*."

"No, dear; if she hurt the baby she was guilty, whether she was punished for it or not."

"Well, she did it, I just know she did it!" exclaimed Dotty, greatly excited. "That little tinty boy!"

"The judge pitied her for her youth and ignorance; so did the twelve men called the 'jury;' and she was allowed to go free."

"Then did she 'buse somebody's else's baby, mamma?" [34]

"I hope not. The last I heard of her she was married to a negro fiddler."

"O!"

"Do you know why I have told you this sad story, my little daughter?"

"'Cause, 'cause—Harriet beat her head against the door, and hurt a baby, and—and—married black folks!"

Dotty was very pale, and there was a tear in her voice; still her mother could not be sure that her words had made much impression. She was afraid her long story had been "love's labor lost."

But I believe it had not been. Not entirely, at least. Dotty thought of Harriet all the afternoon, and walked about the house with a demureness quite unusual.

"O, Prudy!" said she, when they two were alone in the parlor, looking over a book of engravings, "I'm going to tell you something; 'twill make you scream right out loud, and your hair stick up!" [35]



I'M GOING TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.—Page 34.

"Don't," laughed Prudy, "I've just brushed my hair."

"Once there was a girl, Prudy, lived in this state; and mother thinks she was just like me. But she wasn't, truly. She was homely; and her hair was black; and her mother was dead. The woman spatted her with a stick where she lived. And she didn't love the baby any at all, 'cause he had nicer things, you know; and I guess white sugar and verserves. So she stuck a *spine* into him—only think! In his crib! So he never walked ever again! And his father and mother were gone away, and told her to give him baked apples and milk—with bread in!"

"Why, that can't be true, Dotty Parlin!"

"Yes, *indeed!* Certain true, black and blue. Guess my mother knows!"

[36]

"What!" said Prudy, "just for baked apples and milk?"

"Yes. Her name was Harriet."

"What did you say she did it with, Dotty?"

"Mamma said a *spine*. They took her to the court-house; but they didn't hang her, 'cause she—I've forgot what—but they didn't. They made her marry a black man—that's all I know!"

"Well, there, how queer!" said Prudy, drawing a long breath. "If I was Harriet I'd rather have been hung. Was he all black?"

"Yes, solid black. But I s'pose she didn't want to choke to death any more'n you do."

"Dotty," said Prudy, with a meaning in her tone, "what do you suppose made mamma tell you that story?"

[37]

"I don't know."

Dotty looked deeply dejected.

"Little sister," continued Prudy, taking advantage of the child's softened mood, "don't you wish you didn't let yourself be so angry?"

"Yes, I do, so there!" was the quick and earnest reply.

Prudy was astonished. It was the first time this proud sister had ever acknowledged herself wrong.

"Then, Dotty, what if you try to be good, and see how 'twill seem?"

"Won't you tell anybody, Prudy?"

"No, never."

"Well, I *will* be good! I can swallow it down if I want to."

Observe what faith the child had in herself!

Prudy clapped her hands.

[38]

"There, don't you talk any more," added Miss Dimple, with a sudden sense of shame, and a desire to conceal her emotions. "Let's make pictures on the slate."

Prudy was ready for anything; her heart was very light. She was too wise to remind Dotty of her new resolution; but she kept a journal, and that evening there was a precious item to make in it.

I think, by the way, that Prudy's habit of keeping a journal was an excellent thing. She learned by the means to express her thoughts with some degree of clearness, and it was also an improvement to her handwriting.

"July 2d. My sister Dotty thinks, certain, positive, she *will* be a good girl; and this is the day she begins. But I shall not tell anybody, for I promised, 'No, never.'

[39]

"My mother told her about a girl that almost killed a dear little boy because they asked her to give him baked apples and milk. I heard my father say to my mother that he thought the story pierced Dotty like a *two-leg-ged* sword. So I don't think she will ever get angry again. Finis."

Prudy always added the word "Finis" at the close of her remarks each day, considering it a very good ending.

CHAPTER III.

[40]

FIRE.

For a few days after this, Dotty Dimple had little time to think of her new resolution. Nothing occurred to call forth her anger, but a great deal to fill her with astonishment and awe.

The three little girls, for the first time in their lives, were learning a lesson in the uncertainty of human events. They had never dreamed that anything about their delightful home could ever change. If they thought of it at all, they supposed their dear father and mother, and their serene grandmamma Read, would always live, and be exactly as they were now; that their home would continue beautiful and bright, and there would be "good times" in it as long as the world stands.

[41]

It is true they heard at church that it is not safe for us to set our affections too strongly upon things below, because they may fail us at any moment, and there is nothing sure but heaven. Still, like most children, they listened to such words carelessly, as to something vague and far away. It was only when they were left, in one short day, without a roof over their heads, that Susy sobbed out,—

"O, Prudy, this world is nothing but one big bubble!"

And Prudy replied, sadly,—

"Seems more like shavings!"

You all know how an innocent-looking fire-cracker set Portland ablaze, but you can have little idea of the terror which that woeful Fourth of July night brought to our three little girls.

[42]

When I think of it now, I fancy I see them speeding up and down that departed staircase, trying to help the men carry water to pour on the roof. The earnestness of their faces is very striking as Susy brandishes a pail, Dotty a glass pitcher, and Prudy a watering-pot, in the delusive hope that they are making themselves useful.

After this, when the children have had a troubled sleep, and wake in the morning to find the house actually on fire, the horror is something always to be remembered. Flames are already bursting out of some of the lower windows. It is no longer of any use to pour water. There is no time to be lost. Mrs. Parlin hurries the children down stairs, and out of the house, under their grandmother's protection.

[43]

They thread their dismal way up town, through smoke and flame, Susy shedding tears enough to put out a common coal fire. It is, indeed, a bitter thing to turn their backs upon that dear old home, and know for a certainty that they will never see it again! In the place where it stands there will soon be a black ruin!

"The fire is lapping and licking," says Prudy, "like a cat eating cream."

"I hope it has a good time eating our house up!" cried Dotty, in wrath.

Susy groans. Dotty thinks they are going to be beggars in rags and jags. Prudy, always ready with her trap to catch a sunbeam, says that after all there are other little girls in the world worse off than they are. Susy thinks not.

[44]

"O, children, you are young and can't realize it; but this is awful!"

Dotty tries to be more wretched than ever, to satisfy her eldest sister's ideas of justice. She sends out from her throat a sound of agony, which resembles a howl.

Prudy's chief consolation is in remembering, as she says, that "God knows we are afire." Prudy is always sure God will not let anything happen that is *too* dreadful. She has observed that her mother is calm; and whatever mamma says and does always approves itself to this second daughter.

But Susy can only wring her hands in hopeless despair. She has helped save the books, still she "expects they will burn up, somehow, on the road." Her pony has been trotting about through the night; his hair is singed, and she "presumes it will strike in and kill him." The world is, to Susy's view, one vast scene of lurid horrors. If she couldn't cry, she thinks she should certainly die. [45]

But this strange night came to an end. Dreadful things may and do happen in this world, but, as a general rule, they do not last a great while. The fire did its work, and then stopped. It was fearful while it raged, and it left a pitiful wreck; still, as Mrs. Parlin said, it was "not so bad but it might have been worse." "Nothing," she always declared, "ought to make us really unhappy except sin."

"And here we are, all alive," said she, with tearful eyes, as she tried to put her arms around the three little girls at once. "All alive and well! Let us thank God for that."

"I guess I shan't cry *much* while I have my blessed mother to hold on to," said Prudy, pressing her cheek against Mrs. Parlin's belt-slide. [46]

"Nor I neither," spoke up Dotty, very bravely, till a sudden spasm of recollection changed her tone, and she added, faintly, "If 'twasn't for my cunning little tea-set!"

"I shouldn't care a single thing about the fire," sobbed Susy, "if it hadn't burnt *our* house up, you know. You see it was where we *lived*. We had such good times in it, with the rooms as pleasant as you can think! Nothing in the world ever happened: and now that pony! O, dear, and my room where the sun rose! I don't know what's the matter with me, but *seems* as if I should die!"

"And me, too," sighed Dotty. "I just about know that man threw my tea-set into the Back Cove; and now we haven't any home!" [47]

"It is home where the heart is, children," said Mrs. Parlin, tenderly; but something choked her voice as she spoke.

Though she was never known, either then or afterwards, to murmur, still it is barely possible she may have felt the loss of her precious home as much as even Susy did.

For the present the family were to remain at Mr. Eastman's; and it was in the parlor chamber of that house that Mrs. Parlin and her three children were standing, glad to find themselves together once more, after the night of confusion.

Grandma Read, who was as patient as her daughter, "tried to gather into stillness," and settle herself as soon as possible to her Bible. But the change from the Sabbath-like quiet of her old room to the confusion of this noisy dwelling must have tried her severely. [48]

Mr. and Mrs. Eastman, and Mr. and Mrs. Parlin, were busy enough from morning till night, day after day, searching for missing goods, and aiding the sufferers from the fire. The Eastman mansion was left to the tender mercies of the five children—the Parlins, and Florence, and Johnny.

Master Percy would probably look insulted if he were to be classed among the children. In his younger days he had had his share in ringing people's door-bells and then running away; now, in his maturer years, he did not scruple to tease little folks, when they could be "tickled with a straw" held under the chin, or when they were easily vexed, and answered him back with an angry word or a furious scowl. He liked to torture his "cousin Dimple." He said she shot out quills like a little porcupine. She was a "regular brick," almost as smart as Johnny, and that was saying a great deal; for Percy regarded the youthful Johnny as a very promising child. He was sorry to have him corrected for trifling follies. If Percy had had the care of him, the little fellow would not have lived long, for the older brother quite approved of such amusements as crossing pins on the railroad track, running under horses' feet, and walking on the dizzy roof of a house. [49]

Mr. Eastman was always very busy, and his wife had a deal of visiting to do, so it usually happened that Johnny had more liberty than was good for him.

Mrs. Parlin knew this, and did not like to have Dotty thrown very much in his society, but just now it certainly could not be avoided; Dotty's constant desire to "get out doors and run somewhere" seemed to be fully gratified, for Johnny despised the inside of a house more than she did, and they both roamed about during the day like a couple of gypsies. [50]

Sometimes Prudy went with them, but their games were rather rough for her taste. Susy and Florence were generally together, painting with water-colors, pasting scrapbooks, and doing a variety of things in which they did not care to have Prudy join. The dear little girl might have been lonely, and possibly grieved, if she had been anything but a "bird-child." As it was, she sang when she had no one to talk with, and, whether the rain fell or the sun shone, always awoke with a smile, and found the world as beautiful as a garden.

She amused herself by writing in her little red journal, which had come out of the fire unharmed. [51]
Here is her account of the tragedy:—

"*July 7th.* I ought to tell about the fire; but I can't write with mother's pen any more than Zip can write with a sponge.

"I am so sorry, but a boy fired a cracker. He didn't mean to burn up the city at all. He just touched it off for fun.

"There was going to be a procession, but I believe it didn't *process*. I never saw anything whiz and crack so in all my life! The fire danced and ran all over the city as if it was alive! It burnt just as if it was glad of it. The trees are all black where the green was scorched off. You wouldn't think it was summer. It doesn't look like winter. Father says it looks like a graveyard. [52]

"Dotty lost her tea-set. Susy thought she should faint away, but she didn't—we couldn't find the camphor bottle. A man saved six eggs and the pepper box.

"It was real too bad *grandma's* room was burnt up! When I went into grandma's room I used to feel just like singing. Mother says that isn't so bad as wickedness. She says it is 'home where the heart is.'

"Dotty hasn't had any temper for five days. Finis."

Just about this time a letter came from Willowbrook, saying Mrs. Clifford was quite ill, and asking Mrs. Parlin to go to her. Aunt Louisa said it was fortunate that the children could stay at their aunt Eastman's. She did not know that Mrs. Parlin left them there very reluctantly, having her own private fears that her youngest daughter might fall into mischief. [53]

Dotty kissed her mother good by, and promised to be perfect; but Mrs. Parlin knew too well how the child's resolutions were apt to wither away for want of root.

CHAPTER IV. [54]

PLAYING HINDOO.

"Johnny, Johnny, come to the window, quick!" said Dotty; "see this bird!"

"I've seen birds before," replied her little cousin, coolly, and walking as slowly as possible.

"But this one peeps as if he was hurt; see how he pecks to get in."

"Don't you take him in!" exclaimed Angeline, the kitchen girl; "it's a bad sign to have birds come fluttering round a window."

"What do you mean by a *sign*?" asked Dotty, who had never heard of any silly superstitions in her life. [55]

"Let him alone," cried Johnny, "or you'll die before the week's out, sure's you live!"

Dotty laughed. "A bird can't make me die," said she, seizing the trembling little oriole, and holding him close to her bosom. "O, you birdie darling! Did your mamma go 'way off, and couldn't find a worm? Dotty'll be your mamma, so she will."

She put him in a basket stuffed with rags, and hung over him tenderly for half an hour.

"You're bringing down trouble, I'm afraid, child," said Angeline, gravely, as she walked back and forth, doing her work.

Mrs. Parlin, away off at Willowbrook, was at that moment bathing Mrs. Clifford's forehead. I think she might have dropped the sponge in dismay if she had known what pernicious nonsense was finding its way into Dotty's ears. [56]

Just as Angeline was in the midst of a ghost story, Johnny rushed in again.

"Come," said he, shaking Dotty by the shoulders, "let's go play poison."

"O, no, Johnny. I'm hearing the nicest, awfulest story! And then it rains so, too!"

"Doesn't, either. Only sprinkles. And when it sprinkles, it's a *sure* sign it isn't going to rain."

"Who told you so?"

"Your grandmother Read. She's a Quaker, and she can't lie. Come, Dot Parlin; if you don't like poison, come out and play soldier."

"I don't want to play a single thing; so there, now, Johnny Eastman!"

"Then you're a cross old party, miss."

"I'm not a party at all. I'm only one girl."

[57]

"O, Dotty!" called Prudy from the cellar-way; "take care! take care!"

"So I am taking care," returned Dotty, stoutly. "For my own mother doesn't 'low me to go out doors and get rained on, and he knows it."

It was coming, Prudy feared—her sister's naughty temper. She saw a shadow no larger than a man's hand; but it would not do to let it grow. She must brush it away at once.

"Let's play something in the house," said she, quickly.

"All right," returned Johnny; "only not sit down."

"Yes, let's *do* sit down," interposed Dotty, with a view to thwarting Johnny.

"Suppose we play Hindoo," suggested Prudy, "if we can get Susy and Flossy into it."

[58]

"Play what?"

"Why, play we are Hindoos, and live away off in the Indian Ocean."

"Fishes or sharks?" asked Johnny, growing interested.

"O, *people*; and they act so queer. Mother played it with us once, when Susy had the toothache."

The older girls were hard to be persuaded. They did not like to leave their shell-work; but they came at last.

"Johnny shall be Joggo," said Susy; "that's a boy's name; Prudy will be 'Drop of Honey,' and Flossy 'Young Beauty,' and Dotty 'Summer Moon,' and I 'Onno.'"

"'Young Beauty' 's the prettiest," said Dotty; "if I can't play that, I'd rather stay with my birdie, and not play."

"Why," cried Susy, "how foo—;" but catching Prudy's eye, she added, "you may as well be Young Beauty; Flossy wouldn't mind. But now I think of it, Prudy, we can't play school, for girls don't go to school in India."

[59]

"Make believe you are boys, then," observed Johnny, whose interest in the game had flagged since he knew that Hindoos were not sharks.

"We'll play it's six o'clock in the morning," continued Susy.

"That isn't school time," remonstrated Dotty.

"O, yes, it is, in India. I'm the teacher. Give me a stick, please."

"Here's my old riding-whip," said Flossy, producing it from the wood-box. Things were tucked away in very queer places at Mrs. Eastman's.

Susy tied a string about her waist for a girdle, stuck the whip into it, and began to march the floor with great dignity.

[60]

"Now school has begun. You must all come in, and bow 'way down to the ground, and say, 'O, respected teacher, grant us knowledge.' They are very polite in India.—All but Prudy, she may stay behind and play truant."

The three pupils came forward, touched their foreheads to the floor, and repeated the sentence as directed, Johnny rendering it,—

"O, respectful Susy Parlin, don't you whip me!"—at the same time turning a somerset.

"I forgot one thing," said the teacher, as her obedient pupils stood upright again, with flushed faces. "You ought to have brought me a present, every one of you, such as a fig of tobacco rolled up in a banana leaf, or—"

[61]

"We didn't know you chewed," said Florence, laughing.

"Now you take your seats. No, not there! On the floor! What do you suppose? You're in India, children. There are mats on the floor (we'll pretend)."

The children seated themselves.

"O, we ought to say a prayer to the Muse; but I can't remember what it is. No matter. Multiplication Table comes next. Mother says it's just the same thing in India that it is in America."

The school repeated part of the table, making very absurd mistakes intentionally. Susy walked the floor like a general. "Angeline, please look up some more palm-leaf fans, and some splinters of wood."

Angeline was the soul of good nature, and left her baking to hunt in the meal-room for the fans.

[62]

"A pretty kind of school!" growled Johnny. "Don't they do anything out there in Hindoo but just

fan themselves?"

"O, we pretend these fans are green, just off the trees. We are studying arithmetic, all so fast, and ciphering on these leaves with reeds—(that's our splinters). Indian boys don't know what slates are. They think these leaves are good enough. They come off of the tallest palm trees. Fans don't grow in this country. Where did you ever see a leaf as broad as this?"

"Poh, plenty of 'em in Kennebec County!" said Johnny, confidently.

"Now," said the teacher, after a few moments of mock arithmetic, "now I've looked at my watch, and find it's seven o'clock. How *conscionable* late! And that Drop of Honey hasn't come to school yet! Joggo, you and Young Beauty go and bring her!"

[63]

Prudy, who was sitting at a little distance, under a swing-table, eating ginger snaps, was suddenly seized upon by the two little Indian constables.

"Why, what an idea!" said Prudy, with her mouth full; "I didn't know that was the way to play it."

"Yes," said Susy, "truants must come to school. If they don't come they must be arrested."

"Why, I've *been a-resting* all the time," said Prudy, laughing.

"Well, that doesn't make any difference, Miss Honey Drop," said Johnny, taking her by the shoulders, while Dotty dragged her feet. There was great laughing and scrambling, during which Prudy swallowed a crumb the wrong way, and was finally carried into school on a litter.

"Now, I should judge," said the heartless teacher, looking sternly at the crimson-faced victim, "I should judge that this wicked creature ought to have a terrific whipping!"

[64]

"That's so!" shouted Johnny; "we found Honey Drop top of a house, firing mud into a man's eyes."

"Yes, so we did," said Dotty, fully restored to good humor, "black mud; Honey's a bad Nindian. If you can't whip her hard enough, Joggie will help."

"There, now!" said the teacher, after dealing several "love-pats" with great pretended force; "now I should think 'twas time for school to be out. As you go by me, each of you, I must strike you just as many times as you were minutes late. Now go home, and eat rice for your dinners."

"Well, I don't think it's much of a play, any way," said Johnny.

"Who said it was?" retorted Florence. "Susy and I didn't want to come down; we did it just to please you."

[65]

"Please *me!*" sniffed Johnny. "I wanted to play poison, out in the yard!"

"I do wish," thought Susy, privately, "that cousin Flossy would be more polite to little Johnny. I really think he wouldn't be so rude if she would treat him as a lady should."

"There's another play we used to have," said Prudy, "where you sit round on the floor, right among the dishes, and eat your supper."

"Well, I declare for it," said Angeline, "those people off there do need missionaries more than ever I thought they did."

"Yes," replied Susy, "they tell such horrid stories to their little children. The children don't dare go out after dark, for they suppose there are demons up in the high trees, just ready to dart down and whisk them off."

[66]

"Angeline tells just such stories her *own* self," said Dotty.

"Then she's a heathen," said Florence, who usually spoke the first thought that came into her head.

"If that's the case," retorted Angeline, with dignity, "you'd better all walk out of this kitchen before you are entirely ruined."

As Angeline was evidently in earnest, the children slowly took their way into the dining-room.

"Are there real live ghosts, though, Susy?" asked Dotty, anxiously; "and if a bird comes to the window will you die?"

"Why, no, indeed, child! Mother told me once, when I was right little, that I mustn't let people tell me such foolish stories. If Angeline talks so to you, you must stop your ears. Now, remember!"

[67]

Dotty remembered; but she was not quite convinced. Those awful stories might be true, after all; perhaps Susy didn't know.

CHAPTER V.

RUNNING WILD.

[68]

You begin to see how the children were running wild at Mrs. Eastman's. One morning Dotty climbed the hat-tree to get away from her cousin Percy.

"Don't believe 'cousin Dimple' knows a hat-tree wasn't made for little girls to sit on," said Percy.

"No, 'twas made to swing on," replied Dotty, tilting herself backward and forward like a bird on a bough. "I'm going to stay here till somebody carries me off pick-aback."

Percy, having nothing better to do, took his little cousin on his shoulders, danced her about the hall and through the house, and finally tossed her backward into a pile of shavings. Dotty sprang up, shook off the shavings, and ran after Percy, laughing so boisterously that Angeline said to the chambermaid,— [69]

"I know of one person that will be glad when Mrs. Parlin gets back."

"And I know of another," replied Janey. "The child behaved like a lady when she first came; but what can you expect in this house with those boys?"

"How's that bird?" said Percy, as he and Dotty raced through the kitchen. "Can he stand on both legs yet?"

"Yes, indeed! He could stand on *three* legs if he had 'em. He's most well—I must go and 'tend to him."—"I wonder what's going to happen that's bad," thought she, as she fed the bird in her own chamber with cream biscuit. "I hope it isn't a fire!"—"Why, Johnny Eastman, I shouldn't think your mamma'd let you scream so loud!" [70]

"Then you must hear the first time. Come, let's go out and have some fun; mother's gone to Cumberland."

As if Johnny did not have fun all day, and every day, whether his mother was at home or abroad!

"Prudy," said Dotty, "good by, for Johnny 'n' I are going down to the beach to get some shells."

Prudy looked up from her writing.

"Don't go near the water," said she; then throwing her arms about her little sister, she sang,—

"If you love me as I love you,
No knife shall cut our love in two."

[71]

"Well, I do," replied Dotty, with an affectionate hug, "and I sha'n't go near the water."

"You won't forget?" said Prudy, anxiously. "You know mamma's as afraid of the water as she can be."

"What are you after?" cried Angeline, half a minute afterwards. "Of all the rummaging children!" At the same time she gave Dotty a nice cake warm from the oven.

"I'm looking for my hat," said the little girl, shutting the sink door. "Last time I saw it 'twas in a barrel somewhere."

But it happened to be in a hogshead.

"I think this is a real nice sort of world," thought Dotty, as she and Johnny trudged off in the pleasant sunshine. "I do think, just to myself—though I wouldn't say it out loud—that I'm as nice as anybody. I don't know what Prudy'd do 'thout me; and I guess Susy'd cry her eyes out!" [72]

"What you thinking about?" said Johnny.

"O, 'bout a good many things! Let's run; it tires me to pieces to walk!"

"Look!" cried Johnny, "there's Mandoline!"

And such a pretty sight as bareheaded Mandoline presented! She was a little Jewess, with such beauty, perhaps, as that of the women we read about in the Bible. She had dark, wavy hair, like sea-foam with ink tipped over in it. Her eyes were like gems; there was a brilliant color in her cheeks, and her mouth was so sweet that

"Upon her lip the honey bee
Might build her waxen throne."

[73]

Dotty did not know why she liked Mandoline so well, but like her she did. Mrs. Parlin was afraid Mandoline had not been taught to respect the truth, and had often desired her little daughter not to play with the beautiful Jewess.

But "Lina" went to Mrs. Eastman's, and Mrs. Eastman petted her. Dotty thought it could not be wrong to associate with a little girl her auntie liked so well.

"Come with us, Lina," said Johnny.

"Where are you going?"

"Going to make a Bunger Hill Monuement," replied Dotty. "We know where the shells grow real thick."

"But I've lost my shaker. A dog's got it."

"O, no matter, *you* don't care," said Dotty, in a grandmotherly tone, "for *I* won't let anybody laugh at you." [74]

Lina yielded. The three children tripped along together, taking up Freddy Jackson on the way—a deaf and dumb boy, who only knew when it thundered by the jar he could feel. Everybody was kind to Freddy. Dotty Dimple, with all her faults, was never known to be impatient with the poor boy.

The children reached the sea-shore, which *was* somewhere "near the water," though Dotty had assured Prudy to the contrary. Shell-gathering is more exciting work than picking strawberries in the country; for strawberries are all very much alike, whereas shells present some variety.

But in this instance it was very dull business, for the reason that there were no shells to be found. They had all become weary of groping about in the sand, when Johnny looked at the bay, and observed a boy coming towards them, rowing a boat. [75]

"Hilloa, there!" shouted the boy.

"Hilloa!" responded Johnny. "If that isn't Sol Rosenberg!" (This was Mandoline's brother.) "Where you going, Sol?"

"Nowhere particular. Get in and go too?"

"Yes," said Johnny, "Fred Jackson and I. Fred can steer as straight's a needle. I'll paddle, you know."

"Girls too," added Solomon, gallantly.

With one accord the children walked eagerly towards the boat, which, by this time, Solomon had moored against the beach. All but Dotty.

"Are you old enough, Solly Rosenberg, old enough and know enough not to drown us all to pieces?" [76]

Young Solomon laughed.

"If I can't manage a small concern like this!"

"But four, and one more, make *five*, Solly!"

"You don't say so! Well, I could carry sixteen, if they were all such little snips as you are!"

"Dot Parlin thinks she weighs as much as two tons," said Johnny, in an irritating tone.

"I'm dreadful 'fraid," murmured the little Jewess, shaking the wayward hair out of her magnificent eyes; "but I'll go if you will, Dotty Dimple."

Dotty shoved her feet into the sand and reflected.

"My mamma is afraid of the water; but then she was upset in a scursion, and that's why she's afraid." [77]

"What kind of thing is a *scursion*?" asked Johnny.

"A Sabbath school picnic. And she wasn't upset either, only she 'xpected to be."

"Come on!" called Solly. "All aboard!"

"But my mamma said it wasn't safe!"

"No, she didn't. She never saw this boat; she doesn't know whether it's safe or not."

"Doesn't it leak a single speck, Solly Rosenberg? It looks wet."

"Pshaw! That's where the waves come in; it's as tight as the bark to a tree."

Dotty was becoming very eager to go. It sometimes did seem, when she really wished to do any particular thing, that she wished it more than any one else.

"But, O dear! my mamma doesn't 'low me to sail." [78]

This was spoken sorrowfully; but there was a little wavering in the tone. Dotty had taken the first false step; she had listened to the voice of temptation, and every persuasive word of Solly's left her weaker than it had found her.

"My mamma doesn't *ever* 'low me to sail."

"You *couldn't* sail in a wherry if you were to try," said Johnny. "Come, Sol, don't stop to bother: who wants girls? They just spoil the fun."

"For shame!" said the more polite Solomon, drawing himself up and looking very manly; "the girls shall go if they want to. Only just round the curve."

Dotty liked Solly at that moment very much. She looked at her ill-mannered little cousin with royal disdain, and walked slowly and cautiously on towards the boat. Lina followed at a little [79]

distance. *Her* mother had also forbidden her to go on the water, and had declared that Solomon was too young to manage a boat; but neither Lina nor her brother had very tender consciences. If they did wrong things, and nobody knew it, it was all very well; but if they were found out—ah! then was the time to be sorry! Dotty's conscience had been much better educated than theirs: it gave her plenty of warning, which she would not heed, and tried to stifle by talking.

"It isn't a sail boat. When my mamma went in the scursion, then it was a sail boat, and the wind whistled so the sails shook dreadfully. My mamma never talked to me about wherries; she didn't ever say I mustn't go in a wherry." [80]

While Dotty was still talking, she entered the boat, the last of the five. She seated herself, but was annoyed to find her dainty gaiters sinking into a pool of dirty water. She lifted her feet, but could not keep them up. Well, perhaps she shouldn't have the sore throat after all; she couldn't help it now if she did have it. At any rate she was determined not to complain, when Solly had been so very polite.

"Isn't this prime?" said Johnny, as they launched out upon the water.

The motion was certainly pleasant, and for a few moments Dotty was quite delighted, thinking over and over again,—

"Mamma won't care; it's nothing but a wherry, and the wind doesn't blow."

Then she suddenly remembered her promise to Prudy, not to go "anywhere near the water." [81]

"And I never thought I should. I never s'posed I should see Solly Rosenberg. I didn't know he was in this city. Prudy'd like it just as well as I do, if she was in here, and knew 'twas a wherry."

CHAPTER VI. [82]

HOW IT ENDED.

Yes, no doubt Prudy would have liked it if her mother had approved; for then she could have gone with a clear conscience, and also without fear. But Prudy had suffered in her short life a great deal of what we call "discipline," and had learned pretty thoroughly the lesson of obedience. She knew it is never of the least use for little girls, or any one else, to expect to be happy in the wrong way.

"Straight is the line of duty,
Curved is the line of beauty;
Follow one, and thou shalt see
The other ever following thee."

This means, when put into child's English, that if we try above everything else to have a good time, we never have it; but if we try first of all to do right, then the good time will come of itself. Dotty certainly had not tried to do right: now we will see if that beautiful "curved line" of happiness followed her. [83]

She was very young, or she would have known better than to trust herself on the ocean with a little boy like Solly Rosenberg, even if her mother had not forbidden it: but Dotty was rash; her bold spirit never feared danger.

If she, or any of the rest of the party, had only looked at the sky! But if they had, I dare say they would have made nothing of it. There were clouds scudding about up there like shadowy sail-boats, and the sun had to fight his way through them, till by and by he gave it up entirely, and never so much as peeped out. By that time it was decidedly bad weather; the light had to be sifted through heavy gray curtains. [84]

This made such a difference with the appearance of everything! The world, which had looked, an hour ago, so gay and light-hearted, was now rather gloomy. The waves, instead of sparkling, only foamed and bubbled; indeed they grew larger every moment, for the wind was blowing a gale. The white sea-gulls hovered over the bay, flapping their wings; and Dotty had never liked sea-gulls. She began to grow a very little uneasy.

"It was naughty for *us* to come," thought she, anxious to divide the sin with her companions; "*we* ought to have minded our mothers."

If the sky had continued fair, it may be Dotty would not have felt so guilty, though you and I know the weather had nothing to do with the sin; disobedience is disobedience always, whether it rains or shines. [85]

The little Jewess grew very pale, said she was dizzy, and wished to change places with Dotty.

"Keep still, can't you, girls?" cried Johnny; "if you fuss round so the boat'll be sure to upset."

Johnny looked as dignified as if he had navigated ships across the Atlantic Ocean over and over again; but then, alas! his arms were so little! I suppose his paddle had nearly as much effect as if

it had been an iron spoon; and he probably knew as much about boating as he did about the dead languages. Solly and Freddy were several years older, and considerably wiser; but the wisdom of all these five children, if it had been compounded together, would not have amounted to the wisdom of the three wise men of Gotham who went to sea in a bowl. [86]

"O, dear!" screamed Dotty.

"O, dear! dear! *dear!*" cried Lina; "the water rolls in over the top!"

"Can't you steer for the shore, Solly Rosenbug?" said Dotty.

"You hadn't oughter made us come," sobbed Lina.

Johnny joined the mournful chorus.

"There goes my hat! You were in pretty business knocking it off my head, Dot Dimple!"

"I never; and I didn't mean to," replied Dotty, too much subdued to retort with her usual spirit.

"Fish it out with the paddle," remarked Solly, coolly. [87]

This was intended as a joke, for the hat was already bounding far, far away over the waste of waters. Dotty knew she should always be accused of losing it, though in her secret soul she was sure the wind had blown it off. But a new hat, as we all know, is a mere trifle when we have gone to sea in a bowl! The first thing we think of is how to get home.

"Ahem!" ejaculated Solly, at last, "if you are really afraid, Lina, I suppose we'd better go ashore!"

Lina clapped her hands. "O, do! do! do!"

"Yes, indeed," said Dotty; "and, Solly, don't you bump *too* hard against the shore, 'cause 'twould spill us out."

It was very easy to talk about touching the shore: all the difficulty lay in being able to do it. Not that it was so very distant; indeed, it was in full sight, "so near, and yet so far!" If the wind had only been quiet, instead of "cracking its cheeks!" But, as it was, the boat rocked fearfully, and seemed to be blowing directly away from the land. [88]

Solly and the deaf and dumb boy looked at each other with eyes which seemed to say,—

"The thing is coming to a pretty pass! Only you and I to manage this craft, and we neither of us know what we are about! But we'll keep a stiff upper lip, and make believe we do!"

"Why, Solly Rosenbug!" said Dotty, catching her breath, "you're going just the other way!"

"O, Solly Rosenberg," echoed Lina, "you're going the wrong way! There's the shore, off there!"

"Well, well," said Solly, his "stiff upper lip" very white, "we're coming round to it after a while: you just sit still." [89]

"Yes," said Johnny, puffing very hard, and churning the foam with his paddle, as if he were whipping eggs with a beater, "yes, girls, *we* shall row round to it after a while, *if* you'll only keep still!"

I dare say Johnny thought the most of this commotion was made by his paddle. He was quite as consequential, in his way, as the fly who sat on a wagon-wheel, and said to the wagon, as it rattled down hill, "What a noise we make!"

"We wouldn't put for the shore at all," continued Johnny, "if it wasn't for you girls."

At that moment a remarkably high wave leaped over the side of the boat, and wet Johnny to the skin.

"Just enough wind to make it pleasant!" gasped the little fellow. [90]

"O, dear! O, dear!" sighed the girls, in despair.

"Ugh! how my arms ache!" groaned Johnny, stopping to rub them. "Guess I wouldn't say much if I was nothing but a girl, and didn't have to paddle!"

"O, you needn't fuss with that paddle any longer, Johnny Eastman," said Solly, who had hitherto paid no heed to the little boy's vigorous but useless struggles; "you just drop it; it doesn't amount to anything."

"What! what!" cried Johnny, looking very much insulted. "How are you ever going to get ashore without ME, I'd like to know?"

All this while the boys were growing crimson in the face from the gigantic efforts they made, and the girls very pale with fright. Solly kept repeating,—

"Don't you be afraid, girls!" but his voice faltered as he said it; and as for Freddy Jackson, the trembling of his mute lips was as eloquent as speech. The two boys might put on what blustering airs they pleased—it all amounted to nothing; there was more power in the wind than in the muscles of their small arms. The boat would not go near the shore: anywhere else but there. The sky grew more and more threatening, and the wind increased in force. [91]

"We're going to be drow—drow—drowned!" screamed Dotty; "and I told you so: I knew it before! O, if Susy was here with a shingle!"

"We're going to be drowned!" cried Lina; "and, Solly Rosenberg, you hadn't oughter made me come!"

"And you told an awful, wicked story," struck in Dotty, "for, Solly Rosenberg, you said you's old enough to row, and you're nowhere near old enough; and, O! O! O! you don't know how. And I'll tell my father! And he'll never know where I am! And my mother's gone away to aunt Maria Clifford's, and I'm going to be dead when she gets back! And you won't *try* to row! *Susy* could row if she was here, and had a shingle. But Susy isn't here, and hasn't any shingle! O! O!" [92]

All these sentences Dotty thrust out, one after another, having little idea what she said, only conscious of an overwhelming terror and an impulse to keep talking.

Suddenly poor Solly Rosenberg dropped his oar, exclaiming,—

"There, it's of no use; my arms are giving out!"

Freddy Jackson held out a few moments longer, then dropped his oar also, with a look of utter hopelessness. [93]



IN THE BOAT.—Page 93.

"Why don't you keep a pullin', boys?" said Johnny, dipping in his useless little paddle.

The boat whirled about like an egg-shell, completely at the mercy of the waves. If your papa and mamma had seen it, they would have said there was the last of Dotty Dimple. But, on second thought, you may be sure it was not the last of her; for if she was going to be drowned in the sixth chapter, I should never have written this book.

It was a wonderful mercy that the five rash children *were* spared; but life is full of just such mercies; and of course I knew all the while what was coming, or I could not have written so cheerfully.

What was coming?

"I see something," shouted Dotty, "ever so far off! It isn't a gull!"

"It's a sail! a sail!" cried Solly, and took to his oars again. [94]

"A sail! a sail!" thought Freddy Jackson, though he could not say it; and he steered once more, with courage renewed; though, as to that matter, it would have been just as well if they had kept still.

By the time the sail-boat came up to the wherry, the children were thoroughly drenched and

sobered. A more subdued set of little sailors the captain had never seen.

"Well, now," said he, patting the little girls on the head, "I had a fine lecture made up for you crazy chickens; but you are all so meek, that I reckon I'll just take you on board, and not scold you till I get you ashore."

It was the narrowest escape! and they all knew it. The "foolish chickens" hid their heads, and made mental resolves that they would never, never venture out of sight of land again without some older person to take care of them. [95]

"Don't you tell my father, now," said Johnny to Dotty, as they went home, dripping like a pair of sea-bathers.

"Nor don't you tell mine, nor Susy, nor Prudy, neither."

"We shall have to make up some kind of a story," added Johnny, reflectively. "I don't know but we reached over too far after sea-shells, didn't we, and fell into the bay? *You* did (say), and I got in after you, and pulled you out by your hair."

"Why, Johnny!"

"Well, then, you didn't; *I* fell in, and you pulled *me* out—by the boots; only my boots would have come off, though, they're so big!"

"O, Johnny Eastman!"

Dotty had stopped short in the road, and was looking at her cousin with an expression of mingled pity and scorn. [96]

"Then make up something better to suit yourself."

"I don't make up stories, I just hope I don't," returned Dotty, squeezing the skirt of her dress indignantly.

"But," said Johnny, "they'll know it wasn't all rain-water."

"Then I shall tell the whole, whole truth," exclaimed Miss Dimple, setting her feet down so firmly that the water made a gurgling noise in her boots. "I'll tell how you boys teased us girls to go."

"O, ho, Dot Dimple! that's as much of a story as pulling out by the hair! *I* didn't want you to go. I tried to stop it."

"Yes, I know it, and that was why I went," said Dotty, gravely! "I wasn't going to have you say I mus'n't! If you'd been *willing*, I shouldn't have gone a step." [97]

By this time they had reached Mr. Eastman's gate.

"You tell if you dare!" said Johnny. And, after that, Dotty never thought any longer of trying to conceal a single item of their remarkable adventure. Since Johnny had dared her, she would *certainly* tell.

CHAPTER VII.

 [98]

TELLING OF IT.

Dotty saw her father through the window. She had not supposed it was dinner-time. Her head, which she had just been tossing so proudly, was suddenly lowered, and she entered the house with "faint-footed fear," and stole noiselessly up stairs, leaving wet tracks on the elegant carpet. She did not wish to meet her father while she was in such a plight.

"O, Prudy!" she called out, "something has happened!"

But Prudy was not within hearing. Angeline had given her permission to peel the potatoes for dinner, and she was now in the kitchen, quite unconscious of her little sister's forlorn situation. Hatless Johnny had crept around by the back door, and put himself under the care of Jane, the chambermaid. Janey was very kind-hearted, and withal a little weak-minded. She had often helped Johnny out of his predicaments, receiving in return plenty of kisses and sugar-plums. [99]

But who was going to help Dotty? She did not know where to look for dry garments; for, since her mother went away, her own clothes, and those of her two sisters, had been tossed together in sad confusion. She did not like to go to Susy, for Susy would probably scold; and Dotty, just now, was so uncomfortable, and her nerves had been so terribly racked, that she thought she could bear anything better than to be blamed. [100]

"O, dear! where in this world was Prudy?"

She fidgeted about, trying to find she knew not what. Then she remembered she had herself locked the trunk, to hide away some almond candy from the other girls. Where she had put the key she did not know.

The dinner-bell rang, and still Prudy did not appear.

"I believe she does it *to purpose*," thought Miss Dimple, pulling out the bureau drawers in great haste, and scattering their contents right and left.

"Seem's if I should freeze, but I don't s'pose she cares. I don't want any dinner. If Prudy'd bring me up a piece of pudding, I'd eat it; but she won't, nor pie either."

By this time Dotty had nearly forgotten that all her misery was the result of her own misconduct. She would remember it by and by with renewed shame; but, just now, she had somehow shifted the blame upon innocent Prudy, forgetting that that dear little sister did not even know she was in the house. [101]

"And I sha'n't eat any supper," continued the shivering Dotty. "I wonder how many dinners and suppers 'twould take to starve folks to death? Prudy said she loved me; but if she does, why don't she come up here, and get me some clean clothes?"

Meanwhile, at the dinner-table down stairs, there were three places empty. Mrs. Eastman had gone to Cumberland, and Susy told her father that Johnny and Dotty were away somewhere at play. It was such a careless household, and the meals were so irregular, that Mr. Parlin had several times missed Dotty at table. He did not pay any more attention than usual to her absence to-day, but thought, with a feeling of relief,— [102]

"Her mother will soon be at home, and then I shall feel very much easier about Alice and the other children."

If Mr. Parlin had only known that Dotty was shivering up stairs in wet clothes, he might not have lingered so long over his ice-cream. As it was, he chatted leisurely with Mr. Eastman, put on his hat, and walked away, saying to Susy, in a low voice, as he passed her in the hall,—

"My daughter, while I am so busy, and your mother is gone, I wish you would pay more attention to your little sister Alice. I am really afraid she is running wild."

"Yes, sir," replied Susy, with a swift pang of conscience; for she now recollected that it was seldom she even knew where Dotty was, her mind being wholly absorbed by play and fancy-work. [103]

At this moment Johnny appeared, fresh from a bath, and dressed in a clean suit.

"Where is Dotty?" asked Susy, rather surprised by Johnny's tidy array.

"Dot? O, she's in the house somewhere. She came home when I did."

Johnny spoke very carelessly. He was anxious that no one should suppose anything unusual had occurred.

Susy and Prudy went up stairs in search of their missing sister. They found her in her own room, sitting down disconsolately in the middle of the floor.

"Why, Dotty Dimple, where have you been? How *did* you get so wet?"

No answer.

"Have you been trying to swim?" laughed Prudy, going up and stroking her forehead. [104]

"Prudy Parlin, why didn't you come up here before?" was the sudden response. "I called you and called you.—Where'd you put my clo'es?"

"Why, Dotty, dear, I didn't know you were in the house; and I never touched your clothes."

"Yes, you did. I can't find the key. I'm going to freeze. You don't care. You never brought me a speck of pudding. I'm sick, and going to have the sore throat. I wouldn't eat it now if the mayor was right in this room—so there!"

Nothing could exceed the dreariness of Dotty's tone. Susy, though by no means unfeeling, could scarcely refrain from laughing at the child's unreasonableness; but Prudy, who "was exceeding wise" in reading the heart, knew that Dotty's anger was not very real; that it was partly assumed to hide her wretchedness. Therefore patient Prudy resolved to bear with the sharp words, believing Dotty would be pleasant by and by, when she felt comfortable. [105]

After some delay in hunting, she and Susy dressed the child in fresh clothes. Then Dotty consented to eat a little dinner, and go into her grandma Read's room, to sit on the lounge.

"This little girl doesn't look well," said grandma Read, the first moment; "her cheeks are altogether too red. Where has thee been to-day, Alice?"

"Been down to the beach, picking shells, grandma," replied Dotty, looking hard at the carpet.

"O, where are the shells?" said Prudy.

"I'm sure I don't know; I didn't find any. I didn't come back the same way I went," replied Dotty, twirling her favorite lock of hair over her finger. [106]

"Didn't come back the same way?"

"No, I went wherrying."

"Wherrying?" repeated Prudy.

"Yes, that's what I said."

"Prudence, what does thee suppose the child means?" said grandma Read, taking off her spectacles, and fixing her kind eyes steadily upon Dotty Dimple.

"Wherrying in a wherry," answered Dotty, dryly.

"Does thee mean in a boat?"

"Why no, grandma. It looks like a boat, but it isn't; it's a wherry."

"Who allowed thee to go on the water?"

"Nobody."

"Did thee think thee was doing right?"

"No'm."

"Who rowed the boat?"

"Some boys—two—and Johnny, grandma."

[107]

"Hasn't thy mother told thee not to go on the water?"

"She said I mus'n't sail, and I never. I *wherried*."

"Why, Dotty Parlin," said Prudy, "you'll scare me so I'll never get my breath again! You didn't go off on that bay with some boys?"

"Yes, I did," replied Dotty, trying to look defiant. "*You* wouldn't have dared to, Prudy."

"Thee may get in my lap, Alice, and tell me all about it," said grandma Read, laying down her knitting-work.

Dotty curled herself into a little heap in her grandmother's arms.

"My head aches," said she, "and I love to lay it against your soft *kerjif*."

"Well, dear, so thee may. Now, tell me what made thee go on the water?"

[108]

"'Cause, 'cause, grandma, Solly Rosenbug asked me to go, and Johnny tried to make me *not* go. I asked Solly was he old enough, and knew enough, and he said he did; but he didn't any such thing. And grandma, there it was, right in the middle of the solid water! And began to spin and dance round. We couldn't stop it from dancing; the more we held on, the quicker it went. Way up and down, grandma, and the rain raining, and our feet all sopping, and pouring right into that wherry like a—a catara-duct. They were all afraid but me, and I was awful afraid too. You see I thought we should tip right over, and I didn't want to be drowned, and couldn't swim."

"Why, Dotty, how you make me tremble!" cried Prudy.

"The way Johnny paddled!" continued Dotty, triumphantly. "Solly *said* he couldn't. I could have paddled better, only I didn't dare to."

[109]

"*You* paddle!"

"No, I didn't. The wind blew me so I couldn't; 'twas much's ever I kept in the wherry. I had to hold on to Lina, too; she was just as 'fraid!"

Here grandma Read pressed Dotty close to her heart, as if she wished to make sure the child was really alive.

"'He gave his angels charge concerning thee,'" murmured she. "Tell me, child, how thee ever got to the shore."

"O, the captain took us in a sail-boat! He called us crazy chickens, but said he didn't scold. I was the first one that saw the sail; and then Solly rowed us to it, and it took us in, just as wet as ever was. Johnny lost that paddle. So we got home; and, O, how my head aches!"

[110]

"What a strange, strange child to tell a story!" said grandma Read, shaking her head. "But I've seen thee before. I understand thy odd ways. Thee is deeply ashamed of such wicked conduct—that I am very sure. Thee must be aware, Alice, that it is only by the Lord's mercy thee is safe on dry land, instead of being drowned in the depths of the sea."

Dotty shuddered, and curled her crimson face more closely against the white kerchief.

"But I will not chide thee now. Thy mother will do what is right and proper when she comes home. But now thee must have a bowl of ginger tea, and go straight to bed."

Dotty made no objection. Indeed she was glad to find herself tucked warmly under blankets and coverlets, for she was still chilly, and her head grew worse continually. It was also a great relief to her that she had told the whole story. She knew her father would be sorely displeased; but he had never punished her in his life, and it was not likely he would do it now, while her head ached so dreadfully.

[111]

She wasn't going to tell anybody how sorry she was; but she had made up her mind to this—that she would never *look* at salt water again as long as she lived.

CHAPTER VIII.

[112]

MAMMA AND "LITTLE ME."

"O, dear!" thought Dotty, as she lay through the long afternoon, wakeful and feverish, "I should think there was a drum inside o' my head, and somebody was pounding on it,—tummy, tum, tum."

Grandma had said it was best to leave her alone, in the hope that she might fall asleep. But the sleep would not come, though dreams did, one after another, like pictures in a panorama.

When she shut her eyes, she could see a little red boat rocking on the water like a cradle; then a great wave would dash against it, and turn it over, with all its passengers. The screaming seagulls seemed to be looking far down into the water in search of the sinking children; but the children could not look up to see the gulls, for their eyes were closed, and they were "drowned in the depths of the sea."

[113]

Dotty tried to shut out these horrid pictures. If her dear mamma were only here to talk to her, and lay a cool hand on her head—that mamma she had just disobeyed! Then Dotty repeated some verses she had learned long ago:—

"At night my mamma comes up stairs,—
She comes to hear me say my prayers;
And while I'm kneeling on her knee,
She always kisses little me."

When it came to the last line the poor child buried her face in the pillow. Papa was good, and grandma was good; but there was no one like anybody's own mamma, after all.

[114]

"She always kisses little me," murmured Dotty. "'She *always* kisses little me.' She gives me twenty kisses when I go to bed, 'cept when I'm naughty, and then I don't have but ten."

Dotty counted the number of knobs on the bureau drawers, and then went on:—

"I think if I was in my mamma's place, and had *me* to take care of, I'd throw me out of the window; I wouldn't keep such a girl!"

Dotty had great satisfaction in scolding herself when she was all alone. It was a way she had of "doing her own punishing."

Presently, while engaged in the soothing business of calling herself names, she dropped off to sleep. She dreamed of red wherries and "white waves;" but never once dreamed that her mother had come, and was bending over the bed, actually "kissing little me."

[115]

"Poor thing," said Mrs. Parlin to herself, "if she doesn't have a settled fever I shall be thankful. Will the time ever come when my little daughter will learn to obey her mother?"

Mrs. Parlin stole out of the room very softly; but a sly little rogue, observing that she left the creaking door a little ajar, watched an opportunity, and stole in on her "tipsy toes." It was "wee Katie." Mrs. Parlin had brought her home, to keep her out of the way of Mrs. Clifford, who was still quite ill.

The first thing which roused Dotty to consciousness was a feeling of suffocation. O, was she in the bay? Was she drowning? Something lay very close over her mouth; but it was not water: in fact it was a pillow; and on the pillow sat little Katie with her whole weight. But being a very restless child, it is not likely she would have remained in that position long enough to strangle her cousin, even if Dotty had not thrown up her arms and released herself suddenly.

[116]

"Why, Katie Clifford, is that you?"

"Yes, this is me!" replied Katie, with a voice as sweet as a wind-harp. "You didn't know *I* was comin'. You turned your face away: you wouldn't look to me!"

"I s'pose I was asleep, Katie. You didn't mean to sit down on my head, *did* you, darling?"

"Yes, I did meant to. But you is sick. Folks mus'n't talk."

"No," replied Dotty, smiling, "when folks are sick they mustn't talk."

[117]

"Well," said Katie, putting her finger on her lip, "*they is!*"

"O, Katie!" cried Dotty, a new idea seizing her, "where's mother? Did she come with you?"

Katie shook her head.

"My dee mamma velly sick."

"Yes, I know; but where's *my* mamma? Did she come with you in the cars?"

Katie shook her head again.

"Who did come with you, then? You didn't come alone?"

"No, there was folks."

By this time Dotty had sprung out of bed, and was rushing out of the room to learn whether her mother had come. Mrs. Parlin met her at the door.

"My darling child," said she, hugging and kissing her just as tenderly as if she had never been "wherrying." "You'd better lie down again, and let me bathe your head." [118]

Dotty sprang into bed instantly. She was glad her mother had asked her to do something, so she might prove her desire to obey. She liked the touch of those cool fingers on her forehead.

"O, mamma," said she, "you do make me feel better. It felt a while ago as if they were beating drums in there."

"Is your neck stiff, dear?"

Katie thrust her little prying fingers under Dotty's chin, tickling her, of course.

"No, auntie," said she, "'t isn't any stiff, her neck isn't."

"But it's sore, mother. Not so sore, though, as it was when Jennie Vanee and I got caught in the thunder and lightning."

After she had said this, Dotty blushed, for the words recalled to her mind another act of disobedience. No wonder she had thought herself such a naughty girl, fit only to be thrown out of the window! [119]

"What sort of a child has Dotty been since I have been gone?" asked Mrs. Parlin of Mrs. Eastman, as they both sat by the bedside.

Mrs. Eastman stroked the sheet with her white, jewelled hand before she replied. She was thinking how the little girl had turned the house upside down, and, as she believed, made Johnny more mischievous than ever; so she hesitated a moment.

"A tolerably good child."

This was all Mrs. Eastman could say; and it was as much as Mrs. Parlin had dared hope. She knew how Johnny and Dotty encouraged each other in rude behavior. She looked at her beautiful little daughter with pain, and wondered, as she had many times wondered before, if these bitter experiences she was suffering would ever have the effect to make her a better child. [120]

Dotty did not understand the tender, regretful glance of her mother's eyes. She was not as yet very well acquainted with the English language, and did not know what "tolerably" meant; she supposed it meant "remarkably."

"It's so queer," she thought, "that auntie should tell my mamma I've been tol'ably good! Why, I haven't, I know I haven't: I've been tol'ably bad!"

She looked up at her auntie in surprise, and at that moment there entered into her small mind a doubt of Mrs. Eastman's truthfulness. It was a very faint doubt, which she did not express even to herself. It was almost incredible that a grown-up lady should tell the "thing which is not," or even color the truth by so much as the shadow of a shade. Still, when auntie had called Dotty a tol'ably good girl, she must have known it was a mistake! [121]

Dotty did not have a fever; but for several days she was not at all well, and spent most of the time in her grandmamma's room, on the lounge. It would have been a good opportunity for reflection, if Katie had not been in the house. As it was, Dotty did think of her own conduct for several minutes at a time, during the intervals when Katie was not dancing attendance upon her. She decided never to disobey her mother again, and said so. This, you remember, was nothing new; she had made the same resolve fifty times before, and broken it as often.

Johnny, her little companion in naughtiness, escaped without so much as a sore throat; but he suffered in another way. His father, learning of his exploit upon the water, and being greatly incensed, punished him severely. It was not often that Johnny was corrected, and this time he was very indignant. He reflected that if it had not been for Dotty Dimple his sin would not have been found out. Dotty had ceased to be a "brick;" she was a tell-tale—a hateful, mean tell-tale; and he wished she would go home and stay there. [122]

"I'll pay her for this business," said Johnny, talking to his boots.

Just how he was going to "pay" his little cousin he did not know. As for being sorry for his disobedience, I doubt if Johnny thought of such a thing. He knew he had been in much peril, and now, while the remembrance of the fright was still fresh in his mind, he was not likely to fall into the same temptation again—that was all. [123]

Johnny missed his little lively cousin in his out-of-door sports; but he was so angry with her that he scarcely ever went up stairs to see her; and when he did go, amused himself by putting his

mouth down to her ear, and crying,—

"E, for shame, Dot Parlin! Fore I'd run and tell!"

But Dotty did not know that her cousin Johnny was harboring such bitter thoughts against her. She had a high temper herself; but anger did not rankle in her heart for days and days, as it did in Johnny's. She was not eager, like him, for revenge.

The Parlins were now making ready to go into their new hired house.

They were all longing for a place they could call "home."

[124]

During the few days, while they yet remained at Mrs. Eastman's, very few events occurred which are worth recording. For one thing, Dotty's bird died. She had loved it for its helplessness; but Angeline said,—

"You needn't be sorry. What did I tell you when you took that bird into the window? I knew something would happen; but didn't know as it would be a boat-wreck exactly."

Dotty, and even Prudy, had received some very foolish ideas from Angeline. The Portland fire had affected the Parlin family in more ways than one; and it would be long before the three little girls would settle into their usual quiet habits again.

CHAPTER IX.

[125]

THE NEW HOME.

"Prudy," said Dotty, "you needn't say that word 'wherrying' to me any more. Mamma said there mus'n't anybody tease me about that, because I've—I've repented it all up."

"O, I'm so glad!" replied Prudy.

"I'll never take another bird into the window," continued Dotty; "it's almost as bad as a ghost."

"You never saw a ghost, Dotty. Nobody ever did."

"Yes, indeed; Angeline has seen 'em as thick as spatter! They come when you're asleep, and there don't anybody know it. I shouldn't dare open my eyes in the night. They're wrapped in a sheet, all white, and their eyes snap like fire. Angeline says they do."

[126]

"I don't believe it," said Prudy, stoutly; "my mother told me 'twasn't true."

"P'r'aps mamma doesn't wake up in the night," said Dotty, "and p'r'aps the ghosts never come where she is. Why, Prudy, they're made out o' nothing! If you stick a knife into 'em it goes right through, and don't touch their blood, for they haven't got any blood. They don't care for knives—they're just like bubbles."

"I don't believe it," replied Prudy, again. "I think it's wicked. My mother wouldn't like it if she knew how much you sat in Angeline's lap and talked about ghosts. I don't want to see any or hear any."

"I do, though!" cried Dotty. "I shouldn't be afraid—the leastest speck. I'd go right up to 'em, and, said I, 'How do you do, sir?' And then they would melt like a wink. It blows 'em right out the moment you speak."

[127]

"Does it, though?" said Johnny, who had been listening at the door. "You don't say so! Call me when you see your ghostses, and let me talk to 'em too."

"And *me!* What *is* um?" said wee Katie, toddling in with her mouth full of candy.

"There, there!" cried Dotty Dimple, "you've been a-listening, Johnny Eastman."

"Don't care! 'Tisn't so bad as being a tell-tale, Miss!" said Johnny, ending the sentence in a naughty tone.

"Why, Johnny, you mus'n't say that!"

"Why, Johnny," echoed Katie, "you *musser* say *that!*"

[128]

"Say what?"

"Say *Miss.*"

The children all laughed at this.

"Come, little ones," said Mr. Parlin, appearing at the door, "put on your hats; we are ready to start."

Prudy clapped her hands—an action which cousin Percy did not consider very polite.

"It shows," said he, "how glad you are to leave us."

"O, but we are going *home*, you know, Percy! Only think of having a home to go to!"

"It isn't the burnt one, though," remarked Dotty, as she danced off the door-step; "and I 'spect I'll never see that darling little tea-set any more."

The new house was not in the least like the old one. Susy was always bewailing the contrast. She did not like the wallpaper; the carpets were homely; the rooms were, some of them, too large, and the door-yard, certainly, too small. [129]

"But it's better than nothing," said Prudy, who, for one, was heartily tired of visiting.

"I think," said Mrs. Parlin, smiling, "this is a very good opportunity for my little daughters to learn to make the best of everything. We cannot have the old house, so we will try not to long for it. We never wish for the moon, you know."

"Katie does," laughed Susy.

"We cannot have the old home again, so we will make the new one as happy as we can. Isn't that the best way?"

"Of course it is, mamma," replied all the children.

"Course, indeed, it is!" said Katie, trying to pull up the carpet in her search for a lost three-cent piece. [130]

"I'm glad father's dressing-gown and slippers didn't get scorched," said Prudy; "and the piano sounds as sweetly as ever it did. It sounds to me just as if there was a family in there, living inside."

"Like what?"

"O, you know there are four parts playing at once, and it seems as if it was a man and his wife, and two children, all singing together!"

"I'm glad we brought so many flowers from aunt Eastman's," said Susy, brightening; "now we'll trim all the rooms."

"That is right," said Mrs. Parlin. "This is the first night in the new house: let us make it as cheerful as we can for dear papa. Susy, you may as well practise that new tune he likes so well." [131]

"O, mamma," said Prudy, "I'll tell you what I'll do! I'll make some vinegar candy!—if you'll boil it, you know, and pull it."

"A very brilliant idea, my daughter. Your part will be the looking on, I suppose."

"And what'll *I* do?" queried Dotty, twisting the inevitable lock of front hair; "if papa would only give me some money, I'd go and buy him a present."

"The wisest thing you can do just now, dear, is to wash that berry-stain off your lips; then you may bring me a fresh ruffle to baste in the neck of this dress."

Dotty obeyed at once. She was always glad to wear that white delaine with the scarlet spots.

The whole family were so very busy during the afternoon, that they forgot to feel any regrets for the old home. The furniture had been brought and arranged some time before, and the most Mrs. Parlin expected to do to-day was to make the house as pleasant as possible. Susy was allowed to attend to the flowers; the three others looked on, and watched Mrs. Parlin, while she made vinegar candy, filled some tarts with jelly, and helped Norah set the supper-table. [132]

"How nice!" said Prudy, rubbing her hands. "Sometimes I don't much care if our house was burnt up."

"Nor I either," said Dotty. "This house has got a good deal the best places to hide in."

Mrs. Parlin smiled, in her sweet, contented way. She was thinking how many blessings we can all find in our lot if we only look for them. Not that she would ever have known about the "nice places to hide in" if the children had not mentioned them. [133]

"Dotty," said she, "you may run up and ask grandmother if she will dare drink any coffee to-night."

Prudy and Dotty tripped up the broad staircase, which wound about so much that Prudy said it twisted her like a string. Katie ran after them, catching her breath.

There sat the dear grandmamma, knitting some winter stockings for Prudy. There were no curtains at the windows, and the August sunshine fell on her calm face, bathing it with warm light. The carpet had not been put down yet, and the children's feet made a hollow sound on the bare floor.

"Why, grandma," said Prudy, "it wouldn't be nice here a bit, only the room has got *you* in it!" [134]

"Bless thy little heart, Prudence! It will be nice enough here to-morrow night. I wouldn't have thy mother touch it to-day."

"I've got a gamma to my house," said Katie, passing her little fingers over Mrs. Read's white

kerchief; "but um don't have hang-fiss on um neck."

"Yes," said Mrs. Read, in reply to the children's question, "tell your mother I will take some coffee to-night, and she is very kind to inquire."

On the whole, the supper that evening was quite a success. Mr. Parlin had come home from business, tired and sad. It was not pleasant for him to turn his steps towards that part of the town: he missed his old home more than ever. But when he entered the strange house, the lonely look left his face; for there in the hall stood his wife and children, awaiting him with smiles of welcome. [135]

"O, papa!" said Dotty, springing into his arms, while her sisters seized him by the coat-sleeves, "you ought to have a birthday to-night, we've got such a splendid supper!"

"Sthop!" cried Katie. "'T's talking. Cake, and verjerves, and f'owers, and butter!"

"And Susy's been practising the 'Blue Violet's Carol,'" said Prudy.

"Yes, her packus, uncle Ed'ard!"

"And I'll read the paper to you if your eyes ache," went on Prudy; "and we are going to be just as happy, papa!"

"An' vindegar canny," struck in Katie.

"O, hush, now!" whispered Dotty, covering the child's mouth with her handkerchief. [136]

The whole house was fragrant with flowers, and had such a festive appearance, that Mr. Parlin kept exclaiming, "Ah, indeed!" and stroking his beard. Prudy said she always knew when papa was pleased, for then he always "patted his whiskers."

The table was very attractive, and everybody had a fine appetite. After Mr. Parlin had drank a cup of delicious coffee, he no longer remembered that he was tired. He looked upon the merry group around him, and said to his wife,—

"I see, my dear, you are disposed to make the best of our misfortunes. But, after all, you are not quite as meek as one old lady I heard of once."

"Please tell it, if it's a story, papa," said the children. [137]

"Not much of a story; only there were two old women who lived by themselves, and were so very poor that they had nothing in the world to eat but potatoes and salt. One day a friend went to see them, and when he sat down to their humble meal of roasted potatoes, he was moved with pity, and told them he was very sorry to see them so poor.

"Then one of the old ladies rolled up her eyes, and said, 'I was just a-thinkin', neighbor, that this meal is altogether too good for us, we're *so* unworthy! I only wish the potatoes was froze!'"

The children laughed.

"But I shouldn't like that old lady, though. I know how she looked: it was just this way," said Prudy, drawing down her mouth, and looking cross-eyed.

"She didn't want the potatoes frozed," added Dotty; "for if she did, she might have laid 'em out doors all night, and they'd have freezed as hard as a stick." [138]

Grandma Read had a thought just then, though she did not express it. She was thinking what a contrast this cheerful family presented to another "burnt-out" family, who had this very day moved into a house across the street. The mother she had seen from the window, and she looked perfectly discouraged. The children were fretful, and it seemed as if they were all trying, with one accord, to see which could do most to make the new home disagreeable.

"I should say they freeze their potatoes," thought Mrs. Read.

She meant that, instead of trying to improve matters, they only made them worse.

After supper, just as the Parlins were sitting down for a quiet evening, the door-bell rang furiously, and shook for a minute afterwards, as if it were in an ague-fit. Who had come to break up the family harmony? [139]

I will tell you in the next chapter.

CHAPTER X.

A SURPRISE.

Norah went to the door, hardly expecting to find any one there; for when the bell pealed in that violent manner, it was often some roguish boy who rang it, and then ran away. But this time, to her amazement, there stood on the door-step and in the yard as many as twenty boys and girls. [140]

"Is Miss Susy Parlin at home?" said one of them.

"And Miss Prudy?" added another.

"She is—I mean they are. Will you please walk in?"

As Norah spoke, she swung open the parlor door, too much "fluttered," as she afterwards said, to announce the arrival in due form. The guests poured in with all speed. Susy sprang up as suddenly as if the piano stool were exploding; but what to say she did not know, and stood still in dumb surprise. Prudy caught her by the skirts, and whispered, "Good evening;" but nobody heard it. Dotty Dimple, not in the least abashed, was about to do the honors, when Mr. and Mrs. Parlin came forward, and relieved her of the trouble. They greeted the little people very cordially, and gave them a pleasant welcome to the new house. Then Mrs. Parlin directed her daughters to carry away the hats and sacques of the young misses; and by the time this ceremony was over, the stiffness had somewhat worn away, and Susy and Prudy could breathe more freely. [141] [142]

Flyaway went up first to one, and then to another, with the question,—

"Did you *come* to see *me*?"

The two heads of the family retreated, Mr. Parlin saying to his wife as they went,—

"When you and I were children, we had our parties in the afternoon; but this is a new fashion, I suppose."

"It is the first time our little girls have ever received company in the evening," replied Mrs. Parlin. "I do hope these children will not stay late. It happens that I have made a large quantity of vinegar candy, but not enough, I think, for the whole company."

"Very well," said Mr. Parlin; "and now, as the little people seem to be doing very nicely, suppose we go out for a walk, and call at a confectioner's on our way home." [143]

Susy felt very much flattered by this surprise party. It gave her an assurance that she was held in kind remembrance by her schoolmates, many of whom had been "burnt out," and knew exactly how to sympathize with her.

But Susy's satisfaction was by no means complete. In the first place, Katie would not go to bed, and could not be persuaded to leave the room any longer than just to bring in her ragged black Dinah, and the yellow-and-white kitten.

Dinah was passed around the room to be pitied. There was a mustard plaster on her chest, applied that day by Dotty, in order to break up a lung fever. Dinah's ankle, which was really broken, had been "set" and mended with a splinter, and was waiting for a new bone to grow. Percy Eastman, the oldest boy present, said,— [144]

"Well, cousin Dimple, you and Flyaway do take extra care of Miss Dinah! If you should lose her, you can't have anything to reflect upon."

Susy did not so much mind the laughter at Dinah's expense; for, although such a hideous black baby was not suitable for genteel society, still it was Katie who was exhibiting it, and Katie was pardonable for the weakness. The trying question was, What would the child do next? There was nothing certain about Flyaway except her uncertainty. Susy was about to appeal to her mother to take the little one away, when she heard the hall door open and shut; her father and mother had gone out for their walk.

It did occur to Susy that this was a great pity; and, indeed, it is quite probable, Mrs. Parlin would not have left the house if she could have foreseen how much her presence would be needed. [145]

And after all it was Dotty Dimple, and not Flyaway, who made the whole trouble. Flyaway was under every one's feet, it is true, and sat down in the middle of the floor to comb and brush the kitty's head; but then she never for a moment lost her temper: it was Dotty, the girl old enough to know better, who was cross and disagreeable.

I am sorry to record this of Dotty, and so I will try to make a little excuse for her. She was not well. She had hardly felt like herself since that unfortunate boat-ride. She was sleepy and tired, and ought to have gone to bed at eight o'clock—the usual hour. Then, again, the guests were nearly all older than herself, and paid very little attention to her. She thought she might as well have worn her calico wrapper as this beautiful white delaine, for all the notice they took of her dress. [146]

There was only one child present of Dotty's own age,—Johnny Eastman,—and if he would only have played cat's cradle with her, all might have gone well. But Johnny had not forgotten the severe correction his father had given him in the stable with a horsewhip. Every time he looked at his little cousin, the thought arose,—

"She was real mean to run and tell! I'll pay her for that—won't I, though?"

Percy had promised to aid him in his revenge; and you will presently learn what this was to be. Percy liked "cousin Dimple" very well; he was only putting a wicked scheme into his little brother's head "just for the fun of the thing." [147]

The guests were talking of having a few tableaux and charades, like some they had seen arranged

by their older sisters.

"I don't care anything about their old tolly-blows—do you, Johnny?" said Dotty. "Let's play 'I spy'—you and I."

"No, you don't catch me playing high spy with such a cross party as you are, Dot Dimple."

"I wish you'd stop calling me a 'cross party' the whole time, Johnny Eastman," replied Dotty, shaking her elbows.

Just then Susy came, and whispered a few words in her ear.

"No, I won't be hung! I'm sure I won't be hung!" cried Dotty, who was by this time very much out of sorts.

"O, Dotty! what makes you act so? We've got a charade, 'Crisis.' Half of us are going to play it for the other half to guess. We only want to weigh you, with a yardstick through an old shawl; that's all. Come, let us pin you up; there's a goody girl." [148]

"I don't want to be a goody girl. I'm too big to be goody. If you want a baby to make believe with, why don't you take Flyaway? She's littler than me."

"There, there!" said Prudy, coming to the rescue, "you needn't do a single thing, Dotty, if you don't want to. We didn't know but you'd like to play be weighed, you can squeal so be-*you*-tifully!"

"I know I can squeal just like a rubber doll; but s'posin' they should let me fall off the yardstick—where'd I go to then?"

"O, but they wouldn't!"

"Of course they would, Prudy Parlin. And I should fall right into the tolly-blow—that's where I should fall to." [149]

"O, pshaw!" exclaimed Percy, coming into the corner where his cousins stood; "if cousin Dimple has got into one of her contrary fits, it's of no use teasing. You might as well try to move the side of the house."

This cutting speech was all that was needed to complete Dotty's ill humor. Did she remember any longer her promise not to get angry, but to swallow her temper right down? No, indeed; she forgot everything but her own self-will.

"Don't you speak again, Percy, or I'll scream my throat right in two!"

"Girls, I advise you to let that child alone," said her cousin, with a look of supreme contempt. "Let's try Flyaway; she's a little darling. Here, Flyaway, aren't you willing to be pinned up in a shawl if we'll give you a whole cent?" [150]

"Course, indeed, so!" replied the little one, tossing her kitten across a chair, and into the fireplace. "But you mus' gi' me mucher'n that! Gi' me hunnerd cents!"

No answer was made to this, except to dress the child in a ruffled cap and long clothes, and pin her into a plaid shawl.

"Now cry," said Percy; "cry just as if you had soap in your eyes."

"Ee! Ee!" wailed Katie, loudly.

"No, cry *weak*; cry just as you did when you were a baby."

"I don't 'member when I was a baby, 'twas so *many* years ago," sighed Flyaway.

But she practised crying again, and succeeded very well, Dotty all the while looking on in grim displeasure.

Susy was the mamma; and when the folding-doors opened upon the scene "Cry," she was sitting in a rocking-chair, admiring her child, a remarkably well-grown baby, two months old. [151]

"Just the image of his papa, Mrs. Pettibone!" cried Florence Eastman, rushing in, in the character of an old lady, her head adorned with a scoop bonnet. "Let me look at the precious little creature! Yes, just the image of his papa! I said so before I ever set eyes on him. He's two months of age, you say, and how many teeth?"

"She is a girl," replied Mrs. Susy, kissing the big bundle, "and weighs twenty-nine pounds, three inches."

Susy meant "ounces."

Then followed a chat between herself and a few little old ladies concerning catnip and "pep'mint" tea; after which the wonderful baby was held up by the yardstick to be weighed. [152]

Flyaway had not expected to be suspended so high in the air. She forgot the baby-like cry she had been practising, and screamed out in terror,—

"I wish I didn't be to Portland! O, I wish I didn't be to Portland!"

As this was a very long speech for a baby two months old, the audience were taken by surprise,

and laughed heartily. Poor little Flyaway was lifted out of the shawl, and kissed over and over again. She had not played properly, it is true, but she had intended to do right, and was applauded for her good intentions.

Dotty saw and heard the whole. She was sorry she had refused the part, and she put her fingers in her mouth, and sulked, because little Flyaway had been stealing the praise she might have received herself. [153]

After both syllables of the charade had been acted and guessed, then the other half of the company took their turn, and attempted to arrange a tableau. There was a deal of confusion. No one knew exactly what ought to be done. They were to have a Goddess of Liberty, and finally decided to dress her in an embroidered window curtain, with a shield on her breast made of a blue box cover, striped with yellow silk. Dotty was selected as goddess, on account of her superior beauty.

"But my mamma never 'lows me to wear window curtains, and I sha'n't be a tolly-blow 'thout I can wear my white dress with red spots, and a big bosom-pin in!"

"And a shaker," suggested one of the girls. "I didn't know before that Susy Parlin had such a bad sister."

This was too much. Dotty's head was on fire. She caught the girl by the shoulder, and shook her as if she had been a breadth of dusty carpeting; then ran away. [154]

Which way she went she did not heed, and never stopped till she came to a dark pantry, which had been made without any windows, on purpose to keep out flies. The unhappy child threw herself, out of breath, upon the floor of this closet, her heart beating high with rage and shame.

CHAPTER XI.

 [155]

JOHNNY'S REVENGE.

Dotty's cross behavior had entirely spoiled the pleasure of the evening for her two sisters. They felt, as they had felt years before, when they saw her, a mere baby, perched upon the wood-box, with her hands and feet tied—they felt that it was a family disgrace.

All these little boys and girls, who had never known before what Dotty's temper was, knew all about it now; they would talk of it to one another; they would go home and tell of it, and remember it forever and ever.

"And, O dear!" thought Susy, "they won't know she was born so, and can't help it." [156]

For that this was the case, Susy firmly believed.

"I've got it written in my journal," thought Prudy, "how she promised to swallow it down; but Dotty isn't well, and that's the reason she can't remember."

Both the sisters knew that Dotty had left the parlors, and they were very glad of it. They did not attempt to follow her. They did not know precisely where she had gone, but presumed she was pouting somewhere. That there could be danger of any sort for the poor child in that house they never dreamed. Neither did Mr. or Mrs. Parlin dream it, or they would have walked home a little faster from their visit to the white tents on Green Street.

The games went on as usual, and were quite as amusing to the guests as if they had not been very poor ones indeed. Susy and Prudy need not have feared that the little people would not have a good time; the "surprise party" was a perfect success, and Dotty's ill-humor made no one unhappy but her sensitive sisters. Meanwhile the wretched child was lying on the pantry floor, thinking very confused thoughts. [157]

"I wish I was dead. No I don't. I'm too wicked. But I wasn't any wickeder 'n that girl. She said Susy Parlin had a bad sister. What made her say that? She knew I'd hear. I'm glad I shook her. No, I'm sorry. It was murder—the Bible says so. Johnny murdered too—murdered me. He called me a 'cross party.' That was a story. Johnny's wickeder 'n ever I was.

"Prudy thought I ought to be a baby. Percy thought so. He said, 'I devise you to let that child alone.' I'm going to let *him* alone! All the time! Did I want to fall off that yardstick, right into the tolly-blow? [158]

"There's Prudy: she can be good; it doesn't hurt her. It hurts *me* to be good; it tires me all up.

"And here it is, as dark as a pickpocket." (Dotty raised her head and took a survey.) "Why, the moon can't get here, nor the sun. Is this down cellar? No, I didn't see any stairs. Where did I go to when I came? I walked right on the floor. What floor? Was it the dining-room, or was it out doors? I didn't look at it to see.

"This is a 'cuddy.' There's ever so many 'cuddies' in this house to hide in. I've gone and hid. Nobody'll ever find me. My father'll say, 'Why, where's that child?' And my mother'll say, 'I don't know.' And they'll hunt all over the house; and I shall keep my head in my apron, and won't say a [159]

word.

"Then Prudy'll say, 'O, my darling sister Dotty! How sweet and good she was!'

"And they'll think I'm dead! And Susy'll cry out loud, and tell Percy, and he'll say, 'O, how sorry I am I said "I devise you to let that child alone!"!'"

Dotty sighed as she pictured to herself Percy's conscience-stricken face.

"And that girl that called me a bad sister—how *she'll* feel! And Johnny—I guess Johnny won't say 'cross party' any more!

"Grandma—why, grandma'll read the Bible. And O, such a time!

"That Angeline girl will remember how she rocked that darling Dotty, and told me stories."

Dotty was seized with a sudden shivering. The stories came back to her mind vividly. If Angeline had told her simple little tales of every-day life, Dotty might have forgotten them; but, like all children, she had an active imagination, and anything marvellous or horrible made a deep impression. [160]

The current of her thoughts was changed as soon as she remembered those unknown ghosts of Angeline's description.

"All white, wrapped in a sheet. Put a knife through, and they don't know it. No blood, no bones, no anything. Go through a keyhole. Will they, though? Prudy don't believe it. Am I anywhere near a keyhole? I don't know. I've gone and hid, and I can't find myself. I'm somewhere, but I don't know where."

Dotty began to feel very uncomfortable. There was no longer the slightest satisfaction in the thought of frightening the family. She was frightened herself, and with the worst kind of fear—the fear of the supernatural. [161]

"I can't see the leastest thing, and I can't hear anything, either. Ghosts don't make any noise. May be there are some in this house: been locked up, and the man didn't know it."

The silence seemed to grow deeper. Dotty could hear her heart beat.

"My heart thumps like a mouse in the wall. I'm going to get out of this place. I feel as if there's a ghost in here. It creeps all over me. I can't get my breath."

Dotty rose cautiously; but she had been lying so long in a cramped position that both her feet were asleep. While trying to recover her balance she caught at something, which proved to be a glass jar of raspberry jam. The cover came off, and the jam poured down her neck in a thick stream. [162]

"My beautiful white dress with the red spots! Who put that dirty thing in my way? Smells like purserves. They ought to be ashamed!"

Dotty tried bearing her weight on both feet, and found she could walk.

"But I've whirled round three or four times. I didn't ever know which way to go, and now I'm sure I don't know so well as I did in the first place. If I step any more, perhaps I'll step into some molasses."

Dotty's meditations were becoming more confused than ever. Now it was not only ghosts, but jam and jelly which went to make up the terrors of the situation. But she was growing desperate. She groped right and left, saying to herself,—

"Where's the *out?*" [163]

At last she came to the door, which she had unconsciously closed when she entered the pantry. She opened it, and her eyes were greeted with light. It was the moon shining in at the kitchen windows.

Her fears vanished. She was just wondering whether to return to the parlor in a forgiving spirit, or to stay away and make everybody unhappy, when a strange, horrible object met her view,—not white, but yellow.

Was it—was it—a truly, truly *ghost?* O, it must be a ghost on fire! It hadn't any sheet round it. Nothing was to be seen but a hideous head peeping in at the window. No man ever looked like that. No man ever had such a mouth. It was as deep as a cave, and all ablaze. Somebody had gone and swallowed a stove; somebody had come to do—do—O, what had he come to do? [164]

"It's a yellow ghost!" thought Dotty. "I didn't know they had such a kind. Angeline never said so. But its eyes are just like her ghosts' eyes—going to burn you up!"

These thoughts darted through Dotty's mind like lightning-flashes. At the same time she gave one loud, terrified scream, and fell forward upon the floor. She did not rise, she did not speak, she seemed scarcely to breathe. The shock had partially stunned her.

"Why, Dotty—Dotty Dimple!" exclaimed Percy, rushing in at the back door, and seizing his little cousin by the shoulders. "Look up here, darling! 'Twas nobody but me!"

No answer.

"Nobody but me and Percy," said Johnny, pulling Dotty's ears to attract her attention. [165]

"Only a jack-o'-lantern, you dear little ducky," cried Percy.

"A pumpkin, you goosie," said Johnny.

No reply, but a sudden choking, followed by convulsive sobs. Whether the child heard and understood what was said to her, Percy could not determine. He was old enough to know that a sudden and powerful shock is always more or less dangerous. He redoubled his efforts.

"Look, dear, here's the pumpkin. Holes cut out for eyes. A gash for the mouth. A candle stuck in."

"Smart girl!" ejaculated Johnny, who was too young and ignorant to see anything but amusement in the whole affair. "Smart girl, scared of a pumpkin!"

"Johnny was angry with you," went on Percy, rather nervously; "he said he wanted to tease you. I brought the pumpkin from our house. I'm sorry. Look up, Dimple, see what it is! Don't be afraid. Laugh, or if you can't laugh, cry. Here's my handkerchief." [166]

Dotty continued to moan.

Percy caught her up in his arms. "Any pump in the house? Johnny, get some water somewhere, quick! and then run for the camphor bottle."

Percy was at his wit's end. He ran round and round, with the little girl in his arms. She had life enough to cling to his neck. Johnny saw a pail of water, dipped a tea-strainer into it, and dashed two drops in Dotty's face.

"That won't do, boy! Throw on a quartful! Hurry!"

Johnny promptly obeyed. Dotty gasped for breath, and uttered a scream. Percy felt encouraged. [167]

"More, Johnny; the whole pailful. We'll have her out of this double-quick—"

Just as Percy had extended his little cousin on the floor, and Johnny had poured enough water over her to soak every thread of her clothing, there was a sound of foot-steps. Mr. and Mrs. Parlin were coming in at the back door.

"What does this mean?" they both exclaimed, very much alarmed, as might have been expected. There lay their little daughter, screaming and gurgling, her mouth full of water, her dress stained with the raspberry jam, which was easily mistaken for blood.

"Why, uncle Edward," stammered Percy, "'twas a—"

"Why, auntie," cried Johnny, "'twas only a pumpkin. She went and was afraid of a pumpkin!"

The cause of this direful affright, the lighted jack-o'-lantern, was lying face upward on the floor, the candle within it smoking and dripping with tallow. One glance explained the whole mystery. [168]

But by this time there seemed to be no further cause for anxiety with regard to Dotty. She gathered herself together, sat upright, and began to scold.

"'Twas blazing a-fire, mamma. He lighted it to plague me—Johnny did."

"I'm ever so sorry, auntie," said Percy, and his regretful face said as much as his words.

"Johnny scared me to death," broke in Dotty; "and then he pumped water on me all over—Johnny did."

"I'll never do so again," said Percy, shamed by the look of reproach in his uncle's face.

"See that you remember your promise, my boy. You have run a great risk to-night." [169]

No one supposed, at the time, that Dotty had received a serious injury; but she did not sleep off the effects of her fright. She was remarkably pale next morning, and declined her breakfast. She had not been well for some time, but she had not trembled as now at the opening and shutting of a door. It was plain that her nerves had been quite unstrung.

Days passed, and still she did not seem quite like herself. Her father told the family physician she was not well, and asked what it was best to do with her. The doctor said he thought she only needed time enough, and she would recover her "tone."

"I have an idea," said Mr. Parlin to his wife some days after this. "If you approve, I believe I'll take the child West with me, next time I go there on business. I took Prudy once, and it is no more than fair that the other children should have their turn." [170]

"We will see," said Mrs. Parlin; and so it was left. The subject was never mentioned before Dotty; but here is what Prudy said of it in her journal:—

"Sept. 5th.—I think my little sister Dotty will go out West to see aunt Maria, &c.; but anybody mus'n't ever tell her of it. She is very pale, they poured so much water over her that night, and she thought it was a yellow ghost.

"I *told* her it was very, very wrong to sit in Angeline's lap and hear her talk so. We mus'n't believe anything for certain except Bible stories.

[171]

"She has had temper, and shook Ada Farley. But that was before she was frightened by the ghost, so she couldn't get her breath; and she won't do it again. Finis."

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Inconsistent hyphenation of words in original text has been retained (afire, a-fire).

Inconsistent or unusual spelling of contractions in the original text has been retained (sha'n't and shan't, mus'n't and musn't, are'n't).

Page 9, missing close quote inserted. (mamma? _Is_ I?"

Page 35, misplaced apostrophe fixed. ('twill)

Page 42, "woful" changed to "woeful". (that woeful Fourth of July)

Page 46, word after comma starts with uppercase. Original text retained. (she added, faintly, "If 'twasn't)

Page 56, missing close quote inserted. (cross old party, miss.)

Page 73, unusual spelling of "Monuement" retained. (make a Bunger Hill Monuement)

Page 144, word after comma starts with uppercase. Original text retained. (The trying question was, What would the child)

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