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**COURAGE**

**A Story Wherein Every One Comes To The Conclusion That The  
Courage In Question Proved A Courage Worth Having**

**By Ruth Ogden**

**Illustrated by Frederick C. Gordon**

**With Twenty Original Illustrations**

**New York**

**Frederick A. Stokes Company**

**1891**

*Courage*



*a Story by*

*Ruth Ogden*





ON THE WATCH.



# “COURAGE”

A STORY WHEREIN EVERY ONE  
COMES TO THE CONCLUSION  
THAT THE COURAGE IN  
QUESTION PROVED A COUR-  
AGE WORTH HAVING.

BY

RUTH OGDEN,

*Author of "A Loyal Little Red-Coat," "His Little Royal  
Highness," etc.*



WITH TWENTY ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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# COURAGE

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## CHAPTER I.—NAMED AT LAST.

If one has a fairy tale in mind, why then, of course, the more mystery the better; but when you have a story to tell about people who cannot fly from hill-top to hill-top, and who to live at all must have food more substantial than rose-leaves and honey-dew, why then, say I, the less mystery the better. Therefore, let me tell you at once that the Courage of this story is not at all the sort of thing you might at first imagine. Auburn-haired, brown-eyed, and rosy-cheeked was this particular Courage; in point of fact, as charming a little maiden as you would meet on a long day's journey, and with Courage for her name. An odd name no doubt you think it. Courage herself did not like it, but the suns of a half-dozen summers and winters had risen for the little lady in question before she could so much as lay claim to any name whatsoever. All that while she was simply known as Baby Masterson. Her father, Hugh Masterson, was foreman in a machine shop over on the west side of the city, and "a very queer man," people said. Probably they were right about it. He was unquestionably a very clever man, and queerness and cleverness seem to go hand-in-hand the world over. He was the author of at least three successful inventions, but, as often happens, others made more money out of them than he. Hugh, nevertheless, did not seem inclined to grumble at this state of affairs. Having a wife whom he loved devotedly and a comfortable home of his own, he felt thoroughly contented and happy. Then when, one bright June morning, Hugh found himself the father of a lovely baby daughter, happy was no name for it, and he was quite beside himself with joy. But, sadly enough, the joy was soon over, for scarcely three months after the baby-life came into the little home the mother-life went out of it, and then it seemed to poor Hugh as though his heart would break. He hired a kind-hearted woman named Mary Duff to care for his baby, and plunged harder than ever into his work, hoping by delving away at all sorts of difficult problems to grow less mindful of his great sorrow; but do what he would, there was always a sense of irreparable loss hanging over him. However, between his work and his sorrow he did often succeed in altogether forgetting his baby. Still the little daughter grew and flourished, apparently none the worse for this neglect. Mary Duff was love and tenderness itself, and it were well for the children if every mother in name were just such a mother at heart. But at last there came a time when Hugh Masterson could no longer fail to notice his baby's charms. She had taken it into her wise little head to grow prettier and prettier, and more and more cunning with every day, till there was no more forgetting of her possible; and first thing her father knew, he found himself thinking of her right in the midst of his work, and then hurrying home through the crowds of laboring people at night, fairly longing for a sight of her. And so it happened that the little girl grew to fill a larger and still larger place in his life, till on her sixth birthday he decided that she really ought to have a name, that little woman beginning strongly to resent the fact that she was known only as Baby Masterson to the small world in which she lived. So when Sunday came, Hugh carried her in his arms up to St. Paul's to be christened. But the name that he gave her! Well, it was not in the least like other little girls' names, as you know. No wonder Mary Duff, who was standing godmother, was more than surprised when she heard it, having simply taken for granted that Baby would be named for her mother. Baby herself was naturally greatly mystified at the whole proceeding.



“UP TO ST. PAUL’S TO BE CHRISTENED.”



“What did you say I had been, papa?” she asked, as with her hand held fast in his she trudged home beside him.

“I said you had been christened, darling.”

“Christened!” she repeated softly, wondering just what the word might mean.

“And did you say I had a name now, papa?”

“Yes, dear; and you think it was time, don't you?”

“I have wanted one for a very long while,” she said, with a little half sigh; “but did you say my name was Courage?”

“Yes, Courage; it's a pretty name, isn't it?”

“I don't know,” rather doubtfully. “Do other little girls have it?”

“No, I believe not; but probably they don't deserve it.”

“I would like to have been named Arabella,” she replied, somewhat aggrieved. “Why did you not let me choose, papa?”

“Why, I never thought of that, Baby; besides, it isn't customary to consult children about what names they shall have—is it, Mary?” turning to Mary Duff, who, because of the narrow flagging, was walking just behind them.

“No, I believe not, Mr. Masterson,” said Mary; “but then, sir, no more is it customary to delay a naming of them till they're old enough to be consulted.”

“Well, I reckon Mary's right about that, Baby, and perhaps I ought to have talked matters over with you; but I can tell you one thing, I never should have consented to Arabella—never in this world. I should say

Arabella was a regular doll name, and not at all suited to a sturdy-limbed little girl like you."

"But there are other beautiful names, papa—Edith and Ethel and Helen! I love Helen." Then suddenly coming to a standstill and eagerly looking up to her father's face, she exclaimed: "Papa, if we hurried back perhaps the minister would un-un-christen me"—proud to have remembered the proper word and evidently comprehending that the rite was a binding one.

"No, I fear not," laughed her father; "but take my word for it, you'll like Courage after a while; it's just the name for you."

"Does it mean something, papa?"

"Yes, something fine. Why, when you grow up, Baby" (for the new name was quite too new for use), "you'll discover that there's nothing finer than courage."

"Is courage something that people have? Have I got it?"

"Some people, dear, and I hope that you have it."

"But why am I named it, if you are not sure, papa?"

"Because then perhaps the name may help you to get it; but the best reason of all is this, that the sight of you, darling, always puts new courage into me and although she did not in the least understand it, Baby felt somehow that that was a beautiful reason, and as her father lifted her up in his arms, gave him a tight little hug and was perfectly satisfied.

"How do you like my new name?" she said, looking over her father's shoulder at Mary.

"Faith, darling," said Mary, taking hold of her little extended hand, "I thought it some queer at the first, but now that I've learned the reason, I think it's an elegant name."

It may be that you do not agree with Mary Duff in this, and yet you must know that it was just because Courage proved to be so well named that there is this little story to tell about her.

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## CHAPTER II.—ON THE WATCH.

At the time of the commencement of our story Courage was twelve years old. To be sure, she was only six over in that little first chapter, but to be quite honest, that wasn't a first chapter at all. It was simply what is termed an introduction, but we did not dare to mention the fact, because, if you will believe it, that is something many people cannot be persuaded to read. So the real story commences with a twelve-year-old Courage standing one May morning on the edge of a wharf at the foot of a West side street. The wind was tossing her auburn hair and winding her little plaid skirt close about her, but was not strong enough by half to blow a sad, wistful look from her brown eyes. Morning after morning she had taken her position at exactly the same spot, and there had sat or stood for hours at a time. The men who worked on the wharf had come to know her, and some of them to wish her a cherry good-morning as she tripped by. It was evident that she was watching for somebody, and that the somebody did not come. After awhile they began to feel sorry for her, and finally one of them—Big Bob they called him—resolved to stroll out to where she was standing that breezy May morning and have a word with her.

"Be yez watchin' for some one, miss?" he said.

"Yes," answered Courage; "I've been watching a great many days."

"That's what the men was a-noticin', miss. Is it for yer father ye're lookin'?"

"No, not for him and there was a sadness in her voice which even the big burly Scotchman was not slow to detect.

"Mayhap ye've no longer a right to be lookin' for him on ony o' this world's waters," said the man, gazing down sympathetically over the ledge of his great folded arms.

Courage bit her lip, and the tears sprang into her eyes, but she managed to answer, "My father died two weeks ago, sir—just two weeks ago to-day," while the man looked the sympathy he could not speak. "That is why I am watching for Larry," Courage added.

"For Larry!" he exclaimed. "Is it for Larry Starr ye're watchin'?"

"Why, yes," said Courage, as though she thought any one should have known that; "do you know him?"

"Of course I do. Every 'longshoreman knows Larry."

"Have you seen him lately?" very eagerly.

"No, not for a twelvemonth; but come to think of it, he often ties up at this very wharf."

"Yes, often," said Courage; "but it's two months now since he's been here, and he never stays away so long as that. You don't think"—she paused a moment, as though afraid to give words to her fears—"you don't think, do you, that he can have died too, somewhere?"

Poor little Courage! with her mother dead since her babyhood and her father lately gone from her, no wonder she felt it more than possible that Larry would never come back.

"Oh, no, miss," said the man reassuringly; "he'd never a-died without our a-hearin' of it; still, it's some old he's a-gettin', is Larry."

"He's a good strong man yet, though," Courage replied, not willing to admit the possibility of waning powers in her hero.

"Faith, and I know he's a good man, miss, and no doubt, too, but his strength will be as his day."

"But you don't know anything about where he is now?" Courage asked rather hopelessly.

"No, not for this twelvemonth, as I was a-tellin' ye; but like as not some of the men has heard some word on him. Gang back wi' me and we'll speir 'em a question or two," whereupon he extended his hand, which Courage took rather reluctantly, it was such a powerful-looking hand; but there proved to be nothing rough in the way it closed over the small brown hand she placed in it. So side by side, in this friendly fashion, they walked up the dock to where the men were unloading a Southern steamer.



UNLOADING A SOUTHERN STEAMER.



"Has ony o' ye heard a word o' Larry Starr o' late?" called Big Bob, but in a tone so different from the one in which he had spoken to Courage, that she gave a little start of surprise, and then hoped he had not seen it. Most of the men shook their heads in the negative. "Niver a wurrud," answered an old Irishman. Indeed, only one of the number made no reply whatsoever, so that Courage thought he could not have heard. It was his place to free the huge iron hook from the bales, after they had been landed on the wharf, and he seemed all absorbed in his work. Fortunately, however, he had heard, and as he stood watching the hook as it slowly swung back aboard of the vessel, he called out, "Yes, I has some word on him, Bob; anybody 'quiring for him?"

"O' course there is, just the verra little leddy what I've here by the hand. If ye'd eyes worth the name, John, ye'd seen her 'fore this!"

"Oh, is it you, miss?" said John, looking for the first time toward Courage, and at once recognizing the little girl who had been so long on the watch. "Well, then, I can tell ye he'll be at this wharf this day week, certain. The Lady Bird's due here on Friday or Saturday, and Larry's under contract to carry part of her cargo down to the stores Monday morning. It's a pity, miss, you hadn't asked me afore, I could a-told you the same any day back for a fortni't. But run down bright and early next Monday morn-in', and take my word for it, you'll find Larry's lighter swinging up to this wharf, as sure as my name's Jack Armstrong."

Courage, meantime, had grown radiant. "Oh, he'll come sooner than that!" she exclaimed exultingly. "He'll tie up Saturday night and spend Sunday with us. He always does that when he has work at this pier for Monday." Then, looking up to Big Bob, she said gratefully, "Thank you very much for finding out for me. I will run right home now and tell Mary Duff," and suiting the action to the word, Courage was at the wharf's end and up the street and out of sight before the slow-moving longshoremen had fairly settled to work again.

Now that Courage was sure that Larry was coming, as sure as though it had been flashed across the blue May sky in letters of silver, all the hours of weary foreboding and waiting were quite forgotten. So true is it, as Celia Thaxter sings in that peerless song of hers, as brave as any bird note, and as sweet:—

```"Dark skies must clear, and when the clouds are past,

```One golden day redeems a weary year."=

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### CHAPTER III.—LARRY COMES.

**S**trange as it still may appear to you that a little girl should have Courage for her name, yet, true it is, that she was no sooner named herself than she had a namesake. It was none of your little baby namesakes either, but a stanch and well-built boat, and one that was generally admitted to be the finest craft of her class in the harbor. The Courage Masterson was what is commonly known as a lighter, and to whom of course did she belong but to Larry Starr, Hugh Masterson's best friend; but she was no common lighter, I can assure you. Larry had given his whole mind to her building, and it was unlike any of the other lighters that make their way up and down the river or out on the bay, with their great cumbersome loads. She had a fine little cabin of her own, a cosey, comfortable cabin, with two state-rooms, if you can give them so



fine a title, opening out of it, and a tiny kitchen beyond, lighted by a small sky-window. All this, as any one knows, was very luxurious, but Larry had put the savings of many years into that boat, and he meant to have it as he liked it. To be sure, the cabin, occupying as it did some twenty square feet, greatly lessened her carrying capacity, for one square foot on the deck of a lighter stands for innumerable square feet of merchandise, which may be piled to almost any height upon it. Larry was quite willing, however, to lose something from the profits of every trip for the sake of the added comfort. But it was six years now since the lighter had been launched, and so it had happened that all that time, while the little girl Courage had been having a variety of experiences on land, the big boat Courage had been sailing under "fair skies and foul" on the water, and safely transporting many a cargo that netted a comfortable living for Larry. And now Saturday afternoon had come, and Courage was down in her old place at the dock's end with a happy certainty in her eyes, and yet with a sorrowful look overshadowing it, for there was such sad news to be told when at last Larry should come, and at last he came.



Courage first thought she discovered a familiar boat away down the river, and then in a moment there was no longer a doubt of it. The lighter, with her one broad sail spread to the wind, came slowly nearer and nearer, and Courage in her eagerness stood way out on the farthest corner of the dock, so that Larry caught sight of her long before she put her two hands to her mouth, trumpet fashion, and called, "Hello there, Larry," at the top of her strong little lungs.

"Hello there, Courage," rang back Larry's cheery answer, as leaning hard against the tiller, he swung his boat into place with the skill of a long-time sailor.

"I knew you'd find out somehow that I was coming," he called, and then in another second he was ashore and had Courage's two hands held fast in his, and was gazing gladly into her face. But instantly the look of greeting in her eyes faded out of them. She could find no words for the sad news she had to tell. Larry was quick to see her trouble, and his voice trembled as he asked, "Why, Courage, child, what has happened?" and then he drew her to a seat beside him on a great beam that flanked the wharf.



"WHY, COURAGE, CHILD, WHAT HAS HAPPENED?"



It was easier to speak, now that she could look away from Larry's expressive face, and she said slowly, "The saddest thing that could happen, Larry. Papa——" and then she could go no further.

"You don't mean that your father is——" but neither could Larry bring himself to voice the fatal, four-lettered little word.

"Yes," said Courage, knowing well enough that he understood her, "nearly three weeks ago. He had typhoid fever, and he tried very hard to get well, and we all tried so hard, Larry—the Doctor and Mary Duff and me—but the fever was the kind that wouldn't break. And then one day papa just said, 'It isn't any use, darling. I'm going to give up the fight and go to your blessed mother, but you need have never a fear, Courage, while Larry Starr is in the world.'"

"Did he say that really?" asked Larry, tears of which he was not ashamed rolling down his bronzed face.

"Yes," said Courage solemnly; "but oh, Larry, I have been waiting here for so many days that I began to think perhaps you would never come, and if you hadn't come, Larry——" and then the recollection of all these hours of watching proved quite too much for her overwrought little frame, and burying her face in her hands on Larry's knee, she cried very bitterly.

"It is best," thought Larry, "to let her have her cry out." Besides he was not sure enough of his own voice to try to comfort her, so he just stroked the auburn hair gently with his strong hand, and said not a word. Meanwhile another old friend had come upon the scene, and stood staring at Larry and Courage with a world of questioning in his eyes. He seemed to have his doubts at first as to the advisability of coming nearer. He discovered, it was evident, that there was trouble in the air. That he was greatly interested, and fully expected to be confided in sooner or later, was also evident from the beseeching way in which he would put his head on one side and then on the other, looking up to Larry, as much as to say, "When are you going to tell me what it is all about?" But never a word from Larry and never a glance from Courage, till at last such ignominious treatment was no longer to be borne, and walking slowly up, he also laid his head upon Larry's knee. Courage felt something cold against her cheek and started up to find a pair of wonderfully expressive eyes raised beseechingly to hers. "Oh, Bruce, old fellow," she cried, "I forgot all about you," and then, flinging her arms about his neck, she literally dried her tears on his beautiful silky coat. But Bruce would not long be content with mere passive acceptance of affection, and in another second rather rudely shook himself free from her grasp, and began springing upon her, so that she had to jump to her feet and cry, "Down, Bruce," three or four times before he would mind her; but Bruce was satisfied. Things could not have come to such a terrible pass if it took no more than that to make Courage seem her old self again, and finally, concluding that she really said "Down, Bruce," quite as though she meant it, he decided to give his long legs a good run, and call on an old collie friend of his who picked up a living on Pier 17. Never, however, had visit of sympathetic friend proved as timely as this call of Bruce's. With what infinite tact had he first sympathized with and then tried to cheer his little friend! And he had succeeded, for both Larry and Courage now found themselves able to talk calmly of all that had happened, and of what had best be done.

"So you would like to come on the lighter with me for the summer," said Larry somewhat doubtfully, after they had been conferring for some time together, and yet with his old face brightening at the thought.

Courage simply nodded her head in the affirmative, but her eyes said, "Oh, wouldn't I, Larry," as plainly as words.

"And Mary Duff thinks it would be all right, too?"

"The very best thing for the summer, Larry."

"Well then, bless your heart, you shall come; but how about next winter? Why, then I suppose I shall have to send you away to a school somewhere."

Courage shrugged her shoulders rather ruefully.

"Perhaps," she said; "but next winter's a long way off."

"That's so," said Larry, every whit as glad of the fact as was Courage herself. "And you said," he continued, "that Mary Duff is going to care for that little lame Joe of John Osborne's."

"Yes," Courage answered, "though Mr. Osborne can't afford to pay her anything, as papa did for me; but she says she doesn't mind; if she only has her home and her board she can manage, and that it's just her life to care for motherless little children that need her."

"Ah! but that Mary Duff's a good woman," said Larry, and Courage mutely shook her head from side to side, as though it were quite hopeless to so much as attempt to tell how very good she was.

After awhile Larry went down to the boat to give some directions to his cabin-boy, Dick, and Courage went with him. When that was completed, a long shrill whistle brought Bruce bounding from some mysterious quarter, and the three started up the dock. The 'longshoremen were just quitting work as they neared them, and Larry paused to have a word with Big Bob and the other men whom he knew, Courage keeping fast hold of his hand all the while.

"Now she's got him she don't mean to let him go," said one of the men as they passed on.

"I'd like to be in Larry's shoes, then," muttered Big Bob, who led rather a lonely life of it, and would have been only too glad to have had such a little girl as Courage confided to his keeping.



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## CHAPTER IV.—MISS JULIA.

It was "high noon" in New York, as our English cousins say, but in a wider sense than our English cousins use it. Not only was it twelve by the clock, with the sun high in the heavens, flooding the streets with brilliant sunshine, but the whole city apparently was in the highest spirits. The sidewalks were alive with gayly dressed people, gayly liveried carriages rolled up and down the avenue, violets and lilacs were for sale at the flower-stands, and the children were out in crowds for an airing.

Here a little group of them, with unspeakable longing in their hearts, surrounded a grimy man who had snow-white puppies for sale; there another and larger group watched a wonderful ship in a glass case, riding angular green waves which rose and fell with the regularity of a pendulum, and some of them furtively glanced up now and then, with eyes full of astonished admiration, to the gray-bearded man who claims the honor of the invention.

But notwithstanding it was Saturday, with half the world bent on a holiday, and schools as a rule at a discount, there was one school over on the West side that threw open its doors to an eager company of scholars. It was a school where the children came because they loved to come, and no wonder. You had only to see the teachers to understand it. They were lovely-looking girls, with their bright, wide-awake faces and becoming, well-fitting dresses; enthusiastic, earnest girls, thoroughly abreast of the times, interested in everything, and fond of all that is high and ennobling—working in the sewing school this afternoon, attractive matinées notwithstanding, and talking it over in some bright circle this evening; girls, the very sight of whom must somehow have done good to the very dullest little maids upon their roll books. But queen among even this peerless company reigned "Miss Julia," the superintendent, or whatever the proper name may be for the head teacher. She was lovely to look at, and lovely in spirit, and beyond that it is useless to attempt description, so impossible is it to put into words the indefinable charm that won every one to her. But with the bright May Saturday, about which we are writing, the afternoon for closing the school had come, and there was a wistful expression on the faces of many of the children. Not that they were exactly anxious to stitch on and on through the spring-time, when every healthy little body loves out-of-door life and lots of it, but no sewing school meant no Miss Julia; so, with reason, they looked less glad than sorry.

Miss Julia, as was her custom, had started in abundance of time from her old-fashioned home in Washington Square, but not too early, it seemed, to find at a corner near the chapel where the school was held, half a dozen little girls already on the look-out. As soon as they spied her they flocked down the street to meet her, and then with her in their midst flocked back again. Presently, in twos and threes, the young teachers began to arrive, and soon it was time to open the school and to settle down to the last day's lesson.

Courage Masterson happened to be in Miss Julia's own class, and was ordinarily a most apt little scholar; but on this particular Saturday her thoughts seemed to be everywhere rather than on her work; indeed, she had to rip out almost every stitch taken, until Miss Julia wondered what could have happened. Afterward, when the children had said their good-byes and gone home, and the teachers, with the exception of Miss Julia, had all left the building, Courage, who had been standing unnoticed in one corner, rushed up to her, burying her red-brown curls in the folds of her dress and sobbing fit to break her heart.

"Why, Courage, dear, what is the matter?" and Miss Julia, sitting down on one of the benches, drew Courage into her lap. "I was afraid all the lesson that something had gone wrong. Poor child! have you some new sorrow to bear?"

"No, Miss Julia; I am going to do just what I want to do most; I am going to live on a boat; but, oh! I can't bear to go away from you and Mary Duff."

"Going away, and to live on a boat! why, how is that, Courage?" and then as Courage explained all the plans, and how she was to spend the whole summer out on the bay with "Larry, the goodest man that ever was," her sad little face gradually grew bright again.

"Look here," said Miss Julia, after they had been talking a long while together, "I am sure"—and then she paused and looked Courage over quite carefully—"yes, I am sure I have something that will be just the thing for you now that you are to be so much on the water; wait here for a moment," and going into a little room that opened from the chapel, she immediately returned with something in her hands that made Courage open her eyes for wonder. It was a beautiful astrachan-trimmed blue coat, with a wide-brimmed hat to match. They had belonged to a little niece of Miss Julia's—a little niece who no longer had need for any earth-made garment, and so here they were in Miss Julia's hands awaiting some new child-ownership.

She had already thought of Courage Masterson as one to whom they would prove not only useful but becoming, and yet had feared to excite the envy of the other children. But if Courage was going away, that settled it; she should have them; for in that case her less fortunate little sisters need never be the wiser. So Miss Julia gladly held them up to view, for she dearly loved little Courage, while Courage, incredulous, exclaimed: "For me? Oh, Miss Julia!" and proceeded to don the coat and hat with the alacrity of a little maid appreciative of their special prettiness. Then what did the little witch do but run post-haste to the rear of the chapel, mount the high and slippery organ-bench, and have a peep into the mirror above it. Miss Julia could not keep from smiling, but said, as she came running back: "It does look nicely on you, Courage, but you must not let it make you vain, darling."

"Was it vain to want to see how it looked?"

"No, Courage; I don't believe it was."

"I'm glad I did see just once, though, because, Miss Julia, I guess it will not do for me to have it," and Courage reluctantly began to unfasten the pretty buttons.

"Not do for you to have it! Why, Courage dear, what do you mean?"

"It is so bright-looking, Miss Julia. Even this curly black stuff doesn't darken it much (admiringly smoothing the astrachan trimming with both little hands), and one of the girls said to-day in the class that 'orphans as had any heart always wore black.' At any rate, she said she shouldn't think if I had loved my father *very* much I'd wear a gay ribbon like this in my hair," whereupon Courage produced a crumpled red bow from the recesses of a pocket to which it had been summarily banished; "So, of course, Miss Julia, it would be dreadful to wear a blue coat like this. It's queer Mary Duff never told me about orphans wearing black always."

"But they do not always wear it, Courage. It seems sad to me to see a child in black, and I think Mary Duff did just right in not putting you into mourning."

"Into mourning?" queried Courage.

"Yes; into black dresses, I mean, because some one had died."

Courage looked critically at Miss Julia, noticing for the first time that her dress was black, and that even the little pin at her throat was black, too.

"Why, Miss Julia," she said, her voice fairly trembling with the surprise of the discovery, "you are in mourning!"

"Yes, Courage."

"And did somebody die, Miss Julia?"

"Some one I loved very much."

"Long ago?" and Courage came close to the low bench, and lovingly laid her hand upon Miss Julia's shoulder.

"Yes, very long ago."

"Not your father or mother, was it?"

"No, darling."

"And you mind still?" ruefully shaking her head from side to side.

"Yes, Courage; I shall always mind, as you call it, but I am no longer miserable and unhappy—that is, not very often, and one reason is that all you little girls here in the school have grown so dear to me. But about the coat; you must surely keep it. I scarcely believe your father would like to have seen his little girl all in black; and besides, black does not seem to belong with that brave little name of yours."

Courage stood gazing into Miss Julia's face with a puzzled look in her eyes, as though facing the troublesome question. Then suddenly diving again into her spacious pocket—a feature to be relied upon in connection with Mary Duff's dressmaking—and evidently discovering what she sought, she said, eagerly: "Miss Julia, will you wait here a moment?"

"Certainly, dear; but what are you up to?" Courage, however, had no time to explain, and with the blue coat flying out behind her, darted from the chapel, across the street, into a little thread-and-needle store, and was back again in a flash, carrying a thin flimsy package. Hastily unwrapping it, she disclosed a yard of black ribbon, which she thrust into Miss Julia's hands.

"What is this for, Courage?"

In her excitement Courage simply extended her left arm with a "Tie it round, please," indicating the place with her right hand. Miss Julia wonderingly did as she was bid.



"You tie a lovely bow," said Courage, twisting her neck to get a look at it. "You know why I have it, don't you?" Miss Julia looked doubtful. "It's my mourning for papa. I have seen soldiers with something black tied

round their arms because some other soldier had died, haven't you?"

"Oh, that is it," said Miss Julia, very tenderly.

"Yes, that is it; and now you see I don't mind how bright the coat is—the little bow tells how I miss him. Will you just take a stitch in it, please, so that it will stay on all summer?"

So Miss Julia reopened her little sewing-bag, and the stitches were taken, and a few moments later Courage was on her way home, proud enough of the beautiful coat and hat, and eager to show them to Mary Duff, and yet sad at heart, too, for she had said good-bye to "Miss Julia."

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## CHAPTER V.—SYLVIA.

There had been a week of active preparation, and now everything was ready, and Mary Duff and Courage, seated on a new little rope-bound trunk, were waiting for Larry to come. The house looked sadly forlorn and empty, for Mary had sold most of the furniture, that the money it brought might be put in the bank for Courage, and the only thing yet to be done was to hand over the keys to the new tenant expecting to take possession on the morrow. Mary had intentionally arranged matters in just this fashion. It was not going to be an easy thing to say good-bye to the little girl she had so lovingly cared for since her babyhood, and she knew well enough that to come back alone to the old home would half break her heart; therefore she had wisely planned that it should be "good-bye" to Courage and "how do you do" to little lame Joe in as nearly the same breath as possible.

At last there came a knock at the door, and Courage bounded to open it. Bruce, unmannerly fellow, crowded in first, and after Bruce, Larry, and after Larry—what? who? A most remarkable-looking object, with tight curling hair braided fine as a rope into six funny little pig-tails, with skin but a shade lighter than her coal-black eyes, and with a stiffly starched pink calico skirt standing out at much the same angle as the pig-tails. Mary Duff apparently was not in the least surprised at this apparition, but Courage stared in wide-eyed wonder. "Oh, isn't she funny?" were the words that sprang to her lips, but too considerate to give them utterance, she simply asked, "Who is she, Larry?"

"This is Sylvia," said Larry; "Sylvia, this is Miss Courage," whereupon Sylvia gave a little backward kick with one foot, which she meant to have rank as a bow.

"And who is Sylvia?" in a friendly voice that went straight to Sylvia's heart.

"She's to be company for you on the lighter, Courage, and a little maid of all work besides."

"Spesh'ly I'se to wash up," Sylvia volunteered, beaming from ear to ear.

"What do you mean?" asked Courage, with considerable dignity, seeming to realize at a bound the relation of mistress and maid.

"Mean dat on boats dere's allers heaps an' heaps to wash up—pots an' kittles an' dishes an' lan' knows what—an' dat me's de one dat's gwine do it. A-washin' of demselves is all de washin' dat's 'spected of dose little lily white han's, Miss Courage, case de Cap'n say so—didn't yer, Cap'n?" whereupon Sylvia gave a marvellous little pirouette on one foot, that made pigtails and skirt describe a larger circle than ever.

"Yes, that's what I said," answered Larry, rather taken aback by this performance, and wondering if he had gotten more than he had bargained for in this sable little specimen, chosen somewhat at random from the half dozen presented for his inspection at an asylum the day before. But Courage had no fears, and saw in anticipation delightful opportunities for no end of fun, and, when it should be needed, for a little patronizing discipline. Meanwhile Bruce, who seemed unquestionably worried as to what sort of a move was pending, had made his way out of doors, and taken up his stand near the boy who stood in waiting with a hand-cart, ready to carry the trunk to the boat. When at last the trunk was in the cart, with Sylvia's bundle atop of it, and it became evident that the little party were actually on their way to the lighter, his delight knew no bounds, and he flew round and round after his tail, as a relief to his exuberant feelings.

Courage kept tight hold of Mary Duff's hand all the way. Of course it was going to be lovely out on the water all summer, and with Larry; but oh, how she wished Mary was to be there too! But that always seemed to be the way somehow—something very nice and something very sad along with it. Glancing ahead to Sylvia, who, with a jolly little swing of her own, was trotting along at the side of the cart, steadying her bundle with a very black hand, Courage wondered if she had found it so too, and resolved some day to ask her.

The good-byes were said rather hurriedly at the last. Mary Duff first went down into the cabin with Courage and helped to unpack her trunk. Then, when finally there was nothing more for her to do, there was just a good hard hug and two or three very hard kisses, and then you might have seen a familiar figure disappearing around the nearest corner of the dock, and Mary Duff was gone. As soon as she was out of sight she stopped a moment and wiped the tears from her eyes with a corner of her shawl, for they were fairly blinding her, and then hurried right on to the little cripple, to whom her coming was to prove the very most blessed thing that had ever happened. As for Courage, she went to her own little room and had a good cry there, and though neither of them knew of the other's tears, the skies soon looked clearer to them both. But there was one pair of eyes in which tears were not for a moment to be thought of. Tears! with the great orphan asylum left behind and all the delights of life on that beautiful boat opening out before her? No indeed! Let Miss Courage have her little cry out if she must, but for Sylvia, a face wreathed in smiles so broad as to develop not unfrequently into an audible chuckle. And so while Courage was trying to get herself in hand, for she did not want Larry to know how badly she felt, Sylvia, acting under orders, was as busy as could be, setting the table in the cabin, and making supper ready in the tiny kitchen.

When Courage again came on deck, the lighter had cleared the wharf and was well out upon the river. Larry was at the helm, and she made her way straight to him and slipped her hand in his, as much as to say, "I'm yours now, you know, Larry," and Larry gave it a tight little squeeze, as much as to say, "Yes, I know you are, dear," and they understood each other perfectly, though not a word was spoken.

"Don't you think I had better call you uncle or something instead of just Larry?" said Courage after she had stood silently at his side for ever so many minutes.

"Why?" asked Larry, amused at the suggestion.

"Oh, because it doesn't seem right for a child like me to call you by your first name. I should have thought that they would have taught me different."

"Oh, bless your heart, Courage! nobody taught you what to call me..You just took up 'Larry' of yourself in the cutest sort of a way, and before you could say half-a-dozen words to your name, and now to tack an uncle on to it after all these years would sound mighty queer, and I shouldn't like it."

"Well, then, we'll just let it be Larry always," and indeed Courage herself was more than willing to have things remain as they were. As for Sylvia, she soon decided that her one form of address for Larry should be "my Cap'n," for was he not in very truth *her* captain by grace of his choice of her from among all the other little colored orphans whom he might have taken? Indeed, Sylvia fairly seemed to revel in the two-lettered personal pronoun, for if there is a Saxon word for which the average institution child has comparatively little use it is that word *my*. Where children are cared for by the hundreds, *my* and *me* and *mine* and all that savors of the individual are almost perforce lost sight of. No wonder, then, when Sylvia said "my Cap'n," it was in a tone implying a most happy sense of ownership, and as though it stood for the "my father" and "my mother" and all the other "mys" of more fortunate little children.

At last Sylvia's supper was ready, and before announcing the fact, she stood a moment, arms akimbo, taking a critical survey of her labors. Then, convinced that nothing had been forgotten, she cleared the cabin stairs at a bound, and beckoning to Larry and Courage, called out excitedly, "Come 'long dis minute, please, 'fore it all gets cold."

Larry, who had many misgivings as to the result of his protegee's first efforts, was greatly surprised on reaching the cabin to find a most tempting little table spread out before them, but it was hard to tell whether surprise or indignation gained the mastery in the eyes of astonished Courage. That the table looked most attractive no one could for a moment deny, but what most largely contributed thereto was a glorious bunch of scarlet geraniums, to compass which Sylvia had literally stripped a double row of plants standing in the cabin window of every flower. These plants had been Mary Duff's special pride for several seasons, and she herself had carefully superintended their transportation in a wheelbarrow to the lighter the day before.



MARY DUFF'S SPECIAL PRIDE.



Who could marvel, then, that the tears came unbidden, as Courage at one glance took in the whole situation—the elaborate decorations, the sadly despoiled plants.

"Oh, Sylvia, how could you?" was all she found words to say. Poor Sylvia, never more surprised in her life, stood aghast for a moment, looking most beseechingly to Larry. Then a possibility dawned upon her.

"Am it dem posies, Miss Courage?" and the question let the light in on Larry's bewildered mind.

"Of course I mean the flowers," said Courage, laying one hand caressingly on a poor little dismantled plant. "You have not left a single one, and I wouldn't have had you pick them for all the world."

"But I was 'bliged to, Miss Courage," with all the aplomb of a conscientious performance of duty.

"Obliged to?" and then it seemed to occur simultaneously to Larry and Courage that they had possibly secured the services of a veritable little lunatic.

"Yes, Miss Courage; hab you neber hearn tell of a kitchen garden?"

"Never," said Courage; and now she and Larry exchanged glances as to the certainty of Sylvia's mental condition.

"Well, I'se a kitchen-garden grajate," Sylvia announced with no little pride.

"Bless my stars! if you're not a stark little idiot," muttered Larry under his breath, but fortunately Sylvia was too absorbed to hear.

"Well, dere ain't much you kin tell a kitchen-garden grajate," she continued complacently, "'bout setting tables and sich like. Dere's questions and answers 'bout eberyting, you know, an' when Miss Sylvester ses, 'What must yer hab in de middle ob de table?' the answer is, 'Fruit or flowers so as there wasn't no fruit, why —' and Sylvia, pausing abruptly, gave a little shrug of her shoulders, and with a grandiloquent gesture, pointed to the geraniums, as though further words were superfluous.

"Oh, I didn't understand," said Courage, for both she and Larry were beginning to comprehend the situation, and a little later on, when they had had time to realize more fully the careful arrangement of the table, to say nothing of the tempting dishes themselves, they were ready to pronounce the little lunatic of a few moments previous a veritable treasure. The ham was done "to a turn;" the fried potatoes were deliciously crisp; dainty little biscuits fairly melted in your mouth; the coffee was perfection, and Sylvia sat beaming and radiant, for there was no lack of openly expressed appreciation.

"What did you say you were, Sylvia?" asked Courage during the progress of the meal.

"Oh, I didn't say I was nuffin 't all," nervously fearing that in some unconscious way she might again have offended her new little mistress.

"Yes, you did, don't you know?" pretending not to notice the nervousness. "It was something nice to be; it began with kitchen."

"Oh, yes," said Sylvia, much relieved, "a kitchen-garden grajate. Want to see my di-diplomer?" including both Larry and Courage in one glance as she spoke. Wholly mystified as to what the article might be, both of course nodded yes, whereupon Sylvia, plunging one little black fist down the neck of her dress, vainly endeavored to bring something to the surface.

"It kinder sticks," she explained confidentially, but in another second a shining medal attached to a blue ribbon came flying out with appalling momentum. "Dere now," she said, giving a backward dive through the encircling ribbon, "dat's what I got for larning all dere was to larn."

Courage took the medal and examined it. It was made of some bright metal, and was stamped with the figure of a girl with a broom in her hand. Across the top were the words "Kitchen Garden," and on a little scroll at the bottom the name Sylvia Sylvester.

"Why do they call it a kitchen garden?" asked Courage, passing the medal on for Larry's inspection; "it's an awful funny name."

"Glory knows! ain't no sense in it, I reckon."

"And that medal," added Courage, "was a sort of a prize for doing things better than the others, wasn't it?"

"No, Miss Courage, dat's a reg'lar diplomer. All de chillens in de school had 'em when, dey grajated."

Courage looked appealingly toward Larry, to see if he knew what she meant, and Larry looked just as appealingly to Courage. The truth was, Sylvia had the best of them both. To be sure, she used a pronunciation of her own, but it was near enough to the original to have suggested graduate and diploma to minds in anywise familiar with the articles.

"And did they teach you to cook in the kitchen garden?" Courage asked, feeling that she must remain quite hopelessly in the dark regarding the words in question.

"No, dat was an extry. One ob de lady man'gers, Miss Caxton, teached us de cookin'. She was a lubly lady—sich a kind face, and sich daisy gray haar, and allers so jolly. She came twic't a week, case she was dat fond ob cookin' and liked chillens. She ses black skins didn't make no difference. One ob dese days I'se gwine to write down for yer all de dishes what she teached how to cook."

And so the first meal aboard the lighter fared on, and before it was over Larry made up his mind that as soon as he could afford it he would send five dollars to the orphan asylum and a letter besides, in which he would warmly express his approval of an institution that sent its little waifs out into the world so well equipped for rendering valuable service.

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## CHAPTER VI.—ABOARD THE LIGHTER.



It took such a very little while for Courage to feel perfectly contented and at home on the boat, that she was more than half inclined to take herself to task for a state of things which would seem to imply disloyalty to Mary Duff. As for Sylvia, she felt at home from the very first minute, and was constantly brimming over with delight. Nor was Larry far below the general level of happiness, for work seemed almost play with Courage ever at his side. As for Larry's boy, Dick, of a naturally mournful turn of mind, he too seemed carried along, quite in spite of himself, on the tide of prevailing high spirits. On more than one occasion he was known to laugh outright at some of Sylvia's remarkable performances, though always, it must be confessed, in deprecatory fashion, as though conscious of a perceptible loss of dignity. And who would not have been happy in that free, independent life they were leading! To be sure, there were discomforts. Sometimes, when the lighter was tied to a steaming Wharf all day, the sun would beat mercilessly down upon them, but then they could always look forward to the cool evening-out upon the water; and so happily it seemed to be in everything—a hundred delights to offset each discomfort. Even for Larry and Dick, when work was hardest and weather warmest, there was a sure prospect of the yellow pitcher of iced tea, which Courage never failed to bring midway in the long morning, and then at the end of the day the leisurely, comfortable dinner, for they were quite aristocratic in their tastes, this little boat's company.



“WHEN WORK WAS HARDEST,”



No noon dinner for them, with Larry in workaday clothes and the stove in the tiny kitchen piping its hottest at precisely the hour when its services could best be dispensed with, but a leisurely seven-o'clock dinner, with the lighter anchored off shore, and when, as a rule, Dick also had had time to “tidy up,” and could share the meal with them. And in this, you see, they were not aristocratic at all. Even little black Sylvia had a seat at one side of the table, which she occupied as continuously as her culinary duties would admit.

One night, when Larry stood talking to a friend on the wharf, Courage and Sylvia overheard him say, “They're a darned competent little pair, I can tell you.” Now, of course, this was rather questionable English for a respectable old man like Larry, but he intended it for the highest sort of praise, and the children could hardly help being pleased.

“Larry oughtn't to use such words,” said Courage.

“But den I specs he only mean dat we jes' knows how to do tings,” said Sylvia apologetically; and as that was exactly what Larry did mean, we must forgive him the over-expressive word; besides they were, in point of fact, the most competent pair imaginable.

Early every morning, when near the city, Dick would bring the lighter alongside a wharf, and Courage and

Sylvia would set off for the nearest market, Sylvia carrying a basket, and always wearing a square of bright plaid gingham knotted round her head. There was no remembrance for her of father or of mother, or of much that would have proved dear to her warm little heart, but tucked away in a corner of her memory were faint recollections of a Southern fish market, with the red snapper sparkling in the morning sunlight, and the old mammies, in bandana turbans, busy about their master's marketing; and as though to make the best of this shadowy recollection, Sylvia insisted upon the turban accompaniment to the basket.



OFF FOR THE NEAREST MARKET.



Then, after the marketing, came the early breakfast; and after that, for Courage, the many nameless duties of every housekeeper, whether big or little; and for Sylvia the homelier tasks of daily recurrence; but fortunately she did not deem them homely. Why should she, when pretty Miss Sylvester, as perfect a lady as could be, herself had taught her how to do them, every one? Nor was this work, so dignified by the manner and method of teaching, performed in silence. Every household task had its appropriate little song, and the occasions were rare on which Sylvia did not make use of them.=

``Washing dishes, washing dishes, suds are hot, suds are hot,

``Work away briskly, work away briskly, do not stop, do not stop,"=

was the refrain that would greet the ear first thing after breakfast, followed by=

```First the glasses, rinse them well, rinse them well,

```If you do them nicely, all can tell, all can tell,"=

and so on *ad infinitum*.

Then, after everything had been gotten into "ship-shape" condition, came the mending, of which there seemed to be an unending supply. Tarry and Dick were certainly very hard on their clothes, and when, once a week, Dick brought the heaping basketful aboard from the washer-woman, who lived at the Battery, Courage and Sylvia knew that needles and thimbles would need to be brought into active requisition.

Then, in odd hours, there was studying and reading, and whenever they could manage it, a little visit to be paid to Mary Duff. In addition to all this, Courage had taken upon herself one other duty, for big, fifteen-year-old Dick did not so much as know his letters. He one day blushing confessed the fact to Courage, who indeed had long suspected it, with tears in his honest blue eyes. Dick's mother—for that is what she was, though most unworthy of the name—had shoved him out of the place he called home when he was just a mere slip of a lad, and since then it had been all he could manage simply to make a living for himself, with never a

moment for schooling. But a happier day had dawned. No sooner was Courage assured of his benighted condition than she won his everlasting gratitude by setting about to mend it. Their first need, of course, was a primer, and they immediately found one ready to the hand, or rather to the *eye*, for it could not be treated after the fashion of ordinary primers.

There were only seven letters in it, five capitals and two small ones, and the large letters were fully ten feet high. It did not even commence with an A, but C came first, and then R; then another R, followed by a little o and a little f; and after that a large N and a large J. Indeed, C. R. R. of N. J. was all there was to it, for the letters were painted on a depot roof that happened to be in full sight on the evening when Dick commenced his lessons. And so Dick finally mastered the entire alphabet by the aid of the great signs in the harbor, and do you think they ever rendered half such worthy service?

This, then, was the story of the uneventful days as they dawned one after the other, until at last May yielding place to June, and June to July, Saturday, the first day of August, came in by the calendar, ran through its midsummer hours, and then sank to rest in the cradle of a wonderful sunset. It was such a sunset as sometimes glorifies the bay and the river, and will not be overlooked. Long rays of gold and crimson shot athwart even the narrowest and darkest cross streets of the city, compelling every one who had eyes to see and feet to walk upon to come out and enjoy its beauty; while a blaze of light, falling full upon the myriad windows of Brooklyn Heights, suggested the marvellous golden city of the Revelation. Full in the wake of all this glory, and just to the southeast of Bedloe's Island, Larry had moored the lighter. It was a favorite anchorage with all the little boat's company.



A FAVORITE ANCHORAGE.



"The Statue of Liberty", standing out so grandly against the western sky, and with the light of her torch shining down all night upon them, seemed always a veritable friend and protector.

To-morrow, perhaps, they would touch at Staten Island, and locking the cabin, "all hands" repair to a little church they loved well at New Brighton; or, should it prove a very warm day, they might have a little service of their own on board instead, sailing quite past the church and as far down the bay as the Bell Buoy.

But for the present there was nothing to be done but watch the sun set, so they sat together in the lee of the cabin, silently thinking their own thoughts as the sun went down. Courage had on the blue coat and hat, and from the wistful look in her eyes, might easily have been thinking of Miss Julia. Larry sat looking at Courage more, perhaps, than at the sunset, and his face was grave and sad. Courage had noticed that it had often been so of late, and wondered what could be the trouble. After awhile Larry slowly strolled off by himself to the bow of the boat, and Courage gazed anxiously after him; then, turning to Dick, she said with a sigh, "We had better have a lesson now, Dick."

"Ay, ay," answered Dick, always glad of the chance.

"It's too dark for a book," Courage added, "but there's a good sign;" whereupon Dick set himself to master two large-lettered words over on the Jersey shore, one of which looked rather formidable.

"Begin with the last word, Dick. You've had it before."

"D-o-c-k—dock, of course."

"Now the first word. Try to make it out yourself."

Dick shrugged his shoulders, for it was rather a jump to a word of three syllables, but success at last crowned his efforts. "National Docks!" he exclaimed, with the delight of unaided discovery, feeling as though the attainment had added a good square inch to his height. Then came another sign with the one word Storage, but that was easy, for "Prentice Stores" had been achieved the day before off the Brooklyn warehouses, and it was only a step from one word to the other. Finally, when there were no new signs to conquer, Courage began a sort of review, from memory, of all they had been over. In the midst of it Sylvia suddenly ran to the side of the boat, arched one black hand over her eyes that she might see the more clearly, and then flew back again.

"Dat horrid statue boy is comin'," she cried excitedly; "I thought it looked like him, an' if onct he gets a foot on dis boat he'll keep comin', he will; I knowed him."

"I don't see that you can help it, though," laughed Courage; "you can't tell him that we just don't want to have anything to do with him."

Sylvia looked perplexed, but only for a moment; then, indulging in one of those remarkable pirouettes with which she was accustomed to announce the advent of a happy thought, she ran back again to the boat's edge.

Meanwhile every dip of the oars was bringing the objectionable boy nearer, and a horrid boy he was, if one

may be permitted to speak quite honestly. Dick and Sylvia had made his undesirable acquaintance one evening when Larry had sent them to the island to learn the right time. He was the son of one of the men employed to care for the statue, and was, alas! every whit as disagreeable in manners as in looks, which is not to put the case mildly.

"Hello, Miss Woolly-head!" he called, bringing his boat to the lighter's side, and tossing a rope aboard, which Miss Woolly-head was supposed to catch, but didn't, so that the boat veered off again.

"What's the name of your little missus?" called the boy, apparently not in the least nonplussed by his rather chilling reception. The knowledge that Sylvia had a little "missus" had been obtained by means of several leading questions which had characterized the young gentleman's first interview with Sylvia and Dick, and which they had regarded as the very epitome of rudeness.

"Dis yere lighter is called for my missus," said Sylvia, "so you kin jes' read her name dere on de do' plate," pointing to the lettering at the bow of the boat, "an den again, mebbe you can't," she chuckled.

It looked as though the statue boy "couldn't," for he did not so much as glance toward the bow, as he added, "Well, it's your missus I want to see, and not you, you little black pickaninny."

"Dat's all right, sah," and Sylvia folded her arms aggressively, "but you can't see her."

"Ain't she in?"

"Yes, she's in, but she begs to be excused." This last in the most impressive manner possible.

Dick and Courage, who were sitting just out of sight, looked at each other and almost laughed outright. What remarkable phrases Sylvia seemed always to have at her tongue's end! Indeed, Dick did not know at all what was meant by the fine phrase, but fortunately the statue boy did—that is after a moment or two of reflection.

"So she don't want to see me," he said, sullenly adjusting his oars with considerable more noise than was necessary; "well, no more then do I want to see her. I ain't no mind to stay where I ain't wanted, but I reckon it's the last time you'll be 'lowed to anchor your old scow over the line without there being a row about it," and with this parting rejoinder their would-be caller beat a welcome retreat.

"Oh, Sylvia, how did you happen to think to say that?" laughed Courage.

"Why, dat's what you must allers say when anybody calls. Dey teached it in a game in de Kitchen Garden. We all stood up in a ring, an' a girl came an' knocked on yer back and axed, 'Is Mis' Brown to home?' Den you turn roun' an' say, 'Mis' Brown are to home, but begs to be excused,' and den it was yer turn to be de caller and knock on some other girl's back."

"But, Sylvia, if Mrs. Brown wanted to see the caller what would you say?"

"I don' prezachly recommember. I mos'ly likes de excused one de bes'."

Meantime Dick made his way to Larry.

"Did you know we were anchored inside the line?" he said. Larry stood up to take his bearings. "Why, so we are," with evident annoyance, for Larry prided himself on his observance of harbor rules.



A FAIR-WEATHER PILOT.

"And I guess we've done it before," added Dick; "the boy from the island there said it would be the last time we'd be 'lowed to do it."

"And it ought to be," for Larry was thoroughly out of patience with himself; "we'll show 'em we meant to obey orders anyway. Let go her anchor, Dick," and then in a moment the big sail, that had been furled for the night, was spread to the wind once more, and the Courage Masterson was running out upon the bay, that she might swing in again and anchor at the proper distance from the island.

"What's up, I wonder," said Sylvia, starting to her feet when she felt the lighter in motion. "Oh, I know; Dick's told Larry we were anchored too near," and she settled down again in the most comfortable position imaginable, on the rug beside Courage.

"Tell me, Sylvia, what is your other name?" Courage asked after a little pause; "I've been meaning to ask you this ever so long. I think it was on the medal, but I do not remember it."

"Sylvester," said Sylvia complacently, smoothing out her gingham apron. "Sylvy Sylvester; dose two names hitch togedder putty tol'ble, don't dey, Miss Courage?"

"Yes, they go beautifully together; that's why you're named Sylvia, of course."

Sylvia shook her head. "No, dat's why I'se named Sylvester." Courage looked puzzled. "I'se named arter Miss Sylvester, one ob de Kitchen Garden ladies."

"But, Sylvia, children can only have their first names given to them; they're born to their last names."

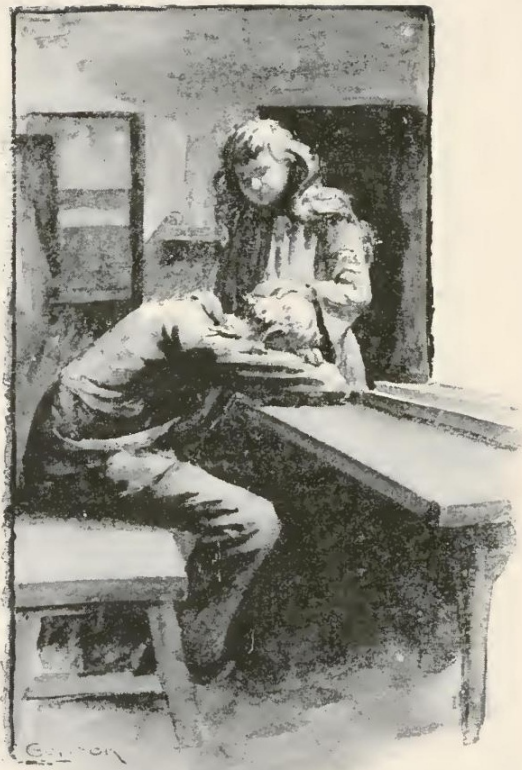
"Dis chile wa'nt, Miss Courage; leastways nobody didn't know at de 'sylum what name I was bawn to, cep'n jes' Sylvy, so I picked mine out mysel'. One day I went to Miss Sylvester an' sez, kind o' mischievous, 'How do yer like yer namesake?' 'Ain't got none, Sylvy,' sez she. 'Yes you hab,' I done told her. 'It's ten year old an' its black, but I hope yer don't mind, 'case it's me.' An' she didn't mind a bit, jes' as I knowed she wouldn't, and she sez some beautiful 'things 'bout as I mus' 'allers be a honor to the name, an' arter dat she gimme two books, wid Sylvy Sylvester wrote into 'em, from her everlastin' friend an' well-wisher, Mary Sylvester. Youse done seen dose two books on my table, Miss Courage. One's called—" but the sentence was not finished. Something happened just then that made both children spring to their feet and hold their breath for fear of what was coming. A few minutes before they had noticed that one of the large Sandy Hook boats seemed to be bearing down upon them, and that to all appearances they were directly in her track. But their faith in Larry was supreme. He would surely manage to get out of the way in time, but alas! they were mistaken, for the great boat came looming up like a mountain beside them, and in another second there was a deafening, heart-sickening crash, and splintering of timbers. Sylvia gave one piercing, terrified scream, while she and Courage clung as for their lives to the coping of the cabin roof. And indeed it was a terrible moment. The force of the collision sent the lighter careening so much to one side that it seemed for an instant hopeless that she could possibly right herself; and oh! low frightful to go down, down into that cruel dark water; but then in another instant she swung violently to the other side, and they knew that the danger of capsizing was over, though the boat was still rocking like a cradle. Then they saw the captain of the St. Johns come hurrying to the deck-rail, and heard him angrily call out, "Man alive there, are you drunk?"

"No, I'm not drunk," Larry answered, from where he stood, pale and trembling, leaning heavily against the tiller.

"Not drunk? Then you're too green a hand to be minding a helm in salt water. Only for our reversed engines you'd not have a shingle under you."

Larry made no reply; Courage, still holding Sylvia by the hand, looked daggers at the man. To think of any one daring to speak like that to good old Larry. Of course he was not the one to blame, and but that the two boats were fast drifting apart, she would then and there have told the St. Johns' captain what she thought of him. Just at this moment Courage noticed a lady and gentleman on the rear deck of the steamer. She saw the lady give a start of surprise and speak hurriedly to the gentleman, who immediately called in as loud a voice as he could command, "What is your name, little girl? Tell me quickly." He meant Courage, and Courage knew that he did; but Sylvia not so understanding it, a confusion of sounds smote the air, of which a shrill little Syl was all that could by any chance be distinguished; then in a second they were all hopelessly out of hearing of each other, and the big boat steamed on to her pier, none the worse for the encounter save for a great ugly scar on her white-painted bow.

But alas! for Larry's lighter. Although she was still sound as a nut below the water's edge, above it she looked as though a cyclone had struck her. And so it was a subdued though a thankful little company that stowed themselves away in their berths an hour or so later, after the boat had again been brought to anchor, and they had had time to talk everything over. But there was one pillow that lay unpressed that night. With his mind full of anxiety, bed was out of the question for Larry, and for hours he slowly paced the deck; at least, it seemed hours to Courage, as she lay awake in her little state-room, counting his steps as he went up and down, until she knew precisely at just what number he would turn. She had first tried very hard to go to sleep. She had listened to the water quietly lapping the boat's side, imagining it a lullaby, but the lullaby proved ineffectual. At last she pulled back the curtain from the little window over her berth, so that the light from the statue might stream in upon her, entertaining a childish notion that she might perhaps sort of blink herself to sleep; but all in vain. Finally she heard Larry come into the cabin and apparently stop there. Why didn't he go on into his state-room, she wondered. When she could stand it no longer, she put on her wrapper and slippers, and stole out into the cabin. The little room, lighted by Liberty's torch, was bright as her own, and Larry sat at the table, his head bowed upon his folded arms. Courage went close to him, and putting out one little hand, began softly to stroke his gray hair. Larry did not start as she touched him, so she knew he must have heard her coming.



‘DO YOU FEEL SO VERY SORRY ABOUT THE LIGHTER?’



“Do you feel so very sorry about the lighter, Larry?” she asked anxiously; “will it take such a great lot of money to mend it?”

Larry did not raise his head, but it seemed to Courage that a sob, as real as any child's, shook his strong frame.

“Please, Larry, speak to me,” Courage pleaded, and feeling her two hands against his face, Larry suffered her to lift it up. Yes, there were tears in his eyes. Courage saw them and looked right away—even to the child there was something sacred in a strong man's tears—but she slipped on to his knee, nestled her head on his shoulder, and then said, in the tenderest little voice, “It isn't just the accident, is it, Larry? Something's been troubling you this long while. Please tell me what it is. Don't forget about my name being Courage, and that p'r'aps I can help you.”

The words fell very sweetly upon Larry's ear, and he drew her closer to him, but she could feel him slowly move his head from side to side, as though it were hopeless to look for help from any quarter. Suddenly a dreadful possibility flashed itself across her mind, and sitting upright, she said excitedly, “You're not going to die, Larry? Say it isn't *that*, quick, Larry!”

“No, darling, it isn't that,” Larry hastened to answer, deeply touched by the agony in her voice, “but it's almost worse than dying; I'm going—” and then the word failed him, and he passed his hand significantly across his eyes.

“Not *blind*, Larry?” yet instantly recalling, as she spoke, many a little incident that confirmed her fears.

“Yes, blind, Courage; that's the way it happened to-night. It was all my fault. I couldn't rightly see.”

“But, Larry, hardly any one could see, it was getting so dark.”

“Courage, darling,” Larry said tenderly, “it's been getting dark for me for a year. I shall never sail a boat again. They told me in the spring that I wasn't fit for it, but then I found you'd set your heart on being on the water with me, and so, with Dick's eyes to help, I thought I could manage just for the summer; but it's all over now, and it's plain enough that I've got to give in.”

And so Larry has done all this for her. At first Courage cannot speak, but at last she contrives to say, in a tearful, trembling voice, “Try not to mind, Larry. If you'll only let me take care of you, it won't matter at all whether we live on the water or not. I can be happy any-where with you.”

And Larry is in no small degree comforted. How could it be otherwise with that loyal child-heart standing up to him so bravely in his trial! And finally he tells Courage of a plan, that has come into his mind, to spend the remainder of the summer in the queerest little place that ever was heard of, and he proceeds to describe the little place to her. Courage is delighted with the scheme, and they talk quietly about it for ever so long, till after awhile, right in the midst of a sentence, Courage drops asleep on Larry's shoulder. Then, rather than disturb her, Larry sits perfectly motionless, and at last the noble gray head, drooping lower and lower, rests against the red-brown curls, and Larry is also asleep, while across them both slants a band of marvellous light from the torch of the island statue.

## CHAPTER VII.—“THE QUEEREST LITTLE PLACE.”

It's mos' as nice as de boat, an' eber so much like it," said Sylvia.

"Yes, most as nice," Courage conceded, "and the next best thing for a man like Larry, who's lived all his life on the water. It looks a sight better than when we came, doesn't it? But hush! Look, Sylvia; isn't that a bite? Have the net ready."

And Sylvia had the net ready, and in another second a great sprawling crab was landed in the boat beside them, for you must know that mistress and maid are out crabbing on the South Shrewsbury, and are meeting with much better luck than is generally experienced in midsummer weather. Directly over their heads is the queer little place that has recently become their home. That chink there is in the floor of Sylvia's carpetless room, and those wisps of straw are sticking through from Bruce's kennel. To be sure, you have heard nothing of that young gentleman since the day when Courage dried her tears on his coat, but that is only because there have been more important things to tell about. He has, however, been behaving in the most exemplary manner all the while, and has been, as always, Larry's constant companion.

As for the queer little place, you have probably never seen anything at all like it, unless, as is possible, you have chanced to see this very little place itself. It is a house, of course, but wholly unlike other houses. It has several rooms, but they are all strung along in a row, and boasts neither attic nor cellar. There is water under it and water on every side of it; in short, it is on the drawbridge that spans the river between Port-au-Peck and Town Neck, and is what I presume may be called a draw-house. Of the many bridges spanning the inlets threading all that region of sea-board country, this South Shrewsbury Bridge is by far the longest, and therefore the most pretentious.



The draw, to accommodate the channel of the river, has been placed near the southern end, while at either end of it on the main bridge are gates that swing to for the protection of teams when the draw itself is open. The house also stretches its length along the main bridge toward its southern end.

From the day when the ice goes out of the river to the day when it locks it in again it is David Starr's home, and David is Larry Starr's brother. David's wife has been dead these many years; all his children are married and settled; and David, not wishing, as he says, "to be beholden to any of 'em," minds the South Shrewsbury draw. For nine months or thereabouts he stays on the bridge, and then, while the river is ice-bound, retreats to a little house on the main-land, living quite by himself all the while.

And this is the place to which Larry has come with Courage and Sylvia, and lonely old David is glad enough to see them, particularly as Larry proposes to pay a snug little sum weekly, by way of board.

What they will do when cold weather sets in Larry has not yet decided; he fully expects, however, to send Courage to school somewhere in the city, if it take half his savings to do it; but for Larry himself, alas! the darkness is settling down more and more surely. Meantime, Courage and Sylvia do all in their power to cheer him, and everybody, Larry included, tries hard not to think of the on-coming blindness. As for Larry's cabin-boy, Dick, he could not, unfortunately, be included in this new plan, but Courage, at Larry's dictation, wrote him a most promising sort of a reference, and one which succeeded in obtaining him just as promising a situation. And there was one other important matter attended to before they all took final leave of Dick and the dear old lighter. Larry painted out her name from the bow with the blackest of black paint. He would sell his boat if he must, but the Courage Masterson, never!

But while I have been telling you all this, Courage and Sylvia, their crabbing concluded, have tied their boat to the shore, and with a well-filled basket swinging between them, are coming down the bridge. Over against the house Larry sits in the sunshine, smoking his pipe, that is now more of a comfort than ever, and with Bruce at his feet. He hears the children and knows their tread almost the instant they set foot on the roadway, his good old ears seeming kindly bent on doing double service.

"Any luck?" he calls out, as soon as he reckons them within speaking distance.

"Yes, twelve big ones," answers Sylvia; "but Lor'! Ise don' know nuffin 'bout how to cook things what's alive to start with."

"David'll tell you how to manage," laughs Larry, and just then a carriage, crossing over the bridge, comes close upon them. Courage instinctively glances over her shoulder, and straightway dropping her end of the basket, cries out, with what little remaining breath surprise has left her, "Why, Miss Julia!"

"Why, Courage, dear, *where* did you come from?" and instantly the phaeton is brought to a standstill, and Courage bounds into it, and then there is the report of a kiss loud enough to have started any save the most discriminating of ponies on the wildest of gallops.

"But I thought you were to be on a boat all summer!" exclaims Miss Julia the next minute.

"Yes, I was, but—" and then, feeling that there is something even more important than an immediate explanation, Courage bounds out of the carriage again, that she may lead Larry to Miss Julia, and they of course shake hands very heartily, as two people should who have heard so much of each other. Then Larry and Courage between them explain matters, and Miss Julia in turn tells of her summer home, but a mile away on the Rumson Road, and of how very often she drives over the Shrewsbury Draw.

Meanwhile poor Sylvia has been having an anxious time of it. When Courage so unceremoniously dropped her end of the basket, several of the crabs went scrawling out of it, and, as you know, there is nothing more lively than a hard-shell crab, struggling with all its might to regain its native element. But with the aid of Miss Julia's man, who has sprung down from the rumble to help her, Sylvia does succeed in recapturing four of the runaways, not, alas! however, before two beauties have succeeded in gaining the edge of the bridge, and in plumping themselves back into the water with a splash that must have consumed with envy the hearts of their less fortunate fellows.

At last it is time for Sylvia to be introduced, and, as usual, her beaming face expresses her satisfaction. Then there is a general chatting for a little while longer, in which each bears a hand.

"And how pretty you have made it all!" says Miss Julia, taking up the reins, preparatory to driving on. "I never should have known the place, with the dainty dimity curtains at the windows and these starch boxes full of plants along the rail here; such nice old-fashioned plants, too—geraniums and lemon verbena and that little low plant with the funny name—oh, yes, I remember—portulaca. How long has it taken you to work such a transformation, Courage?"

"Only a week, Miss Julia. We came down last Monday; but then Sylvia and I have worked pretty hard."

"Of course you have. You're a pair of regular wonder-working fairies, you and your faithful Sylvia. And now I must say good-bye, but not until Larry promises that you shall come, both of you, and spend day after tomorrow with me. I will send John down for you, with the ponies, bright and early, and we'll have such a day of it."

Larry promised, Miss Julia drove on, and the children looked a delight which was, in very truth, unspeakable.

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## CHAPTER VIII.—COURAGE DOES IT.

**R**eally, I believe it's nicer than being on the boat."

"Yes," responded Sylvia, with a supreme faith in any assertion that Courage might choose to make; "but why?"

"Because we have the fun of living out on the water, and Miss Julia besides."



"Oh, yes, to be sure!" half ashamed to have ventured so obvious a question.

Miss Julia besides! No one could imagine what those three little words meant to Courage. It was a delight in itself simply to waken in the morning, and know that before night Miss Julia would probably come riding over on her beautiful "Rex" or driving the gray ponies, or if not to-day, then to-morrow. Whenever she came she would stop for a chat, and more likely than not bring with her some little gift from the wonderful place on the Rumson—a plant from the greenhouse, a golden roll of delicious butter, or just a beautiful flower or two that her own hands had picked in the garden.

And so the summer was crowned for Courage by the happy accident of nearness to Miss Julia, and the only sad moments were when, now and then, a great longing for her father surged over her, or when the realization of Larry's ever-increasing blindness pressed heavily down upon even her buoyant spirit.

As for life on the draw, the days slipped by as uneventfully as on the lighter, though no doubt they were more monotonous. There were no morning trips through the busy streets to market (David had all their supplies sent over from Red Bank), and nothing, of course, of the ever-changing life of the harbor; but the children were more than contented. Sylvia was never so happy as when at work, and somehow or other there always seemed to be plenty of work for the little black hands to do. But, it must be confessed, there were times when Courage did find the days rather dull—times when she did not feel quite like reading or studying, and when she could think of nothing that needed to be done. There was one recreation, however, that always served to add a zest to the quietest sort of a day. Every clear afternoon, somewhere between four and six o'clock, she would don the pretty blue hat, and when it was anywise cool enough the blue coat, too—for she loved to wear it—and then go out and perch herself safely somewhere on the top of the bridge rail and with her back to the sun, should he happen to be shining. Then in a little while some of her friends, out for their afternoon drive, would be pretty sure to come crossing the bridge, and though possibly lacking

the time to stop for a chat, would at least exchange a few cheery words as they perforce walked their horses over the draw. I say some of her friends, for already there were many of them, for people could hardly escape noticing the pretty little house and the kind-faced, halfblind old man sitting in the door-way, or failing these, the little girl in the handsome blue coat and hat. Some had either guessed or found out the meaning of the black bow on the sleeve, and ever afterward seemed to regard her with an interest close bordering on downright affection. Indeed, in one way and another, the household on the draw became known far and wide, and strangers sometimes driving that way for no other reason than to see the beautiful little girl with the remarkable name, were disappointed enough if they did not chance to come across her; but of this far-reaching notoriety Courage fortunately never so much as dreamed.

And so the days fared on much as I have described until there came an evening when something happened. It was an evening early in October, and our little party sitting down to their six o'clock supper were every one in a particularly happy frame of mind. The sun had gone down in a blaze of gold and crimson, and the river, which is wide enough below the bridge to be dignified as a bay, lay like a mirror reflecting the marvellous color. Later, when the twilight was fusing all the varying shades into a fleecy, wondrously tinted gray; a brisk little breeze strode up from the west, and instantly the water rose in myriad tiny waves to meet it, and each wave donned a "white-cap," as in honor of its coming.

Low down on the horizon the veriest thread of a new moon was paying court to the evening star, that was also near its setting, but both still shone out with more than common brilliancy through the early evening air. Here, then, was one cause for the generally happy feeling, and another, no doubt, lay in the all-pervading cheeriness of the little home. Humble and small it was, to be sure, but there was comfort, and plenty of it, on every side—comfort in the mere sight of the daintily set table; comfort of a very substantial kind in the contents of the shining teapot, in the scrambled eggs sizzling away in a chafing-dish, which Sylvia had cleverly concocted, and, above all, in the aroma, as well as in the taste, of the deliciously browned toast. People who chanced to come driving over glanced in at the cosey, lamp-lighted table, caught a whiff of the savory odors, and then the moment they were off the draw urged on their horses in elusive hope of finding something as inviting at home. During the progress of the meal, and while Sylvia, who was an inimitable little mimic, was giving a lisping impersonation of one of the teachers at the Asylum, a carriage rolled rapidly by, and some one called, "Hello there, Courage!" Quickly recognizing the voice, Courage rushed out-of-doors, almost upsetting the table in her eagerness, but even then Miss Julia was a long way past, having actually trotted her ponies right over the draw itself in most unprecedented fashion. This was a grave offence in David's eyes, and Courage, retaking her seat at the table, wondered what he would have to say about it.

"Miss Julia must have been in a great hurry," she ventured.

"Yes, a ten-dollar hurry," growled David.

"Oh, you won't fine her!" Courage exclaimed, alarmed at the mere thought of anything so ungracious; "she just couldn't have been thinking."

"Well, then, we'll just teach her how to think;" but Sylvia, quite sure that she detected a lack of determination in David's tone, said complacently, "Neber you fear, Miss Courage. Mr. David don' sure nuff mean what he sez, I reckon," whereupon Mr. David shook his head, as much as to say, "Well, he rather guessed he did," but Courage saw with relief that there really was nothing to fear. After supper Larry and David took a turn on the bridge while the table was being cleared, and then coming back to the little living-room, Courage read aloud for an hour from one of Sylvia Sylvester's namesake books. It chanced to be the incomparable story of "Alice in Wonderland," and David and Larry were as charmed as the little folk themselves. At nine o'clock the book was laid away and Larry went directly to bed. Courage and Sylvia hurried into coats and hats for a run in the bracing night air, and David, stopping first to light his pipe, followed them out onto the bridge. All three found to their surprise that the sky had grown suddenly lowering and overcast, while the breeze of the twilight was fast stiffening to a vigorous west wind.



"THE ONLY SAD MOMENTS."



"WE'RE IN FOR A BLOW, I'M THINKIN."



"We're in for a blow, I'm thinkin'," said David, looking down-river, with the children standing beside him, "and, bless me! there isn't a star to be seen. Who'd a-thought it after that sunset."

Courage, seeing something in the distance, paid no attention to this last remark. "Mr. David, what's that?" she exclaimed, pointing in the direction in which she had been gazing.

"Sure it looks like a sail, Courage. Can it be that they're wantin' to get through, I wonder? What's a boat out for this time o' night, anyhow?" Then for several minutes all was silent.

"Listen," said Sylvia at last; "doesn't that sound like rowing?"

"Yes it do," said David, after listening intently, his hand to his ear. "I thought it didn't 'pear just like a sail-boat; howsomever, there's a white thing dangling to it that looks—" but here David was interrupted by a coarse voice calling out, "Hello there! Open the draw, will you?"

"Hello there!" David answered; "but what'll I open it for? Ye're rowin', aren't ye?"

"Yes, we're rowing to gain time, but there's a sail to the boat as plain as daylight, isn't there? Now hurry, man alive, and do as you're told; we've sprung aleak."

"Sprung aleak! Then ye're fools not to make straight for the shore," reasoned David.

"That's our lookout; but for land's sake! open the draw, instead of standing there talking all night," and David, realizing that there may be danger for the men in longer parleying, puts his hand to the lever, hurriedly dispatching the children to close the gates at either end; and away they fly, eager to render a service often required of them when there was need for special expedition. Indeed, one can but wonder how David sometimes managed when alone, and a boat tacking against the wind had need to make the draw at precisely the right moment.

But to-night it happens that he is in too great haste, and while yet several yards from the gate, Courage, with horror, feels the draw beginning to move under her. "Wait," she calls back to David, but her voice is weak with fear, and her feet seemed weighted. Oh, if she cannot reach the end in time to make the main bridge and close the gate, and some one should come driving on in the darkness, never seeing that the draw was open! At last she is at the edge, but only the tenth of a second more and it will be too late to jump. Shall she try it? It will be taking a dreadful risk. She may land right against the rail, be thrown back into the water, and no one know in time to hasten to her rescue. She hesitates. *No*—and then *yes*, for an instantly deciding thought has come to her.

The draw swings clear of the bridge. The men in the boat, grumbling at everything, paddled clumsily through, while over the other gate, reached barely in time, Sylvia hangs breathless and trembling. At the same moment with Courage, she, too, felt the draw begin to move, but luckily chanced to be nearer her goal. Meanwhile, where is Courage? Not in the water, thank God, but prone upon the bridge above it, lying just where she fell when, as she jumped, the rail of the draw struck her feet and threw her roughly down upon it. She feels terribly jarred and bruised, and tries in vain to lift herself up. But, hark! is that the sound of horses

on the road? Yes, surely, and they are coming nearer; and now they are on the bridge, and the gate—the gate is open. With one superhuman effort she struggles to her feet, reaches out for it, and swings it to. Then, leaning heavily against the rail, she utters one shrill, inarticulate scream. There is another scream almost as shrill in answer, and instantly a pair of ponies, brought to an alarmingly sudden standstill, rear high in the air beside her, and Courage, unable to stand another moment, drops in a limp little heap to the flooring.

"My darling, darling Courage!" whispers some one close bending above her.

"Dear Miss Julia," and a little hand all of a tremble gropes for Miss Julia's face in the darkness.

The draw swings back into place, and Sylvia is on it in a flash.

"Oh, you didn't gib us 'nough time," she cries accusingly to David as she flies past. David instantly divines her meaning, for they both know Courage well enough to fear she may have run some terrible danger, and seizing the lantern, hanging midway in the draw, David follows Sylvia as fast as tottering limbs will carry him. What a sickening sensation sweeps over him as the horses loom up in the darkness and he sees a group of people crowding about something hung on the bridge!



"AS FAST AS TOTTERING LIMBS WILL CARRY HIM."



"She isn't deaded! she isn't deaded!" Sylvia joyfully calls out, and that moment the light from the lantern falls athwart a prostrate little figure in the midst of the group.

"I think I can get up now" are the words that meet David's ear, and an answering "God be praised!" escapes from his quivering lips. Then some one turns the heads of the quieted horses, and two ladies, one on either side of Courage, help her back to the house. Larry, who has heard the commotion, succeeds in getting dressed and out to the door just as the little party reach it. He starts alarmed and surprised at the sight of Courage, but fortunately is too blind to see the alarming stains of blood on her little white face, but the moment they enter the light the others are quick to see them. Courage is lifted into David's big rocker, and Larry, groping into his own room, brings a pillow for her back; Sylvia disappears and returns in a trice with a towel and a basin of water; Miss Julia, with shaking hands, measures something into a glass; the other lady, with a little help from Courage, removes the dust-begrimed coat, and then lays it very tenderly over a chair. And now the color begins to surge back into the little pale face. The cut under the curls, which is not severe enough to need a surgeon, is tightly bound, and then at last they all sit down to get their breath for a moment. The horses, which of course were none other than Miss Julia's gray ponies, are secured to a rail outside, and David brings a strange gentleman into the room.

"This is my brother, Courage," says Miss Julia—"he has often heard me speak of you—and this lady is his wife."

Courage smiles in acknowledgment of the introduction, for, indeed, she does not feel equal to talking yet, and so keeps perfectly quiet, listening to all the others—to David's reiterated self-accusations for forgetting, in his haste, to make sure that the children were clear of the draw; to Sylvia's excited account of the way she had "jes' ter scrabble" to get over in time; to Miss Julia's explanation of how they had set out at that late hour, and on a sudden impulse, to pay a call down at Elberon, and of how, in her eagerness to spend as little time as possible on the road, she had forgotten to walk the ponies over the draw; and then to her description of her terror when the scream smote her ears, and she reined in her ponies so suddenly as to almost throw them over backward; until, at last, Courage herself feels inclined to put in a little word of her own.

"And you didn't hear me call at all, Mr. David?" she asked in a low little voice.

"Never a word, darling—never a word. Oh, it's dreadful to think what might ha' happened, and I so careless!"

"It's all right now though, Mr. David," Courage said comfortingly, "but it was terrible to have to jump at the last moment like that. I thought I couldn't at first, that no team would be likely to come over so late, and then—oh, it's wonderful how many things you can think just in a moment—I remembered that Miss Julia was over the draw, and I felt I must try to do it," and Courage looked toward Miss Julia with eyes that said, "There is nothing in the world I would not try to do for you," and then what did Miss Julia herself do but break right down and cry.

"Oh, why are you crying?" asked Courage, greatly troubled.

"Because I cannot help it, Courage. It was so brave to risk so much, and all for my sake, too."

"But I was not really brave, Miss Julia. You see"—and as though fully convinced of the logic of her position—"I think I was not going to do it at all till I remembered about you. And if I hadn't, and even if no one had happened to come on the bridge, I should have been ashamed of it always every time any one called me Courage."

"And so you are not going to take the least credit to yourself," said Mr. Everett, Miss Julia's brother. "Well, you certainly are a most unheard-of little personage."

Courage was not at all sure whether this was complimentary or otherwise, but no matter. She had not much thought or heed for anything beyond the fact that Miss Julia was crying, and she very much wished she wouldn't.

Meanwhile, Miss Julia's sister sat thinking her own thoughts with a sad, far-away look in her eyes. She knew that little blue coat so well, and this was not the first time she had come across it since, months before, she had sent it away, expecting never to see it again.

"Courage," she asked at last in what seemed an opportune moment, "were you not on a lighter that was run into by the St. Johns a few weeks ago?"

"Why, yes," answered Courage, surprised; "and were you the lady and the gentleman?" (glancing toward Mr. Everett).

"Yes; we wanted to learn your name, but you and Sylvia here both answered at once, so we could not make it out."

"But why did you want to know?"

"Because I thought I recognized the little blue coat you had on, and now that I have seen you again, I feel sure of it. I think it must have been given to you by Miss Julia."

"Why, yes," said Courage; "and did you know the little girl it used to belong to?"

"It belonged to my own little girl, Courage."

"To your little girl? Oh, I would love to have seen her wear it, it's such a beautiful coat! Did she mind having it given away?"

"Courage," said Miss Julia sadly, "little Belle died last winter, and so there was no longer any need for it."

"Oh, dat's how it was," said practical Sylvia, who had listened attentively to every word. "We've spec'lated of 'en an' over—ain't we, Miss Courage?—why a jes-as-good-as-new coat was eber gib away."

"Hush, Sylvia!" whispered Courage, feeling instinctively that this commonplace remark was untimely; and then by grace of the same beautiful intuition she asked gently, "Did it make you feel very badly to see your little Belle's coat on a strange little girl?"

"It almost frightened me. Courage, for Belle had auburn curls, too, and you seemed so like her as you stood there. Then, after a moment, when I had had time to think, I felt pretty sure it must be Belle's own coat that I saw."

"I am sorry that I happened to have it on," said Courage; "I would not like to have seen anything of my papa's on anybody else."

"And so I thought," said Mrs. Everett, wondering that a child should so apparently understand every phase of a great sorrow, "but I find I was mistaken," and Mrs. Everett, moving her chair close beside Courage, took her little brown hand in hers, as she added: "More than once since that evening it has been on my lips to ask Miss Julia if she knew who was the owner of Belle's coat."

"And more than once," said Miss Julia, "it has been on my lips to tell without your asking, and then I feared only to start for you some train of sad thoughts." Miss Julia by this time had gotten the best of her tears, and stood behind Courage affectionately stroking the beautiful wavy hair, for both she and Mrs. Everett were longing to give expression to the overpowering sense of gratitude welling up within them.

"Do you know what the black bow is for?" Courage asked of Mrs. Everett.

"I thought it was mourning for some one, perhaps."

"Yes; it is mourning for my papa. A little girl told me I ought to wear all black clothes, but Miss Julia thought not; only she just tied this bow on for me the last day of sewing-school, because I wanted to have something that would tell that I was very lonely without him. Soldiers wear mourning like that, you know."

All this while Larry had sat quietly on one side, his dimmed eyes resting proudly on Courage; but now he

had something to say on his own account.

"It was all my fault, sir," he began abruptly, addressing Mr. Everett—"that accident on the bay a few weeks back. I was losing my sight, and was just going to give up my life on the water when I found that Hugh Masterson had died, and that Courage there had set her heart on spending the summer with me on the boat. And so I tried for her sake to hold on a while longer, but it wa'nt no use, and I'd like to made an end to us all that evening. I wish sometime when ye're aboard the St. Johns ye'd have a word with the captain, and tell him how it all happened, and that Larry Starr has not touched a drop of liquor these twenty years; he thought I was drunk, you know, and no wonder."

"Indeed I will, Larry, and only too gladly," Mr. Everett promised, drawing closer to Larry's side, that they might talk further about it.

Not long after this Miss Julia made a move to go, not, however, you may be sure, until she had seen Courage tucked away in her own bed, and dropping off into the soundest sort of a sleep the moment her tired little head touched the pillow. But before Miss Julia actually gave the reins to her ponies for the homeward drive there was a vigorous hand-shaking on all sides, for the exciting experiences of the last hour had made them all feel very near to each other.

"Well, Julia, we must do something for that precious child," said Mrs. Everett as soon as the ponies struck the dirt road, and it was less of an effort to speak than when their hoofs were clattering noisily on the bridge.

"And what had it best be?" asked Miss Julia, and yet with her own mind quite made up on the subject.

"Nothing less than to have her make her home with us always."

"Nothing less," said Miss Julia earnestly.

"Bless her brave heart! nothing less," chimed in Mr. Everett; "but what will become of poor Larry?"

True enough! what would become of poor Larry? and would it be right to ask him to make such a sacrifice? It was not necessary, however, to discuss all the details of the beautiful plan just then, and even Mr. Everett, who had raised the question, had faith to believe that somehow or other everything could be satisfactorily arranged. For the remainder of the drive home not a word was spoken. People who have just been face to face with a great peril, and realize it, are likely to find thoughts in their hearts quite too deep for utterance and too solemn.

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## L'ENVOI

**Y**ou may not happen to know what this "l'envoi" means. Neither do I exactly, only nowadays poets who try to make English poems like French ones put it at the head of their last verse; so I have a notion to follow their example and put it at the head of this last chapter.

As to its meaning as the poets use it, I find that even some pretty wise people are not able to enlighten us, so we'll have it mean just what we choose, and say that it stands for the winding up of a story by which you learn what became of all the people in it. At any rate, as that's what this chapter's to be, we'll press this mysterious little L'Envoi into service in lieu of such a long title. Confidentially, however, I have an idea that it isn't "the thing" to wind up a story at all. That to give you merely an intimation as to what probably happened to Courage, and to leave you wholly in ignorance as to the others, would be far more in keeping with modern story-telling; but why try to be modern unless it is more satisfactory? Then I imagine you really would like to know something more of the friends we have been summering with through these eight chapters, and besides, if someday you should yourself go driving over the South Shrewsbury draw, you would naturally expect to at least have a chat with David Starr, feeling that he was a fixture, whatever might have become of Larry and Courage and Sylvia. But alas! that cannot be, and you ought to know it beforehand. The same little house is there, and in summer weather the same boxes of geraniums, verbena, and portulaca line the rail in front of it, but the old man at present employed at the draw is as much of a stranger to me as to you.

It is several years now since that eventful night on the bridge, and all this while Courage has been living in Washington Square, for it had been easily arranged with Larry that she should make her home with Miss Julia and Mrs. Everett. Indeed, it had proved an immense relief to Larry's anxious heart to know that her future would be so well provided for, and it all came about at the right time, too, for the very next winter Larry died. He had not been feeling well for a few days, and Sylvia, who had been left behind at the bridge, wrote for Courage; and Courage, losing not a moment, came in time to care for him for two whole weeks before he passed away. His illness was not a painful one, and now that complete darkness had closed in about him, he had no great wish to live. The many mansions of the Father were very real to Larry, and the eyes that were blind to all on earth seemed to look with wondrous keenness of vision toward "the land that is very far off;" while to have Courage at his side in this last illness summed up every earthly desire that remained to him. He was buried in the cemetery over at Shrewsbury, and it was not long before a grave was dug for faithful Bruce, who seemed to lose all heart from the hour his master left him.

When Courage went back to Washington Square, the day after the funeral, Sylvia went with her, to assist in the care of a blessed Everett baby that had lately come to gladden every one in the home; and Sylvia was overjoyed to be once more under the same roof with Courage.

For a year or two after that David continued to keep the draw, living alone in the same way as before, which must have seemed a more lonely way than ever, with Larry out of the world and Courage and Sylvia quite the same as out of it, as far as he was concerned. But finally David had to give up. "The rheumatics," as he said, "got hold of him so drefful bad that there was no help for it but that he must just go and be beholden

to his daughter," which, as you can imagine, must have been no little trial to independent old David.

And Courage! brave little Courage! just how does the world fare with her? Well, she is quite a young lady by this time, with the beautiful auburn curls twisted into a knot, and dresses that sometimes have trains to them, and yet she is just the same Courage still. It seems to Mr. and Mrs. Everett as though they could hardly have loved their own little Belle more, while to Miss Julia it seems as though she could not possibly live without her; and no one who truly knows Courage wonders at this for a moment. As for Courage herself, she looks up to Miss Julia with all the saint-like adoration of the old sewing-school days, and Miss Julia is every whit worthy of such loyal devotion. At the same time, they are the best of friends.



THE BEST OF FRIENDS.



During these five years of daily companionship Miss Julia has been unconsciously training Courage to be just such another noble woman as she is herself, and so they have been constantly growing nearer and still nearer to each other, if that were possible. They love the same books, they enjoy the same things, and now that regular school-life is over for Courage, they have the happiest sort of time together, day in and day out. Often, indeed, they have a very merry time of it, largely accounted for by the fact that Courage, being well and strong, as well as young, is often brimming over with a contagious buoyancy, sometimes called animal spirits, but to my thinking, it deserves a better name than that.

Everywhere that Miss Julia goes Courage goes too that is, if she is wanted (and seldom is she not), and one of the places where they go most frequently, and never empty-handed, is to a great hospital, where, since little lame Joe died, Mary Duff has become one of the sisters who give their lives to caring for sick children.

Courage even has a class next to Miss Julia's in the sewing-school where she used to be a scholar. Now and then she feels some little finger pointing at her, and knows well enough what is being said. One Saturday afternoon, when on her way to the chapel, she noticed two rather unkempt little specimens in close conference. "Yes, that's her," she heard the smaller girl exclaim as she neared them, "and ain't she sweet and stylish! Well, she used to belong down here somewhere, but now she lives in a beautiful house with Miss Julia in Washington Square."

"Like as not she didn't do nothin' to deserve it, either," said the larger girl enviously, with a sullen shrug of her shoulders.

"Didn't do nothin'? Well, perhaps you don't know that she just saved Miss Julia's life; that's something, ain't it?" And with the color mantling forehead and cheeks Courage hurried on, grateful for the championship of her unknown little friend.



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