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P's and Q's

or

THE QUESTION OF PUTTING UPON

and

Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe
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OR

THE QUESTION OF PUTTING UPON

AND

Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE"

Paulina hiding the letter.

London
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1891

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"I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU: HUSH, DON! DON'T BARK SO"  

"I CAN EAT MUCH BETTER WITHOUT," SAID LAVO  

LAVO HAD CLIMBED UP THE SIDE OF THE DOOR, AND WAS SITTING ASTRIDE ON THE TOP OF IT  

"AH! CECCO, CECCO!" CRIED THE LITTLE GIRL, PAUSING AS SHE BEAT HER TAMBOURINE  

"IS THAT THE WAY YOU GET FISH?" SHE ASKED  

"HELP ME: I'M AFRAID," SAID LUCY  

HARK! THERE'S A CRY, AND OUT JUMPS A LITTLE BLACK FIGURE, WITH A STOUT CLUB IN HIS HAND  

AND HERE BESIDE HER WAS A LITTLE FELLOW WITH A BOW AND ARROWS SUCH AS SHE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE  

"IS IT NOT GOOD?" SAID THE LITTLE HOSTESS  

WHISKING OVER THE SNOW, WITH ALL HER MIGHT AND MAIN, MUFFLED UP IN CLOAKS AND FURS  

"MARRIED! OH NO, YOU ARE JOKING!"  

"I WILL SHOW YOU WHERE YOU LIVE—THIS IS CONSTANTINOPLE!"  

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P's and Q's

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CHAPTER I

PALMER-WORM PARK

Four roofs sloping down together left in the midst a small space, a little more than a yard square, and somewhat enlarged by an attic window opening upon it from one of the roofs. On the lead which covered the said flat space stood various flower-pots and boxes filled with earth, and with a framework covered with muslin or net stretched over them. Among them knelt a girl of thirteen, big, dark, rosy, the wind playing with her immense bush of black, rather rusty hair, as with a brown
holland apron over her morning frock, and the frame removed from one of the pots, she was busied in removing with a camel's hair brush, certain green, yellow-banded caterpillars from a withered oak branch to a fresh one, talking to them in no very civil terms as she did so: "You horrid little plague, come along! What do you stick so fast for! Have you lost your appetite? You can't live on camel's hair, you know! Off with you! You goose, you! Don't you know if you go climbing you'll find nothing but slates, and the swallows will swallow you, and there'll be an end of you! Come along, you sulky thing! Get on the brush, I say; I won't have any tricks. Curling yourself in a ball, indeed. Tumbling down! No! Keep your spinning for your cocoon. Don't waste it that way, I say—Wah! I shall pinch you! Oh, dear! Horace ought to give me the first silk gown off you, when he's made his fortune!"

"Paula!" called a voice below in the room.

"Well, what?"

"Miss Lillywhite's come."

"Oh, bother! I can't come. I'm doing the Pernii,"
"But Persis sent me."

"Bother Persis! Get upon your leaf, you nasty little wriggler."

"But Elspeth said she couldn't have you always late for lessons."

"Bother Elspeth! You made that one tumble down! Here, come up and help me, Alie."

"But, Paulina, Elspeth said she couldn't have Miss Lillywhite kept waiting."

"She must, then. I'm not going to starve all Horace's *Pernii* to please her! Lilly may hear the little ones—There's a brush for you."

"But Elspeth hears them," said the younger sister, who nevertheless had obeyed, standing on a chair, with her legs within the window, and her body and head out, a lighter, paler head than Paulina's, with brown hair and eyes.

"Nobody asked her," was Paulina's reply. "Here, you take and do this branch—carefully, mind."

*Pernii*—or, more properly, *Bombyx Pernii*—is, it should be observed, the name of a large kind of silkworm, which lives upon oak leaves, and spins a handsome green cocoon. Some eggs had been entrusted to Horace Quintall, and were to be the
foundation of his fortune—only, as he was at school himself, the care had to be left to his sisters. To shift small green caterpillars from one oak-leaf to another may not be in itself the most delightful occupation in life, but at any rate it is so far preferable to lessons, that Aline was much readier than she would have been half an hour ago to assist Paulina in the operation.

"How they crawl! Have they changed their skins again?"

"Yes, and eaten them up."

"I say! How many there are to do! Won't Miss Lillywhite be in a way?"

"Never mind. There's plenty of time for our lessons; and as long as there's that, she has no right to complain. She never used before Sisters came home, and I won't be on my P's and Q's to please their fidgets. I wonder they haven't called yet—"

"Ah! she's talking to Sisters," said Aline.

"Talking! What about?" said Paulina, with a jerk, as if she disliked the notion.

"About all sorts of things. She was telling them
about Horace going to Prince's Quay last year, to the regatta."

"What business had she to tell them about that?"

"It is very cross of her; but she did begin something about the regatta, and she thought they ought to know——"

"Now I do declare that's sneaking and spiteful!" cried Paulina, stamping her foot on the hard black leaden roof, so that the pots and glasses rang. "What has she got to do with Horace? I'll pay her out! What more?"

"I don't know. They sent me away to look for you."

"Ay, to have their plot out! But I'll be even with them. I won't have Horace put upon and hindered of his pleasures."

"You know Mrs. Peterson did make a great fuss last year."

"I know she did, old cross patch. What business had she poking in her nose and worrying? He should go, if it was only to give her a lesson."

"Papa didn't know about it."
"No, of course not. Who was going to be such a sneak as to tell him what the Petersons and all the lot of them might choose to make up? Take care, Alie; you'll let that one drop——"

Aline did let it drop, giving a great start as a step was heard on the floor behind, and a dear, quiet voice said, "Are you here, Alie——Paula?"

"Yes, changing the Pernii," called back Paulina.

"Oh, those silkworms! Can't they be done at any other time?"

"No," said Paulina, in a displeased tone; "their boughs die, and that would kill them."

"Then I think you ought to begin earlier in the day. Have you nearly done? Perhaps I could help you, and then you could get down by the time Olive has finished her scales."

"Oh do, Persis dear," cried Aline, crawling through the window out upon the roof to make way for her, though not without a gruff growl of warning from Paulina that she would upset all the pots, and that there was not another brush.

However, there appeared through the window the head and shoulders of another young lady, not unlike Aline, only grown up, and with the soft brown
hair coiled round her head instead of flying loose. "Are there many more? I could help you through them," she said, as she mounted the chair; and though neither girl gave up the brush to her, she managed so well with leaves and fingers, that the sulkiest green caterpillars crawled where they ought as she coaxed them: "Come, my finger can't be half so nice as that fresh oak! There! On the edge. Put them on the edges and under side, Alie; they like that best. Here, my pretty green fellow!"

Paulina thawed and brightened again as the Pernii began to accept their new lodgment; and when Persis offered to come and help for half an hour before breakfast, she agreed to it thankfully, feeling that Persis was as well convinced as herself that no trouble was too great to be taken on behalf of Horace, their only boy.

She even had a great mind to ask Persis about Aline's story of Miss Lillywhite's tales, but she had a natural distrust of all grown-up people, and she could never quite tell whether to count Persis as belonging to her own side or to that of—should she call it the enemy? And before the self-debate was over, another voice was heard—
"Children—Paulina! Aline! Where have you hidden yourselves? Miss Lillywhite is waiting! Persis!—what, you here too? All come up like the family in die kluge Else?"

"Here's die kluge Else herself," said Persis, making them all laugh. "No, we aren't weeping, Elsie; we're only in Palmer-worm Park, doing Horace's maggots! We've all but done."

"It must not be done in lesson-time," said the clear, resolute voice from within—not sharply or unkindly, but with a sound as if it would be obeyed.

"Only this once. You see it's a matter of life and death to the worms. We are going to have a spell at them before breakfast in future."

"Only don't catch cold, Persis. Make haste, now; and remember, Paulina, lesson-time must not be encroached upon again. It is not right by Papa or by Miss Lillywhite."

There was a very grey cloud over Paulina's face as she shook her head with a toss backwards, and muttered something that Persis did not choose to hear.
CHAPTER II

THE QUINTALLS

Mr. Quintall was one of the partners in the Peterskirk Bank, and lived in an old brick house, with a large walled garden and paddock, a little way out of the town, just so far that Miss Lillywhite always went and came by the omnibus; and he did the same on wet days.

Elspeth and Persis were the children of his first wife, who had died when they were almost babies, and their grandmother, Mrs. Trefusis, had taken them to her home at Kew, where they had lived with her and their aunts through all their childhood, only making visits at home every year. Paulina, Horace, Aline, and the two little ones, Olive, and Clare, were the children of the second wife. She had had a great deal of bad health, and died just as Paulina was thirteen. The children were still in mourning for her, and sometimes
thought sorrowfully of "poor Mamma," but she had never been able to do much for them, and they did not miss her as many children would miss their mothers.

At the time of her death Elspeth and Persis had been in the South of France. Their grandmother had lately died, and one of their aunts had been so much worn out by nursing her, as to have to go abroad for her health, taking them with her. They offered to come home to their father at once; but as Persis was rather delicate, and a winter abroad was very good for her, Mr. Quintall would not consent to this, though he accepted their proposal to return in the spring and take care of the house and of their brother and sisters.

In their visits they had always shown themselves very kind sisters. They had played with the younger ones, told them stories, described sights in London,—yes, and even had Paulina to stay at Kew twice, and Horace once, for a week together, and shown everything to them; nor did they ever forget to send charming letters and presents on the birthdays. So the younger ones had all looked forward to their return—Paulina especially. She was a
sensible girl, and felt that things were not going on well, and that they ought to be set to rights; while, if she tried to do so, it always ended in a quarrel with one or other of the servants, generally in their teasing her about the fine times she would have when her half-sisters came. Then she would not lord it about the house, and be Miss Quintall. She would soon find the difference, and have to take care of her P's and Q's.

Even Paulina's cousins, the Proudfoots, who lived in the country, pitied her, and seemed to think she would be a sort of Cinderella. They told her that Elspeth and Persis were stuck-up fine ladies, grand and scornful, and that this was the reason that her own mamma would never let them live at home. But Paulina did not think much of Henrietta and Georgina Proudfoot: they had never been very nice girls, and she was pleased to belong to sisters whom she could believe superior to any one in Peterskirk, certainly equal in look and style even to Miss Poins, the daughter of the principal partner, who had a grand park.

No, she was not a bit afraid of them. They were her own dear big beautiful sisters, real ladies;
and people might talk of P's and Q's as much as they pleased, she knew she should be happy with them.

And was she? It was six weeks since their first coming, and it no longer seemed as if they were company. Were Henny and Georgie Proudfoot right?

Paulina had stood by "Sisters" with all her might in the great battle with Emma the housemaid, who had flatly refused to exert herself to get the drawing-room into a state to sit in every day. "She had never been used to it," for Mrs. Quintall, when she did come down stairs, used to sit in the dining-room and keep the drawing-room blinded and swathed up. That battle-royal, and one or two more, had ended in Emma's going away, with some very strong language as to Miss Paulina's ingratitude in worshipping the rising sun, and hopes that she would repent it.

Nay, Paulina had endured, and very reasonably, the having the canary-birds' cages, with all their apparatus of newspaper, turned out of the sunny window in the dining-room. Perhaps she bore it all the better because Aline went into fits of crying.
at the banishment of her dear little Dick. But it went hard with her when Elspeth objected to having Ponto fed indoors. Ponto was Horace's dog, and any interference with Horace's concerns was not to be borne.

Horace was at school about three miles off on the other side of Peterskirk, but he came home from Saturday to Monday, and Saturday afternoons were the happy times of his sisters' life—at least so they thought from Monday morning till Saturday noon, and then—however it was with Paulina, Aline's happiness was not quite so certain a thing. Indeed, the way the sisters behaved about Aline was one of the things that was doing most to change Paulina's views about them.

Was not Aline a stupid, fretful little thing, apt to cry for nothing? And what business had Persis to come flying down with her cheeks in a flame to spoil Horace's amusement, when he was only just exploding a few caps to teach the child to stand fire? Why should Elspeth interfere when he rubbed out the sum that had just been finished, to teach her not to be such a dawdle? Horrid little thing, she had found it
out too, or why did she not bear her tortures meekly, as she ought to do, and always had done hitherto, but cry and roar till "Sisters" came down to scold poor Horace, and carry her off to spoil her?

Nay, had not Elspeth even pronounced that Aline would play the best, if Paulina did not take more pains? It was plain that they were making a favourite, and that was very unjust and unfair, not to be borne or submitted to for a moment! Nurse herself, and Miss Lillywhite, like all former governesses, were always blaming Aline for whining and being idle, and was all this to be turned upside down, and the child only coaxed when she was tiresome?

Then poor little Clare, who used to play all day in peace, was caught and pinned down in the morning to learn to read, instead of only saying the names of a few letters when she pleased! And if she refused, these cruel sisters would even put her in the corner! It all came into Paulina's head now as she changed the Periinii, and she began to say to herself, "If I had only known, I'd never have been so glad to see them! Yes, I see
how it is—just as Henny said—pretending to be nice at first, till they have wormed themselves in, and then setting Papa against us poor children. But I'll be even with them, that I will, and Horace sha'n't miss the regatta."

But when Persis so good-humouredly showed her the last green caterpillar on his fresh leaf, she quite started at the break into her thoughts, and the start blew away a great many of them. Nay, when Persis looked round at Horace's room, to which the window belonged, and wondered whether a cabinet for his birds'-eggs would not please him for his next birthday present, she began to forget what enemies her sisters were.

After all, Aline had only heard a little of what Miss Lillywhite was saying, and everybody knew that Aline's versions of a story were not to be depended upon. Paulina never did believe them unless she wanted to have a grievance. The story of the last regatta, as far as Paulina knew it, was this:—These boat-races took place at Prince's Quay, a place about nine miles from Peterskirk, upon the 28th of June, the Coronation-day, which was always a holiday at Horace's school, and it
was the custom of the boys to make up parties, and go down by railway in the morning and return in the evening.

The very carefully-brought-up boys, such as the clergyman's sons, the Browns—whose mother was a very strict widow—and one or two more, never went; but it was the young people's fashion to pity them very much, and call their parents very unkind, and nobody had ever made any objection to Horace's joining the party.

Last year all the younger population knew that the set Horace had gone with had got into a great scrape. Tom Drake, one of the seniors, had come back with two undeniable black eyes, which he had had in a fight with a sailor-boy; all the rest seemed to have had something that was not at all good for them, and tumbled up stairs and into bed somehow. Most had very bad headaches the next day, and some fathers were reported to have declared they would never let their sons go again; but as one or other said so every summer and always forgot it the next, this did not much trouble any one.

Mr. Quintall was always a busy man. He had
much more to do with the management of the bank than Mr. Poins, and was often at work beyond office hours. Then he went to the reading-room, or out riding, and never came home till late. When his wife had been tolerably well, he would take her out for a drive, and he used to sit with her in the evening; but the children were very little with him, and scarcely knew him. He had been less with them than ever since their mother's death, and they had no notion of telling or asking him anything.

Yet, since Elspeth and Persis had come home, they had seen more of him. He sat in the drawing-room in the evening, and liked their music, though he generally went to sleep, and he talked more than of late. Paulina heard people say that he was recovering his spirits, and that his daughters were doing him a great deal of good. It is not quite certain that this delighted Paulina as much as it ought to have done. She did not like to think her half-sisters were brightening the home more than she could have done—nay, perhaps than her own Mamma. She felt cross over it.
"The Pernii are quite well, Horace."

"Persis comes up and helps us change them every morning."

"All right! Look here, Polly."

"What a horrid-looking thing, and how it smells. What is it?"

"Fancy your not knowing! It's a great moth caterpillar."

"How did you get him?"

"Oh! a fellow got it and didn't want it, and I swapped my umbrella for it, because he'd broken his nose."

"His nose!"

"His umbrella's nose, stupid, trying to poke out a woodpecker's nest."

"But what will you do for an umbrella?"
"Oh! I've got his; 'tis just as much use, you see, and they were just alike at first, only his father is a Turk, and would blow him up no end, for it is the fourth humberella that he has come to grief with this term."

"And you traded on greater endurance?" said Elspeth, looking up from her drawing.

"I knew you were a jolly old sis," said Horace with a hug.

"And that creature?" asked Persis; "I hope he is to go out on the leads."

"Oh, yes, only I must take him in in the winter. He lives in wood, and he'll eat for a year or two, and then change."

"And will he go on smelling all that time?" asked Aline disconsolately.

"Or being smelt," put in Elspeth.

"Well, I don't think he's at all nasty," Paulina's general spirit of opposition tempted her to say.

"Polly shall have him put in a bottle and carry him round her neck for a scent," cried Horace.

"Luckily that wouldn't agree with him any more than with us," said Elspeth. "Come, take him away to Palmer Park, Horace, there's a good boy."

C 2
"Wouldn't you like one more good sniff?" quoth Horace, holding the box with the disgusting red animal close to her nose; an infliction which Elspeth bore with laughing good humour, for she was exceedingly fond of her only brother, but she defended Persis from the like.

"No, no, Horace; don't. Persie can't stand so much as I can. Take the monster away; he'll make her faint."

And still merrily, though resolutely, Elspeth sailed along between Horace and Persis, with whom Aline had taken refuge, defending them with outspread dress from the raid which the boy showed himself ready to attempt.

He ran laughing up stairs, Paulina keeping close behind him. "Elsie always makes such a fuss about Persie!" she said.

"Well, Persie is a tender piece of goods, ain't she?" said Horace.

"I don't see it; and Alie is getting affected, and will be just as bad, and they encourage her in it."

"Holloa! what's the row?"

"Why, just fancy—Elspeth came out quite angry because I had taken the candle and left Alie in
the dark, and she chose to set up one of her roarings. A great girl like that! If it had been little Clare it would have been absurd enough; but Persis coaxed her and petted her just as if she had been a baby. It is quite true, Horace; they are making a favourite."

"Holloa! I wonder if this privet-hawk wants to change," said Horace, kneeling on the leads, and caring a great deal more for the fat green caterpillar striped with purple and white, and with a horn on his tail, than for home affairs.

"Oh no, he's not half big enough. And, Horace—"

"I don't see the lackey."

"I think he is shrivelling up to nothing."

"Oh! hurrah! these black fellows of the Red Admiral are jolly."

"There again! Persis never lets Aline gather the nettles for them; she always does it herself."

"That's rather jolly of her."

"Only it is spoiling Aline."

"Then I'll unspoil her. I say, what a famous net frame this is! I'll be bound Persis made that."

"Well, she did,—at least I helped! But do you know, Horace——"
"Oh, Polly!" he interrupted, for as a general rule people are always much more eager to tell their own news than to hear other people's, "Harding says one can get silver-washed fritillaries by the dozen on Quack Common! I must get over there as soon as ever there's a holiday. Would there be time on a Saturday?"

"Hardly, if you walked. But, Horace, I was going to tell you, that horrid Lilly has been at Sisters about the Regatta day, and you're to be prevented from going to Prince's Quay."

"Eh! That's meanness of the last description," said Horace, but with a careless tone that did not fit the strong voice. "Did you hear father say so?"

"No, but Alie heard Sisters and Miss Lillywhite talking."

"Oh! if it is only Alie—Besides, I don't know whether I shouldn't go after the silver-washed," said the butterfly-mad boy.

"You won't be allowed to go anywhere," said Paulina, half provoked at not being able to get up a hardship. "Mrs. Hill, and Mr. Cunard, and all the rest of the cross ones, will ask Mr. Quick not
to give a holiday, and Elspeth will go and put up Papa to do the same."

What made Paulina talk in this way it is really difficult to tell, but when people have begun to get up a nice little grievance, it is provoking not to have it perceived or made much of by other people. She succeeded so far as to make Horace say, "She'd be an uncommon cross toad if she did then." But it was spoken in an absent sort of way; he was counting his oak-eating silkworms all the time.

"It would be very cross! quite unjustifiable. You have always had a holiday, and I'll not see you cheated of it. I know how I'll manage."

"All right," said Horace; "only don't upset that hopdog."

Horace had a great deal of faith in Paulina; she was a year older than he, and, from having been much with her Mamma, was a good deal older in mind and ways, and she had often begged him off in scrapes, and obtained pleasures for him. He knew his cause was safe in her hands, and, so far as he cared about it at all, felt secure; but it was only too plain that what nurse called "they nasty palmers" were far nearer his heart than all the boats
in the regatta. So long as he had his holiday he did not heed whether he went to Prince's Quay or not; in fact, as he was not likely to meet any butterflies, moths, or caterpillars there, he did not by any means feel called in that direction.

Never was there a more unpromising grievance!
CHAPTER IV

PETS

Might not Horace be more safe and as happy without the Prince's Quay Regatta?

That thought was borne in upon Paulina's mind when she awoke early on Sunday morning with the sun peeping pleasantly in behind the blinds. Assuredly Elspeth and Persis would say so, and the better self urged that it would be a sad thing to let him run into the way of temptation. But then it would be giving in; it would be letting one's self be put upon; it would be allowing the Sisters once to begin, and then there was no knowing when they would stop. Horace would be deprived of all his pleasures, and they would be as dull and stupid as the Airlies. Yes, but suppose he did get into mischief!

Knock. "Yes, Susan."

Enter Susan to draw up the blinds.
"Seven o'clock, Miss Paulina."

"Oh! very well," in a sleepy voice.

"Your sisters are getting up, Miss Paulina. It is quite time."

"Don't bother about my sisters, Susan; I shall be in time."

Now Elspeth and Persis liked to go to the early service at St. Paul's Church—the new one—at half-past seven, and they trusted to Paulina to be down stairs, make the tea, and have things ready so that their father, who generally came down at a quarter to nine on a Sunday morning, might find everything in order, even if they should be a few minutes late.

They had asked her kindly, and she had been pleased, and had always hitherto been quite in time, but Susan's interruption somehow vexed her. "Making me get up early to do their work," said she to herself. "Why can't they stay at home? I don't like being put upon! I'll get up presently—there's lots of time."

However, lots of time have an unaccountable manner of slipping away when one has a soft pillow, and the next thing Paulina was sure of was Susan at the door. "Miss Paula! Miss Paula! There! I
told you so. Asleep again! Oh, dear! it is half-past eight o'clock!"

"I shall be ready quite in time," said Paulina, defiantly jumping up, recollecting that in old times she should hardly have viewed this as being late.

A great scurry she had; but hastily washed, hastily brushed, and what was worse, with hastily gabbled prayers, hurried over after she had heard her father's step on the stairs, she ran down the broad old stair, just as Elspeth, with her bonnet on, was making the tea, and her father blaming her with some sharpness for not being content to stay at home, but running about to strange churches, breaking up all the hours of the family.

"I am afraid we are later than usual, Papa," said Elspeth. "Oh, Paula! did not you make the tea?"

Paulina felt angry at the reproachful tone. "It's not my business now," she answered pertly.

"The child is right," said Mr. Quintall. "Duties you have taken on yourself are not to be put off on her whenever you choose to leave them. I'll have no more of this gadding about before breakfast."

"Oh, Papa!" exclaimed Persis, who had already a great tear on each cheek.
"No, indeed! It is too much for you already. You are knocked up for the day. Elspeth should have known better."

"Indeed, Papa——"

"Nonsense! Don't I see her made almost hysterical? It is just the self-willed foolish way young women act! Now listen, both of you. Since nothing else will do, I forbid you to be running off to St. Paul's in this wild manner, as if your parish church was not good enough for you. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Papa," said Elspeth, looking up; "but perhaps you do not quite know what a privation this would be to us."

"I know that what sufficed for your mother—ay, and mine before her, good women as ever lived—may suffice for you, and I will have it so."

By this time Aline, frightened at her father's loud voice and at Persis' silent choking and struggling with tears, began to sob, and that put an end to it. "Never mind, my little Aline," said her father; "hush! nobody is angry with you;" and he heaped her plate with marmalade.

To see the elder sisters blamed was certainly new and wonderful, and on the whole it is to be feared
that Paulina was rather entertained; and certainly, whatever twinge she felt, she did not choose to think herself guilty of having caused it all by not having come down in time to make the preparations. At least she so entirely expected to be blamed, that she had got her defence ready, and was quite determined not to care.

Horace had drummed on the end of the table with the handle of his knife all the time it was going on, but now that Aline was pacified, Persis carried off her own bonnet and Elspeth's, and presently returned with somewhat red eyes; but as Mr. Quintall began to talk as usual, the two daughters answered him, and the breakfast went on as if the subject was over.

Then Horace eagerly claimed Persis' assistance in Palmer-worm Park, and away she went, followed by Aline, with a little hand stealing into hers. Horace was perhaps extra civil in helping Persis through the window, and, when he saw her anxious about her crape, getting a chair for her to sit upon in moderate cleanliness; and he made a great deal of fun, to which she responded brightly, and wholly amused by the sight of the beautiful cocoon which
the hopdog was spinning—a delicate apple-green fellow, with white tooth-brush tufts down his back, black velvet slashings visible as he crawled, and a rose-coloured feather in his tail. He had got into a corner of his box, had constructed a framework of silk, in the midst of which he was standing upright, waving his head from side to side as he produced from his mouth the silk with which he was enveloping himself in a sort of cloud.

Horace declared he was just as good as a real silkworm, and that he would wind off the hopdog cocoons and get them woven,—they would be a new sort of silk, and he would take out a patent for them: all the ladies should be wearing "hopdoggia" dresses. Paulina, hearing Persis laugh, thought the trouble of the morning quite got over, but little Aline had a tenderer heart, understood that the laugh was not quite free, and, when Persis went to wash her hands and prepare for church, followed her to her room, and tried to show her fellow-feeling by saying, "Papa was so cross."

"Never say that again, Aline," was Persis' answer, as angrily as Persis could speak. "Papa has reasons, and says what he thinks right."
"And shall you never go to St. Paul's before breakfast again?" asked Aline.

"I don't know,"—and the voice quivered. "We must try to do what is right. Now, Ali Baba dear, run away, or your boots will never be laced in time."

Aline knew that there was a full quarter of an hour before her, but she had the sense to perceive that Persis wanted to be alone, and went off as she was desired. When little girls will do a thing like this, they show tact and consideration, and grown people are very much obliged to them. The whole family met to walk to St. Peter's, through a mile of closed shops, only meeting girls here and there carrying out dinners to the baker's.

At this, the old church, Paulina thought it rather a distinction to have one of the square pews, with a green curtain on a rod on the outer side of it. Every one had been used to kneel with elbows on the seat, and head against the sides of the pew; but though Elspeth and Persis interfered with nobody, they did not turn round, but knelt upright on the floor, leaning against nothing. Aline had once asked why, and Elspeth had said that they thought this way more reverent than crawling
on the elbows: and Aline then observed that her Papa was always upright, and never leant as the children did. However, Paulina did not choose to take her head out of her favourite corner: it was a great deal too comfortable to be given up, and therefore she said it was all nonsense, and that she would not see Alie affected and changeable.

Horace's place was in the middle of the side, against the wall of the church, where he had a delightful knot-hole full of dust—a perfect preserve of curiosities, which seemed to fill up fresh every week; however, he routed it out every Sunday. On this day he found a fine fat spider, and was holding the end of its line, intending to let it lower itself down upon the black stocking that swelled smoothly above Aline's boot before it was hidden by her little black petticoat.

But his manœuvre was perceived by Elspeth, who, being out of reach herself, touched her father, and he reached out and put a sudden stop to the proceeding by a summary blow on Horace's ears with his prayer-book—making him drop the spider and subside suddenly, hiding his face on the pillow of his twisted arms. Paulina's blood boiled. Rather than inter-
fere with Horace's little amusements, her own calves should have been the promenade of stag-beetles, ear-wigs, hornets, if he pleased. To set Papa upon him, that was beyond all endurance. No doubt this way of kneeling was to act spies on them all. That was the way Paulina said the Litany.

"Wasn't it an abominable shame?" she said, as soon as she could get to Horace's side after church.

"Eh—what?" asked Horace, who had quite forgotten all about it.

"That great knock she made Papa give you at church."

He laughed. "That! who cares for a little bit of a whack like that? If you want to know what a real stinger is, I'll show you."

Paulina had no desire for such an experience, but it seemed strange to take a blow from a father so lightly, and in fact some boys would have been far more grieved—some angry and resentful; but Horace was a bright, careless fellow, on whom no vexation ever sat long.

They sat on Paulina in his stead. It might have been thought that she was the one who had been punished, by her gloomy face all dinner-time, while
Horace chattered and laughed as he only of all the young ones seemed able to do in Papa's company.

Hitherto it had been the custom to take a country walk immediately after dinner, and have the Sunday Catechism, saying of hymns, and reading, after coming in; but on this day it was so bright and hot that Elspeth and Persis decided that from henceforth, while summer lasted, it would be best to have the Sunday occupations first, and the walk after,—a very reasonable plan, as Paulina would have seen if she had not been just in that captious state of mind which cannot endure any change.

No, it was not too hot to walk—they always did walk after dinner: nobody could learn just after dinner; it was very unkind—it was impossible.

Whether impossible or not, she thought it so; and a sort of stupidity—that was not unlike that of the deaf adder we are told of in the Bible—came over her mind and memory, and made her blunder over the answers in the Catechism, so that Horace laughed outright, and it was very painful to her sisters' sense of reverence.

They were glad to set her to work where she would not disturb others, namely, to looking out and
copying texts as references to the Catechism—a work which she had done with interest and enjoyment for the last four or five Sundays; but on which, in her present mood, she would not bestow the slightest pains or attention.

Meantime Persis had done two verses of Greek Testament, and read a chapter of the "Kings of Judah" with Horace. She always had to go through his yawning and growling at the beginning, and calling it a great bore not to be let alone on Sunday, like other fellows; but when he had once fairly started, he always grew interested; and he had found that when, on Friday, a lesson in religious knowledge was given, he knew much more about it than the other fellows.

Elspeth had the two little girls, teaching them by word of mouth, while Aline learnt the collect and a hymn, and then letting them play or look at pictures while Aline had a little lesson on what she had learnt.

All went well till Elspeth came to look at Paulina's copy-book. The handwriting and spelling were such as people of thirteen can do when they are cross. Moreover, when the ill-written words were read, they
had not the most distant connection with the subject in hand. The reference to the Second Epistle of St. John had been looked out by Paulina in the second chapter of the Gospel, and so she had set down a verse about the marriage of Cana in Galilee, without troubling herself for a moment to consider whether it could possibly apply. And when Elspeth pointed it out, she answered glumly, "It was in the book. I'm sure."

Elspeth was really angry. She had been taught so early to find out references that they came as easily to her as the alphabet, and perhaps she did not quite know how puzzling they might be to a beginner; but the senselessness and inattention provoked her greatly.

"This is too bad!" she said. "Could you not think for one moment, instead of making a holy subject almost absurd?"

"It was in the book," doggedly repeated Paulina.

Then Elspeth looked, but her anger was not lessened. "That is no excuse! If you had cared in the least for what you were about, could you not have asked Persis or me? Besides, here's a word left out! And how do you spell contrition?"
No, Paulina, this will not do. You must write that page over again, fit to be seen, instead of coming out."

Persis, who was explaining a picture to little Clare, exclaimed, "Oh, Elsie, please! we never had punishments on Sundays."

"I am very sorry, as sorry as you or Paula can be," returned Elspeth gravely; "but such carelessness and temper, especially on such a subject, cannot be passed over. It would not be right to take her out to enjoy herself."

Perhaps Persis recollected that it was not well to interfere with her sister's rule, for she said no more; only she lingered when the others were going to put on their hats, and said, "Make haste, Paula; if you write all you can, and very nicely, and show it to Elsie when she comes down, very likely she will wait for you and let you come."

"I don't want to come with her," muttered Paulina, and her head went down between her elbows as Horace's had done at church, so that nothing was to be seen save her black bush of hair; and when Persis smoothed it, she shook the hand off with a pettish jerk, but then felt aggrieved
and angry when Persis moved quietly away, only first putting a fresh pen near her, in case any of the blame of the bad writing should have been due to the old one.

There she remained with her head between her elbows, till she heard them clattering down stairs, and Ponto's joyous bark as Horace was unchaining him. Then she heard Elspeth go to the study door. To tell of her! Horridest sister! No: "Papa, we are going out; won't you come?"

The answer could not be heard, but it must have been something about meeting them, for Elspeth returned, "We will come back by the avenue. Pray do; it is getting very pleasant."

The feet ceased to be heard in the hall, the front door was closed, and a last echo of merry voices came through the window. "There they are, all gone out to enjoy themselves," said Paulina to herself; "and here am I left to mope at home, just because Elspeth takes a fancy to make us do stupid things on Sunday when we can't. I thought Sunday was meant for a holiday. Elspeth hasn't got a bit of right to spoil it with tiresome stupid lessons—when one has done them already,
too! I'll not stand it! I'll not do them! I'll not be put upon!" And Paulina pushed away the book, reached out her arm, and took down Through the Looking Glass, reading it in a dreamy, discontented way, trying to think she was enjoying it very much; but not even the Knight would entertain her now, she was much too sorrowful and unhappy a victim, much too like a Cinderella oppressed by cruel step-sisters. Presently she looked up as the voices of people in the road sounded cheerfully. "Oh, dear! oh, dear! everybody is out of doors and happy but me—and I have got these texts to do! My own mamma never made me write texts out! Oh, I wish Sisters hadn't come; I want my own mamma."

And then she began crying passionately and violently, as she had never before cried for her mamma.

She had cried for a good while and had grown tired of it, and begun to draw her sobs more slowly, when she heard the sound of the study door, and the pause of a tread before the door. Perhaps she gave a somewhat louder sob in con-
sequence. At any rate, the door was opened and Mr. Quintall said:—

"What's the matter now? Why aren't you out?"

"Elspeth made me stay," she sobbed out.

"Elspeth! Why?"

"She made me stay in, to write my texts over again. And how was I to know that it was the Epistle."

"Well, never mind now. Dry up your tears and come out. I'll not have you kept in all Sunday! Put on your hat."

Paulina obeyed in no small haste and satisfaction. It did not come across her to question whether if her account was true it was perfectly honest. She only felt the satisfaction of having Papa on her side against her sisters. He was not a very talkative man, and she did not expect a lively walk; indeed, before they had gone far, he met his friend the doctor, and they began discussing some matter concerning the health of the town, about which she neither knew nor cared.

The avenue was a fine broad quadruple row of lime-trees, extending nearly a mile from the main street of the town, and the way home from almost
PAULINA'S GRIEF AT BEING LEFT AT HOME.
everywhere. Here, after some little time, the walking party were met, with hands full of cowslips and bluebells, and Horace with three new caterpillars disposed in different pill-boxes about his person.

Of course they looked much surprised to see Paulina, and Elspeth asked in an undertone, "Did Papa give you leave?"

"Yes, he told me to come."

"Oh, if Papa gave you leave, it is all right."

Paulina was very anxious to know what would pass with her father about it, but as long as Dr. Penrose was present, of course nothing was said, and when at the garden gate he had taken leave, Paulina only caught thus much by lingering on the stairs:—

"Why did you keep that child indoors crying?"

Again she missed Elspeth’s answer.

"I’ve no doubt you mean rightly, Elspeth, but things may be overdone. I won’t have the children disgusted, and their religion made a penance to them. I don’t approve of it."

Paulina heard a movement, and could not venture to stay any longer, but she nodded to herself
with satisfaction at finding that Papa was on her side. She never bethought herself how little he really knew how she had behaved, yet her fright lest Elspeth should show him that unfortunate copy-book might have shown her that she knew she was not being true and just in all her dealings.

She was beginning to think her sisters tyrants always to be opposed, always trying to oppress, and to rank every one as their supporter or hers. In fact she was learning party spirit.
CHAPTER V

QUADRILLES

Monday afternoons were spent at the dancing school, and as Miss Lillywhite had a bad cold, Elspeth undertook to take Paulina and Aline to the Assembly Room, which was hired for the weekly lessons. It was Elspeth's first time of going, and Aline was much delighted, only wishing her dear Persis was going too, and pouring out an immense quantity of information,—rather more, perhaps, than Paulina wished.

"Do you know, Elsie, we are the only pupils that come in our own carriage, except the Rays."

"Because we live the farthest off," suggested Elspeth.

"Oh, no, the Browns live further, and come in by train. They haven't carriages to come in."
“Very likely not,” said Elspeth; “but it is very silly to care about that, Aline. It is manners, not carriages, that make man, or woman either.”

“I wonder,” pursued Paulina, “whether the Rays will be there. That little Tom is so rough and horrid!”

“I didn’t know you had boys.”

“Oh, yes. Tom Ray is almost a baby, only seven years old; and Cecil Wharton goes, and two or three more little fellows like that,” said Aline very proudly, being herself nine; “besides Percy Grafton.”

“Percy Grafton!” exclaimed Elspeth; “why, he is almost a man.”

“Quite,” said Aline. “And oh, he does wear such lovely ties. And he has one pin with a coral death’s-head on the top, and another with a dear little dog. And I wonder if he’ll have his primrose-coloured gloves this time. I like them best, but Paula likes his pale green ones,—don’t you, Paula?”

“No, I like his pale lavender, only he split them all across,” said Paulina.

“And his scents. He has sometimes millefleurs, and sometimes eau de Cologne, and something else I
can't remember," said Aline. "I wonder who he'll
dance with."

"Whom, if you please," said Elspeth. "I should
think nobody would wish to dance with any one so
absurd and conceited."

Paulina looked very much affronted. "He is a
very fine young man," she said.

Elspeth laughed, but Aline went chattering on.
"Oh, every one wants to dance with him," she
said. "I heard Miss Barker say he was the beau
of the dancing-room. He always wants to have
Millicent Airlie for his partner, and she can't
bear him."

"She shows her sense," said Elspeth; "but you
said just now every one wished it."

"Oh, except her. And if she won't have him,
he generally asks Paulina, or sometimes one of the
Rays, if Paulina can't, but——"

"Hush, Aline! don't go on so loud," said Paulina.
"Here we are."

"Yes, here's the Assembly Room, and there's Milly
Airlie! Now there's a flight of stone steps, Elsie,"
continued Aline, quite delighted to have to show
the way.
Millicent Airlie, a nice-looking girl of fifteen, neatly dressed in white piqué, shook hands on the steps, and asked Paulina to be her partner.

“I don’t know,” said Paulina; “I never will be engaged before I go in.”

“Just the contrary to me,” said Millicent. “Aline, then, will you have me?”

“Oh, yes! thank you,” cried Aline, clasping her hand with a glad little jump. “I know Mr. Grafton wouldn’t dance with me!”

Elspeth wished her little sisters were as lady-like as the daughter of the Vicar of St. Paul’s. “Are you alone, Millicent?” she said.

“Mamma is coming in presently, but she had to go to a shop, and sent me on to go in with some one. It is very troublesome, but I am to go to my uncle’s for some grand parties this autumn, and she thought I ought to know the steps.”

Paulina held aloof. She knew that Elspeth wanted her to make friends with Millicent Airlie, and in her present mood this did not make her like her the better. Moreover, she wanted more even than usual to dance with Percy Grafton, because he was generally the leader of the party
to the Prince’s Quay Regatta, and she wanted to hear all about it from him. He had left Mr. Quick’s school last half-year, and was improving himself in dancing and deportment generally, under the tuition of Mrs. Leviti, who came over weekly from Prince’s Quay, with her husband to act as violinist.

It was a large room, with a raised step for an orchestra, and chairs and benches all along one side; Mr. Leviti tuning his violin, and his wife and two young lady assistants putting some little girls through their arm exercises with poles, while the others were waiting on the chairs. Mr. Grafton was not come. All the little girls knew one another, and there was a great deal of greeting and shaking hands; but Elspeth was too new in the place to know many people as yet, and none of her acquaintance were among the mothers and governesses, so she sat down to wait for Mrs. Airlie.

Presently Miss Paulina Quintall was called up to handle her pole. Her great fear was lest Percy Grafton should come in while she was thus occupied, and ask somebody else; and all the time she was straightening her arms and balancing the pole, her eyes were twisting askew towards the door, but still in
vain, though she was twice called to order, and told to look straight before her.

All she managed to see out of the corners of her eyes was Mrs. Airlie coming in, and, after a good many greetings to various people, sitting down by Elspeth and beginning to talk.

By the time they were well in the conversation Paulina's exercises were over, and Aline's had begun. She had a strong suspicion that Elspeth might be consulting Mrs. Airlie about the regatta, and so she came as near as she could, instead of joining any group of little girls. Sure enough it was that very thing! There was a chair in front of them, and Paulina had very quick ears, so that though they lowered their voices as she approached, she could still catch the most of it.

"Yes," Mrs. Airlie was saying, "we have never allowed our boys to go. (More shame for you! thought Paulina.) In fact, they have never seemed to wish it. (Poor stupid creatures! said the girl to herself.) We have tried at times to arrange some little festivity instead." (Oh, indeed! some deadly-lively old woman's tea-party, I suppose.)

"Yes," returned Elspeth, "that was what we
thought of. Another year, if Horace is at home—
(What! unnatural sister! was she going to send
Horace from home?)—and wishes it, we might all go
down together; but this year, I cannot think it fit
to let him go alone with——"

Paulina’s attention was taken off, for Percy
Grafton entered the room in his loveliest pale prim-
rose gloves. Whom was he looking for? That was
a beautiful bow! Ah, the wretch! he was making
his way to Millicent Airlie. Paulina’s heart beat
with foolish jealousy, though she knew full well
what Milly’s answer would be. "Always engaged!
that is too cruel," she heard him say, or rather knew
that he was saying.

Then he stood meditating for a moment—and
was it Elspeth’s whisper that Paulina caught:
"Insufferable puppy! I should like to whip him."

"Ay," thought Paulina, "you would like to
hinder any one from ever speaking to me, shouldn’t
you? And Mrs. Airlie is just as bad! Hark!"

"I think I should have spoken to Madame Leviti,
only that it must anyway be for a very short time,
and they all do keep strict silence, and I can quite
depend on Milly——"
At that moment Aline was released; Mr. Leviti made three preliminary sounds with his "kit," and Percy Grafton advanced to Miss Paulina Quintall and requested the honour of her hand, with the magnificent formality needful under Madame Leviti's eyes. Millicent had to do the same with Aline—in fact, every one with every one. No speaking was allowed, as Mrs. Airlie said, and yet Paulina had contrived a turn of the neck and a whispered answer—"Second choice, Mr. Grafton"—with what she meant to be a look of arch reproach, but if she had had Elspeth's eyes she would have thought it ridiculous affectation.

To talk during the figure was manifestly impossible, but the veteran attendants on the dancing school had sundry ingenious contrivances for understanding one another, and there were moments when people who cared less for obedience than for being found out, could say a good deal to one another. If any little one made a mistake, and every one was thrown out while she was set right, there was often a low buzz all round, which came to a sudden end the moment Madame Leviti looked up. It was in one of these sudden pauses, caused by little Eva
Grace going wrong in the chaine des dames, that Paulina contrived to ask in a hasty whisper, "Are you going to the Regatta?"

"Yes, certainly, the whole party. Are you?"

"Oh no, only Horace."

Here Paulina saw Elspeth looking at her, and stood straight, with a composed countenance; but as the dance was resumed, and her side stood still while the others were careering across, Percy managed to say, with a glance from the corner of his eye towards Miss Quintall, "Dragon in human form—eh?"

A nod and a sigh, and the response, "The worst of it is, I'm afraid she won't let Horace go."

"Intolerable! Can't she be circumvented?"

The second figure was over now, and they had to stand still while the third was prepared for, and to do their part of the third. Again came a blunder: Millicent Airlie had forgotten, and was dancing the lady's part. Percy Grafton gave the further information:—

"The Quagga is to race the Petrel; there are bets up to three hundred pounds on it. It is to be
the best regatta there has been at all. All the windows towards the bay are taken."

"Oh, he must go," cried Paulina, under her breath.

"How can we manage?"

"Could not some one get him out for the day?" suggested Percy.

"Oh, but——"

"Paulina!" came a grave voice across the room. Percy and Paulina started, shrugged their shoulders, and compressed their lips.

Paulina felt Elspeth's eye upon her all the rest of the dancing lesson. How provokingly unlike dear old Lilly, who always sat between two of her friends, and if she ever looked up at all, could always be daunted with a saucy glance. Anger and determination were growing higher and higher every moment in Paulina. No, the tyrant sisters should not interfere with everybody's pleasure, and cut the whole family off from all their friends. Girls might be under her dominion, but Horace should be saved.

Not another word could be exchanged with Percy Grafton till the general break-up. Then, while Elspeth was being introduced by Mrs. Airlie to some lady who had come with her little girls, and
had begged to know Miss Quintall, there were a few more sentences:—

"You see how it is, Percy."

"New brooms sweep clean," he responded; "in fact, I believe there's a conspiracy among the fogies. Counterplot them, that's the ticket," said Mr. Grafton, looking witty.

"I think I see."

"Ah, I knew you had the spirit. Make a beginning at once. _Ce n'est que,—_you know the French proverb."

"Paulina, come and put on your hat." She was forced to follow into the cloak room, and there was on her face what she thought a very determined look, but which was a very sullen one.

"Paula," said Elspeth, as they were going home, "I thought it was a rule that there was no talking at these lessons."

"I didn't talk."

"Paulina!"

"Nobody calls that talking!"

"Indeed!"

"Everybody does it."

"I do not know what everybody else does, but
if these lessons are made an opportunity of being disobedient and unladylike, I shall put a stop to them."

Paulina had a great mind to say, "Do you think Papa would let you," but there was a grave, quiet resolution about Elspeth that did not make it at all easy to be openly impertinent to her.

But the resolution was taken. She should be circumvented.
CHAPTER VI

PREVARICATION.

Yes, Elspeth was to be circumvented. Whatever she might accomplish as to her sisters, Horace’s liberty was not to be abridged. He was to be trusted like other boys, and should go to the Regatta and enjoy himself, instead of being put off like a baby with some stupid little trumpery treat,—a tea-drinking in the nursery, or a picnic with the Airlies, forsooth!

Percy Grafton should see that Paulina Quintall was a girl of spirit and resource in her brother’s cause, and was not to be put down by any fine prim London-bred sister, coming down to send them all to the right-about, and think everything wrong.

Did no voice within say to Paulina, that, in the first place, Horace did not care for the Regatta, and
in the next, that it was no good sister's part to promote her brother's going among a set of lads who might teach him evil habits, that would perhaps cling to him for life?

Alas! it is very odd what a difference self-will makes, either in our inward voices or our inward ears! If Horace did not care for the yacht racing, he ought! Why should he not be like other boys, instead of the muff the elder sisters would like to make him? Temptations! Paulina had heard of such things, but she believed them to be what stupid, tiresome people talked of when they wanted to prevent their unfortunate victims from enjoying themselves or having any fun. She felt herself a high-spirited, generous sister, standing up for her brother and his rights, and she entirely forgot that the reason she cared so much for Horace's having this entertainment, was not because she showed symptoms of disappointment, but because Elspeth had offended her.

Paulina believed that she would not tell a falsehood, but she had never quite learnt to think a subterfuge wrong.

Now, about seven miles off, lived her old great-
uncle, Mr. Proudfoot. He was the head of the Proudfoot family, and had a large, very pleasant estate and farm, but he was very old, and nearly blind, and things were chiefly managed in the house by his old housekeeper, Mrs. Rebekah Saunders, of whom all his young visitors were very fond, for they were petted to their heart's content, and allowed to skim the cream, and eat the preserves, and play in the great spare attics, and roast chestnuts in the ashes, and do everything else that was thought delightful. Horace was an especial favourite with both master and maid, and was every now and then invited to spend a day at the farm, which he could easily reach by going in the morning train to the nearest station, walking a little more than a mile, and returning in the same way in the evening.

Mr. Proudfoot was too blind to write, and once or twice when he had wanted Horace to come out to him, he had made Rebekah mark the day in a corner of one of his cards and send it by the post, and this was quite understood in the family. It struck Paulina that if Horace could show such a card to his father, with the day of the Regatta marked on
it, Mr. Quintall would not hesitate for a moment to grant the holiday, and Elspeth would probably be only too glad to have him so safely disposed of.

"There will be no telling falsehoods," said Paulina to herself; "only showing the card."

Yet surely she must have known that a falsehood in action was very like a falsehood in word, or else why should she have watched everybody out of the room before she began to search in the card basket, and given such a violent start when Aline came in and asked what she was looking for?

"Oh, I was just seeing if—if there was a card fit to make a pincushion on."

And she began looking at the cards, as if considering them, telling herself that it was quite true, since she should see if there were one suited to her purpose. How horribly inconvenient it was in Aline to ask what the pincushion was to be made of. "Oh, I don't know; I've got a bit of ribbon."

"Oh, Paula! you don't mean to cut that beautiful bit with the pagodas and Chinamen upon it? If you do, please give me a corner."

"Don't bother so, Aline. You worry so, I don't know what I'm about."
Poor little Aline was not conscious of any particular bothering, but she was pretty well used to being hunted about by Paula, and could take it meekly.

No card of Mr. Proudfoot's was in the basket, as in fact he never left one. But Paulina still had a resource. Mrs. Saunders—Becky, as her favourites called her—was, as she well knew, quite ready to pity and sympathize with the children of her master's niece, and to expect that they must be oppressed by their half-sisters. So she would write to her, and beg her to say nothing to her master, but to send his card or an envelope addressed to Paulina herself, putting the date in the corner.

The difficulty was to write the letter without being asked to whom she was writing; and here Paulina was obliged to resort to another contrivance. She dawdled purposely over learning her lessons for the next day, and when Aline and the little ones were going down after the elders' dinner, she said, as naturally as she could, that she had not finished her tiresome geography, and could not come; there were ever so many horrid places in the interior of Africa to be looked out.
This made a very good excuse for putting the globe on the table as a screen, and spreading a great atlas before her, in the middle of which lay her geography-book, and within that a sheet of note-paper; the inkstand could be reached by making a long arm over the map of Africa, and Paulina began—

"My dear darling old Becky,—I know you will be a ducky darling, and help your pet in a bother, and hold your tongue, like a good old darling as she was. Horace wants a holiday terribly on the 20th: he has always had one to go to the Regatta, but my sisters are making a fuss and trying to hinder him, which is a great shame. Now, dear Becky, do please stand our friend, and just——"

Hark! What was that? A footstep! What a start! Down goes a drop of ink in the middle of Timbuctoo! A hand on the door—whisk goes the letter under the atlas! Oh, what a dreadful thing to have tiresome, troublesome, horrid, prying half-sisters!

"My poor Paula,"—it was Persis's gentle voice,—
"this is very nice and steady of you."

Paulina's heart would have felt a pang, only it was
stifled by the fancy that this good-nature was only an excuse for coming to see what she was about.

"How close and dismal the room feels," said Persis, drawing up the blind, and opening the window wider. "No wonder you felt stupid and could not get on. Here, let us try if we cannot find the places together—which are they?"

"Oh, let me see," said Paula, exceedingly afraid that the atlas would be moved and her letter discovered. "There's what's his name—Ticonderoga."

"There surely is not a Ticonderoga in Africa," said Persis. "I thought it was a fort in America. Let me look."

Paulina rather rudely held the atlas fast, and muttered, "I've just done, if you'll only let me alone."

"Only do let me make out about this place for my own satisfaction," said Persis. "Let me see the book."

"There!" said Paulina, crossly. "I like to learn my lessons by myself."

"That's a change," said Persis, smiling, for at first Paulina had always been crying out for her help. "Has Elsie taught you self-reliance, as she calls it?"
Ticonderoga! My dear, it is Timbuctoo! And no wonder you could not see it, under that terrible spot of ink! Why, it is fresh!"

"Is it?" said Paulina, still thinking that she was guilty of no untruth.

"Quite fresh! So much the worse for my fingers and the map," said Persis. "What a pity! How could it have happened? What have you been doing, Paula? You never should have ink about and map-books open."

Persis was so true herself that she was entirely unsuspicuous; otherwise she could hardly have failed to perceive that there was something wrong when Paulina, in a dreadful fright, held the atlas fast, lest it should be lifted up, and almost said, "Oh, don't!"

"I think I had better fetch some of my soft blotting-paper," said Persis. "Nothing takes up ink so well."

And while she was gone to her room for it, Paula popped the letter into a drawer and breathed more freely; but this most inconvenient Persis had no sooner so taken up the ink that it remained only a little cloudiness, to express, as she said, the black-
ness of the negro country, then she began to say, "I think Elsie will hardly be able to find out where the mischief was."

"I don't see why she should ever find it out at all," said Paulina.

"Why, of course you will tell her?"

"There's no use. That old atlas is all over ink-spots already in England and Europe, and nobody ever thought of telling anybody."

And Paulina turned the pages to a place where Ireland was spotted over like a plum-pudding. Horace had done it one day when the last governess had set him an imposition before he went to school; but she was too cross and guilty to mention the ridiculous scene when it was found out.

"Well," said Persis, "the poor book does seem to be in a bad way, but I never could be happy to have done the smallest damage without confessing it."

"I don't tell lies," said Paulina snappishly, feeling as if resenting the supposed injustice vindicated her from all that made her feel uncomfortable.

"I should trust not, indeed," said Persis with a shudder. "Dear Paula, how can you speak of anything so dreadful? I only meant that the safest
way for one's self and other people is to mention every little thing the moment it happens."

"I don't call this anything," sulkily answered Paulina, partly resolved against yielding to Persis, and partly in dread of bringing upon herself Elspeth's inquiry what she was doing with the ink.

Persis desisted, seeing that it was of no use, and perceiving that respect for the atlas was so lost that the injury to it was hardly viewed as mischief; so that for her to mention it was hardly a duty, and might make Paulina view her as a tell-tale.

However, she kindly stayed, and helped Paulina to search out several places with long and uncouth names, not getting much gratitude, for of course the girl was only burning to be rid of her. Nay, she even stayed to help to put away the books, and thus took away all chance of finishing the letter or even getting it out of the drawer where it had been hidden, and which was a very dangerous place.

The only way that Paula could manage now, was that after spending her hour in the garden, where all were sitting out after dinner, when she bade good-night, she exclaimed to Aline, "I've left something in the school-room," and darted off into it. She
shut the letter into a book and carried it up stairs with her, and in the evening light she sat up in bed and finished in pencil:

"You see how I am put about to write, dear ducky daddles; I am writing this in bed, because they watch me so. If you will just put one of Uncle Proudfoot's cards in an envelope, and write the '20th' in the corner and send it to me, I can get poor Horace his holiday, and it will be all right; only don't tell my uncle. I am sure you can manage it, and that you will be the dear old thing you always were. Mind you address the envelope to me, and say nothing about it.

"I am your affectionate

"P. Q."

It was not so difficult to contrive the getting the letter into the envelope and addressing it, for that took so short a time that Paulina could manage it by getting up early and spending a few minutes in the schoolroom before meeting Persis in Horace's room to feed the caterpillars.

There was a pillar post not very far from the gate. Paulina put on her hat—not a very usual practice with her when she was only going to get
leaves for the caterpillars—ran headlong down stairs, out at the door, and through the iron gate. It opened easily from the inside, and in a few seconds she was dropping her letter into the slit in the pillar.

But oh, she had forgotten. The gate had shut itself, and there was no means of opening it from the outside. There was Paulina Quintall, with no gloves, only her hat, shut out into the street. She was beginning to find out how prickly are all ways outside the straight one. Indeed, it is hardly true to say she was beginning, for it was not the first time Paulina had manoeuvred, or she could hardly have done it so readily. She hurried across the road—it was half road, half street here—and at haphazard gathered a handful of green leaves and grass from the hedge on the opposite side, and then rang the bell. She had never been afraid of being alone in the street before, but she certainly did not like it now, feeling sure that she could not be looking like a lady, and not at all certain what would happen to her.

She waited long, and rang again, and she gave such a start at the voice within.
"Bless me, if it is not Miss Paulina!"
"Ringing again! Mind, I won't have none of that! I sha'n't answer the door for a quarter of an hour if I have any more of that."

"Susan!" called Paulina.

"Bless me, if it is not Miss Paulina! Well, if ever!——

Paulina held up her leaves. "I got these for the caterpillars, and was shut out."

So she ran past Susan and reached Palmer-worm Park safely and unsuspected; and, alas: she only felt her escape, not how evil her deceit must be.
CHAPTER VII

QUANDARIES

Paulina's next anxiety was about Rebekah's answer. She did not at all want to have the letter put into her hands before everybody, when Aline—if not one of the elder sisters—would be sure to exclaim, "Who can be writing to you, Paula?" and would think it very strange if she did not open it at once. She wished she had desired Rebekah to direct it to the post-office, so that it might lie there till it was called for; but there were two dangers in doing this—one, that Rebekah would not understand too many directions, and the other, that she would understand too well that there was something underhand, and carry the letter to her master, though it was not easy to believe that dear old Becky would be so treacherous.
Letters used of course to come in the morning, and the country posts also came in the afternoon, when they used to lie at the office till six o'clock, unless any one inquired there after them; and if Mr. Quintall expected any letter in particular, he sometimes sent down one of the clerks from the bank, or sometimes called himself on his way home, and brought in the family letters.

This was what Paulina greatly wished to avoid. She knew that her having received the envelope might be remembered when the card was produced, and that it would be even more dangerous than the post-box in the morning, into which, if she had good luck, she might manage to fish before any one else looked in.

No one ever said a truer word than Sir Walter Scott when he wrote—

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive."

Paulina was full in the midst of this web as she racked her brains to find an excuse for going to the post-office. She could not say she wanted stamps, for some had just been given to her. She
must make an excuse for getting into the street, and then trust to luck.

However, fortune favoured her, for at luncheon—the children's dinner—Elspeth said, "I think I must go into the town this afternoon; I want some drawing paper and some other things."

"Oh, please let me come," cried Aline; "I want——" and she paused.

"Do you know what, Alie?" asked Elspeth, laughing. "I observe that a whole string of wants spring up as soon as any one is going into the town."

"Oh, but I do really want some Turkish delight."

"Nonsense, Alie," said Paulina, who had taken her resolution. "Take me, Elsie; I do really want some perforated card."

"Me too," cried Olive; "I do really want to spend my penny."

"Me too," cried little Clare; "me do really want sweeties."

"Haven't you a 'me do really want' too, Persie?" said Elspeth, laughing.

"Persie is grown up." said Aline.
"Ah, Ali Baba," said Elspeth good-humouredly, "if you begin hatching wants at your age, you won't stop when you are grown up!"

"I can truly say, *me do reelly want*—not to go into Peterskirk," said Persis decidedly, for she did not like the town at all—a thing which greatly amazed her little sisters.

"Very well, then; Paula is the only one who has a sensible reason for wanting to go with me," said Elspeth. "No, Alie; Turkish delight is not at all a sensible want for a young lady of nine years old, who can have plenty of good fruit; and little Olive will learn some day that the mere want to spend her penny is more silly still. Perhaps Persie will take you all out to get some wild roses, and see if the wool strawberries are ripe, while Paula and I go into the town."

"I want some perforated card to make a pin cushion too, said Aline, pouting a little.

"Me too," cried Olive; "I want some card."

"Me too," added Clare; "a pretty tart with a wobbin on it."

"Silly little echoes," said Elspeth merrily; "you think you have found the right note. Hadn't you
better say at once that you all want a little peeping in at the shop-windows?"

"Oh, but won't you let us have it?" entreated Aline.

"No, Aline; we can't go in so many to the shops. You little ones must take turns to go in with us. And, above all, when you want to do a thing, say so straightforwardly, at once, and don't look about for reasons which are not direct."

These last word made Paulina feel very cross, and think Elspeth must suspect something, and be talking at her. Such a thing it is to have a guilty conscience.

As they walked into the town, she never saw Elspeth look towards her without fancying that she suspected something; and when they reached the shop where drawing materials were sold, her heart gave a great throb, as if she were doing something very dangerous, when she ventured to ask whether she might run on to the worsted shop while Elspeth was choosing her drawing paper, and get her perforated card. The consent came quite easily, and almost made her feel ashamed. The fact was that a birthday was not far off, and
Elspeth knew the delight of secret contrivances for making up presents as a surprise, and thought that this might account for Paulina’s desire to go shopping by herself.

Away then posted Paulina, going so fast that she almost tumbled into a perambulator round the corner, and quite ran against a woman with a market busket, who seemed inclined to give her a good scolding.

And when she reached the post office, she found getting the letters no such rapid business. Quantities of people seemed to be there wanting orders, or letters, or stamps, or something, and they were all attended to in turn, on the principle of “first come, first served,” which hurt her dignity very much. She did not like to see a common soldier or a little scrubby maidservant attended to before Miss Paulina Quintall; and, besides, suppose she was kept waiting too long, and Elspeth were to suspect!

However, her pride was thus far flattered, though with a great fright at first. “Miss Quintall, can I do anything for you?” said a voice a little in front of her. She gave a start, and then perceived that
the voice came from one of the young clerks in
the bank, and she was able to feel herself a little
grand again, as she answered, "Thank you, Mr.
Bakewell, if you would ask for our letters."

Mr. Bakewell signed acquiescence, and Paulina
stood a little out of the line of people waiting,
—getting, however, jostled by all who were going
away, and feeling more cross and frightened every
minute, as she wondered whether she had better
cautions Mr. Bakewell against telling her father he
had met her there, and then deciding that there was
such a distance between one of the partners and the
junior clerk that nothing was more unlikely than
that he should mention any such thing.

His presence saved her full ten minutes' waiting,
as he had been there for some time before her; but
still she had been kept so long, that when a letter
addressed to Miss P. Quintall was put into her hand,
she durst not stop to read or to look at it, but put it
into her pocket and hurried away, scarcely thanking
Mr. Bakewell.

She had really forgotten all about the perforated
card, and was in full career back again, when
straight before her she saw Elspeth:
"My dear, what a time you have been! I was going to the worsted shop in search of you."

"I have not been there," said Paulina, colouring, but still trying to persuade her conscience that she was speaking truth. "I did not think I should find just what I wanted there, and so I went on further."

"You should have told me if you intended it," said Elspeth. "Your going into a shop three doors off is very different from your wandering half over the town by yourself. I do not think Papa would like it."

"I have often been by myself," growled Paulina. "With Papa's knowledge?—eh? However, we will not say any more about it now. Have you got what you wanted?"

Paulina had actually answered Yes, but she recollected that Aline and all the rest would come crowding round expecting to see her card, so, with a stammer and falter, she said, "Yes; at least I must still get a bit of card here."

Elspeth had never been so near suspecting something wrong. Indeed she would have quite suspected it if it had not been for the approaching birthday, for Paulina bought her card in an inatten-
tive-hurry, very unlike a person who had just been taking so much trouble about her materials. She did not know whether she wanted it coarse or fine, broad or narrow, nor how much she required, so that Elspeth could not help saying gently, "My dear, you should always know your own mind before you come shopping, or you are very unnecessarily troublesome."

Paulina shook her shoulders. She was in a state of mind all over prickles, in which the slightest reproof made her think of the P's and Q's, and feel justified in any kind of underhand resistance to such tiresome, fussy half-sisters.
CHAPTER VIII

P. AND P.

Not till Paulina was in her own room taking off her things did she venture to open her envelope. Eagerly she tore it open; it stuck very fast, all along the edges, and she tore right through the back before she could get it open.

Behold, there was no card in it; it was all letter, three sheets, in a cramped-looking hand, beginning "My dear Child."

Was Becky actually venturing on calling her so? Surely that was very impertinent, if the old thing were ever so tiresome, in giving her a lecture instead of doing as she was asked. Paulina stamped on the ground with impatience and anger at the insolence, and the vexation that the Sisters should get their own way, and oppress poor Horace after all.

Then it struck her that the writing was not like
that of an old servant. It might be worse. She had heard something about Uncle Proudfoot being able to write, though he could not read. That dreadful old Rebekah must actually have gone and told him, and he had written her a scolding. Of course that was it. Did it not begin—

"My dear Child,—You ask me——"

When old people began in that way, how could they expect young ones to have any patience to read their letters? No, no! Uncle Proudfoot and his lecture would keep, and he might have stood by his own niece's children better than to let them be ground down by the Trefusis kind! Elspeth's misdeeds and Horace's disappointment were always growing in Paulina's eyes.

Aline came racing into the room to look at the purchases, and she hastily thrust the letter into her pocket, intending to think no more about it, and make away with it when she had an opportunity. She was sure that she had quite lectures enough from her sisters by word of mouth, without troubling herself to read them in cross old Uncle Proudfoot's crooked writing.

She answered Aline in the same ill-tempered way
as to what she meant to do with her card. "Was it to be anything for Persis' birthday?"

"No! There was quite fuss enough about Persis already."

"Oh, but Persis is such a duck!" said Aline. "Only think, Paula, she told us stories all the way. She told us about the Princess that held her tongue and sewed the nettle shirts for her brothers."

Paulina felt as if she was doing it. "And, Paula," went on Aline, "if you would only let me have a little bit of your card, I would make a book-marker for Persie. I could do it all myself! May I?"

"Don't keep bothering," said Paulina. "You care for nothing else but what is new, and pets and spoils you. Now, I care too much for my own mamma to make up to what is new."

"But Persis doesn't want us to forget our own mamma," said Aline. "We went to the High Wood to-day, and Persie and I made the most beautiful wreath of wood anemones and blue periwinkles that I ever saw, and we went home by the cemetery and put it on her grave."

"All flummery, and I hate it," said Paula, angrily; not that she did really hate anything but the being
forced to acknowledge kindness in her half-sisters.

"Why can't they be a little kind to poor Horace, instead of their flowers and things!"

"Kind to Horace!" Aline opened her eyes.

"Ay! hindering him from the Regatta for Lilly's nonsense and Mrs. Airlie's."

"But Horace doesn't want to go to the Regatta," said Aline.

"Oh, nonsense! that's the way they make you and him give way to them. But I care for old ways, not for new fancies and fashions!"

"But, Paula, aren't you almost sure that we are all going to do something ever so nice instead? Do you know I almost think it will be a picnic on Quack Common. I am sure there is a great secret; and oh, wouldn't that be nice?"

"No! not if it is instead of the Regatta, and all cothered up with the Airlies," answered Paulina, flouncing away in the determination to have her grievance, now that her machinations had proved unsuccessful, and only brought a lecture upon her.

Only as she sat at tea did it flash upon her that it was possible that worse things still might be in store. Uncle Proudfoot might mean to tell Papa!
She must read his letter, reproofs and all, and see whether there were any danger of anything so shocking, or if she could do anything to prevent it. No sooner had this thought occurred than she became almost wild to make an opportunity of reading the letter; but with Aline sitting opposite to her, sighing over a French verb and watching for any possible distraction, this was quite impossible.

At last, however, Aline had finished, and ran away to dress; and Paulina, who had found that no word would stay a moment in her head—nay, that her eyes could scarcely see rightly while this dreadful alarm was on her mind—took the letter out of her pocket, laid it on her old friend the atlas, and began to spell it out again.

"My dear child," it began,—"you ask me——"

So far was plain in the first two lines, but then came seven or eight words together that Paula could not make out at all. It was really very illegible writing; any one would have found it so: and "love," "father," "sacrifice," were all she could make out at long intervals apart, and she could see nothing looking in the least like the words Horace, Prince's Quay, or Regatta, insomuch that she began to doubt whether
it were not all a mistake, or whether it had anything to do with the matter at all. She hastily looked at the end. It was a good deal crowded up into the space over the commencement, but she made out the letters "Ever y'' a''my, K. U."

About the "K. U." there could be no doubt, for they were more like printing than manuscript letters. Paula had not a "K. U." among all her acquaintance! She looked again, and saw an address in white embossed letters, stamped on the sheets of paper. It was the number and street of a house in London. It was plain now that it was a letter to Persis—Miss P. Quintall, too. What business had people to write such stupid directions!

And now what was to be done? Put it back into the envelope and pop it into the post-box in the door, so that it might come out with the other letters in the morning? Alas! the envelope was far too much torn for this to be possible!

Give it to Persis, asking her pardon and explaining that it had been opened by mistake? Then Paula's expedition to the post-office must have been mentioned, and all her plans would have become known.
And while she was thinking, up came footsteps, and Aline—tiresome, perpetual Aline—flew into the room.

"Oh, Paula! only think," she cried. "But what have you got there?"

"Oh, nothing!" said she, hastily crunching the letter anyhow into her pocket.

"Well," said Aline breathlessly, "only think—Elsie and Persie have coaxed Papa out on the lawn to play at croquet, and if you don't want to play, I may."

"Papa can't play," said Paulina, getting up slowly.

"No, but they are going to teach him! Isn't it fun? Please, Paula, say whether you want to play, for they are waiting to begin, and I may play if you won't."

Paulina had no desire to play. She had rather have puzzled over the "K. U.," but she was in a dog-in-the-manger temper, and the sight of Aline wishing for the game immediately decided her on asserting her rights as eldest, and playing herself.

"You aren't fit to play," she said; "one person who doesn't understand it is quite enough in a game."
Aline looked much disappointed.

"Indeed, Paula, Persie said I played very well last Saturday."

"I don't care how Persis pets you; I know you can't play."

And down ran Paulina in a great hurry, unable to get rid of the letter, which, in its crumpled state, bulged out in her pocket.

Mr. Quintall had been persuaded to come out on the lawn, not unwillingly, but protesting that he knew nothing about it; and Elspeth and Persis were merrily showing him how to hold the mallet, and the various devices of the game. He was a slow, deliberate man in his ways, and never seemed to care much for amusement, but his daughters thought that he worked too hard and incessantly, and were always trying to lure him into relaxations.

He took up his mallet in a steady, earnest way, and, new as he was to the game, he gave such hits that the ball seemed to understand him, and go wherever he wished.

"Quite right, Papa," cried Elspeth; "you'll be as good a player as Kenneth Urquhart,—won't he, Persie?"
"Who is Kenneth Urquhart?" asked Mr. Quintall.
"Oh, don't you know?" said Elspeth, laughing.
"Blue—Paula, it's you to play." And Paulina was obliged to go after her ball, which, in her vexation, she drove against the hoop, rebounding far; and the first thing she heard again was in her father's voice, after delivering his ball:

"Mr. Urquhart is very ultra, I believe."
"You know we don't think so," said Elspeth, in a bright outspoken tone, while Persis' face crimsoned over under her hat. "I do not believe you would think so either, if you knew him," added Elspeth, looking bravely up to her father.
"I don't wish to know him. I should have cautioned your aunts, if I had guessed what was going on! Why, Persie, even the novice that I am could have made a better stroke than that."

For Persis had struck with a trembling, ineffective hand, and her ball had gone a very little way towards the hoop. "The two P.'s are in a bad way," laughed Elspeth, giving her mind to the game in a moment. "We shall have only too easy a victory, Papa! Look out, Persie."

Click went Elspeth's ball against Persie's, and for
the next few turns she had it all her own way. Then Paulina felt impelled to retrieve her cause, and as she could really play very well, she brought her ball back, and had such a run of luck that she became keenly interested. Persis, too, had recovered herself, and the success of both together brought matters into a very exciting state. Paulina was in despair for her blue ball. Would her father send it entirely away? Was there not a hope that he would not see it? She stood near it, almost over it, in hopes that his ignorance of the game would save it. Behold, her own partner betrayed her! It was Persis who called, "Paula, take care; do you know where you are standing?"

Paulina moved away. "How could you, Persie?" she asked under her breath. "There!" as her father called out, "See, Miss Polly, there's an end of your triumph. Mend that if you can, Persie," as he used his advantage to pursue the ball of the other P.

"There! you've spoilt our chance," said Paulina, crossly, though still very low.

"Hush, Paula!" said Persis, with much more displeasure than her gentleness usually showed. "It is well for you that Papa and Elsie did not see you.
Do you think I would win a game by unfair, underhand ways?"

Paulina reddened with anger. All her gleam of good-humour had vanished. "Every one does it," she muttered between her teeth, as Persis moved forth to try to bring back her unfortunate ball. "I'm sure Persis has no business to make such a fuss about underhand ways! I wonder how she would like to know what sort of a letter I have in my pocket! But I'm one who can put two and two together! And she to talk to me of underhand ways!"

"Paula! play. You've got your ball to recover," called Elspeth, interrupting her meditations. "Why," as she passed across, "one would think you had pocketed the ball. What have you got sticking out there?"

"Oh, just some papers," said Paulina, putting down her hand and squeezing them tighter, in hopes to make them flatter; and, in spite of her fright, thinking, "Suppose I did bring them out, how would Mrs. Persie look about being underhand, forsooth?"
CHAPTER IX.

Q IN THE CORNER

The conversation in the croquet-ground had shed a light on affairs. Paulina knew that the name Urquhart was spelt with a "U," and not as her ear would have told her, Erkirt, for she had heard her sisters tell droll stories of misdirections of letters, and it occurred to her that she had seen "From K. U." in more than one book of her sister's. The "K. U." in the corner was no doubt Kenneth Urquhart, this prime croquet player, at whose name Persis blushed, lost her power of making a stroke, and against whom her father wished he had cautioned her aunt.

Paulina's eyes and ears had not been very closely watched over. She had listened to a great deal of idle gossip among the people who came to sit with
her mamma, and she had also read whatever she pleased in the many books that came from the circulating library to amuse the many hours that Mrs. Quintall spent as an invalid. This had made her old of her age, and filled her with foolish fancies and speculations about grown-up life, when she was not old enough really to understand anything about it.

And so it was that she could gather so plainly that this Kenneth Urquhart was in love with Persis, and that, as her father so strongly disapproved, they corresponded in secret. To think that it was really and truly a love-letter that she carried crushed up in her pocket! Paulina felt all the taller for it, however it had come about, and was all the more ardent for another study of it. Since she had looked once, and could never give it to Persis as it was, she had the less scruple in looking at it again. She did so want to see what real people said to one another when they were in love. It could do no harm; or, if it did, Persis quite deserved it for making such a fuss about being open when she was herself deceiving Papa.

So Paulina got the letter out of her pocket,
smoothed it out, and proceeded to try to read it, as she had written her own, by the evening light after she had gone to bed.

"My dear child,"—yes, that was just what some of the lovers in Mamma's books were apt to call their ladies; that was all right;—"you ask me"—Oh dear! "K. U." did write a shocking hand, to be sure! What could he say Persis had asked him? Something about her father's wishes; that was clear. But what, entirely baffled Paula; there was something a little further off like "compensate for the sacrifice," and then followed some crookbacked things and curly tails and looped heads, that Paula could no more make out than the hieroglyphics in the British Museum. "In—fleece"—yes, fleece she thought she read. Could it mean the "Fleece"—the "Golden Fleece"—the principal hotel in the town—a very old one, where all the post-horses and flys were kept? Yes, here was the word "fly." Could "K. U." be coming to the "Fleece" to meet Persis? Here, too, was a word that must be "destiny," and another before it something like "link." How hard it was that the writing should be so exceedingly troublesome to read! And here was darkness making the
difficulty all the greater. It was of no use to go on. But what was to be done with the letter? Here was a step coming! The maid to shut the shutters! Under the pillow with the letter! That would do for the time;—but for the future? Nay, even as Anne came in, the crackling of the paper seemed so loud in Paulina's ears that no one could choose but hear it. However, Anne made all dark, and went away unsuspicious, leaving Paulina wide awake—so wide—that it seemed as if she could never sleep again—wondering over her strange discovery.

Persis must be in love! Papa must disapprove of it, and she must be having letters in secret. No doubt this "K. U." in the corner was Kenneth Urquhart, and he was telling her that he would come down to the "Golden Fleece," and then he would meet her. Where? Paulina's heart beat with the excitement of such a wonderful discovery. Persis—quiet, gentle Persis—who had always seemed so exceedingly good and docile—whom Elspeth held up as an example, and who so often stood between her sisters and the displeasure of sharper, sterner Elspeth—Persis, with her caressing manner towards her father, her love for all that was good! She to
be carrying on an underhand engagement and a clandestine correspondence!

Maybe the wonder and excitement, the interest and curiosity, would have made Paulina feel friendly towards the lovers, but for the hostile spirit she was feeling towards both her stepsisters, which made her look upon the discovery as something to be used for her own defence and protection if they "put upon" her any more—something that gave her the solace of finding that Persis at least was not so good as she was supposed, and that when the Sisters preached about being true and upright and straightforward, they only meant it for the children, and not for themselves.

Therewith Paulina's thoughts began to get confused, until she saw Persis whispering to Percy, as she danced quadrilles on the deck of a yacht, while somehow the waves and cordage and everything else would make a crackling sound, and presently she saw that all the sails of the yacht were made of letters which were all over Perinni caterpillars—eating, eating them ever so fast, so that the ship would soon not be able to sail; it would stop, it would sink, and then it was sinking—the waves
came crackle, crackle round Paulina's ears, and awoke her; and then she remembered that it was all that unlucky letter under the pillow,—and yet, after all, it made so very little noise in reality when she turned her head, that her conscience must have had the most to do with it.

What was to be done? It was quite dark by this time, for she heard a clock striking eleven, and so it would be no use to open a shutter to enable her to see how to dispose of the letter; nor did she like to lay it on the chair by her bedside with her stockings, lest Anne should come in to wake her and should observe it. Yet she had a wonderful horror of hearing it crackling in her ears. If she was wide awake the sound was slight enough, but if she began dozing it grew louder, and absolutely began to cry out, "K, u—q; Kew in the corner! Q, u—who are you? Q, u—who are you?" till she started up again half awake, and in a fit of desperation snatched out the letter and tore the sheets across and across, she knew not how, and brushed them from her to the floor. She was really so sleepy and so desperate, that she hardly knew what she was about—certainly did not think—till she woke out of a dreamless sleep, this time
at the sound of the opening of the shutters, and Susan saying, "Why, Miss Paulina, however did you make the bed in such a litter? I am sure it was tidy enough when I saw you last."

"Oh, never mind, Susan! I'll pick it up!" said Paulina, bustling out of bed in a great hurry. "It is only some paper that I had in my pocket."

Susan might think it very odd, but she was too busy to attend to the matter now; and having opened the shutters and poured out the water, away she went, while Paulina collected the bits in some distress and anxiety of mind, half sorry for a moment that she had put it out of her power to restore the love-letter to poor Persis, but consoled by thinking that lovers always wrote to each other every day, so that one letter more or less really could not matter, and that Persis never ought to have had it.

But what was to be done with it? Fires there were none at this time of year, and to light a flame on the hearth to burn it would have brought Susan, Aline, perhaps Elspeth down upon her. If she left it Susan might be curious, piece it together, and make the discovery; and if she put it into the scrap
basket, Persis herself might look in and see the writing. Besides, as Paulina held the fragments in her hands, she could not help feeling a sort of odd sentimental respect for the first love-letter she had ever seen, which would have kept her from destroying it, even if she could have done so. There was very little time to deliberate. Anne would be coming in a minute to see whether she were tidy, and all she could devise at the moment was to stuff the scraps of the letter into her pocket, and as soon as ever she was dressed she scrambled through her prayers and flew to the old rocking-horse on the landing. Where the saddle had once been, there was a hole in his side. Olive and Clare were wont to call it "feeding Gee-gee" to drop in old mumbled crusts; and sometimes in fun, sometimes in mischief, sometimes in sheer naughtiness, a good many odd things had been entombed for ever in the body of the old charger. There, then, rolling up her papers into little quillets, did Paulina consign poor Persis' precious letter from "K. U." to the keeping of the ancient dapple-grey steed—starting a good many times if she heard a step, and once obliged to desist altogether, as Elspeth came suddenly out of her room.
"Paula, what are you doing, dawdling on the horse? You are not so silly as to be putting things in?"

"Only some bits of paper," said Paulina, unable to help colouring furiously.

"You had better not get into such a foolish habit, or we shall lose something of importance some day."

Paulina got her last little roll in when no one was looking, and thought herself very lucky!
CHAPTER X

POOR PERSIS

Paulina was angry at being told not to dawdle, or else she might have pitied Persis when the letters came in; for after an eager look, her face grew blank.

But Paulina was on the watch herself for Rebekah's card, and when it did not come she felt cross and uneasy on her own account, and these feelings rendered her idle and troublesome at lessons. At least, so said Elspeth and Miss Lillywhite. She said herself, and thought, that the "putting upon" was getting worse than ever, and that while they were so particular, and expected so much from her, it was of no use to try; and she rounded her back, and made things as much worse as she could.

And when she was ordered to stay indoors till
she had re-written her French exercise, she remembered how her father had interfered on Sunday, and sat in the same sullen position for full an hour, in hopes of his coming in and seeing her,—a futile hope, as she knew all the time, for he seldom came in so early, and, if he did, was not Elspeth gardening outside to intercept him? Gardening!—a thing that had never been thought of here before, which Paulina hated and despised, but over which Elspeth was ridiculously eager, actually liking to potter over plants and seeds, to water annuals, peg down verbenas, and cut off withered roses, better than to walk in the Avenue, where at least you saw somebody, and could have a chance of a little talk!

And there were Olive and Clare, stupid little things, trotting round and about her with baskets and little wheelbarrows, as if it were the most delightful thing in the world.

Persis and Aline were neither of them in sight, and Paulina grew so restless and curious as to what had become of them, that at last, as the only way of getting out, she did finish her exercise, and brought it out to Elspeth on the lawn.

Elspeth read it over, and said it was better, and
that Paulina might stay out now and do as she pleased. She asked where the others were. "They are gone into the town," said Elspeth; "Persis had something to do there, and she took Alie to walk with her."

Paulina could guess what that something was, but she said nothing, only fetched a story-book, and lay down on the grass under a tree.

"Paula," said Elspeth, "I don't think the grass is dry enough for that."

"Oh yes, it is—quite," growled Paulina.

"And I should have thought it better for you to be walking or running about after sitting still all the morning. Suppose you went and got me some bass from the tool-house?"

"Fine putting upon! You won't catch me doing your errands," thought Paulina, as she read on without seeming to hear.

Elspeth stood and looked at the girl a moment, repressing with difficulty something that was rising to her lips; then went to the house, brought back a carriage-rug, and said in a voice of forced gentleness, "I desire you will lie on this."

Never was poor girl so bothered and put upon. She
pityed herself so much for it that she could hardly go on with her story, though she drove away the black cat that came up and tried to nestle in her lap, because its tail came between her and the page.

By and by fresh voices came into the garden, and Persis went up to Elspeth, while Paulina rose, and, meeting Aline, dragged her aside, while asking in her peremptory way, "What in the world have you been doing in the town?"

"I only went with Persis," said Aline in a tone of frightened entreaty.

"And what did Persis go for?"

"She went to the post-office first," said Aline.

"I thought so!" muttered Paulina. "And you haven't got my—any letter for me?" she added eagerly.

"No," said Aline; "there were no letters at all for the house, only some for the bank, and Persis was very much disappointed."

"Indeed! how do you know?"

"Oh, she almost cried then, poor dear Persie. She said she made sure of getting a letter."

"From whom?" asked Paulina, breathlessly.

"She didn't say," answered Aline. "I said, 'Who
PAULINA AND ALINE IN THE GARDEN.

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from whom? and she didn't seem to hear; then I said 'Who from?' again, and she just gave my hand a squeeze and said, 'Never mind, my little Ali Baba; you know nothing about it.'"

"Of course not," said Paulina.

"Why, Paula, do you?" And as Paulina nodded her head knowingly, "Oh, tell me! Do! there's a good sister!"

"No, no; a baby like you can't understand; I sha'n't tell you."

"Did Persis tell you for a secret?" asked Aline, a little awed.

"Nonsense! I'm not going to tell you anything about it."

"Then it is very cross of you, and I sha'n't tell you a bit more," whined Aline.

"I've heard it all," said Paulina, contemptuously.

"No, you haven't," said Aline, feeling her power for a moment.

"Yes, I have," said Paulina, turning away with the instinct that to make light of the intelligence was the way to draw it from her younger sister.

"You've not! you haven't heard how Persie cried at church."
"At church!"

"Yes, at St. Paul's. She asked me if I should mind, and I didn't; and we went in, and oh, Paula! it was such pretty singing, only Persis cried all the time we were kneeling down."

"Well, Aline," said Paulina severely, "I can't think how you could do such a thing."

"But indeed I couldn't help seeing, Paula; and I was so sorry!"

"Nonsense! that wasn't what I meant: it was going to St. Paul's."

"Going to St. Paul's!" said the astonished Aline; "why, it was going to church."

"What a little silly you are, Aline, not to know that Papa hates St. Paul's."

Aline's brown eyes opened with wonder, for she was a much more simple child than Paulina, and had no notion of differences of opinion about churches.

"But it is a church, Paula," she repeated; "and Persis took me there."

"That's all you know," said Paulina.

"Paula, what can you mean? Papa won't be angry with me?"
"Oh no, I don't suppose he will, with a baby like you."

"But with Persis?" entreated Aline, who was learning to love Persis better than all the world besides.

"Oh, as to that, I don't know," returned Paulina, a little spitefully; "most likely he will never know."

"Persie would tell him if she thought he would not like it," reiterated Aline; and as Paulina laughed as if knowing better, she added: "She says, and so does Elspeth, if you doubt about a thing, always tell of it."

"I dare say," said Paulina, "that's what she tells you; but wait a little while, and you will see Mrs. Persis knows how to have contrivances of her own."

"For shame, Paula! I won't have you say such things of Persis! I'm sure she's good, whoever else isn't,"—and Aline began to cry.

"Paula!" came Elspeth's voice across the lawn. "You aren't teasing your sister? Aline, what's the matter?"

"She said—she said," sobbed Aline, all the louder
for Paulina's fierce pinch on the arm to stop her mouth—"that Persis wasn't good! and that she had con—con—contrivances of her own, and that Papa would be angry because we had been to St. Paul's."

"Paulina," said Elspeth, "you do not seem to be in a kind or charitable mood to-day; I wonder what is the matter with you?"

"Never mind now, Elsie," said Persis, coming up; "I mean to tell Papa where I have been; Paula need not think I should do anything without."

Persis looked so open and candid that Paulina felt ashamed, and quite forgot for the time that she had suspected her sister of anything besides this expedition to St. Paul's.

And when Mr. Quintall came home and said, in a pleasant, good-humoured voice, "Well, girls, and what have you been doing to-day?" Persis answered: "Elsie has been gardening, and I walked into Peterskirk with Aline. I went to the post-office, and then to St. Paul's. Papa, do you think letters for the house ever go by mistake to the bank?"

"Certainly not, Persis; I desire the postmaster to be careful to keep the bags separate. Do you think anything is wrong?"
"There is a London letter that I am rather uneasy about, but I dare say it will all come right," said Persis.

Artful being! So she had used her anxiety about her lost letter to divert her father's mind from her disobedient church-going, while she seemed to confess it. How people were deceived in her, and how innocent she looked all the time!
CHAPTER XI

QUARRELS ON THE QUADRANGLE

"Horace! come and speak to me—out here, where nobody can hear," called Paulina in a hasty whisper, as Horace came into the house on the Saturday.

"Eh! Nothing the matter with the Pernii, I hope," as he followed her up stairs.

"Oh, two of them have died, but that can't be helped,—and that's not it," said Paulina, climbing out on the roof.

"Died—the brutes! What made them go and do that? Holloa! and here are some more that look uncommonly like it. What have you been doing to them?"

"Nothing—unless Persis hurt them when she was changing them."

"Persis, indeed! She holds them a pretty sight
more tenderly than you do! More likely you did, with your great clumsy fingers."

"Persis! It is always Persis!" said Paulina petulantly.

"To be sure! It was as dull as ditch-water before she came and made it jolly. What! jealous, Polly? Polly peevish!"

"For shame, Horace!" sobbed Paulina. "I'm sure it's very unkind of you to like a stranger better than your own sister."

"Persis is my sister."

"No, she isn't—not like me."

"No, not like you, for she isn't a plague."

"Horace!" stamping her foot and crying passionately and pitifully; "that's a shame, a cruel, horrid shame, after all I've done for you."

"Much you've done—with Persie and Alie helping you too!"

"I declare," cried Paulina in her vexation, "I hate the very name of Persis! You always used to like me best before she came."

"Yes, I didn't know what was jolly," said Horace, enjoying, like a teasing boy, her anger and vexation.
"Horace! I say," she sobbed, "when you know all, you'll know who is your friend and who is good to you."

"Not you! Why, you've made all the glasses ring, and the woolly bear curl himself up! You're enough to spoil their spinning. Get away, do—you've upset the hawkmoth's flower-pot."

"But, Horace," said Paulina, recovering herself, "have you had a card from Uncle Proudfoot?"

"No!"

"Then that horrid old Becky has failed me!"

"How?—what do you mean?"

"Why, I wrote to ask her to send one of Uncle Proudfoot's cards for the 20th."

"But I don't want to go to Paddocksfield; I've got all the butterflies there."

"No, but I didn't mean you to go there. Uncle Proudfoot wasn't to know."

Horace gave a long whistle.

"You know," said Paulina eagerly, "Elspeth is so nasty about the Regatta, that I thought it was the only chance for you. If you showed Papa the card, he would never ask any questions, but let you have
the day, and you could join Percy Grafton and his party."

"A pretty sneaking business, I declare," cried Horace. "Just like a girl, to think I'd do such a dirty thing as that."

"Horace, you're very cross!—as if I had wanted you to say one word that wasn't true."

"There's not much odds between doing what isn't true and saying what isn't true. One is as dirty as the other, or rather dirtier. Besides I would as soon go to Jericho as to Prince's Quay."

"Oh, Horace! But there is to be a race between the Quagga and the Petrel."

"I don't care."

"And Percy Grafton is going."

"An overbearing perfumer's prig—I'd rather go a dozen miles than anywhere with him! Besides, there's something jolly getting up about going to Quack Common."

"A picnic with the Airlie babies," said Paulina scornfully.

"Ay, but there are silver-washed fritillaries, and meadow ringlets; and I know Elsie has got a jolly pigeon-pie for it."

"And so," cried Paulina, "after all the trouble
I have taken for you, you like going off like a baby, with a lot of girls and little ones, to drink tea and run after butterflies, when you might be going like a man to a boat-race with the other boys! I wonder you haven't more spirit—I do!"

"How can you talk such rubbish?" said Horace, but in a tone as if she had stung him. "I do what I like!"

"What Elspeth likes, you mean," said Paulina. "All the boys will see you, and laugh, and know how we are all put upon. I won't bear it; and you wouldn't if you had the spirit of a mouse."

"But I don't know what you are at, with your talk of being put upon," said Horace. "I'm sure the house is much nicer than ever it was before."

"There—there! that's just what I say! Nobody cares for poor dear Mamma but me!" And Paulina began to cry again, while Horace grew angry in his turn, and demanded: "Paula, what on earth do you mean? I not care!"

"You said the house was nicer without her."

"Now, can any one guess what women will be at?" exclaimed Horace. "As if all a poor fellow said had not been that it was nicer now than when poor Mamma was always shut up in her
room, and there was no one to do or say a thing for a fellow."

"Ay, you're all very much delighted now," said Paulina. "You think it all very fine; but when you come home for the holidays, see if they don't put upon you."

"I don't care if they do, if this is the way of it. I tell you what, Polly, I believe it is just this: you have had your own way, and now they are come, and are twice as good as you, you don't like it; and that's the long and short of the putting upon."

"Twice as good! We shall see," muttered Paulina. "I know what I know."

"Good!"—Horace opened his eyes—"good! to be sure they are good—only too good for you."

"So you think," she said, triumphantly.

"Think! I know: I see."

"See, indeed! As if they hadn't their secrets, like other people."

"Well, and they have a right to their secrets! I tell you what, Paula, if you say another such word, I'll serve you just as I would a fellow at Quick's. So hold your tongue, and be off with you. Elspeth and Persis not good, indeed! As if I did not know better than that!"
He was so really angry, and ready to proceed to violent measures, that Paulina really durst not tell him of her discovery and the means of it. Perhaps the perceiving how he would look at it was the first thing that made her see she had done something that might be thought very shocking; but the immediate effect was to make her extremely angry, injured, and vexed, that when she had ventured so much for him, he should have gone over to the side of the enemy.

Poor injured, put-upon Horace, playing at croquet with Papa in high glee, and talking everybody to death about silver-washed fritillaries, while Persis made his cages of paper and gauze for his caterpillars—was not he a wretched victim to step-sisters! Paulina was doomed to hear of nothing but the Quack Common picnic all the rest of the day, and to find every one surprised that she was so silent and sullen about what would naturally have been such a treat.

She was chiefly sustained by the certainty that there was something amiss with Persis, who struggled to be bright with her father and the children, but drooped whenever she thought she was not watched, and was pale and red-eyed when
she came down to breakfast on Sunday morning. Her father looked sharply at her, but said nothing, though they all knew by his ways that he was vexed. Again, at church, Persis pulled down her veil, and once or twice seemed to be fighting to keep back tears, and each time Mr. Quintall perceived it he made a little impatient movement as if he were vexed. It seems—nay, it is—shocking, but Paulina really felt an odd sort of spiteful pleasure in seeing that it was true that Persis had some secret grief, and that it was no mere fancy of her own; and, likewise, she had a sort of sense of retaliation in having on her side caused a considerable vexation to one of the Sisters who were always "putting upon her." And Paulina had come to believe that everything she was requested to do—yes, even to the putting on her gloves, or tidying up the schoolroom—was "putting upon": moreover, that her sisters never let her alone, and scolded her day and night. There are moods in which people think the whole world set against them, and Paulina was in one of these.
CHAPTER XII

POST-OFFICE REVELATIONS

Putting upon had really come to such a pass that Elspeth went with the children again to the dancing on Monday, and actually made the engagement for Paulina to dance with Millicent Airlie, so that she could only look at Percy Grafton, inhale his mille-fleurs essence from a distance, and admire his pale lavender gloves sewn with green. Paulina had no satisfaction but dancing as badly as possible, with stiff arms, and feet with no bend in them; and when she very decidedly got the worst of that, she believed and she muttered that Millicent Airlie put her out.

She did shake hands with Percy Grafton during the break-up, and that was only disappointment, for he did not ask about Horace’s going on the 20th,
and, when she told him, did not even seem to care about his defection half so much as about a slit in his own new gloves.

Millicent's high spirits and schemes about the picnic were insupportable too, and she was all the less at rest that Persis had come into town with the dancing party, and gone off her own way.

It was, however, the next afternoon that Mr. Quintall came out upon the lawn where the four elder sisters were at croquet together, and said—

"Persis, what's this about a letter that you've been inquiring about?"

"I have lost a letter, Papa," said Persis, colouring a little.

"When?"

"I expected to have had it on Thursday afternoon or Friday morning."

"This is very strange," said Mr. Quintall. "I went into the post-office just now, and the clerk desired me to tell you that he had been inquiring after your letter, and found that there had come one on Thursday afternoon which he gave to Bakewell, and Bakewell says he gave it to one of the children who was at the office asking for letters."
"Paulina!" exclaimed Elspeth, "don't go—stand still. Thursday was the day you went to Peterskirk with me."

"You did not send her to the post-office alone!"

"Certainly not; but I gave her leave to go and get something, as I thought, at a shop three doors off, and she was gone much too long a time," said Elspeth, looking a good deal startled. "Did you go to the post-office, Paula?"

"I won't answer you," cried Paulina, startled into a state of passionate distress and despair. "You have no business to question me, and—and—turn Papa against me—"

"Hush, Paulina!" said her father sternly; "that is not the way to speak to your sister. Did you go to the post-office?"

It had flashed through Paulina's mind that denial was useless, since the post-office clerks and Mr. Bakewell could both bring it home to her. Not having the contrary temptation, she sulkily answered—

"There was no harm in it."

"Did you go?" repeated her father.

"Yes."
"Did you have a letter for Persis given to you?"

"It had 'Miss P. Quintall' on it, and of course I thought it was for me," said Paulina in a much injured tone.

"Oh, Paula!" cried Persis, starting forward, "how could you forget to give it to me! Where is it? Do let me have it."

Paulina stood stock still, very angry with everybody.

"Why don't you answer your sister?" said Mr. Quintall. "Why did you not give it to her at once? Speak! Don't you know how disgraceful a thing it is to tamper with other people's letters?"

He was so angry now that Paulina could think of nothing but turning his displeasure into a different channel.

"It wasn't a proper letter for Persis to have," she muttered.

"Paulina, do you know what you are saying?" thundered her father.

"Paulina, are you gone out of your senses?" asked Elspeth.

Persis looked on in blank amazement, too much thunderstruck for a word.
"What do you mean?" repeated Mr. Quintall.
"Not a proper letter! What do you mean by that?"
"A love-letter," came out from between Paulina's lips, as she hung her head, frightened at the wrath she had provoked.

She was surprised that Elspeth and Persis both burst out laughing.

"Papa," cried Elspeth, "the child does not know what she is talking about!"

"I never had a love-letter in my life; there's no one to write one to me," asseverated Persis, looking up in his face with her innocent eyes. "Paulina must have made some ridiculous mistake."

"Upon my word, that's more likely, child," said Mr. Quintall; "that is, if it be the letter you expected."

"Please look at it—whatever it is. Read every word of it," entreated Persis.

"Fetch it, Paulina," said her father.
"I can't," she growled.
"Can't! Have you torn it up?"
"Yes."

"But the pieces, Paulina, where are they?" entreated Persis; "thrown away—where?"
"I remember," exclaimed Elspeth, "I saw Paulina poking something into the hole in the rocking-horse. It was on Friday morning. Depend upon it that is what she did with it."

"The hole in the rocking-horse!" said the astonished Mr. Quintall.

"Yes," said Elspeth; "they always put things there they wish to lose."

"I'll have it looked into. I don't know what to believe. I thought I had got to the end of all double dealing. I can't understand a bit of it," said Mr. Quintall, sadly; and Elspeth at least understood something of the tone of pain, for she had suspected more than once that he had been grieved by a little want of straightforwardness in his second wife. "Here is Paulina running off underhand to the post, and opening other people's letters!"

"That might be an accident," said kind Persis.

"Her going off to the post-office unknown to Elspeth was not," said Mr. Quintall. "Paulina, I insist on knowing what you were about. You have accused other people, but that does not clear you. If it be as I believe, you have invented a
slander against your sister, of which you do not know the cruelty."

"I'm sure," broke out Paulina, "it is a love-letter! Get it out of the rocking-horse and read it!"

"That shall certainly be done," said Mr. Quintall. "Elspeth, is it possible that this may be some impertinent stranger's letter? From whom was it, Paulina?"

"Kenneth Urquhart," said Paulina glibly. "Kenneth Urquhart!" repeated Persis; "that's the very letter!"

"But what is the child talking about?" said Elspeth. "He has a wife and five children."

"He is not the only Kenneth Urquhart," said Paulina, half exulting, half defending herself.

"No, there's his little boy of seven years old!" said Elspeth. "Papa, I think little Kenny might have written Persie a play-letter that Paula took for earnest."

"Oh yes," said Persis eagerly, glad to acquit Paulina of such exceeding unkindness; "I can quite fancy that. Please don't be angry with her."

"Stay, Persis, I have not got to the bottom of
it yet. If Paulina did make so absurd a mistake in good faith, she ought either to have brought the letter to me or to you, instead of suppressing it."

"I suppose she thought that would be kind to me," said Persis.

Paulina really began to think that the storm was after all diverted from herself to curiosity about the letter, and perhaps her sisters would have let it be so, but Mr. Quintall came back to the charge.

"How came she to meddle with the letter at all? What made you go inquiring for one, Paulina?"

"I thought I should get one."

"From whom?" Mr. Quintall had to repeat the question several times before he elicited—

"From Uncle Proudfoot's Becky." And then she took refuge in a great burst of tears. Mr. Quintall began to walk backwards and forwards and say there was some mystery in all this, and he could not make out girls; daughters were enough to drive one mad.

Elspeth, who had more command of herself than
any one else just then, went up to him, and touching his arm, said gently, "Dear Papa, don't you think that Paulina might speak out better if she were alone with you?"

"You take her, Elspeth; I don't know what to make of her."

"I think," said Elspeth, in a low, persuasive voice, "it may be better for you to speak to her; I am beginning to think she has made some great mistake about us, that she cannot speak out freely before us."

Paulina, who could not hear this, fancied of course that Elspeth was inciting her father to punish her, and was very much startled when he, speaking roughly, out of his vexation and dislike to the business, called her into his study.

"Paulina, what is the meaning of all this?" he gravely asked, when he had seated himself, and she stood before him, sobbing.

"The letter was directed to me," she said, laying hold of the most defensible point.

"That is nothing to the purpose. What I desire to understand is, what are the extraordinary machinations that I find going on in my family?"
She made no answer, and he changed the form of the question—

"You say you expected a letter from Becky Saunders. Had you written to her?"

Paulina did not quite say Yes, but it came to the same thing.

"What could you write to her about? I desire to know. Speak! I shall go over to find out from her."

So conjured, Paulina did speak: "I wanted a card for Horace."

"What do you mean by a card?"

"One of Uncle Proudfoot's cards."

"Why couldn't you ask for one openly? Am I to understand that you and Horace are in the habit of intriguing with your uncle's servants to obtain invitations?"

"Oh no, no—not Horace! He had nothing to do with it—nothing!" cried Paulina, wakened from her sulky trance to defend him.

"How do I know? I can't trust your word for anything! I shall go over to Paddocksfield and find out what has been going on."

"Oh, please, Papa, don't let Horace get into the
scrape, and I'll tell you all about it; and you'll see he knew nothing about it, and didn't want it either," said Paulina, quite changed now she had her innocent brother instead of her guilty self to defend. "It was all my sister's fault," she began, however, to his amazement. "Elspeth would not let Horace go to the Regatta on Thursday, and he has always been, and it was too bad of her! Dear Mamma always let him go."

"But," said Mr. Quintall, interrupting the tones of wrath in which she spoke, "I thought Elspeth had arranged some safer and more becoming party of pleasure as compensation."

"A stupid thing! I thought Horace would not like it," said Paulina.

"Or Horace did not like it?"

"Yes, but he did; he did really," protested Paulina, getting more and more dismayed as she saw her own shuffling made her father disbelieve what she said of her brother. "It was I!—I could not bear for him to be put upon."

"Put upon, by being kindly guarded from temptation!"

"He always had gone, and it never hurt him,
and the boys would have laughed at him," said Paulina.

"Passing that by, I do not see now how your Uncle Proudfoot's invitation to Paddocksfield was to take him to this Regatta."

Paulina did begin now to feel very much ashamed as she said, "Uncle Proudfoot wasn't to know."

"You mean, then, that his servant was to take one of his cards without his knowledge, and send it here, that Horace might, on a false pretext, join this expedition."

Paulina could only mutter, "Because Elspeth was so cross."

"Poor child!" and her father's deep sigh startled her: "she does not seem to understand the shame and disgrace of such conduct. Then it was in the expectation of this card that you stole away from your sister and opened Persis' letter?"

"I would have given it back if I had not torn it," said Paulina; "and when I began to read it, I thought it was to me."

"How was that possible?"

"It began with 'My dear Child,' and I thought,
perhaps, Uncle Proudfoot had found out. But, Papa, indeed it was a love-letter."

"Nonsense, child; you don't know what a love-letter is. Well, I can't say how much truth there is in what you say," he sighed; "it is bad enough, any way. Go up to your room now; I can't have you about this evening."

"Only, Papa," said Paulina, lingering, "it wasn't Horace's doing."

"Did he know of it?"

And then Paulina told her first direct falsehood in the matter, for she said "No;" and as she saw her father look really pleased, she went up to her room, thinking that at any rate Horace had not known of her manoeuvres before, only after; but she was too miserable to sleep properly, and tossed about amid unhappy dreams and waking fears throughout the night and the weary long light morning.
CHAPTER XIII

QUARTERING THE ROCKING-HORSE

Mr. Quintall could not rest till he had come to some understanding of the affair. Instead of going to the bank the first thing after breakfast, he sent for a carpenter, and desired him to open the rocking-horse.

All the family stood round with as much curiosity as wonder, except poor little Clare, who ran away to Susan in an agony of crying, as if it had been a live horse that was to be cut in two; and not half believing the assurances that dear old Gee-gee would be as well as ever in the evening.

The first thing that came to light when the upper part of the poor dappled grey was severed from the lower was a mouse's nest, explaining the wonderful mousey smell that had for some little time been
remarked in the passage. Olive’s plan of feeding Gee-gee upon crusts must have been appreciated by the mouse family. Amongst dust and crumbs and “sloven’s fur” almost enough to make a tippet, came forth five slate-pencils, two lead-pencils, one knife, one piece of india-rubber, one female member of Noah’s family and one of his beetles, besides a number of scraps of paper, upon which Elspeth and Persis immediately threw themselves, picking out those which bore Mr. Urquhart’s handwriting, and piecing them together. It turned out that Paulina’s hurried midnight tearing had not been into very minute pieces; it had done little more than quarter them, so that it was not difficult to put them together again.

Mr. Quintall had not said a word to Persis about the letter; he had even said he only caused the search to be made to satisfy himself about Paulina’s truth, and for the same reason he had ordered his horse, to ride to Paddocksfield and examine Becky. He did not attempt to look at the fragments, or ask any questions about them; but Persis, so soon as she had arranged them legibly, came up to him, and said, with hotly glowing cheeks—
"Father, please read this."

"Do you really wish it, Persis?" he said, and Paulina felt half jealous of the manner. "You understand that at your age your correspondence is perfectly free, and that I should never think again of that child's accusation—only not scandalous because it is so foolish and impossible."

"Please read it, Papa," repeated Persis; and Paulina, for all her troubles, raised her head with eagerness and suspense; so amazed was she that the letter could be even supposed to be anything but what she had thought it.

"From Mr. Urquhart?" asked her father.

"Yes, Papa," said Persis, "and perhaps I had better tell you first; for I am not sure now whether I ought not to have done so before; you know Mr. Urquhart prepared us for Confirmation, and he told us, whenever we could, to go to the Holy Communion early. So when you forbade us"—(Mr. Quintall was looking displeased now, and the tears stood in Persis' eyes, and her voice quivered)—"we were very much puzzled what was right to do; for indeed we—at least I—don't know how to be any way good without strength and help, always. So I
wrote—perhaps I ought to have told you first—to ask Mr. Urquhart what was the right thing to do, and this is his answer."

So this was what Paulina had taken for love-making! The colour rushed into her face at her own exceeding foolishness, and she would have been ready to run out of the room with shame and dismay if she had not perceived that her father was not much pleased.

"Hm! I think young ladies might put their fathers before strangers."

"But he could not be a stranger to us, Papa," said Persis; "he taught us long ago."

"Well, ha! that's some excuse; let us see——"

Paulina wished he would have read aloud, so that she might have had her difficulties cleared up; but instead of this, he only said, "Must I read it? A horrid bad hand he writes, this adviser of yours.—Good and sensible, that!—Why, Persie, girl, did it go so very deep with you? You might have told me, child, though, after all.—Hm! ha! he seems a good, right-minded man, not at all disposed to stir up strife between father and child.—Patience, influence——" (Influence; that must have been Paulina's "fleece"—
her "Golden Fleece")—"There, my dear, I am glad you showed it to me; it puts your friend in a fresh light to me, and I suppose you must do as you please."

"Oh, Papa!" and the colour came into Persie's face, and she clasped her hands—"thank you!" And Elspeth fervently echoed, "Thank you, Father!"

"Well, say no more about it now; anyhow, I see you gave up something to come home and help me, my girls, and I don't want to make it harder to you; only have it all out with me next time, if I cross you again."

"I will, Papa; I will not be afraid again." And Persis ventured to bend down and kiss him. Paulina had never thought of such a thing as that, and was amazed to see him put up his arm and hold her down and return the kiss, saying, as he did so, "You are very like your mother, Persie."

Then Paulina felt a fierce pang of jealousy.

"Stay a moment," said her father, as Persis was going; "when does Horace come home?"

"To breakfast, to-morrow."

"I shall leave speaking to him till then. I am going over to Paddocksfield now."

A kind of despair seized Paulina at the thought
of what Uncle Proudfoot would say to the use she had intended to make of his servant and his cards.

Elspeth spoke, however: "Don't you think you could speak to this old housekeeper apart; I don't imagine Mr. Proudfoot knows anything about it."

"Most likely not. I should be ashamed that he should. Shall I drive you there, Elsie?"

"No, thank you, Papa; I think you will get on better without me," said Elspeth, feeling that otherwise Paulina might never think his judgment impartial.

"Very well; only mind, you need not get ready for this picnic business. I can't have pleasuring while an affair like this is going on."

Aline gave a start of horror and dismay, and Elspeth said—

"Is not that rather hard on the innocent?"

"How do I know who is innocent? I believe Horace is at the bottom of it all the while."

"Indeed, Papa," said Elspeth, eagerly, "I do not think so. I don't think Horace cares about anything but butterflies, and his head is full of the silver-washed fritillaries on Quack Common. He really prefers it."
"So you think, Elsie—you are a good girl, and never were used to slippery ways; but nothing shall ever make me believe that the girl there got up such a plot without being egged on by her brother."

"I did! I did, Papa!" cried Paulina, darting forward again. "Horace knew nothing about it. Oh, punish me as much as you please, but don't believe horrid things about Horace. He didn't want to go. He was angry with me for it."

"There now, Paulina, last night you told me he knew nothing about it! That's the way with you all—anything to shield your brother. I only hope I may get the truth out of him, anyway."

And Mr. Quintall went off, leaving Paulina crying now as she had never cried before.

"Oh, Elsie, Elsie, what shall I do! Indeed, indeed, Horace had nothing to do with it."

"No, Paula, I cannot believe he had," said Elspeth; "but if you have not spoken the perfect truth, it will be very hard to convince Papa."

"I did speak truth. He did not ask me to do it," sobbed Paula; "he did not want me to do it; he knew nothing till it was all done, and then
I thought Becky might have been stupid and sent him the card, so I told him, and he was very angry with me."

"But you told Papa he did not know!"

"Oh, Elsie, don't you see, in that sense; and I didn't tell one other fib in the whole."

"I do see, Paula, 'in that sense,' as you call it; but it was a great pity you did not explain to Papa."

"I was so frightened! and I only thought how to get Horace out of the scrape! And now I have made it worse than ever!"

Poor Paulina was crying so bitterly and sobbed so violently, that Persia looked at Elspeth quite frightened; and Elspeth said—

"Poor child! she is quite worn out. Lie down here, Paula,"—making a place on the sofa. "I dare say you did not sleep all night."

Paula sobbed out "No," while Persis laid her down, and presently Elspeth brought her some salvolatile. She was dimly conscious that they were both a great deal kinder to her than she in the least expected or deserved; but she was tired out with her misery, and could not think about it, and
so she fell asleep. When she awoke partially, it was to hear their voices.

"I can't help hoping that after all this is the beginning of better things."

"I can't help hoping everything in the joy your letter has won us," said Elspeth.

"Did people really care about Church and Holy Communion as much as all that?" thought Paulina.

"How very kind Papa was!" added Persis. "And oh, what a helpful letter it was! I wonder what put the fancy into her head, poor child!"

And then both sisters indulged in a hearty, noiseless laugh. If Paulina had been as honourable as they were, she would have shown herself to be awake, but she had not learnt as yet all the lessons she ought to learn,—and she lay still.

"I am sure we are both very much indebted to her," said Elspeth. "I only trust good may come out of the present trouble."

"If Papa can only acquit poor Horace!" said Persis. "I have great hopes that the dear boy's own open-faced manner will convince him."
"I am sure it ought," said Elspeth. "Dear Horace! I do think the most hopeful part about all this terrible affair is that she is more distressed for his sake than her own."

"There was nothing selfish in it from first to last," said Persis, warmly.

"I am not so sure of that. There was some self-deceit. It was the spirit of opposition to me."

"How did Elspeth know so well," thought Paulina. "I am sure no one could have been kinder!" cried Persis.

"No one could have meant to be kinder, but I never knew how difficult it would be to do right and yet seem kind. Poor children! I have often been sorry for them, and have feared things seemed to be done for the sake of change and tyranny, when they really could not be helped."

There Paulina dropped off to sleep again, but with a very different feeling in her mind as to being "put upon."
CHAPTER XIV

POISONING A HOLIDAY

Mr. Quintall did not come home till quite late. Mr. Proudfoot had insisted on his staying to dinner, and Elspeth was obliged to send Paulina to bed before he came home, promising to come and tell her what he said about Becky.

The girl was so tired out, however, that she was fast asleep when her sisters looked in at her, and it was not till the morning that she knew the fate of her letter.

Becky Saunders was no great reader, and she had kept the letter for her young niece to read to her after church on Sunday. And the niece had, after spelling it out with difficulty, brought her to the conclusion that "the young gentleman wanted to go out a pleasuring unknownst to his Pa," which
Becky rightly held to be very dangerous; besides, how was she ever to go for to do such a thing as to take one of her master's cards without his knowledge! So Becky had made up her mind to take no notice; it was just a fancy of the young ladies and gentlemen that they would soon forget, if she let it blow over, and be glad she had done so. Sensible old servants often do put a stop to follies in that way, by taking no notice.

Becky was much afraid of bringing the dear children into trouble, but when questioned she had told all that she knew. She had in her real good-nature destroyed the letter; and as the kitchen fire had done so more effectually than the rocking-horse, she could not produce it; and this was unlucky, as it would have done something towards clearing Horace.

Poor Horace! it was a different holiday from what he expected when he came home with his sunny face and his butterfly net on that summer morning, expecting his picnic and butterflies innumerable. He was at once met and called by a stern voice into his father's study; and what passed there no one knew, —while his sisters waited outside in great distress.
"I'll thank you not to meddle in my affairs again."

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At last Horace came out, looking glum and fierce, and turning to Paulina, said—

"I'll thank you not to meddle in my affairs again! A pretty mess you've got me into this time."

"Horace, dear, you—"

"None of your dears—making my father not believe a word I say."

And as his father's step was heard following, he flung out of the room by the windows, unable to meet him. Paulina durst not go after him—she who had comforted him in all his scrapes before.

"As I thought, Elspeth," said Mr. Quintall, coming in, "the boy was cognizant of this scheme. I was sure the girl would never have got it up unless it was instigated."

"Papa! Papa!" Paulina almost screamed, in her dismay and despair.

"Silence, Paulina!—it is of no use to listen to you."

Elspeth rose up now. "Papa, I believe she tells the truth."

"What!" interrupted Mr. Quintall, "when one
minute she tells me he did not know, and he tells me himself that he did!"

"She has explained——" began Elspeth.

"Explained!—explained!—that's the way with women! You do the boy no good by letting him hoodwink you, Elspeth. You are not weak to your sisters, why should you be so to him?"

"I am trying not to be weak, but to stand up for what I believe to be the right," said Elspeth. "I believe what Paulina tells me, that Horace never wanted to go to Prince's Quay, but that she, fancying I was unkind in preventing him, concocted this plan without his knowledge. Yes—she only told him of it last Saturday, when all her measures had been taken, and then he was very properly angry with her; but I am quite sure you would not have thought better of him for betraying her. Has he said anything inconsistent with that?"

"Why, no—not if I can believe anything."

"Then do believe this, Papa dear, for I am sure it is the truth. No one can look at Horace a moment and think he would wilfully deceive."

"Little you know about boys, Elspeth. However, nothing, as you say, is proved against him, so I am
content to leave it as it is. I shall say no more about it, and you may tell him so."

With which Persis stole out to seek Horace in the garden in vain, and continue her search upstairs to his own room, and Palmer Worm Park, where she found him squatted down among his flower-pots, dull and gloomy, resisting all the caresses that little Aline tried to lavish on him,—driving her back, sometimes with a growl, sometimes, it may be feared, with a kick; but she was a loving little thing, and returned, after every rebuff, to fawn on him like a faithful dog.

It was the first time his father had ever doubted his word, and it was very sore to him. When Persis came he only turned the more away, and tried to shake off her soft hand as Paulina had once done.

"Dear Horace, I came to tell you Papa does not mean to be angry any more."

"Does he believe me?" The boy looked up eagerly, and as Persis hesitated—

"There, you see how it is! What an abominable thing it is to have a sister!"

"Oh, Horace, don't," entreated Aline.
"Get away, do: you are all one as bad as the other."

Persis laughed her little sweet laugh.

"Not quite, Horace," she said. "Come, I do not wonder that you are exceedingly vexed and grieved."

"Such an abominable trick to have played me!" he went on.

"She meant it for kindness."

"As if that did me any good. All those silver-washed running to destruction for want of some one to catch them—and my new net and all. And my father thinking me no end of a brute! Oh, Persie! isn't it enough to drive a fellow out of his senses?"

"I really think it is, almost," said Persis. "Paula almost cried herself ill about it yesterday."

"I should hope so! You standing up for her, Persie, of all people in the world, when she went and begged your letters, and told all manner of spiteful fibs about them."

"That was all her mistake."

"Nice mistake! I declare I would as soon have a nest of vipers in the house."
“I think nothing will be so likely to cure her as all this.”

“If not, there will be no living in the house with her. I sha’n’t speak to her, nor let her touch anything of mine, I can tell her. I shouldn’t wonder if her meddling made the Perini die.”

“Hardly that; she has been very careful. And, Horace, I think the best sign of all is, that she grieves for having brought you into trouble more than for herself.”

“Well, she may,” quoth Horace, “I never asked her; and now she has been and poisoned my holiday, and, what’s worse, my father’s mind.”

“Papa will soon get over that,” said Persis. “Nobody can suspect a really true and upright boy long.”

“But I shall never now be able to say he never suspected me at all. Oh, Persie, that he should think I could plot against him and tell him lies, and be a horrid mean sham!”

The boy burst into a flood of tears, feeling it a great deal more deeply than Persis had thought was in his light gay nature. There, on that queer quadrangle between the roofs, among the cater-
pillars, he leant against her as she sat on a low stool, and cried bitterly; and Paulina, lingering about the bedroom door, heard, and was cut to the heart.

But Horace was all the better for the crying; and when he did look up again, he had relieved himself, so that he could bear it; and when he had looked about a little, he saw that two silkworms of the real old kind had actually spun, and must be wound. And Persis was so glad to see him consoled in any way, that she gladly gave the rest of the morning to nothing but the winding of silk: and it was done so successfully, that Horace, when summoned to dinner, declared that, "considering all things, it was a good thing that the sensible people in the family should have stayed at home to attend to anything so important."

Moreover, he entirely forgot that he had intended to treat Paulina like a nest of vipers, but he called her Polly just as usual, or more kindly as he saw her unhappy; and was so bright and good-natured, that Elspeth feared she would lose the impression that had been made.

But Paulina's disposition was very different from
her brother's. Things went deeper with her, and his kindness, after the injury she had done him, only made her pain the greater. She felt there was something she could never forget in the way both he and Persis treated her.
Elspeth thought the kindest thing to do would be to take Horace out for a long walk that afternoon; and though it looked much hotter than was pleasant, she offered to go with him to a down where someone was reported once to have seen a painted lady of the woods.

It was too far for Aline, and Paulina was not well enough, so Persis stayed at home with them, and only Olive, whose sturdy legs nothing ever seemed to tire, went off with the walkers.

Just as they were coming home with a poor painted lady waiting in a pill-box for the laurel leaves that were to end her pretty fluttering life, they saw a cab driving at full speed towards the station, and Olive declared that she saw Mrs. Grafton
in it,—Mrs. Grafton, who never was known to leave her own fireside. They all laughed at the little girl’s mistake.

But as they reached their own gates, footsore and dusty, but with their hands full of flowers and their hearts full of cheerfulness, they saw Mr. Quintall coming quickly up from the end of the road. Horace, remembering the morning in one sudden thrill of shame, would hardly have waited for his coming but for a sign he made to them. The first thing he did was to lay his hand on Horace’s shoulder, and exclaim, in a husky, agitated voice—

“My boy! my boy——”

Horace fancied it was displeasure at first, and started; but Elspeth knew better.

“What is it? Is anything the matter?” she asked.

‘Matter—yes, Elsie; those unhappy boys. Too much wine, it is believed. Took a boat—mismanaged—ran foul of the quay——”

“Drowned! who?”

“Poor young Davies; not sure of the others when they telegraphed. Percy Grafton alive, but an arm broken. They came into the bank to tell me, fancy—
ing my boy must have been among them, and it crossed me whether he had really gone, after I had stung him with suspicion. I scarcely durst come home to look:” and he wiped his brow and gasped, as he held Horace safe by the shoulder. The boy was pale enough.

“I was very near going,” he said, in a low awe-struck voice; “I was in such a rage I should, if Persie hadn’t come up and——” but there again Horace broke down in tears as he strove to ask, “Charlie—Charlie Hill—was he there?”

“Charlie Hill—the Hills never go.”

“Ah, but he said he wouldn’t be badgered any more. It’s all their fault, they bored him so at home——”

“Poor things!” said Mr. Quintall. “Horace, we do both owe unspeakably much to these sisters of yours. I am sorry I spoke hastily to you this morning, my boy; I heard afterwards that you had steadily refused to join the party this year. I will never doubt your word again, Horace, unless you give me cause to do so. I beg your pardon now.”

Horace looked up in wonder as his father held out his hand and clasped his tight, not so much in
reconciliation as in the joy of feeling it warm, strong, and healthful. But the boy's heart was very sore for his schoolfellows, and he counted over the names in great anxiety, for it was pretty well known in the school who were going to the regatta, who had free leave, and who had extorted it.

It was Paulina, however, who felt it the most. When they came into the house, they found her as white as a sheet waiting for tidings. Nobody said to her, "Suppose your plan had succeeded?" But perhaps she felt it the more because no one did. How would she have felt at that moment?

She began to understand the real kindness of the sisters in not roughly forbidding, as Mrs. Hill did, but striving to give a pleasure in lieu of that they wished to prevent,—the sisters she had thought so cruel.

Horace could not stay at home; he must go up to the station to hear what tidings came in, and his father somehow could not bear to have him out of sight, so they went together while Paulina lay on the sofa with her hand in that of Persis, too anxious to speak, but listening for every sound. How much more terrible that listening might have been.
It was not for more than an hour that the father and son came back. Then it was with better news. Nobody had been actually drowned. All had been restored, with diligent care, though Percy Grafton’s arm was broken, and he, and one or two more, were not in a fit state to be brought home.

The accident seemed to have been caused by the boys’ own carelessness and Percy Grafton’s conceit. They had lunched at a hotel by the waterside, and had taken enough liquor of various kinds to make them all the more boastful and unsteady. They refused all advice and caution from the boatmen, and no wonder that the consequence was that even in pushing off from the quay the boat had been upset.

It was true that all had been rescued, but it had been the nearest and narrowest of escapes, and such revelations had been made of the perils the boys underwent, and, far worse, the company they ran into at these regatta parties, that every one in the town resolved more firmly than ever that the boys should never again be allowed to go without some safe person to look after them.

And Paulina herself began to understand that “putting upon another” might sometimes mean
keeping out of temptation. When she heard the particulars, she did not think of temptation as a merely long word used by cross people to prevent one from enjoying one's self.

"I am sure, if that is all, I hope my sisters will 'put upon us' all their lives," she said to herself after she had kissed Horace once more that night and felt him safe.

"Persie, my girl," said Mr. Quintall, "this has been a great mercy. I think I must come to church with you next Sunday morning. One feels as if one must do something by way of thanksgiving, and as much for such a girl as Elsie as for the boy's safety."

It would be exaggerating to say that Paulina Quintall never came to a squabble again about the P's and Q's, but at any rate the sisters had a foundation of good understanding; Paulina trusted the others entirely, never again tried to circumvent them, and therefore came in time to be trusted herself, long before Horace had Pernii silk enough to make her a dress.
There was once a wonderful fortnight in little Lucy's life. One evening she went to bed very tired and cross and hot, and in the morning when she looked at her arms and legs they were all covered with red spots, rather pretty to look at, only they were dry and prickly.

Nurse was frightened when she looked at them. She turned all the little sisters out of the night nursery, covered Lucy up close, and ordered her not to stir, certainly not to go into her bath.
Then there was a whispering and a running about, and Lucy was half alarmed, but more pleased at being so important, for she did not feel at all ill, and quite enjoyed the tea and toast that Nurse brought up to her. Just as she was beginning to think it rather tiresome to lie there with nothing to do, except to watch the flies buzzing about, there was a step on the stairs and up came the doctor. He was an old friend, very good-natured, and he made fun with Lucy about having turned into a spotted leopard, just like the cowry shell on Mrs. Bunker's mantelpiece. Indeed, he said he thought she was such a curiosity that Mrs. Bunker would come for her and set her up in the museum, and then he went away. Suppose, oh, suppose she did!

Mrs. Bunker, or Mother Bunch, as Lucy and her brothers and sisters called her, was housekeeper to their Uncle Joseph. He was really their great uncle, and they thought him any age you can imagine. They would not have been much surprised to hear that he had sailed with Christopher Columbus, though he was a strong, hale, active man, much less easily tired than their own papa. He had been a
ship's surgeon in his younger days, and had sailed all over the world, and collected all sorts of curious things, besides which he was a very wise and learned man, and had made some great discovery. It was not America. Lucy knew that her elder brother understood what it was, but it was not worth troubling her head about, only somehow it made ships go safer; and so he had had a pension given him as a reward, and had come home and bought a house about a mile out of the town, and built up a high room to look at the stars from with his telescope, and another to try his experiments in, and a long one besides for his museum; yet, after all, he was not much there, for whenever there was anything wonderful to be seen, he always went off to look at it; and whenever there was a meeting of learned men—scientific men was the right word—they always wanted him to help them to make speeches and show wonders. He was away now: he had gone away to wear a red cross on his arm, and help to take care of the wounded in the sad war between the French and Germans.

But he had left Mother Bunch behind him. Nobody knew exactly what was Mrs. Bunker's
nation, indeed she could hardly be said to have had any, for she had been born at sea, and had been a sailor's wife; but whether she was mostly English, Dutch, or Danish, nobody knew and nobody cared. Her husband had been lost at sea, and Uncle Joseph had taken her to look after his house, and always said she was the only woman who had sense and discretion enough ever to go into his laboratory or dust his museum.

She was very kind and good-natured, and there was nothing that the children liked better than a walk to Uncle Joseph's, and, after a game at play in the garden, a tea-drinking with her—such quantities of sugar! such curious cakes made in the fashion of different countries! such funny preserves from all parts of the world! and more delightful to people who considered that looking and hearing was better sport than eating, and that the tongue is not only meant to taste with, such cupboards and drawers full of wonderful things, such stories about them! The lesser ones liked Mrs. Bunker's room better than Uncle Joseph's museum, where there were some big stuffed beasts with glaring eyes that frightened them, and they
had to walk round with hands behind, that they might not touch anything, or else their uncle's voice was sure to call out gruffly, "Paws off!"

Mrs. Bunker was not a bit like the smart housekeepers at other houses. To be sure, on Sundays she came out in a black silk gown with a little flounce at the bottom, a scarlet China crape shawl with a blue dragon upon it—his wings over her back, and a claw over each shoulder, so that whoever sat behind her in church was terribly distracted by trying to see the rest of him—and a very big yellow Tuscan bonnet, trimmed with sailor's blue ribbon; but in the week and about the house she wore a green stuff, with a brown holland apron and bib over it, quite straight all the way down, for she had no particular waist, and her hair, which was of a funny kind of flaxen grey, she bundled up and tied round, without any cap or anything else on her head. One of the little boys had once called her Mother Bunch, because of her stories; and the name fitted her so well that the whole family, and even her master, took it up.

Lucy was very fond of her; but when about an hour after the doctor's visit she was waked by a
rustling and a lumbering on the stairs, and presently the door opened, and the second best big bonnet—the go-to-market bonnet with the turned ribbons—came into the room with Mother Bunch's face under it, and the good-natured voice told her she was to be carried to Uncle Joseph's and have oranges and tamarinds, she did begin to feel like the spotted cowry, to think about being set on the chimney-piece, to cry, and say she wanted Mamma.

The Nurse and Mother Bunch began to comfort her, and explain that the doctor thought she had the scarlatina; not at all badly; but that if any of the others caught it, nobody could guess how bad they would be; especially Mamma, who had just been ill; and so she was to be rolled up in her blankets, and put into a carriage, and taken to her uncle's; and there she would stay till she was not only well, but could safely come home without carrying infection about with her.

Lucy was a good little girl, and knew that she must bear it; so, though she could not help crying a little when she found she must not kiss any one, nay, not even see them, and that nobody might go with her but Lonicera, her own washing
doll, she made up her mind bravely; and she was a good deal cheered when Clare, the biggest and best of all the dolls, was sent in to her, with all her clothes, by Maude, her eldest sister, to be her companion,—it was such an honour and so very kind of Maude that it quite warmed the sad little heart.

So Lucy had her little scarlet flannel dressing gown on, and her shoes and stockings, and a wonderful old knitted hood with a tippet to it, and then she was rolled round and round in all her bed-clothes, and Mrs. Bunker took her up like a very big baby, not letting any one else touch her. How Mrs. Bunker got safe down all the stairs no one can tell, but she did, and into the fly, and there poor little Lucy looked back and saw at the windows Mamma's face, and Papa's, and Maude's, and all the rest, all nodding and smiling to her, but Maude was crying all the time, and perhaps Mamma was too.

The journey seemed very long; and Lucy was really tired when she was put down at last in a big bed, nicely warmed for her, and with a bright fire in the room. As soon as she had had some beef-tea, she went off soundly to sleep, and
only woke to drink tea, and administer supper to
the dolls, and put them to sleep.

The next evening she was sitting up by the
fire, and on the fourth day she was running about
the house as if nothing had ever been the matter
with her, but she was not to go home for a fortnight;
and being wet, cold, dull weather, it was not always
easy to amuse herself. She had her dolls, to be
sure, and the little dog Don, to play with, and
sometimes Mrs. Bunker would let her make funny
things with the dough, or stone the raisins, or even
help make a pudding; but still there was a good deal
of time on her hands. She had only two books with
her, and the rash had made her eyes weak, so that
she did not much like reading them. The notes
that every one wrote from home were quite enough
for her. What she liked best—that is, when Mrs.
Bunker could not attend to her—was to wander
about the museum, explaining the things to the
dolls: "That is a crocodile, Lonicera; it eats people
up, and has a little bird to pick its teeth. Look,
Clare, that bony thing is a skeleton—the skeleton
of a lizard. Paws off, my dear; mustn't touch.
That's amber, just like barley sugar, only not so
nice; people make necklaces of it. There's a poor little dead fly inside. Those are the dear delightful humming-birds; look at their crests, just like Mamma's jewels. See the shells; aren't they beauties? People get pearls out of those great flat ones, and dive all down to the bottom of the sea after them; mustn't touch, my dear, only look; paws off."

One would think Clare's curved fingers all in one piece, and Lonicera's blue leather hands had been very movable and mischievous, judging by the number of times this warning came; but of course it was Lucy herself who wanted it most, for her own little plump, pinky hands did almost tingle to handle and turn round those pretty shells. She wanted to know whether the amber tasted like barley-sugar as it looked, and there was a little musk deer, no bigger than Don, whom she longed to stroke, or still better to let Lonicera ride; but she was a good little girl, and had real sense of honour, which never betrays a trust, so she never laid a finger on anything but what Uncle Joe had once given all free leave to move.

This was a very big pair of globes—bigger than
globes commonly are now, and with more frames round them—one great flat one, with odd names painted on it, and another brass one, nearly upright, going half-way round from top to bottom, and with the globe hung upon it by two pins, which Lucy's elder sisters called the poles, or the ends of the axis. The huge round balls went very easily with a slight touch, and there was something very charming in making them go whisk, whisk, whisk; now faster, now slower, now spinning so quickly that nothing on them could be seen, now turning slowly and gradually over and showing all that was on them.

The mere twirling was quite enough for Lucy at first, but soon she liked to look at what was on them. One she thought much more entertaining than the other. It was covered with wonderful creatures: one bear was fastened by his long tail to the pole; another bigger one was trotting round; a snake was coiling about anywhere; a lady stood disconsolate against a rock; another sat in a chair; a giant sprawled with a club in one hand and a lion's skin in the other; a big dog and a little dog stood on their hind legs; a lion seemed just about to spring on a young maiden's head; and all were thickly spotted
over, just as if they had Lucy's rash, with stars big and little: and still more strange, her brothers declared these were the stars in the sky, and this was the way people found their road at sea; but if Lucy asked how, they always said she was not big enough to understand, and it had not occurred to Lucy to ask whether the truth was not that they were not big enough to explain.

The other globe was all in pale green, with pink and yellow outlines on it, and quantities of names. Lucy had had to learn some of these names for her geography, and she did not want to think of lessons now, so she rather kept out of the way of looking at it at first till she had really grown tired of all the odd men and women and creatures upon the celestial sphere; but by and by she began to roll the other by way of variety.
"Miss Lucy, you're as quiet as a mouse. Not in any mischief?" said Mrs. Bunker, looking into the museum; "why, what are you doing there?"

"I'm looking at the great big globe, that Uncle Joe said I might touch," said Lucy: "here are all the names just like my lesson book at home; Europe, Asia, Africa, and America."

"Why, bless the child! where else should they be? There be all the oceans and seas besides that I've crossed over, many's the time, with poor Ben Bunker, who was last seen off Cape Hatteras."

"What, all these great green places, with Atlantic and Pacific on them; you don't really mean that you've sailed over them! I should like to make a
"I'm looking at the great big globe that Uncle Joe said I might touch,"
said Lucy.
midge do it in a husk of hempseed! How could you, Mother Bunch? You are not small enough."

"Ho! ho!" said the housekeeper, laughing; "does the child think I sailed on that very globe there?"

"I know one learns names," said Lucy; "but is it real?"

"Real! Why, Missie, don't you see it's a sort of a picture? There's your photograph now, it's not as big as you, but it shows you; and so a chart, or a map, or a globe, is just a picture of the shapes of the coast-line of the land and sea, and the rivers in them, and mountains, and the like. Look you here:" and she made Lucy stand on a chair and look at a map of her own town that was hanging against the wall, showing her all the chief buildings, the churches, streets, the town hall, and market cross, and at last helping her to find her own Papa's house.

When Lucy had traced all the corners she had to turn in going from home to Uncle Joe's, and had even found little frizzles for the five lime-trees before the Vicarage, she understood that the map was a small picture of the situation of the buildings in the town, and thought she could find her way to some new place, suppose she studied it well.
Then Mrs. Bunker showed her a big map of the whole country, and there Lucy found the river, and the roads, and the names of the villages near, as she had seen or heard of them; and she began to understand that a map or globe really brought distant places into an exceedingly small picture, and that where she saw a name and a spot she was to think of houses and churches; that a branching black line was a flowing river full of water; a curve in, a pretty bay shut in with rocks and hills; a point jutting out, generally a steep rock with a lighthouse on it.

"And all these places are countries, Bunchey, are they, with fields and houses like ours?"

"Houses, ay, and fields, but not always so very like ours, Miss Lucy."

"And are there little children, boys and girls, in them all?"

"To be sure there are, else how would the world go on? Why, I've seen 'em by swarms, white or brown or black, running down to the shore, as sure as the vessel cast anchor; and whatever colour they were, you might be sure of two things, Miss Lucy, that they were all alike in."

"Oh, what, Mrs. Bunker?"
"DO PLEASE SIT DOWN, THERE'S A GOOD MOTHER BUNCH, AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT THEM."

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"Why, in plenty of noise for one, and the other for wanting all they could get to eat. But they were little darlings, some of them, if I only could have got at them to make them a bit nicer. Some of them looked for all the world like the little bronze images Master has got in the museum, brought from Italy, and hadn't a rag more clothing neither. They were in India. Dear, dear, to see them tumble about in the surf!"

"Oh, what fun! what fun! I wish I could see them. Suppose I could?"

"You would be right glad, Missie, I can tell you, if you had been three or four months aboard with nothing but dry biscuits and salt junk, and may be a tin of preserved vegetables just to keep it wholesome, to see the black fellows come grinning alongside with their boats and canoes all full of oranges and limes and shaddocks and cocoa-nuts. Doesn't one's mouth fairly water for them?"

"Do please sit down, there's a good Mother Bunch, and tell me all about them. Come, suppose you do."

"Suppose I did, Miss Lucy, and where would your poor uncle's preserved ginger be, that no one knows from real West Indian?"
“Oh, let me come into your room, and you can tell me all the time you are doing the ginger.”

“IT is very hot there, Missie.”

“That will be more like some of the places. I’ll suppose I’m there! Look, Mrs. Bunker, here’s a whole green sea, all over the tiniest little dots. There can’t be people in them.”

“Dots? You’d hardly see all over one of those dots if you were in one. That’s the South Sea, Miss Lucy, and those are the loveliest isles, except, may be, the West Indies, that ever I saw.”

“Tell me about them, please,” entreated Lucy.

“Here’s one; its name is—is Ysabel—such a little wee one.”

“I can’t tell you much of those South Sea Isles, Missie, being that I only made one voyage among them, when Bunker chartered the Penguin for the sandal-wood trade; and we did not touch at many, being that the natives were fierce and savage, and made nothing of coming down with arrows and spears at a boat’s crew. So we only went to such islands as the missionaries had been at, and got the people to be more civil and conformable.”

“Tell me all about it,” said Lucy, following the
LUCY HAD A GREAT SNEEZING FIT, AND WHEN SHE LOOKED AGAIN INTO THE SMOKE, WHAT DID SHE SEE BUT TWO LITTLE BLACK FIGURES!  P. 187.
"I am so glad to see you. Hush, don't bark so!"

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old woman hither and thither as she bustled about, talking all the time, and stirring her pan of ginger over the hot plate.

How it happened, it is not easy to say; the room was very warm, and Mother Bunch went on talking as she stirred, and a steam rose up, and by and by it seemed to Lucy that she had a great sneezing fit, and when she looked again into the smoke what did she see but two little black figures, faces, heads, and feet all black, but with an odd sort of white garment round their waists, and some fine red and green feathers sticking out of their woolly heads.

"Mrs. Bunker, Mrs. Bunker," she cried, "what's this? who are these ugly figures?"

"Ugly!" said the foremost; and though it must have been some strange language, it sounded like English to Lucy. "Is that the way little white girl speaks to boy and girl that have come all the way from Ysabel to see her?"

"Oh, indeed! little Ysabel boy, I beg your pardon. I didn't know you were real, nor that you could understand me! I am so glad to see you. Hush, Don! don't bark so!"
"Pig, pig, I never heard a pig squeak like that," said the black stranger.

"Pig! It is a little dog. Have you no dogs in your country?"

"Pigs go on four legs. That must be pig."

"What, you have nothing that goes on four legs but a pig! What do you eat, then, besides pig?"

"Yams, cocoa-nut, fish—oh, so good, and put pig into hole among hot stones, make a fire over, bake so nice!"

"You shall have some of my tea and see if that is as nice," said Lucy. "What a funny dress you have; what is it made of?"

"Tapa cloth," said the little girl. "We get the bark off the tree, and then we go hammer, hammer, thump, thump, till all the hard thick stuff comes off;" and Lucy, looking near, saw that the substance was really all a lacework of fibre, about as close as the net of Nurse's caps.

"Is that all your clothes?" she asked.

"Yes, till I am a warrior," said the boy; "then they will tattoo my forehead, and arms, and breast, and legs."

"Tattoo! what's that?"

"Make little holes, and lines all over the skin
with a sharp shell, and rub in juice that turns it all to blue and purple lines."

"But doesn't it hurt dreadfully?" asked Lucy.

"Hurt! to be sure it does, but that will show that I am brave. When Father comes home from the war, he paints himself white."

"White!"

"With lime made by burning coral, and he jumps and dances and shouts: I shall go to the war one of these days."

"Oh no, don't!" said Lucy, "it is horrid."

The boy laughed, but the little girl whispered, "Good white men say so. Some day Lavo will go and learn, and leave off fighting."

Lavo shook his head. "No, not yet; I will be brave chief and warrior first,—bring home many heads of enemies."

"I—I think it nice to be quiet," said Lucy; "and—and—won't you have some dinner?"

"Have you baked a pig?" asked Lavo.

"I think this is mutton," said Lucy, when the dish came up,—"it is sheep's flesh."

Lavo and his sister had no notion what sheep were. They wanted to sit cross-legged on the
floor, but Lucy made each of them sit in a chair properly; but then they shocked her by picking up the mutton-chops and stuffing them into their mouths with their fingers.

"Look here!" and she showed the knives and forks.

"Oh!" cried Lavo, "what good spikes to catch fish with! and knife—knife—I'll kill foes! much better than shell knife."

"And I'll dig yams," said the sister.

"Oh no!" entreated Lucy, "we have spades to dig with, soldiers have swords to fight with: these are to eat with."

"I can eat much better without," said Lavo, but to please Lucy his sister did try; slashing hard away with her knife, and digging her fork straight into a bit of meat. Then she very nearly ran it into her eye, and Lucy, who knew it was not good manners to laugh, was very near choking herself. And at last, saying the knife and fork were "great good—great good; but none for eating," they stuck them through the great tortoiseshell rings they had in their ears and noses. Lucy was distressed about Uncle Joseph's knives and forks, which she knew she ought not to give away; but while she was looking
"I CAN EAT MUCH BETTER WITHOUT," SAID LAVO.

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Javo had climbed up the side of the door, and was sitting astride on the top of it.

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about for Mrs. Bunker to interfere, Don seemed to think it his business, and began to growl and fly at the little black legs.

"A tree, a tree!" cried the Ysabelites, "where's a tree?" and while they spoke, Lavo had climbed up the side of the door, and was sitting astride on the top of it, grinning down at the dog, and his sister had her feet on the lock, going up after him.

"Tree houses," they cried; "there we are safe from our enemies."

And Lucy found rising before her, instead of her own nursery, a huge tree, on the top of a mound.¹ Basket-work had been woven between the branches to make floors, and on these were huts of bamboo cane; there were ladders hanging down made of strong creepers twisted together, and above and around the cries of cockatoos and parrots and the chirp of grasshoppers rang in her ears. She laid hold of the ladder of creeping plants and began to climb, but soon her head swam, she grew giddy, and called out to Lavo to help her. Then suddenly she found herself curled up in Mrs. Bunker's big beehive chair, and she wondered whether she had been asleep.

¹ See the Net, June 1, 1867.
"Suppose and suppose I could have such another funny dream," said Lucy. "Mother Bunch, have you ever been to Italy?" and she put her finger on the long leg and foot, kicking at three-cornered Sicily.

"Yes, Missie, that I have; come out of this cold room and I'll tell you."

Lucy was soon curled in her chair; but no, she wasn't! she was under such a blue, blue sky, as she had never dreamt of: clear sharp purple hills rose up against it. There was a clear rippling little fountain, bursting out of a rock, carved with old, old carvings, broken now and defaced, but shadowed over by lovely maidenhair fern and trailing bindweed; and in a niche above a little roof, sheltering a figure of the Blessed Virgin. Some way off stood a
long low house propped up against the rich yellow stone walls and pillars of another old, old building, and with a great chestnut-tree shadowing over it. It had a balcony, and the gable end was open, and full of big yellow pumpkins and clusters of grapes hung up to dry, and some goats were feeding round.

Then came a merry, merry voice singing something about *la vendemmia*; and though Lucy had never learnt Italian, her wonderful dream knowledge made her sure that this meant the vintage, the grape-gathering; and presently there came along a little girl dancing and beating a tambourine, with a basket fastened to her back, filled to overflowing with big, beautiful bunches of grapes: and a whole party of other children, all loaded with as many grapes as they could carry, came leaping and singing after her; their black hair loose, or sometimes twisted with vine-leaves; their big black eyes dancing with merriment, and their bare brown legs with glee.

"Ah! Cecco, Cecco!" cried the little girl, pausing as she beat her tambourine, "here's a stranger who has no grapes; give them here!"
“But,” said Lucy, “aren’t they your Mamma’s grapes; may you give them away?”

“Ah, ah! ’tis the vendemmia! all may eat grapes; as much as they will. See, there’s the vineyard.”

Lucy saw on the slope of the hill above the cottage long poles such as hops grow upon, and vines trained about hither and thither in long festoons, with leaves growing purple with autumn, and clusters hanging down. Men in shady battered hats, bright sashes and braces, and white shirt sleeves, and women with handkerchiefs folded square over their heads, were cutting the grapes down, and piling them up in baskets; and a low cart drawn by two mouse-coloured oxen, with enormous wide horns and gentle-looking eyes, was waiting to be loaded with the baskets.

“To the wine-press! to the press!” shouted the children, who were politeness itself and wanted to show her everything.

The wine-press was a great marble trough with pipes leading off into other vessels around. Into it went the grapes, and in the midst were men and boys and little children, all with bare feet and legs
"AH! CECCO, CECCO!" CRIED THE LITTLE GIRL, PAUSING AS SHE BEAT HER TAMBOURINE.

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up to the knees, dancing and leaping, and bounding and skipping upon the grapes, while the red juice covered their brown skins.

"Come in, come in; you don't know how charming it is!" cried Cecco. "It is the best time of all the year, the dear vintage; come and tread the grapes."

"But you must take off your shoes and stockings," said his sister, Nunziata; "we never wear them but on Sundays and holidays."

Lucy was not sure that she might, but the children looked so joyous, and it seemed to be such fun, that she began fumbling with the buttons of her boots, and while she was doing it she opened her eyes, and found that her beautiful bunch of grapes was only the cushion in the bottom of Mother Bunch's chair.
CHAPTER IV

GREENLAND

"Suppose and suppose I tried what the very cold countries are like!"

And Lucy bent over the globe till she was nearly ready to cut her head off with the brass meridian, as she looked at the long jagged tongue, with no particular top to it, hanging down on the east side of America. Perhaps it was the making herself so cold that did it, but she found herself in the midst of snow, snow, snow. All was snow except the sea, and that was a deep green, and in it were monstrous floating white things, pinnacled all over like the Cathedral, and as big, and with hollows in them of glorious deep blue and green, like jewels; Lucy knew they were icebergs. A sort of fringe of these cliffs of ice hemmed in the shore. And on one of
"IS THAT THE WAY YOU GET FISH?" SHE ASKED.
them stood what she thought at first was a little brown bear, for the light was odd, the sun was so very low down, and there was so much glare from the snow that it seemed unnatural. However, before she had time to be afraid of the bear, she saw that it was really a little boy, with a hood and coat and leggings all of thick, thick fur, and a spear in his hand, with which he every now and then made a dash at a fish,—great cod fish, such as Mamma had, with oysters, when there was a dinner-party.

Into them went his spear, up came the poor fish, and was strung with some others on a string the boy carried. Lucy crept up as well as she could on the slippery ice, and the little Esquimaux stared at her with a kind of stupid surprise.

"Is that the way you get fish?" she asked.

"Yes, and seals. Father gets them," he said.

"Oh, what's that, swimming out there?"

"That's a white bear," he said, coolly; "we had better get home."

Lucy thought so indeed; only where was home? that puzzled her. However, she trotted along by the side of her companion, and presently came to what might have been an enormous snowball, but
there was a hole in it. Yes, it was hollow; and as her companion made for the opening, she saw more little stout figures rolled up in furs inside. Then she perceived that it was a house built up of blocks of snow, arranged so as to make the shape of a beehive, all frozen together, and with a window of ice. It made her shiver to think of going in, but she thought the white bear might come after her, and in she went. Even her little head had to bend under the low doorway, and behold it was the very closest, stuffiest, if not the hottest place she had ever been in! There was a kind of lamp burning in the hut; that is, a wick was floating in some oil, but there was no glass, such as Lucy had been apt to think the chief part of a lamp, and all round it squatted upon skins these queer little stumpy figures, dressed so much alike that there was no knowing the men from the women, except that the women had much the biggest boots, and used them instead of pockets and they had their babies in bags of skin upon their backs.

They seemed to be kind people, for they made room by their lamp for the little girl, and asked her where she had been wrecked, and then one of the
women cut off a great lump of raw something—was it a walrus, with that round head and big tusks?—and held it up to her; and when Lucy shook her head and said, "No, thank you," as civilly as she could, the woman tore it in two, and handed a lump over her shoulder to her baby, who began to gnaw it. Then her first friend, the little boy, hoping to please her better, offered her some drink. Ah! it was oil, just like the oil that was burning in the lamp!—horrid train oil from the whales! She could not help shaking her head, so much that she woke herself up!
CHAPTER V

TYROL

"Suppose and suppose I could see where that dear little black chamois horn came from! But Mother Bunch can't tell me about that, I'm afraid, for she always went by sea, and here's the Tyrol without one bit of sea near it. It's just one of the strings to the great knot of mountains that tie Europe up in the middle. Oh! what is a mountain like?"

Then suddenly came on Lucy's ears a loud blast like a trumpet; another answered it farther off, another fainter still, and as she started up she found she was standing on a little shelf of green grass with steep slopes of stones and rock above, below, and around her; and rising up all round huge, tall hills, their smooth slopes green and grassy, but in
"HELP ME, I'M AFRAID," SAID LUCY.
the steep places, all steep, stern cliff and precipice, and as they were seen further away they were of a beautiful purple, like a thunder-cloud. Close to Lucy grew blue gentians like those in Mamma's garden, and Alpine roses, and black orchises; but she did not know how to come down, and was getting rather frightened when a clear little voice said, "Little lady, have you lost your way? Wait till the evening hymn is over, and I'll come and help you;" and then Lucy stood and listened, while from all the peaks whence the horns had been blown there came the strong sweet sound of an evening hymn, all joining together, while there arose distant echoes of others farther away. When it was over, one shout of "Jodel" echoed from each point, and then all was still except for the tinkling of a little cow-bell. "That's the way we wish each other good night," said the little girl, as the shadows mounted high on the tops of the mountains, leaving them only peaks of rosy light. "Now come to the chalet, and sister Rose will give you some milk."

"Help me. I'm afraid," said Lucy.

"That is nothing," said the mountain maiden springing up to her like a kid, in spite of her great
heavy shoes; "you should see the places Father and Seppel climb when they hunt the chamois."

"What is your name?" asked Lucy, who much liked the looks of her little companion in her broad straw hat, with a bunch of Alpine roses in it, her thick striped frock, and white body and sleeves, braced with black ribbon; it was such a pleasant, fresh, open face, with such rosy cheeks and kindly blue eyes, that Lucy felt quite at home.

"I am little Katharli. This is the first time I have come up with Rose to the chalet, for I am big enough to milk the cows now. Ah! do you see Ilse, the black one with a white tuft? She is our leading cow, and she knows it, the darling. She never lets the others get into dangerous places they cannot come off; she leads them home, at a sound of the horn; and when we go back to the village, she will lead the herd with a nosegay on the point of each horn, and a wreath round her neck. The men will come up and fetch us, Seppel and all; and may be Seppel will bring the medal for shooting with the rifle."

"But what do you do up here?"

"We girls go up for the summer with the cows to
the pastures, the grass is so rich and good on the mountains, and we make butter and cheese. Wait, and you shall taste. Sit down on that stone."

Lucy was glad to hear this promise, for the fresh mountain air had made her hungry. Katherl skipped away towards a house with a projecting wooden balcony, and deep eaves, beautifully carved, and came back with a slice of bread and delicious butter, and a good piece of cheese, all on a wooden platter, and a little bowl of new milk. Lucy thought she had never tasted anything so nice.

"And now the gracious little lady will rest a little while," said Katherl, "whilst I go and help Rosel to strain the milk."

So Lucy waited, but she felt so tired with her scramble that she could not help nodding off to sleep, though she would have liked very much to have stayed longer with the dear little Tyrolese. But we know by this time where she always found herself when she awoke.
Oh! oh! here is the little dried crocodile come alive, and opening a horrible great mouth lined with terrible teeth at her.

No, he is no longer in the museum; he is in a broad river, yellow, heavy, and thick with mud; the borders are crowded with enormous reeds and rushes; there is no getting through; no breaking away from him; here he comes; horrid, horrid beast! Oh, how could Lucie have been so foolish as to want to travel in Africa up to the higher parts of the Nile? How will she ever get back again? He will gobble her up, her and Clare, who was trusted to her, and whatever will Mamma and sister do?

Hark! There's a cry, a great shout, and out jumps a little black figure, with a stout club in his hand: smash it goes down on the head of master crocodile;
HARK! THERE'S A CRY, AND OUT JUMPS A LITTLE BLACK FIGURE, WITH A STOUT CLUB IN HIS HAND.
"To your anchor!"
the ugly beast is turning over on its back and dying. Then Lucy has time to look at the little Negro, and he has time to look at her. What a droll figure he is, with his woolly head and thick lips, the whites of his eyes and his teeth gleaming so brightly, and his fat little black person shining all over, as well it may, for he is rubbed from head to foot with castor-oil. There it grows on that bush, with broad, beautiful, folded leaves and red stems and the pretty grey and black nuts. Lucy only wishes the negroes would keep it all to polish themselves with, and not send any home.

She wants to give the little black fellow some reward for saving her from the crocodile, and luckily Clare has on her long necklace of blue glass beads. She puts it into his hand, and he twists it round his black wool, and cuts such dances and capers for joy that Lucy can hardly stand for laughing; but the sun shines scorching hot upon her, and she gets under the shade of a tall date palm, with big leaves all shooting out together at the top, and fine bunches of dates below, all fresh and green, not dried like those Papa sometimes gives her at dessert.

The little negro, Tojo, asks if she would like some; he takes her by the hand, and leads her into a whole cluster of little round mud huts, telling her
that he is Tojo, the king's son; she is his little sister, and these are all his mothers! Which is his real mother Lucy cannot quite make out, for she sees an immense party of black women, all shiny and polished, with a great many beads wound round their heads, necks, ankles, and wrists; and nothing besides the tiniest short petticoats: and all the fattest are the smartest; indeed, they have gourds of milk beside them, and are drinking it all day long to keep themselves fat. No sooner however is Lucy led in among them, than they all close round, some singing and dancing, and others laughing for joy, and crying, "Welcome little daughter, from the land of spirits!" and then she finds out that they think she is really Tojo's little sister, who died ten moons ago, come back again from the grave as a white spirit.

Tojo's own mother, a very fat woman indeed, holds out her arms, as big as bed-posts and terribly greasy, gives her a dose of sour milk out of a gourd, makes her lie down with her head in her lap, and begins to sing to her, till Lucy goes to sleep; and wakes, very glad to see the crocodile as brown and hard and immovable as ever; and that odd round gourd with a little hole in it, hanging up from the ceiling.
CHAPTER VII

LAPLANDERS

"It shall not be a hot country next time," said Lucy, "though, after all, the whale oil was not much worse than the castor oil.—Mother Bunch, did your whaler always go to Greenland, and never to any nicer place?"

"Well, Missie, once we were driven between foul winds and icebergs up into a fiord near North Cape, right at midsummer, and I'll never forget what we saw there."

Lucy was not likely to forget, either, for she found herself standing by a narrow inlet of sea, as blue and smooth as a lake, and closely shut in, except on the west, with red rocky hills and precipices with pine-trees growing on them, except where the bare rock was too steep, or where on a somewhat smoother
shelf stood a timbered house, with a farm-yard and barns all round it. But the odd thing was that the sun was where she had never seen him before,—quite in the north, making all the shadows come the wrong way. But how came the sun to be visible at all so very late? Ah! she knew it now; this was Norway, and there was no night at all!

And here beside her was a little fellow with a bow and arrows, such as she had never seen before, except in the hands of the little Cupids in the pictures in the drawing-room. Mother Bunch had said that the little brown boys in India looked like the bronze Cupid who was on the mantelshelf, but this little boy was white, or rather sallow-faced, and well dressed too, in a tight, round, leather cap, and a dark blue kind of shaggy gown with hairy leggings; and what he was shooting at was some kind of wild-duck or goose, that came tumbling down heavily with the arrow right across its neck.

"There," said the boy, "I'll take that, and sell it to the Norse bonder's wife up in the house above there."

"Who are you, then?" said Lucy.

"I'm a Lapp. We live on the hills, where the
AND HERE, Beside her, was a little fellow with a bow and arrows such as she had never seen before.
Norseman has not driven us away, and the reindeer find their grass in summer and their moss in winter."

"Oh! have you got reindeer? I should so like to see them and to drive in a sledge!"

The boy, whose name was Peder, laughed, and said, "You can't go in a sledge except when it is winter, with snow and ice to go upon, but I'll soon show you a reindeer."

Then he led the way, past the deliciously smelling, whispering pine-woods that sheltered the Norwegian homestead, starting a little aside when a great, tall, fair-faced, fair-haired Norse farmer came striding along, singing some old old song, as he carried a heavy log on his shoulder, past a scater or mountain meadow where the girls were pasturing their cows, much like Lucy's friends in the Tyrol, out upon the grey moorland, where there was an odd little cluster of tents covered with skins, and droll little, short, stumpy people running about them.

Peder gave a curious long cry, put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out a lump of salt. Presently, a pair of long horns appeared, then another, then a whole herd of the deer with big heads and horns
growing a good deal forward. The salt was held to them, and a rope was fastened to all their horns that they might stand still in a line, while the little Lapp women milked them. Peder went up to one of the women, and brought back a little cupful for his visitor; it was all that one deer gave, but it was so rich as to be almost like drinking cream. He led her into one of the tents, but it was very smoky, and not much cleaner than the Esquimaux. It is a wonder how Lucy could go to sleep there, but she did, heartily wishing herself somewhere else.
CHAPTER VIII

CHINA

Was it the scent of the perfumed tea, a present from an old sailor friend, which Mrs. Bunker was putting away, or was it the sight of the red jar ornamented with little black-and-gold men, with round caps, long petticoats, and pigtails, that caused Lucy next to open her eyes upon a cane sofa, with cushions ornamented with figures in coloured silks? The floor of the room was of shining inlaid wood; there were beautifully woven mats all round; stands made of red lacquer work, and seats of cane and bamboo; and there was a round window, through which could be seen a beautiful garden, full of flowering shrubs and trees, a clear pond lined with coloured tiles in the middle, and over the wall the Q
gilded roof of a pagoda, like an umbrella, only all in ridge and furrow, and with a little bell at every spoke. Beyond, were beautifully and fantastically shaped hills, and a lake below with pleasure boats on it. It was all wonderfully like being upon a bowl come to life, and Lucy knew she was in China, even before there came into the room, toddling upon her poor little tiny feet, a young lady with a small yellow face, little slips of eyes sloping upwards from her flat nose, and back hair combed up very tight from her face, and twisted up with flowers and ornaments. She had ever so many robes on, the edge of one peeping out below the other, and at the top a sort of blue China-crape tunic, with very wide loose sleeves drooping an immense way from her hands. There was no gathering in at the waist, and it reached to her knees, where a still more splendid white silk, embroidered, trailed along. She had a big fan in her hand, but when she saw the visitor she went up to a beautiful little low table, with an ivory frill round it, where stood some dainty, delicate tea-cups and saucers. Into one of these she put a little ball about as big as an oak-apple of tea-leaves; a maid dressed like herself poured hot water on it,
"Is it not good?" said the little hostess.
and handed it on a lacquer-work tray. Lucy took it, said, "Thank you," and then waited.

"Is it not good?" said the little hostess.

"It must be! You are the real tea people," said Lucy; "but I was waiting for sugar and milk."

"That would spoil it," said the Chinese damsel; "only outer barbarians would think of such a thing. And, ah! I see you are one! See, Ki-hi, what monstrous feet!"

"They are not bigger than your maid's," said Lucy, rather disgusted. "Why are yours so small?"

"Because my mother and nurse took care of me when I was a baby, and bound them up that they might not grow big and ugly like the poor creatures who have to run about for their husbands, feed silkworms, and tend ducks!"

"But shouldn't you like to walk without almost tumbling down?" said Lucy.

"No, indeed! Me, a daughter of a mandarin of the blue button! You are a mere barbarian to think a lady ought to want to walk. Do you not see that I never do anything? Look at my lovely nails."
"I think they are claws," said Lucy; "do you never break them?"

"No; when they are a little longer, I shall wear silver shields for them, as my mother does."

"And do you really never work?"

"I should think not," said the young lady, scornfully fanning herself; "I leave that to the common folk, who are obliged. Come with me and let me lean on you, and I will give you a peep through the lattice, that you may see that my father is far above making his daughter work. See, there he sits, with his moustachios hanging down to his chin, and his tail to his heels, and the blue dragon embroidered on his breast, watching while they prepare the hall for a grand dinner. There will be a stew of puppy dog, and another of kittens, and birds'-nest soup; and then the players will come and act a part of the nine-night tragedy and we will look through the lattice. Ah! Father is smoking opium, that he may be serene and in good spirits! Does it make your head ache? Ah! that is because you are a mere outer barbarian. She is asleep, Ki-hi; lay her on the sofa, and let her sleep. How ugly her pale hair is, almost as bad as her big feet."
WHISKING OVER THE SNOW, WITH ALL HER MIGHT AND MAIN, MUFFLED UP IN
CLOAKS AND FURS.
CHAPTER IX

KAMSCCHATKA

Lucy had been disappointed of a drive with the reindeer, and she had been telling Don how useful his relations were in other places. Behold, she awoke in a wide plain, where as far as her eye could reach there was nothing but snow. The few fir-trees that stood in the distance were heavily laden; and Lucy herself,—where was she? Going very fast? Yes, whisking over the snow with all her might and main, and muffled up in cloaks and furs, as indeed was necessary, for her breath froze upon the big muffler round her throat, so that it seemed to be standing up in a wall; and by her side was a little boy, muffled up quite as close, with a cap, or rather hood, casing his whole head, his hands gloved in fur up to the elbows, and long fur boots. He had an
immense long whip in his hand, and was flourishing it, and striking with it—at what? They were an enormous way off from him, but they really were very big dogs, rushing along like the wind, and bearing along with them—what? Lucy's ambition—a sledge, a thing without wheels, but gliding along most rapidly on the hard snow; flying, flying almost fast enough to take away her breath, and leaving birds, foxes, and any creature she saw for one instant, far behind. And—what was very odd—the young driver had no reins; he shouted at the dogs and now and then threw a stick at them, and they quite seemed to understand, and turned when he wanted them. Lucy wondered how he or they knew the way, it all seemed such a waste of snow; and after feeling at first as if the rapidity of their course made her unable to speak, she ventured on gasping out, "Well, I've been in an express train, but this beats it! Where are you going?"

"To Petropawlowsky, to change these skins for whisky and coffee, and rice," answered the boy.

"What skins are they?" asked Lucy.

'Bears'—big brown bears that Father killed in a cave—and wolves' and those of the little ermine and
sable that we trap. We get much, much for the white ermine and his black tail. Father's coming in another sledge with, oh! such a big pile. Don't you hear his dogs yelp? We'll win the race yet! Ugh! hoo! hoo! ho-o-o-o!—On! on! lazy ones, on, I say! don't let the old dogs catch the young!"

Crack, crack, went the whip; the dogs yelped with eagerness,—they don't bark, those Northern dogs; the little Kamschatkadale bawled louder and louder, and never saw when Lucy rolled off behind, and was left in the middle of a huge snowdrift, while he flew on with his load.

Here were his father's dogs overtaking her; picking her—some one picking her up. No, it was Don! and here was Mrs. Bunker exclaiming, "Well, I never thought to find Miss Lucy in no better place than on Master's old bearskin!"
CHAPTER X

THE TURK

"What a beautiful long necklace, Mrs. Bunker. May I have it for Lonicera?"

"You may play with it while you are here, Missie, if you'll take care not to break the string, but it is too curious for you to take home and lose. It is what they call a Turkish rosary; they say it is made of rose-leaves reduced to a paste and squeezed ever so hard together, and that the poor ladies that are shut up in the harems have little or nothing to do but to run them through their fingers."

"It has a very nice smell," said Lucy, examining the dark brown beads, which hung rather loosely on their string, and letting them fall one by one through her hands, till of course that happened which she was hoping for: she woke on a long low
sofa, in the midst of a room all carpet and cushions, in bright colours and gorgeous patterns, curling about with no particular meaning; and with a window of rich brass lattice-work.

And by her side there was an odd bubbling, that put her in mind of blowing the soap-suds into a honey-comb when preparing them for bubble blowing; but when she looked round she saw something very unlike the long pipes her brother called "churchwardens," or the basin of soap-suds. There was a beautifully shaped glass bottle, and into it went a long, long twisting tube, like a snake coiled on the floor, and the other end of the serpent, instead of a head, had an amber mouth-piece which went between a pair of lips. Lucy knew it for a hubble-bubble or narghilhe, and saw that the lips were in a brown face, with big black eyes, round which dark bluish circles were drawn. The jet-black hair was carefully braided with jewels, and over it was thrown a great rose-coloured gauze veil; there was a loose purple satin sort of pelisse over a white silk embroidered vest, tied in with a sash, striped with all manner of colours, also immense wide white muslin trousers, out of which peeped a pair of brown bare
feet, which, however, had a splendid pair of slippers curled up at the toes.

The owner seemed to be very little older than Lucy, and sat gravely looking at her for a little while, then clapped her hands. A black woman came, and the young Turkish maiden said, "Bring coffee for the little Frank lady."

So a tiny table of mother-of-pearl was brought, and on it some exquisite little striped porcelain cups, standing not in saucers, but in silver filigree cups, into which they exactly fitted. Lucy remembered her Chinese experience, and did not venture to ask for milk or sugar, but she found that the real Turkish coffee was so pure and delicate that she could bear to drink it without.

"Where are your jewels?" then asked the little hostess.

"I'm not old enough to have any."

"How old are you?"

"Nine."

"Nine! I'm only ten, and I shall be married next week——"

"Married! Oh, no, you are joking."

"Yes, I shall. Selim Bey has paid my father the
"MARRIED! OH NO, YOU ARE JOKING."
dowry for me, and I shall be taken to his house next week."

"And I suppose you like him very much."

"He looks big and tall," said the child with exultation. "I saw him riding when I went with my mother to the Sweet Waters. 'Amina,' she said, 'there is your lord, in the Frankish coat—with the white horse.'"

"Have you not talked to him?"

"What should I do that for?"

"Aunt Bessie used to like to talk to nobody but Uncle Frank before they were married."

"I shall talk enough when I am married. I shall make him give me plenty of sweetmeats, and a carriage with two handsome bullocks, and the biggest Nubian black slave in the market to drive me to Sweet Waters, in a thin blue veil with all my jewels on. Father says that Selim Bey will give me everything, and a Frank governess. What is a governess? Is it anything like the little gold case you have round your neck?"

"My locket with Mamma's hair? Oh, no, no," said Lucy, laughing; "a governess is a lady to teach you."
"I don't want to learn any more," said Amina, much disgusted; "I shall tell him I can make a pillau, and dry sweetmeats, and roll rose-leaves. What should I learn for?"

"Should you not like to read and write?"

"Teaching is only meant for men. They have got to read the Koran, but it is all ugly letters; I won't learn to read."

"You don't know how nice it is to read stories, and all about different countries. Ah! I wish I was in the schoolroom, at home, and I would show you how pleasant it is."

And Lucy seemed to have her wish all at once, for she and Amina stood in her own schoolroom, but with no one else there. The first thing Amina did was to scream, "Oh, what shocking windows! even men can see in; shut them up." She rolled herself up in her veil, and Lucy could only satisfy her by pulling down all the blinds, after which she ventured to look about a little. "What have you to sit on?" she asked, with great disgust.

"Chairs and stools," said Lucy, laughing and showing them.
These little tables with four legs! How can you sit on them?"

Lucy sat down and showed her. "That is not sitting," she said, and tried to curl herself up cross-legged. "I can't dangle down my legs."

"Our governess always makes us write out a tense of a French verb if she sees us sitting with our legs crossed," said Lucy, laughing with much amusement at Amina's attempts to wriggle herself up on the stool whence she nearly fell.

"Ah, I will never have a governess!" cried Amina. "I will cry, and cry, and give Selim Bey no rest till he promises to let me alone. What a dreadful place this is! Where can you sleep?"

"In bed, to be sure," said Lucy.

"I see no cushions to lie on."

"No; we have bedrooms, and beds there. We should not think of taking off our clothes here."

"What should you undress for?"

"To sleep, of course."

"How horrible! We sleep in all our clothes wherever we like to lie down. We never undress but for the bath. Do you go to the bath?"
"I have a bath every morning, when I get up, in my own room."

"Bathe at home! Then you never see your friends? We meet at the bath, and talk and play and laugh."

"Meet bathing! No, indeed! We meet at home, and out of doors," said Lucy; "my friend Annie and I walk together."

"Walk together! what, in the street? Shocking! You cannot be a lady."

"Indeed I am," said Lucy, colouring up. "My Papa is a gentleman. And see how many books we have, and how much we have to learn! French, and music, and sums, and grammar, and history, and geography."

"I will not be a Frank! No, no! I will not learn," said the alarmed Amina on hearing this catalogue poured forth.

"Geography is very nice," said Lucy; "here are our maps. I will show you where you live. This is Constantinople."

"I live at Stamboul," said Amina, scornfully. "There is Stamboul in little letters below—look."

"That Stamboul! The Frank girl is false;
"I WILL SHOW YOU WHERE YOU LIVE. THIS IS CONSTANTINOPLE."

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Stamboul is a large, large, beautiful place; not a little black speck. I can see it from my lattice. White houses and mosques in the sun, and the blue Golden Horn, with the little caiques gliding."

Before Lucy could explain, the door opened, and one of her brothers put in his head. At once Amina began to scream and roll herself in the window curtain. "A man in the harem! Oh! oh! oh! Were there no slippers at the door?" And her screaming brought Lucy awake at Uncle Joe's again.
“I liked the mountain girl best of all,” thought Lucy. “I wonder whether I shall ever get among the mountains again. There’s a great stick in the corner that Uncle Joe calls his alpenstock. I’ll go and read the names upon it. They are all the mountains where he has used it.”

She read Mount Blanc, Mount Cenis, the Wengern, and so on; and of course as she read and sung them over to herself, they lulled her off into her wonderful dreams, and brought her this time into a meadow, steep and sloping, but full of flowers, the loveliest flowers of all kinds, growing among the long grass that waved over them. The fresh clear air was so delicious that she almost hoped she was gone back to her dear Tyrol; but the hills were not the same.
She saw upon the slope quantities of cows, goats, and sheep, feeding just as on the Tyrolese Alps; but beyond was a dark row of pines, and up above, in the sky as it were, rose all round great sharp points—like clouds for their whiteness, but not in their straight jagged outlines; and here and there the deep grey clefts between seemed to spread into white rivers, or over the ruddy purple of the half-distance came sharp white lines darting downwards.

As she sat up in the grass and looked about her, a bark startled her. A dog began to growl, bark, and dance round her, so that she would have been much frightened if the next moment a voice had not called him off—"Fie, Brilliant, clown; let the little girl alone. Fie done. He is good, Mademoiselle, never fear. He helps me keep the cows."

"Who are you, then?"

"I am Maurice, the little herd-boy. I live with my grandmother, and work for her."

"What, in keeping cows?"

"Yes; and look here!"

"O the delicious little cottage! It has eaves, and windows, and balconies, and a door, and little cows and sheep, and men and women, all
in pretty white wood! You did not make it, Maurice?"

"Yes, truly, I did; I cut it out with my knife, all myself."

"How clever you must be. And what shall you do with it?"

"I shall watch for a carriage with ladies winding up that long road; and then I shall stand and take off my hat, and hold out my cottage. Perhaps they will buy it, and then I shall have enough to get grandmother a warm gown for the winter. When I grow bigger I will be a guide, like my father."

"A guide?"

"Yes, to lead travellers up to the mountain-tops. There is nowhere you English will not go. The harder a mountain is to climb, the more bent you are on going up. And, oh, I shall love it too! There are the great glaciers, the broad streams of ice that fill up the furrows of the mountains, with the crevasses so blue and beautiful and cruel. It was in one of them my father was swallowed up."

"Ah! then how can you love them?" said Lucy.

"Because they are so grand and so beautiful," said Maurice. "No other place has the like, and they
"I cut it out with my knife; all myself."
make one's heart swell with wonder, and joy in the God who made them. And it is only the brave who dare to climb them!"

And Maurice's eyes sparkled, and Lucy looked at the clear, stern glory of the mountain points, and felt as if she understood him.
CHAPTER XII

THE COSSACK

Caper, caper; dance, dance. What a wonderful dance it was, just as if the little fellow had been made of cork, so high did he bound the moment he touched the ground; while he jerked out his arms and legs as if they were pulled by strings, like the Marionettes that had once performed in front of the window. Only, his face was all fun and life, and he did look so proud and delighted to show what he could do; and it was all in clear, fresh, open air, the whole extent covered with short green grass, upon which were grazing herds of small lean horses, and flocks of sheep without tails, but with their wool puffed out behind into a sort of bustle or panier. There was a cluster of clean, white-looking houses in the distance; and Lucy knew that she was in the great plains called the Steppes,
WHILE HE JERKED OUT HIS ARMS AND LEGS AS IF THEY WERE PULLED BY STRINGS.

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that lie between the rivers Volga and Don, and may be either in Europe or Asia, according as you look at an old map or a new.

"Do you live there?" she asked, by way of beginning the conversation.

"Yes; my father is the hetman of the Stantitza, and these are my holidays. I go to school at Tcherkask most part of the year."

"Tcherkask! Oh, what a funny name!"

"And you would think it a funny town if you were there. It is built on a great bog by the side of the river Volga; all the houses stand on piles of timber, and in the spring the streets are full of water, and one has to sail about in boats."

"Oh! that must be delicious."

"I don't like it as much as coming home and riding. See!" and as he whistled, one of the horses came whinnying up, and put his nose over the boy's shoulder.

"Good fellow! But your horses are thin; they look little."

"Little!" cried the young Cossack. "Why, do you know what our little horses can do? There are not many armies in Europe that they have not
ridden down, at one time or another. Why, the church at Tcherkask is hung all round with colours we have taken from our enemies. There's the Swede—didn't Charles XII. get the worst of it when he came in his big boots after the Cossack?—ay, and the Turk, and the Austrian, and the German, and the French? Ah! doesn't my grandfather tell how he rode his good little horse all the way from the Volga to the Seine, and the good Czar Alexander himself gave him the medal with 'Not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the praise'? Our father the Czar does not think so little of us and our horses as you do, young lady."

"I beg your pardon," said Lucy; "I did not know what your horses could do."

"Oh, you did not? That is some excuse for you. I'll show you."

And in one moment he was on the back of his little horse, leaning down on its neck, and galloping off over the green plain like the wind; but it seemed to Lucy as if she had only just watched him out of sight on one side before he was close to her on the other, having whirled round and cantered close up to her while she was looking the other way. "Come
up with me," he said; and in one moment she had been swept up before him on the little horse's neck, and was flying so wildly over the Steppes that her breath and sense failed her, and she knew no more till she was safe by Mrs. Bunker's fireside again.
CHAPTER XIII

SPAIN

"Suppose and suppose I go to sleep again; what should I like to see next? A sunny place, I think, where there is sea to look at. Shall it be Spain, and shall it be among the poor people? Well, I think I should like to be where there is a little lady girl. I hope they are not all as lazy and conceited as the Chinese and the Turk."

So Lucy awoke in a large cool room with a marble floor and heavy curtains, but with little furniture except one table, and a row of chairs ranged along the wall. It had two windows, one looking out into a garden,—such a garden!—orange-trees with shining leaves and green and golden fruit and white flowers; and jasmines, and great lilies standing round about a marble court, in the midst of which was a basin of red marble, where a fountain was playing, making a delicious
splashing; and out beyond these sparkled in the sun the loveliest and most delicious of blue seas—the same blue sea, indeed, that Lucy had seen in her Italian visit.

That window was empty; but the other, which looked out into the street, had cushions laid on the sill, an open-work stone ledge beyond, and little looking-glasses on either side; and leaning over this sill there was seated a little maiden in a white frock, but with a black lace veil fastened by a rose into her jet-black hair, and the daintiest, prettiest-shaped little feet imaginable in white satin shoes, which could be plainly seen as she knelt on the window-seat.

"What are you looking at?" asked Lucy, coming to her side.

"I'm watching for the procession. Then I shall go to church with Mamma. Look! That way we shall see it come; these two mirrors reflect everything up and down the street."

"Are you dressed for church?" asked Lucy.

"You have no hat on."

"Where does your grace come from not to know that a mantilla is what is fit for church? Mamma is being dressed in her black silk and her black mantilla."

"And your shoes?"
"I could not wear great, coarse, hard shoes," said the little Doña Iñes; "it would spoil my feet. Ah! I shall have time to show the Senorita what I can do. Can your grace dance?"

"I danced with Uncle Joe at our last Christmas party," said Lucy, with great dignity.

See now," cried the Spaniard; "stand there. Ah! have you no castanets?" and she quickly took out two very small ivory shells or bowls, each pair fastened together by a loop, through which she passed her thumb so that the little spoons hung on her palm, and she could snap them together with her fingers.

Then she began to dance round Lucy in the most graceful swimming way, now rising, now falling, and cracking her castanets together at intervals. Lucy tried to do the same, but her limbs seemed like a wooden doll's compared with the suppleness and ease of Iñes'. She made sharp corners and angles, where the Spaniard floated so like a sea-bird that it was like seeing her fly or float rather than merely dance, till at last the very watching her rendered Lucy drowsy and dizzy, and as the church bells began to ring, and the chant of the procession to sound, she lost all sense of being in sunny Malaga, the home of grapes.
"See now," cried the Spaniard, "stand there. Ah! have you no castanets?"
CHAPTER XIV

GERMANY

There was a great murmur and buzz of learning lessons; rows upon rows of little boys were sitting before desks, studying; very few heads looked up as Lucy found herself walking round the room—a large clean room, with maps hanging on the walls, but hot and weary-feeling, because there were no windows open and so little fresh air.

"What are you about, little boy?" she asked.

"I am learning my verb," he said; "monco, mones, monet."

Lucy waited no longer, but moved off to another desk. "And what are you doing?"

"I am writing my analysis."

Lucy did not know what an analysis was, so she went a little further. "What are you doing here?"
she said timidly, for these were somewhat bigger boys.

"We are drawing up an essay on the individuality of self."

That was enough to frighten any one away, and Lucy betook herself to some quite little boys, with fat rosy faces and light hair. "Are you busy, too?" she said.

"Oh yes; we are learning the chief cities of the Fatherland."

Lucy felt like the little boy in the fable, who could not get either the dog, or the bird, or the bee, to play with him.

"When do you play?" she asked.

"We have an hour's interval after dinner, and another at supper time, but then we prepare our work for the morrow," said one of the boys, looking up well satisfied.

"Work! work! Are you always at work?" exclaimed Lucy; "I only learn from nine to half-past twelve, and half an hour to get my lessons in the afternoon."

"You are a maiden," said the little boy with civil superiority; "your brothers learn more hours."

"More; yes, but not so many as you do! They play from twelve till half past-two, and have two half-holidays in the week."

"So, you are not industrious. We are. That is the reason why we can all act together, and think together, so much better than any others; and we all stand as one irresistible power, the United Germany."

Lucy gave a little gasp! it was all so very wise.

"May I see your sisters?" she said.

The little sisters, Gretchens and Kätchens, were learning away almost as hard as the Hermanns and Fritzés, but the bigger sisters had what Lucy thought a better time of it. One of them was helping in the kitchen, and another in the ironing; but then they had their books and their music, and in the evening all the families came out into the pleasure gardens and had little tables with coffee before them, and the mammmas knitted, and the papas smoked, and the young ladies listened to the band. On the whole, Lucy thought she should not mind living in Germany, if they would not do so many lessons.
CHAPTER XV

PARIS IN THE SIEGE

"And Uncle Joe is in France, where the fathers and brothers of those little Prussian boys have been fighting. Suppose and suppose I could see it."

There was a thunder and a whizzing in the air and a sharp rattling noise besides; a strange, damp, unwholesome smell too, mixed with that of gunpowder; and when Lucy looked up, she found herself down some steps in a dark, dull, vaulted-looking place, lined with stone, however, and open to the street above. A little lamp was burning in a corner, piles of straw and bits of furniture were lying about, and upon one of the bundles of straw sat a little rough-haired girl.

"Ah! Mademoiselle, good morning," she said.
Ah! mademoiselle, "Good morning. Are you come here to take shelter from the shells?"
"Are you come here to take shelter from the shells? The battery is firing now; I do not think Mamma will come home till it slackens a little. She is gone to the distribution of meat, to get a piece of horse for my brother, who is weak after his wounds. I wish I could offer you something, but we have nothing but water, and it is not even sugared."

"Do you live down here?" asked Lucy, looking round at the dreary place with wonder.

"Not always. We used to have a pretty little house up over, but the cruel shells came crashing in, and flew into pieces, tearing everything to splinters, and we are only safe from them down here. Ah, if I could only have shown you Mamma's pretty room! but there is a great hole in the floor now, and the ceiling is all tumbling down, and the table broken."

"But why do you stay here?"

"Mamma and Emily say it is all the same. We are as safe in our cellar as we could be anywhere, and we should have to pay elsewhere."

"Then you cannot get out of Paris?"

"Oh no, while the Prussians are all round us, and shut us in. My brothers are all in the Garde Mobile, and, you see, so is my doll. Every one must be a
soldier now. My dear Adolphe, hold yourself straight’ " (and there the doll certainly showed himself perfectly drilled and disciplined). “March—right foot forward—left foot forward.” But in this movement, as may be well supposed, little Coralie had to help her recruit a good deal.

Lucy was surprised. “So you can play even in this dreadful place?” she said.

“Oh yes! What’s the use of crying and wearying oneself? I do not mind as long as they leave me my kitten, my dear little Minette.”

“Oh! what a pretty long-haired kitten! but how small and thin!”

“Yes, truly, the poor Minette! The cruel people ate her mother, and there is no milk—no milk, and my poor Minette is almost starved, though I give her bits of my bread and soup; but the bread is only bran and sawdust, and she likes it no more than I.”

“Ate up her mother!”

“Yes. She was a superb Cyprus cat, all grey; but, alas! one day she took a walk in the street, and they caught her, and then indeed it was all over with her. I only hope Minette will not get out, but she is so lean that they would find little but bones and fur,”
"Ah, how I wish I could take you and her home to Uncle Joe, and give you both good bread and milk! Take my hand, and shut your eyes, and we will suppose and suppose very hard, and, perhaps, you will come there with me. Paris is not very far off."
CHAPTER XVI

THE AMERICAN GUEST

No; supposing very hard did not bring poor little French Coralie home with Lucy; but something almost as wonderful happened. Just at the time in the afternoon, blind man's holiday, when Lucy had been used to ride off on her dream to visit some wonderful place, there came a knock at the front door; a quite real substantial English knock and ring, that did not sound at all like any of the strange noises of the strange worlds that she had lately been hearing, but had the real tinkle of Uncle Joe's own bell.

"Well," said Mrs. Bunker, "what can that be coming at this time of day? It can never be the doctor coming home without sending orders! Don't you be running out, Miss Lucy; there'll be a draught of cold right in."
"WHAT CAN THAT BE, COMING AT THIS TIME OF DAY?"
"GOOD MORNING. WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?"
Lucy stood still; very anxious, and wondering whether she should see anything alive, or one of her visitors from various countries.

“There is a letter from Mr. Seaman,” said a brisk young voice, that would have been very pleasant if it had not gone a little through the nose; and past Mrs. Bunker there walked into the full light a little boy, a year or two older than Lucy, holding out one hand as he saw her and taking off his hat with the other. “Good morning,” he said, quite at his ease; “is this where you live?”

“Good morning,” returned Lucy, though it was not morning at all; “where do you come from?”

“Well, I’m from Paris last; but when I’m at home, I’m at Boston. I am Leonidas Saunders, of the great American Republic.”

“Oh, then you are not real, after all?”

“Real! I should hope I was a genuine article.”

“Well, I was in hopes that you were real, only you say you come from a strange country, like the rest of them, and yet you look just like an English boy.”

“Of course I do! my great grandfather came from England,” said Leonidas; “we all speak English as well, or better, than you do in the old country.”
"I can't understand it!" said Lucy; "did you come like other people, by the train, not like the children in my dreams?"

And then Leonidas explained all about it to her: how his father had brought him last year to Europe and had put him to school at Paris; but when the war broke out, and most of the stranger scholars were taken away, no orders came about him, because his father was a merchant and was away from home, so that no one ever knew whether the letters had reached him.

So Leonidas had gone on at school without many tasks to learn, to be sure, but not very comfortable: it was so cold, and there was no wood to burn; and he disliked eating horses and cats and rats, quite as much as Coralie did, though he was not in a part of the town where so many shells came in.

At last, when Lucy's uncle and some other good gentlemen with the red cross on their sleeves, obtained leave to go and take some relief to the poor sick people in the hospitals, the people Leonidas was with told them that he was a little American left behind. Mr. Seaman, which was Uncle Joe's name,
went to see about him, and found that he had once known his father. So, after a great deal of trouble, it had been managed that the boy should be allowed to leave the town. He had been driven in an omnibus, he told Lucy, with some more Americans and English, and with flags with stars and stripes or else Union Jacks all over it; and whenever they came to a French sentry, or afterwards to a Prussian, they were stopped till he called his corporal, who looked at their papers and let them go on. Mr. Seaman had taken charge of Leonidas, and given him the best dinner he had eaten for a long time, but as he was going to Blois to other hospitals, he could not keep the boy with him; so he had put him in charge of a friend who was going to London, to send him down to Mrs. Bunker.

Fear of Lucy's rash was pretty well over now, and she was to go home in a day or two; so the children were allowed to be together, and they enjoyed it very much. Lucy told about her dreams, and Leonidas had a good deal to tell of what he had really seen on his travels. They wished very much that they could both see one of these wonderful dreams together, only—what should it be?
CHAPTER XVII

THE DREAM OF ALL NATIONS

What should it be? She thought of Arabs with their tents and horses, and Leonidas told her of Red Indians with their war-paint, and little Negroes dancing round the sugar-boiling, till her head began quite to swim and her ears to buzz; and all the children she had seen and she had not seen seemed to come round her, and join hands and dance. Oh, such a din! A little Highlander in his tartans stood on a whisky-barrel in the middle, making his bagpipes squeal away; a Chinese with a bald head and long pigtail beat a gong, and capered with a solemn face; a Norwegian herd-boy blew a monstrous bark cow-horn; an Indian juggler twisted snakes round his neck to the sound of the tom-tom; and Lucy found
FINIS.

OH! SUCH A DIN!
herself and Leonidas whirling round with a young Dutch planter between them, and an Indian with a crown of feathers upon the other side of her.

"Oh!" she seemed to herself to cry, "what are you doing? how do you all come here?"

"We are from all the nations who are friends and brethren," said the voices; "we all bring our stores: the sugar, rice, and cotton of the West; the silk and coffee and spices of the East; the tea of China; the furs of the North: it all is exchanged from one to the other, and should teach us to be all brethren, since we cannot thrive one without the other."

"It all comes to our country, because we are clever to work it up, and send it out to be used in its own homes," said the Highlander; "it is English and Scotch machines that weave your cottons, ay, and make your tools."

"No; it is America that beats you all," cried Leonidas; "what had you to do, but to sit down and starve, when we sent you no cotton?"

"If you send cotton, 'tis we that weave it," cried the Scot.

Lucy was almost afraid they would come to blows over which was the greatest and most skilful country.
"It cannot be buying and selling that make nations love one another, and be peaceful," she thought. "Is it being learned and wise?"

"But the Prussian boys are studious and wise, and the French are clever and skilful, and yet they have that dreadful war: I wonder what it is that would make and keep all these countries friends!"

And then there came an echo back to little Lucy: "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nations shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they war any more."

Yes; the more they learn and keep the law of the Lord, the less there will be of those wars. To heed the true law of the Lord will do more for peace and oneness than all the cleverness in book-learning, or all the skilful manufactures in the world.

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