

FICTION

Amy Ella Blanchard

A Dear Little Girls Summer Holidays

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK



eBookTakeAway

FICTION

A Dear Little Girl's Summer Holidays

AMY E. BLANCHARD



WHITMAN PUBLISHING CO.
RACINE, WISCONSIN

Copyright 1911 by George W. Jacobs & Co.



A Dear Little Girl's Summer Holidays
Printed in 1924 by Western Printing & Lithographing Co.
Racine, Wis.
Printed in U.S.A.

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I THE INVITATION	11
II THE ARRIVAL	24
III MISS ELOISE	39

IV THE PORCH PARTY	54
V THE LITTLE BUNGALOW	70
VI IN THE FOG	84
VII A SAILING PARTY	98
VIII THE FIRE	114
IX TO BOSTON	128
X THE BAZAR	143
XI OLD NORTH CHURCH	159
XII HOME AGAIN	174

A Dear Little Girl's Summer Holidays

THE INVITATION

It was a very warm morning in June. Edna and her friend Dorothy Evans were sitting under the trees trying to keep cool. They both wore their thinnest morning frocks and had pinned their hair up in little pug knots on the tops of their heads. They had their boxes of pieces and were trying to make something suitable for their dolls to wear in the hot weather.

"It's too sticky to sew," said Dorothy, throwing down her work. "Marguerite will have to go without a frock and sit around in her skin."

"You mean in her kid," returned Edna.

"Well, isn't kid skin?" asked Dorothy.

Edna laughed. "Why, yes, I suppose it is, and Ben says we are kids, so our skin is kid skin. Oh, dear, it is hot. I wish I were a fish; it would be so nice to go slipping through the cool water."

"Yes, but it wouldn't be so nice to be in a frying pan sizzling over a fire."

"I feel almost as if I were doing that now. There comes the postman, I wonder if he has a letter from Jennie. We promised one another we would always write on blue paper because blue is true, you know, and that looks as if it might be a blue letter the postman has on top. I'm going to see."

"I'll wait here," returned Dorothy. "It's too hot to move."

She sat fanning herself with the lid of her piece box, watching her friend the while. Once or twice Edna stopped on her way back, and finally she began to dance up and down, then ran toward Dorothy, calling out, "Oh, there's a lovely something to tell you. Oh, I do hope it can come true."

"What is it?" cried Dorothy, roused out of her listlessness.

"Just listen." Edna sat down and spread out the letter on her knee.

"We want you and Dorothy to come down to make me a nice long visit. Mamma is writing to your mothers about it and I do so hope you can come. I shall be so awfully disappointed if you don't. Oh, Edna, we shall have such fun. I can scarcely wait to hear."

"Do you suppose our mothers have their letters from Mrs. Ramsey?" asked Dorothy now as much excited as Edna.

"Do let's go and see," returned Edna. "We'll go up and ask my mother first because that will be the nearest and if she has her letter your mother is pretty sure to have hers."

All thought of the hot sun was forgotten as they sped across the lawn to the house, and two little girls with hot faces, panting as they came, burst into the room where Mrs. Conway was reading her letters.

"Oh, Mother," began Edna, "did you get a letter from Mrs. Ramsey?"

"Mrs. Ramsay? Why, I don't know. I will see in a moment. Just wait till I have finished this from your Aunt Kitty."

It seemed incredible to Edna that any letter should be of more importance than Mrs. Ramsey's, and the two little girls danced around so impatiently that Mrs. Conway finally put down the sheet she was reading and said, "How warm you children look. Do sit down and cool off. I never saw such little fidgets."

"We ran all the way from the oak tree," explained Edna. "We were in such a hurry."

"No wonder your faces are red. You are such an impetuous little somebody, Edna. You shouldn't forget that mother has so often told you not to run in the hot sun."

"But we did so want to hear about Mrs. Ramsey's letter," replied Edna anxiously. How could her mother take things so coolly?

"Is it so very important, then?"

"Oh, Mother, it is so exciting we can scarcely stand it till we know."

"Then there is nothing to do but relieve the strain," said Mrs. Conway laughing. She turned over the letters at her side. "Let me see. This is from the dressmaker, and this one from cousin Grace. This must be it." She opened the letter with what seemed to the children a great lack of haste, and began to scan the lines, two pairs of eager eyes watching her the while. "Ah, now I begin to understand," she remarked as she turned the page.

"Well," said Edna breathlessly.

"Wait a moment, dear." And Edna was obliged to be patient till the last line was reached.

"Oh, Mother," said the child pleadingly, "you are going to let me go, aren't you?"

"Why, dearie, I shall have to think about it a little. I can't say just on the instant, and I shall have to see what your father thinks about it."

"But, Mother, won't you say that maybe I can? That will be better than nothing at all."

Mrs. Conway smiled. "I think I can venture to say that much or even a little more. I can say that I should like very much to have you go."

"Goody! Goody!" cried Edna clapping her hands. "That is almost as if you said I really could. I had a letter from Jennie, Mother, and she is just crazy for us to come. You know Dorothy is invited, too. Would you like to see Jennie's letter?"

"Very much."

Edna promptly handed over the blue envelope, and was not disappointed to have her mother say, "That is a very nice cordial letter, Edna, and I am sure the invitation shows that both Mrs. Ramsey and Jennie really want you. I will talk it over with your father this evening. Now run along, and don't exercise too vigorously this warm day, and don't forget what I said about being in the sun." She returned to her letters and Edna with Dorothy left the room.

"Now we must go to my mother," declared Dorothy.

"Yes, but we must walk slowly and I think we had better take an umbrella," returned Edna, fresh from her mother's advice.

"All right," said Dorothy, "I think it would be better, for there is that long sunny stretch along the road, though the rest of the way is shady."

They set forth talking eagerly. "Don't you think it sounded as if I might go?" asked Edna.

"Why yes," replied Dorothy, "only I don't see how we can wait till evening to know."

"Do you believe your mother will say positively that you can or that you can't?"

"I think she will say just what your mother did; that she will have to talk to papa about it, but--oh, Edna, I know what I shall do."

"What?"

"I shall ask mother if she can't telephone in to father and find out, and if she says she can't take the time to do it, I know Agnes will."

"What a lovely idea!" exclaimed Edna. "I shall do that very same thing as soon as I get home."

"And if he says yes, you can telephone over to me."

"That's just what I'll do. Oh, isn't it exciting?"

In spite of their determination to walk slowly, they covered the ground very quickly and in a few minutes had reached Dorothy's home. "Where's mother?" cried Dorothy as she came upon her sister who was sitting on the back porch.

"She has gone over to Mrs. MacDonald's," Agnes told her.

"Oh, dear," said Dorothy despairingly, "just when I wanted her so very, very much. Will she be gone long, Agnes?"

"I don't know, honey. What is the particular haste? Can I help you out?"

"I'm afraid not," answered Dorothy in a woe-begone voice. "Do you know whether mother has had a letter from Mrs. Ramsey this morning?"

"I don't know that, either. She took her mail and said she would read it while she was driving over. What is it about Mrs. Ramsey, and why are you so interested?"

"We'll explain," replied Dorothy. "You let her read Jennie's letter Edna, and that will tell most of it."

A second time Edna handed over the letter to be read, and when Agnes had finished, she told her about the letter Mrs. Conway had received.

"And so you see," Dorothy took up the tale, "mother is sure to say just what Mrs. Conway did, only I thought we might find out sooner what papa thought if we talked to him over the 'phone."

"I don't see why we can't do that anyhow, and get that much settled," said Agnes. "Suppose I call him up and tell him about it, then when mother comes in we will tell her what he says, for she is pretty sure to have had Mrs. Ramsey's letter."

"Oh, Agnes, that will be lovely," cried Dorothy, clasping her hand. "It is awfully good of you to think of doing it."

"Let me see," said Agnes, "I think father is pretty sure to be in his office about this time; we might as well go and get it over."

She went to the 'phone, the two little girls standing by while she carried on the conversation, and once in a while one of them would put in a word of argument, so that they could be sure the last word had been said on the subject. After a while Agnes hung up the receiver and looked down with a smile.

"That much is settled," she told them. "Father says he hasn't the slightest objection and leaves it all to mother to decide."

"Then there is nothing to do but wait, I suppose," said Dorothy with a sigh.

"Why, I don't know," said Agnes after a moment's thought. "Why can't you call up Mrs. MacDonald's and get mother there? She will have read the letter, you see, and it will be fresh in her mind."

"Why, of course," said Dorothy delightedly.

"Shall I do it myself, Agnes?"

"You might as well plead your own cause."

So Dorothy was soon discussing the matter with her mother, and finally won from her the assurance that she did not see anything to prevent, though she would not say positively until she had discussed it with Mrs. Conway.

"Then, Mother, will you please stop there on your way home?" was Dorothy's final prayer.

"She's going to stop and talk it over with your Mother on her way home," was the news she gave Edna. "Now I suppose that is all that we can do. Do you think it is, Agnes?" she asked.

"I don't see why Edna couldn't call up her father just as you did yours," returned Agnes, "and then there would be only the mothers to deal with."

"Why, of course," agreed Dorothy, with a pleased look. "Come on, Edna, and see what he says."

But here they met with a disappointment, for Mr. Conway was not at his office and it was uncertain when he would be, so his word on the subject must be left till later.

At Dorothy's urgent request Edna stayed until Mrs. Evans' return, and the two spent most of the intervening time in watching for the carriage.

At last it was seen slowly coming up the drive, and the two little girls rushed out to meet it.

"Go in out of the hot sun," called Mrs. Evans, as the little figures took up a place either side of the carriage. "What are you thinking of? Do you want to have a sunstroke?"

"Oh, but, Mother, please stop and let us get in; then we won't be in the sun," said Dorothy.

"Stop then, William," Mrs. Evans ordered the driver, and the two children clambered in.

"We just can't wait," began Dorothy. "Mother, do please tell us what you and Mrs. Conway decided."

"We decided that we would not decide until we found out what our husbands had to say."

"Oh, but we know what your husband has to say," returned Dorothy triumphantly. "Agnes called him up on the

'phone and he said he had no objection as far as he was concerned and he would leave it all to you."

Mrs. Evans laughed. "Well, you certainly have not wasted any time."

"Then, please, please say what you think."

"Why, my dear, you haven't given me time to think."

"How long will it take, then," continued Dorothy, pressing the matter.

"I will try to decide by this evening. There is no great hurry, is there?"

"Why, Mother, of course there is. I don't think I could sleep unless I knew."

"Then, I shall try to prevent such a catastrophe by settling it before bedtime. Here we are. You will stay to lunch won't you, Edna?"

"Why, no, Mrs. Evans, thank you, I don't think I ought, for I didn't tell mother I would stay."

"Then let William take you home; it is too warm to walk. The horses haven't been very far, and William can drive slowly."

So the two little girls parted and Edna returned to her own home. She was not long in finding her mother, and in plying her with questions upon the all-important subject, but she received no further assurance than had been given her in the beginning and was fain to exercise her patience and unburden herself to her sister Celia, who was interested and sympathetic. But at last even Celia became tired of the topic and went off to take a nap in her own room. So Edna went down to a cool spot at the back of the house where there was a little stream, and tried to amuse herself with a book.

But even her favorite fairy tales failed to fix her attention, so she returned to the house to find everyone given up to napping and the place so still that finally in the coolest corner of the library where a little breeze found its way through the open windows, she herself fell asleep.

When she awoke it was to hear her father's voice saying: "Hallo! who is this? The Sleeping Beauty?"

"Oh, Papa," cried Edna, awake in a moment, "how nice and early you have come home."

"It was too hot to stay in the city any longer than necessary," her father told her. "There wasn't much doing, so I thought I would be better off here."

"I called you up on the 'phone this morning," said Edna, "but you weren't at the office."

"And what did you want of me?"

"Mother will tell you," answered Edna, suddenly shy of meeting a decision which might disappoint her.

"Then I'd better find mother and see what it is all about."

Left to herself Edna waited for what seemed to her a very long time, quite long enough for the affairs of a nation to be settled, and then she went slowly up the stairs, and paused before the open door of her mother's room. To her surprise her parents were talking about something quite different from the subject uppermost in her own mind.

"Edna, dear," said her mother, catching sight of the little figure, "you'd better get ready for dinner. We shall have it a little earlier, so Susan won't be kept so late over the hot fire."

Edna took a step into the room. "Did you ask him?" she said wistfully.

"Ask what? Oh, yes, I forgot dear," she said turning to her husband. "Edna has had a very cordial invitation from Mrs. Ramsey to spend some weeks at the Ramsey's summer home. She and Dorothy Evans are both invited, and I think the Ramseys really will be disappointed if we do not allow Edna to go. What do you think?"

Wasn't it just like mother to put it that way? thought Edna. Surely her father could not be so heartless as to refuse his consent after that.

Her faith in her mother's tact was not misplaced for her father replied: "Why, I think that will be great for Edna. Of course let her go."

"Oh, Mother, Mother, may I? May I?" cried Edna with clasped hands and beseeching eyes.

Her mother turned from the mirror before which she was standing to arrange her hair. "Well, honey," she said. "I think it is decided that you may."

Edna flew to her to bestow a rapturous hug and kiss, and then sped out of the room and downstairs to the telephone. "One, six, seven; ring two," she called in an excited voice.

Presently there was an answering "Hallo," from the other end.

"Is that you, Dorothy?" called Edna.

"Yes. Oh, Edna, I hoped it was you. Do tell me, is there any news?"

"I'm going," came the triumphant reply.

"So am I," came promptly back to her.

CHAPTER II

THE ARRIVAL

For the next few days there was much talk of clothes and packing, of trains and time-tables, and it was a matter of some discussion as to the best way for the little girls to make their journey of some hundreds of miles. Dorothy had never been so far away from home, and was therefore the more excited of the two. After some writing back and forth it was decided that the two children should go to the city under Mr. Conway's care and there he turned them over to Mr. Ramsey who was to join his family at the seashore in about a week.

"Do you suppose we shall get homesick?" asked Dorothy as the time drew near for them to make their start.

"Oh, I hope not," returned Edna fervently. "I was awfully homesick at Aunt Elizabeth's, but this will be quite different, for there will be Jennie, and Mrs. Ramsey is a real mother; besides we shall have one another."

"I know all that," returned Dorothy a little dubiously, "but Jennie's mother won't be mine nor yours."

Edna was willing to admit this, but she had gone through some rather trying experiences and was not disposed to think that anything but pleasant times awaited them. As Jennie had pictured it the visit was to be one long season of delight, so Edna said determinedly. "Well, I don't intend to be homesick."

"Then I'll try not to be," returned Dorothy, not to be outdone in courage.

However, when the trunks stood ready packed, and Edna said good night for the last time before undertaking the journey, she held her mother very tightly around the neck and whispered: "I wish you were going too, Mother."

"That can't be, darling," said her mother. "You will have such a fine time that you will not miss your mother at all."

"Oh, but I shall," returned Edna, half wishing she were not going after all. "I 'most wish it was time to come back instead of time to go."

Her mother laughed. "And this is the little girl who could scarcely wait to be told she could go. Never mind, dearie, you will feel quite differently to-morrow morning. Now go to sleep, for you must get up bright and early, you know."

Edna settled down with a sigh, but, in spite of her excitement, she soon fell asleep to waken in the morning with the feeling that something very important was to happen. Her mother came in to see that she was properly dressed and to tie the bows on her hair. Then just as they were about to sit down to breakfast, the expressman came for the trunk, and next Dorothy arrived all impatience.

"Why, Edna, haven't you had breakfast yet?" she asked. "Aren't you afraid we shall be late?"

"We don't have to go till papa does, and he hasn't half finished," replied Edna. So Dorothy had to possess her soul in patience for there was no gainsaying the fact that they could not go without Mr. Conway.

At last the good-byes were said, and Edna waved to her mother till she could no longer see the white figure on the porch. Agnes and Celia had gone on ahead to the station and the boys were there, too, to see them off. Soon the train came in sight; in another moment they had been helped aboard, and the next they were off. It was but a short ride to the city, and this part of the journey was not exciting, as it was one with which they were very familiar. But when they were ushered into Mr. Ramsey's private office, they felt that here began their untrod way.

They sat for some time, their feet dangling from their high chairs while Mr. Ramsey conferred with his clerks in the outer office. Their talk was carried on in whispers, though once in a while a stifled giggle told that they were in good spirits.

At last Mr. Ramsey appeared. "Well, young ladies," he said, "I am sorry I had to leave you so long, but when a man is about to take a holiday, he has so many things to see about that he doesn't know which way to turn." He looked at his watch. "I think we have just about time enough to get that ten o'clock train." He pressed an electric button and a boy in a grey uniform came to the door. "Take these bags, Edward," said Mr. Ramsey, pointing to the satchels each little girl had placed carefully by her chair. The boy led the way to the elevator and down they went to the first floor of the big office building, then to the street where an automobile stood to whizz them off to the station. Mr. Ramsey directed the chauffeur to see about the trunks while he conducted the little girls to the waiting-room where he left them, returning in a moment to hurry them to the train, and the second part of their journey began.

"I never was in a parlor car before," whispered Dorothy to Edna as the porter turned their seat to a proper angle and adjusted their footstools.

"I was once," replied Edna.

Here Mr. Ramsey handed over some picture papers to them and a box of chocolates. "I am going into the smoking-

car," he said. "Do you think you young ladies can get along a little while without me?"

"We'll try to," replied Edna politely.

"If you want a glass of water or anything, just call the porter," Mr. Ramsey told them and then he left them.

There were not so very many persons in the car to interest them and for a time the children gave their attention to the newspapers and the box of chocolates, but after a while they wearied of these, and began to look at their fellow travellers. A very pretty young lady smiled at them from across the aisle, and an older woman back of her looked interested in their movements. After a while this latter person came over and took the place directly behind them where Mr. Ramsey had been sitting.

"Are you children all alone?" she began the conversation.

"No," replied Dorothy.

"Are you sisters?" was the next question.

"No, we are only friends," Edna answered this time.

"And is the gentleman who came with you your father?"

"No, he is just taking us to his house where we are going to make a visit."

"Is he any relation to you?" came next.

"No relation at all. He is the father of the friend we are going to visit." It was Dorothy's turn this time.

"And do your mothers approve of your going off this way without a member of your family?"

This question the children thought a very disagreeable one. They looked at one another before Dorothy made reply. "If it wasn't exactly right our parents wouldn't let us do it. They never let us do a thing that isn't exactly right."

"And nobody knows what is right so well as my mother," Edna chimed in.

"Mine, too," put in Dorothy.

"How far did you say you were going?" asked their questioner.

"We didn't say," answered Dorothy, "but we are going to New York." She gave a little frown to Edna, who understood that she was not to vouchsafe any further information. "I just wasn't going to tell her where we were really going from New York," Dorothy said to her friend afterward. "It wasn't any of her business."

"New York is a very wicked city," their acquaintance informed them. "You must be very careful not to be alone in the streets. I would advise you never to lose sight of your escort for a moment."

Both little girls felt rather glad that they were not to remain in such a dreadful place, but they made no reply and wished most heartily that Mr. Ramsey would return to his seat and rid them of this undesirable companion. Presently Edna had a bright idea. "Would you like to look at some of our papers?" she asked.

"What have you?" asked the lady putting up her lorgnette.

"We have Life and Puck and Judge and--"

"I'll take Life and Puck." She accepted the papers handed to her and settled back in the seat she had behind them. The two children looked at each other with relieved expressions. "Don't you wish Mr. Ramsey would come back?" whispered Edna.

"Yes, but where will he sit?" Dorothy whispered back. They both smothered a giggle at this, and looking up Edna caught sight of the pretty young lady looking at them with an amused expression. She made a little movement with her hand to beckon Edna over to her.

"Is that old turtle quizzing you?" she asked in a low tone. "She is a perfect bore. She tackled me first but I wouldn't talk to her. Are you wondering if she is going to take that seat and keep it?"

"We were wondering what Mr. Ramsey would do," returned Edna.

"I'll tell you what to do; you take her seat and see what will happen. It is just here in front of me."

Edna took possession and in a few moments the inquisitive lady looked up and saw her there. She at once hurried over, dropping the papers by the way. "Here here," she cried, "what are you doing in my seat? You must get right up. All my things are here, and I don't want anyone to meddle with them. Get right up."

Edna arose with alacrity while the pretty young lady leaned over and said: "I asked her to sit there while you occupied her friend's seat. I wanted to talk to her, too. It is a poor rule that doesn't work both ways, you know."

The inquisitive lady gave the speaker a withering look and sank to her place with an air of great dignity while Edna returned to her place by Dorothy. In a few minutes Mr. Ramsey returned and both children gave a sigh of relief, though

both kept wondering what would have happened if he had found someone in his place, and what more would have happened if he had taken the place the lady now occupied. They soon forgot all this, however, for Mr. Ramsey began to talk to them about the place to which they were going and before they knew it they had reached New York. The pretty young lady gave them a nod and a smile as she passed out, but the inquisitive lady did not look their way at all though she still retained the copy of *Life* they had lent her.

A taxi-cab whirled them up-town to the hotel where they were to lunch. Mr. Ramsey sent them upstairs to a pretty room, in charge of a neat maid who tidied them up and then took them down to the dining-room where Mr. Ramsey was already seated waiting for them. They felt very grand to be in so fine a place lunching with a gentleman quite like grown-up young ladies, and both wished their sisters could see them.

Lunch over, Mr. Ramsey took them to a large reception room where he stationed them at a window so they could look out on the street. "I think you will be entertained here," he said. "I am obliged to meet a business appointment, but I will be back as soon as I can. In the meantime amuse yourselves as you like, but don't leave the hotel. Here is the key of your room. The elevator boy or one of the chambermaids will show you where it is, if you would rather go there. I am glad there are two of you, for you can't be lonesome with one another. Good-bye." He was off and the two little girls, feeling that they were very small frogs in an immense puddle, sat by the window looking out on the street. Although it was not so warm as it had been earlier in the week, still it was warm enough, and the passers-by looked hot and tired, and after a while the two little girls wearied at looking at the constant stream of people.

"Let's go upstairs," suggested Dorothy.

"All right. Let's," returned Edna.

But just as they were standing timidly looking up and down the corridor trying to determine in which direction to go to find the elevator, a man wearing many brass buttons on his coat, came up to them. "Are you the young ladies in Number 136?" he asked.

Dorothy looked at the key she was holding and on its wooden tag she read the number 136. "Yes, that is the number," she told the man.

"Then here's something that's come for you," he said holding out two packages. "I knocked at your door, but you wasn't there, and the chambermaid said you might be in here."

The children thanked him and looked at the packages which were quite distinctly marked with their names and the number of their room as well as with the name of the hotel. They inquired their way to the elevator and had soon closed the door of their room after them.

"I'd a great deal rather be in here to ourselves," said Edna, "so we can do just what we like. You open one package, Dorothy, and I will open the other. Do you suppose Mr. Ramsey sent them?"

"Of course, because no one else knows where we are. Isn't it funny, Edna, to think that even our mothers don't know where we are? Do hurry and open your package. Mine isn't tied, and I know what it is but I don't want to tell till you have yours ready."

"This is such a heavy string," said Edna fumbling at the knot. "If I had a knife I would cut it, but I think I know what this is; it is a book, I am sure." After much to-do they managed to unfasten the package to disclose a new book of fairy tales.

"How perfectly lovely!" cried Dorothy. And, "I have wanted to read those ever since I took a peep at them one day when we were at Helen Darby's."

"Now we'll look at the other package," said Dorothy, slowly unfolding the paper which enclosed this.

The second package was found to contain two paper-dolls and two puzzles. After the paper-dolls were duly admired they were laid aside. "For," said Dorothy, "we haven't any scissors, so we can't cut out their frocks."

"I think it was perfectly lovely of Mr. Ramsey to think of getting such nice things," said Edna warmly.

"I suppose he thought we might get lonely if he stayed so long away. What would you do, Edna, if something happened that he didn't ever come back?"

Edna considered for awhile before she answered: "I'd send a telegram to papa to come and get us."

"It would be better to telephone," returned Dorothy. "We could use the long-distance 'phone and tell them all about it."

"So we could. I didn't think of that. We could stay right here and not leave the hotel at all, because that woman said it wouldn't do for us to go alone in the streets of New York."

But such an emergency did not arise, though as the afternoon wore on, the little girls began to get somewhat anxious. They read several of the fairy tales; they worked over their puzzles; they watched from the windows, and

finally decided to put on their hats and pack up such of their belongings as they had taken from their satchels so they might be all ready. The new book and other gifts were stowed away, too, and this was hardly done before there came a quick knock at the door, and it was opened to Mr. Ramsey himself.

"You're all ready?" he cried. "Good! Come right along as fast as you can."

A boy had already snatched up their hand-bags and was hurrying off with them. Mr. Ramsey rushed them along the hall and into the elevator, then they were hurried into a taxi-cab which stood waiting and off they went.

As soon as they had started, Mr. Ramsey looked at his watch. "It's a close shave, but I think we can make it," he said. Then he leaned over to speak to the driver. "Get us to the Fall River boat in time and you shall have an extra tip," he said.

So through the crowded streets, worming their way among lines of heavy teams, across car-tracks, and into queer-looking neighborhoods they were taken, arriving just in time to be taken on board the boat before she should move off.

It was all very exciting, but not unpleasant, for they felt quite safe with Mr. Ramsey. He smiled down at them as he led the way to the deck. "We did make it, didn't we?" he said. "If you children had not been all ready we should have been goners."

"Suppose we had been too late for the boat what would you have done?" asked Edna.

"We could have taken a night train, but it would not have been so pleasant this warm evening. Now you can sit here while I get the keys of our staterooms, then we will go on deck and see the harbor. Our staterooms open into one another, so you needn't be afraid, but you will have to draw lots for the upper berth."

This last matter was easily adjusted for Dorothy begged to be allowed to climb up while Edna thought she would prefer to be below. After all this was talked over and settled, they sat on deck till they had seen the Statue of Liberty, had passed under the Brooklyn bridges, and had gone beyond the boundaries of New York. Mr. Ramsey pointed out all the things of interest and at last said they would better have supper. This over, they returned to the deck till sleep overcame them and they were put in charge of the stewardess while Mr. Ramsey remained above to smoke a final cigar.

Edna was awakened the next morning by Dorothy's leaning over to tickle her ear with a slip of paper. "Do you know where you are?" she asked.

Edna sat up rubbing her eyes. "I didn't at first," she answered, "but I do now. Is it time to get up, Dorothy?"

"I don't know, but I should think so, for the boat isn't going. I think it has stopped for good, for there is a great noise of taking off things, and I hear people talking outside."

In a few minutes there came a knock from Mr. Ramsey's stateroom and his voice inquired: "Are you getting up, young ladies?"

"We are up," replied Edna, "but we aren't dressed yet."

"Come out when you are and we'll have some breakfast before we take the train," came the response.

"I should think we'd better hurry a little," Edna told Dorothy. "I'll do your ribbons and buttons if you will do mine." This mutual help hastened matters decidedly and they were very soon ready, deciding that they would be on the safe side in putting on their hats, but after all breakfast was rather a hurried meal, and next thing they knew they were on the train for Boston. Here they crossed the city to take another train which should bear them over the last stage of their journey.

"Jennie is sure to be there to meet us." Mr. Ramsey told them. "I shall let her know what famous travelers you are. I shouldn't want better. No stopping to prink at the last moment, no forgetting something when it is too late to go back for it. Always smiling and in good spirits. You are models, I tell you."

The girls felt very much flattered at such high compliments, and were glad they had given heed to the careful instructions they had received from their mothers.

When at last the train did stop at the station, sure enough there was Jennie the first one to greet them. She was so eager to welcome her friends that her father complained that she had no eyes for him. At this she gave him a hasty kiss, but at once turned back to Edna and Dorothy. "I am going to take you home myself in the pony cart," she said. "Papa can go in the motor-car."

"All alone?" queried her father in pretended dismay. "I like that."

"Oh, but you will have Mack," returned Jennie, "and it isn't far."

Mr. Ramsey laughed and the two delighted guests clambered into the little pony-cart, Jennie took her seat, touched up the pony very lightly with her be-ribboned whip and off they went full of pleased anticipations.

CHAPTER III

MISS ELOISE

It was quite a different looking country from that they had left which Dorothy and Edna now drove through. Instead of rolling meadows, hills and dales, were long stretches of salt marsh, sand dunes and beyond all the great expanse of ocean. An avenue of trees led up to the Ramsey's home, and there was a broad lawn in front, but on the east side was a pretty beach, a view of the harbor and the sparkling water. "Isn't it beautiful?" whispered Edna to Dorothy as the two followed Jennie up the steps to where Mrs. Ramsey stood on the porch to meet them.

"Fine," returned Jennie.

She had time to say no more than this, for here was Mrs. Ramsey asking how they had stood the journey, and how they had left all at home, so their attention must be given to answering questions and not to discussing what they saw around them.

Mr. Ramsey had already arrived, the motor-car having far outdone the little pony, and he was now talking to two ladies who sat at the further end of the porch. They were hidden by his figure so the little newly-arrived guests did not recognize them then.

"Take the little girls up to their room, Jennie," directed Mrs. Ramsey. "You will all have time for a nice dip in the sea before lunch time."

This was a very exciting prospect, for neither of the two had ever gone through the experience of sea-bathing.

"We have new bathing-suits," they told Jennie with pride.

"But they are in our trunks," suddenly exclaimed Dorothy, "and those haven't come yet."

"Never mind," replied Jennie, "I have two or three, so we need not wait."

However, the trunks did arrive before they had need to borrow, and the bathing-suits were easily found and hastily put on amidst much giggling and many exclamations, for it was such a new excitement it was impossible to do anything soberly. Then Jennie led the way down the back stairs and over a path at the rear of the house to the little stretch of beach. With many little squeals of apprehension, the two who lacked experience, ventured to the edge of the water, but Jennie dashed in, letting the waves completely cover her, and with such an example the other two soon became braver and began to enjoy themselves hugely. Indeed they were fain to remain longer than they should, but at last a maid came to say they must not stay in a moment longer as it was nearing time for lunch.

"I think it is perfectly lovely," said Edna as, with the water dripping down her bare legs, she entered the little bath house where they exchanged their wet suits for dry clothing which the maid had brought down. "Do you go in every day, Jennie?"

"Just about," she replied.

"Even when it rains?"

"Oh, no, not then, unless it is a very gentle rain and it is not too cold."

Edna gave a sigh of satisfaction. "And what do you do in the afternoons?"

"Oh, anything I please. Sometimes I take the pony and drive up to the rocks, and sometimes I just stay around the house or the grounds. What should you like to do? Would you like to go to the village?"

"Why, I don't know." Edna looked at Dorothy. "I'd like to do whatever you two would like."

"That's just like you," said Jennie. "You always want to have other people have a good time whether you do or not. We don't forget about Clara Adams, do we, Dorothy?"

"Oh, that wasn't anything," returned Edna. "Besides, I had the very finest sort of a time."

"Well, we can decide after lunch what we would like to do," Jennie went on, "but now I daresay you are as hungry as hunters; I know I am."

"Who were the two ladies sitting on the porch?" asked Dorothy.

"Oh, didn't you know?" said Jennie in a tone of surprise. "Then I won't tell, and you can find out when we go in. I know you will be awfully pleased."

The mystery of this made the other two hurry with their dressing, but they were none too early as they found when they reached the house, for the rest were already seated at table. To the surprise of both the visitors the two ladies

were well known to them for one was their teacher, Miss Newman, and the other was her invalid sister, Miss Eloise.

"Oh, isn't this lovely?" cried the latter. "We knew you were coming, but you didn't know we were here, did you?"

"Indeed we did not," replied Edna. "How did you get here, Miss Eloise?"

"We came all the way by boat, and I did enjoy it so much. I'll tell you all about it after lunch."

"And if you are as hungry as I am," said Mr. Ramsey, "you will be glad to give your undivided attention to this clam-chowder first thing. We all know how entertaining Miss Eloise's tales can be, so you'd better save them for dessert."

The luncheon was so good that the children did not need a second bidding, and were surprised to find how hungry they were till they remembered that they had not eaten anything since their none too hearty breakfast. It was certainly delightful to be there in the cool spacious house with the noise of the sea ever in their ears and the cool breeze coming in the windows, and the newcomers felt that all this accounted for the better color in Miss Eloise's cheeks and for the brighter look in her eyes.

They all gathered around her on the porch after lunch and she told them about her coming.

"You see it was this way," she began. "It was so stifling in the city that I was perfectly exhausted by the heat and the doctor told my sister I must get away if possible, but neither of us could see where or how, and poor sister was so worried she didn't know what to do. Then all of a sudden, just as if she knew all about our difficulties, came a letter from Mrs. Ramsey asking us to come up here, and arranging it all so nicely that there seemed no reason in the world why I could not make the journey comfortably. So we decided that we would try it. Mr. Ramsey sent the automobile that took us to the wharf and we came all the way by boat to Boston where Mrs. Ramsey met us, and from there we took another boat which brought us to the wharf here. Sister was so afraid I would be seasick, but I was not, in fact it was the most glorious trip I ever had, and we can go back the same way. It is all so wonderful that I haven't recovered from the wonder of it yet. I am so much stronger that I can walk about a very little, and don't have to sit in a rolling chair all day."

All this did seem very wonderful to the little girls who had been accustomed to seeing Miss Eloise always in an invalid's chair wheeled from room to room. "Do you think you will be able to walk more and more?" asked Edna interestedly.

"The doctor--Mrs. Ramsey's doctor--thinks I may be able to as I get stronger. He has encouraged me so much that I begin to think anything possible."

All this was very pleasant news, but here Miss Newman interfered by saying, "Ellie, darling, you know you must not overtax your strength and now you must be taking a rest. The salt baths are doing her a world of good," she turned to the children to say, "but we must not go beyond her strength." So she bore off Miss Eloise and the little girls were left to themselves.

There were so many pleasures in sight that they found it hard to choose, but finally it was decided among them that each should take her turn in making plans for the afternoons, and that they would draw lots for first choice. This they did with three slips of paper. Dorothy drew the longest, therefore to her fell the choice for that day. Jennie drew the second longest and she was to take the next day. As Edna's was the shortest she came last and after that it was easy enough, for they were to keep it up in this order.

After much discussion, Dorothy decided that the very nicest and most unusual thing to do would be to go out in a boat for a row.

"I think that will be perfectly lovely," declared Edna, who had been wavering in her own mind between a preference for the water and a drive behind the little pony.

"I'm sure I shall like it," Jennie said, "and we shall have a good time, I know. Mother always lets me go when we can get old Cap'n Si to take us, for he is perfectly safe and is such a funny old fellow."

"Who is he?" asked the others.

"He is an old fisherman who used to have a fishing vessel of his own, but now he is too old to go to the Banks, so he just fishes around a little, and takes people out rowing or sailing when they don't want to go too far. He lives in that little old house over on that point."

Dorothy and Edna looked to where she indicated and saw a little low brown house very near the water. They could distinguish someone sitting in the doorway.

"What is he doing?" asked Dorothy.

"He is mending his nets."

"How will he know we want him? Do we have to go over and tell him?"

"No, I will tell you how we manage. Come with me."

The two followed her to the bath-house, one side of which was used as a boat-house. From a nail inside the door

Jennie took down a tin horn, which she blew lustily, then looked intently in the direction of Cap'n Si's house. "He hasn't heard," she said presently, and blew another blast. At this Cap'n Si shaded his eyes, and then waved his hand.

"He hears," said Jennie. "Now I must let him know the time." She went to where a flag-pole displayed a blue and white pennant. This she raised and lowered three times. "Now he will know that he is to come at three o'clock," she told the others.

Cap'n Si evidently understood, for he waved his hand three times.

"I think that is a fine way to let him know," said Edna. "How did you ever think of it?"

"Oh, I didn't think of it, Cap'n Si did. He always sits out there on that bench pleasant afternoons, and he told me just how I could let him know when I wanted him. I think I will get him to take us to Shelly Beach; it is such a nice place."

"Are there really shells there?"

"Oh, yes, ever so many, and some of them are so pretty, tiny little pinky ones."

This sounded so fascinating that Edna declared that if it had been her afternoon to choose she could have selected nothing more to her mind than this expedition.

"We must go tell mother where we are going," said Jennie, "so she won't be anxious."

Mrs. Ramsey was in the library at a desk writing letters. She looked up as the children came in. "I am just sending a line to your mothers, dearies," she said to Edna and Dorothy. "I thought they would be anxious to know of your safe arrival. What is on hand for this afternoon?"

"We are going to get Cap'n Si to take us to Shelly Beach," Jennie told her.

"Then be sure to take some warm wraps and be back before six."

"Oh, you know Cap'n Si never keeps us out late."

"No, I realize that he can be relied upon. I think that will be a very nice expedition for you. Would you like to take along some biscuits or something? You can ask Emma to give you something of that kind if you like."

"Could we have some hard-boiled eggs, too?"

"If there is time to boil them. Let me see. Oh, yes, it is only half past two. Well, run along and make your preparations. Have a good time."

"Isn't she dear?" said Dorothy, when they were out of the room. "Does she always let you have anything you want, like that?"

"Oh, yes, generally. If she doesn't it is because there is some good reason why I shouldn't. I will take some extra salt and maybe Cap'n Si will get some fish and cook them for us on hot stones. He does that sometimes, and they do taste so good. I'll get Emma to pack everything in a little basket."

"Where do we go to get in the boat?" asked Edna. "Do we have to go to the steamboat wharf?"

"No, indeed, he will come right to our little landing there beyond the boat-house."

This all seemed most convenient, and what with watching Emma pack the basket and with hunting up wraps the time went very rapidly and they were surprised to hear Mrs. Ramsey call to them, "Come along, children. Here comes Cap'n Si."

Although the sun was hot it did not seem so intolerable as it did at home, for here was the cool sea-breeze always blowing, and even the way to the beach did not seem an uncomfortable walk. Cap'n Si, a grizzly, toothless old man with a pleasant smile and twinkling blue eyes had already drawn his boat up on the sands when they reached him. He gave a quick nod of greeting as the three came up.

"These are my friends Dorothy Evans and Edna Conway," said Jennie.

Cap'n Si jerked his head to each one. "Glad to see ye," he said. "Where be ye going, Jinny?"

"We thought we would like to go to Shelly Beach. It isn't too far, is it?"

"No, 'm, 'tain't. Good weather, too. Hot down your way?" He turned to Edna to ask.

"It has been scorching hot," she told him, "but it wasn't quite so dreadful when we came away."

"Ever been to these parts before?"

"No, and we never saw the ocean, not the real ocean till now."

Cap'n Si looked at her as if she were a strange species of animal. "Wal, I swan," he ejaculated. "Ain't it queer how folks kin live 'slong as that and not see the ocean," he said, turning to Jennie.

"I guess I'd die ef you was to take me out of sight and sound of the water. Lived right here all my life." He turned to

Edna again. "Born in that there little house, and ain't never lived nowhere else, less you call it living on board a fishing vessel. I've seen a good bit of towns and been to considerable many ports, but I ain't seen nawthin' I'd swop this place fur." He took the basket and stowed it safely away, gave directions about their getting in the boat, shoved it off and came aboard himself without seeming to mind the fact that he had walked through two feet of water.

Edna and Dorothy thought him a most interesting person with his red face, his white tuft of beard under his chin and his great knotty hands. He had a fund of stories to tell them about the sea and the creatures that lived in it, and he used so many queer expressions that they thought him very amusing and determined to remember all his funny sayings that they might tell the boys when they returned home.

They reached Shelly Beach in about half an hour, and found it a very surprising place, for here were not only shells but seaweeds and pretty pebbles. Just beyond the beach was a small grove where they decided they would have their little picnic after they had satisfied their desire for shells and pebbles. In the meantime Cap'n Si went off promising to return in a little while.

"I say we gather some of these seaweeds for Miss Eloise," said Edna.

"I am going to take some home to Agnes," declared Dorothy.

"Then I'll take some to Celia, but there is plenty for everyone, so we needn't be afraid that anyone will have to be left out. I think I shall gather some shells for Uncle Justus." This from Edna.

"Why, Edna, do you think he will care for them?"

"Of course he will. He likes those Captain Doane has very much. I haven't found any of the tiny pink ones yet, have you, Jennie?"

"Not yet, but I think we shall find some further along."

"Then let's go further along."

This they did and to their delight found some of the delicate little shells they were so anxious for. They were still absorbed in their search for these when Cap'n Si returned.

"Oh, see what he has," cried Jennie.

"What," asked Edna, turning her head to look.

"A string of fish. I wonder if he got them for us and if he is going to cook them."

They soon found that this was what Cap'n Si intended to do, for he began to gather driftwood for a fire, and while the stones were heating he cleaned the fish, which he finally set to cook on the heated stones.

"After all, I think we'd better have our picnic on the beach," said Jennie, "for we won't want to carry fish so far. I'll go get the basket and we can spread it out, the picnic, I mean, on that big flat rock."

"I think that will be nicer than the woods," declared Dorothy, "for we have had picnics in woods often, but we never had one on a beach before."

Jennie proceeded to open the basketful of supplies and the other bustled about getting all things properly placed. They wondered how they would be served with fish as there were no plates, but Cap'n Si soon solved this difficulty by handing it around on clean pieces of driftwood.

"How good it does taste," said Dorothy. "I never did taste such good fish. I think this is the finest kind of picnic. Don't you wish our mothers could see us, Edna?"

"I don't see how I am able to eat so much?" remarked Edna. "I thought I was as hungry as I could be at lunch time and when it was over I didn't feel as if I ever wanted anything to eat again, but now I am just as hungry as if there had never been any lunch."

Cap'n Si laughed at this. "That's what the sea air does for folks," he said. "I guess you'll take a pound or two more home with you than you come with."

Edna looked down at her chubby little self and came to the conclusion that she would not care to take back too many more pounds, for she didn't like her brothers to call her Butterball, as they were in the habit of doing when they wanted to tease her. However, this did not prevent her from doing full justice to the biscuits and butter, the little cakes and the sweet chocolate with which they ended their meal.

Then Cap'n Si said it was about time they were starting back, so they did not have time to explore the grove and had not gathered half the seaweeds they had intended to, though they were not so much disturbed at this lack because Jennie said, "Oh, well, don't bother, we can come here any time, and there will be just as many things as there are now."

Edna turned this over in her mind for some time. It seemed a strange fact that in spite of the tide's forever washing away shells and weeds and pebbles, it forever washed in more to take the place of what had been given again to the

sea.

She smiled up into Cap'n Si's face as she clasped his horny hand when they were about to land. "I think it is all so beautiful," she said, "and I don't wonder you like it so much. Thank you for telling us about all those things. I hope you'll take us out again."

Cap'n Si gave an answering smile. "Any time you want to go, just h'ist the flag," he said. Then he rowed off in his boat across the shining waters.

"Oh, dear," said Edna with a sigh. "I am having such a lovely time I hate the day to be over."

"But there's to-morrow," replied Jennie cheerfully.

CHAPTER IV
THE PORCH PARTY

This first afternoon was followed by many others quite as happy. Shelly Beach came to be a familiar spot, the grove was more than once explored, the drives up and down the coast became old acquaintances, while Cap'n Si grew to be as well known as any member of Jennie's family. The little girls were never allowed to go out in a sail boat and never were permitted to go too far in the rowboat though Mr. Ramsey promised that some day they should all go on a sailing party, even Miss Eloise. The salt baths and the fine air were doing Miss Eloise so much good that one might expect almost anything would be possible for her before the summer was over. She was a great favorite with everybody, and with none more than the three little girls to whom she gave confidences she withheld from older persons, and they came to know a great deal about the circumstances of herself and sister.

"I wish we could do something about it," said Jennie, one day where the three children were sitting in a row on the warm sands.

"About what?" asked Dorothy.

"About Miss Eloise. You know she told us about the mortgage on their little house. I asked papa to tell me what a mortgage was. At first I thought it was something that had been built on and that had to be lifted off in some way, but it isn't that at all; it is money that has to be paid before they can own the house all themselves. I asked papa if he couldn't give them the money, but he said it would never do to offer it, for both Miss Eloise and Miss Newman were very proud and would much rather earn the money themselves even if it took a long time."

"But Miss Eloise can't earn money; she is an invalid," put in Edna.

"I know, but I wish she could: Papa said I needn't worry about it, as the mortgage was not so very big, and the money they had to pay on it every year did not amount to such a great deal, but I know from what Miss Eloise said that she would like it to be paid; she said she would feel ever so much more comfortable."

"Oh, dear, how in the world can anyone ever understand about such things as interest and mortgages and all that?" said Dorothy. "I don't believe I ever shall get through fractions, let alone interest."

"You see," Jennie went on, "Miss Eloise isn't like a Home for the Friendless or anything like that, or we could have a bazar for her."

"Of course she isn't a Friendless," said Edna with indignation.

"That's just what I said she wasn't, and that is what makes it hard to do things. I am so fond of her that I would like to have her get anything she wants."

"She tells the most lovely stories," said Edna thoughtfully, "but the trouble is, she hasn't the strength to write them down."

"Yes, but maybe she can some day," Dorothy spoke up. "Don't you remember when we first saw her she couldn't even sit up in her chair, and had to be wheeled everywhere."

"Yes, I know that, but the doctor says she must be very careful and must never do anything to tire her back, and writing does tire it; she said so." Edna gave this last word.

They were all very thoughtful for a little while after this. Edna employed herself in making little piles of sand, scooping it up with a purple mussel shell. Dorothy merely let the sand slide through her fingers, while Jennie amused herself by covering up one hand with sand and suddenly pulling it out of its covering.

It was while they were thus occupied that Emma came down the beach to find them.

"Your mother says you are to come up to the house and bring the others with you," she said to Jennie.

"What does she want us for, Emma?"

"To see some company that has come."

"Oh, very well, I suppose we shall have to go. Come on girls."

They all arose and followed Emma to the house to find that a neighbor had driven over with her two children, a little girl somewhat younger than either of the three, and a little boy somewhat older. Jennie had never met them before, but at her mother's suggestion she bore them off to a corner of the porch, leaving the ladies to talk together. In spite of there being a company of five, the children did not seem to get along very comfortably, for the visitors were shy and had very little to say.

Miss Eloise from her chair watched them all for awhile. She could see that very little headway was made, though Jennie as hostess was doing her best to entertain. Billy Potter with round eyes stared straight ahead, taking interest only in the passing of an occasional vessel; Mallie, with drooping head responded yes or no to the questions put to her, and both visitors refused to leave their chairs to go anywhere or see anything. Presently Miss Eloise called Jennie softly and she immediately responded.

"You're having rather a hard time of it, aren't you dear?" said Miss Eloise.

"Oh, Miss Eloise, you don't know what sticks they are. I can't make the little girl say anything but yes and no, and the boy won't even say that much; we have all tried him."

Miss Eloise laughed. "Do you think you could wheel me up closer?"

"Why, of course I shall be delighted to."

Edna seeing what was taking place, ran to help. "Oh, Miss Eloise," she cried, "are you coming to help us out?"

"I am going to try," she said smiling. And presently the strangers looked up to see a sweet face smiling at them from a nest of silken pillows.

It would be a rare child whom Miss Eloise could not entertain, and in a few moments Billy's round eyes removed their gaze from the passing ships while Mallie was a delighted listener to one of Miss Eloise's fascinating stories.

Time passed so rapidly under this treatment that when, in the course of half an hour, Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Ramsey came over to where the group sat, they found no one ready to move until the tale was done, so both ladies sat down to hear its close.

"Gee! but that was a fine story," said the hitherto silent Billy, when the end of the story came. "I wish you could tell 'em like that, Mother."

"Oh, my dear, I wish I could," returned Mrs. Potter. "What a gift you have, Miss Newman. I wish more children could have the privilege of hearing you. I quite envy Mrs. Ramsey such an institution as a self-working reciter of tales."

The ladies all laughed and Mrs. Ramsey said that her neighbors need not think they could send over and borrow this new institution, though she was sure the institution was much more entertaining than any phonograph. They were all quite merry over it, and all the time Edna was thinking very hard, and was the most sober one of the company.

After the visitors had departed, the two younger of them quite thawed out, and promising with great readiness to come again, the three little girls returned to their place on the sands.

They were discussing the two Potter children when suddenly Edna sang out: "I see a boat coming."

"There are always boats coming and going," remarked Dorothy; "I don't think that is anything very unusual."

"But they don't often come so close to the shore, as if they were making right for this little landing," protested Edna.

Jennie sprang to her feet. "I do believe it is someone coming here," she declared, "but I don't know who it is. I think it is one of the boats from the hotel. There are two pretty big boys in it and a smaller boy. Yes, they are going to land. Shall we stay here or go to the house? I am sure I don't know them."

The other two were standing up by now. They watched the boat till it came up to the little landing, saw one of the boys, the smaller one, scramble ashore and then the others row off. The smaller boy came on directly to where the little girls were standing. As soon as he caught sight of them he took off his hat and walked faster.

Then Edna recognized him: "Why it's Louis, my cousin Louis," she cried, and ran to meet him. "Why, Louis Morrison," she greeted him as he came up, "where in the world did you come from?"

"From the hotel," responded Louis. "Mother and I are staying there and mother had a letter from your mother telling her that you were here and where you were staying, so when Al and Phil Haines said they were coming out in a boat I got them to leave me here. I say, it's fine, isn't it?"

Just what was fine, Edna did not stop to inquire, but turned to her friends to say, "This is my cousin Louis Morrison; Louis, this is Jennie Ramsey and this is Dorothy Evans, my dearest friends."

"What were you doing when I came up?" asked Louis.

"We weren't doing anything in particular. It is Jennie's afternoon to choose--we take turns in choosing how we will spend our afternoons, you see--and she hadn't made up her mind exactly." Edna looked inquiringly at Jennie as if to ask what the program was to be.

Jennie, like the little lady she was, turned to Louis. "What would you like to do?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't know." Louis looked a little embarrassed at being thus appealed to. "What do you generally do?"

"Sometimes we get Cap'n Si to take us out rowing, sometimes we go for a drive, and if no one else is going to use the automobile, mother will let Mack take us out in that, but I am afraid she is going to use it this afternoon. We could take

the pony, though, or we could go out in the boat."

"Have you a boat of your own? I can row," Louis returned.

"No, I haven't a boat of my own, but papa says I shall have one when I am old enough. He never lets anyone take me out but Cap'n Si."

"Ho," exclaimed Louis, "I could take you as well as not."

Here Jennie became quite dignified and drew herself up to her small height. "I believe it is my afternoon to choose," she said turning to the two girls; "I think we'd better go to drive. I will tell Peter to bring up the pony and cart in half an hour." She walked away toward the stables, Dorothy joined her and Edna was left with her cousin feeling half indignant with Louis and half miffed with the girls. Why couldn't they have asked her and Louis to go to the stables? They might have known Louis, being a boy, would be interested in the horses.

She was roused from her thoughts by Louis who said, "I say, Edna, you don't want to go to drive, do you? It's stupid to just go driving up and down the roads; it's lots more exciting to go out in a boat. I like a sail-boat, don't you?"

"I've never been in one," said Edna truthfully. "Mr. Ramsey doesn't think they are very safe, but he says we shall all go on a sailing party some day soon."

"I hope I can go, too," returned Louis. Then, realizing that it would be best for himself if he tried to be more gracious to Edna's friends, he said, "I reckon after all, it will be nice to take a drive. Perhaps the driver will let me drive a little."

"The driver is Jennie," Edna told him. She began to be a little troubled about this new element which had suddenly come in to disturb the harmony of the days. She knew that Jennie was rather tenacious of her rights in the matter of her pony, though she was generosity itself in other things. She wished that they were going out with Cap'n Si instead of in the pony-cart. She wasn't sure whether the girls wanted herself and cousin to follow them, and yet she did not like to stand as if waiting. "Let's go up to the house," she said suddenly.

This proved an excellent move, for they met Mrs. Ramsey just as they were going up the steps, and when Edna explained who her companion was, Mrs. Ramsey said, "Why, that is very nice. I must go and call on Mrs. Morrison. I was going to the hotel anyhow. Where are the others, Edna?"

"They went to the stable to order Peter to get out the pony and cart so we could all go to drive."

"Wouldn't you rather go in the motor-car? There is plenty of room, for Miss Newman thinks it better Miss Eloise should not give up her afternoon rest, and will not leave her by herself. I can have Mack leave me at the hotel, and while I am making my calls he can take you children around by the Cape, and you can pick me up on the way back. How do you like that plan?"

"I think it would be lovely," said Edna looking at Louis for confirmation.

"Suits me down to the ground," said Louis.

"Then I'll telephone down to the stables and tell Peter never mind about the pony, and I'll ask him to send Jennie and Dorothy up to me."

Edna was much relieved at this outcome of the difficulty, for she knew there could be no attempt made to drive the motor-car whatever Louis might want to do in the matter of driving the pony. He was an only child and rather a spoiled one, having had his way at home, and being seldom thwarted by his over-indulgent parents. Edna was fond of him in a way, but she feared he would prove a marplot if he spent much time at the Ramsey's, and she began to wonder how long he and his mother were to be at the hotel. She did not like to ask, and just then the automobile appeared with the other two in it.

"We're not going in the pony cart after all," explained Jennie. "Did you know, Edna?"

"Yes," she replied, "your mother said so." She felt that the situation was relieved of its awkwardness because Mrs. Ramsey would be with them, and while she wasn't exactly offended with Jennie and Dorothy, she felt that she ought to be loyal to Louis, and now there would be no need of straining a point either one way or the other. Therefore when she and Louis settled down on the seat by Mrs. Ramsey all promised most favorably, and since Louis was bound to enjoy himself there was no friction.

Leaving Mrs. Ramsey at the big hotel some distance beyond, they enjoyed a spin of half an hour and then returned. Mrs. Morrison came out to greet Edna and to tell Louis he had best remain instead of continuing the drive to the Ramseys.

"Oh, bother," exclaimed Louis, "I don't see why I can't go back. I don't have to hang around here all the time."

"No, but Louis, you will have a long way to return, and besides you have been away all the afternoon."

"Oh, but that doesn't make any difference," Louis continued to parley. "I haven't seen Edna for ages."

"But you can see her again to-morrow. Come in, dear, and I will tell you about a nice plan Mrs. Ramsey has been

arranging."

This brought Louis to a sense of propriety, for if he showed himself unpleasant he might not be included in all the nice plans, so out he clambered.

"Thank Mrs. Ramsey for inviting you to go in her automobile," whispered his mother, and Louis gave his thanks heartily, calling out as the automobile started off, "Good-bye, Edna, I'll see you to-morrow."

Jennie and Dorothy glanced at one another meaningly as he said this, and Mrs. Ramsey perceiving the look said, "I have thought of a nice plan, children."

"Tell us, tell us," they clamored.

"I am going to let you give a porch party to-morrow."

"What is that, Mother?" asked Jennie.

"Why, it is just this: I have been thinking how very hard it must be for those mothers who are boarding at the hotel with restless children and who must find it difficult to entertain them. Many of these mothers do not get a moment's rest, and would be so glad of a little time when they knew their children were safe somewhere, and were having a good time as well, so I thought I would gather up some of these children to-morrow for a porch party and let Miss Eloise tell them some of her stories. You know there is nothing she loves so well as to get a parcel of children around her, and the way she keeps them as still as mice is a perfect marvel to me. I want to do something of the kind for her before she goes, and I am sure she would like this better than any grown-up affair. What do you think of it?"

"It would be fine," cried the little girls in chorus.

"But what do you mean, Mother, by saying before Miss Eloise goes. She surely isn't going soon?"

"Why, I am afraid she and her sister have made up their minds that they must."

"Just as she is getting along so nicely. What a shame!" cried Jennie. "Can't you possibly persuade her to stay?"

"I have tried my best, my dear, but you know they are very proud, and have said that while they are very grateful for the invitation to stay longer that they could not impose upon me to the extent of more than the original time for which I invited them; that was for a month, and the month was up last week."

"Oh, Mother, why didn't you say all summer while you were about it?"

"Why didn't I? I think it was because I was afraid if I made it so wholesale they would decline to come at all, and I thought once they did come it would be easy to persuade them to extend their visit, if it proved to be the best place for Miss Eloise."

"Oh, dear," sighed Jennie, "I just hate to think of her going back to that hot city. Isn't there some way we could manage to make them stay somewhere, even if it were not at our house? Why couldn't they take a little cottage or bungalow or something and stay till school begins?"

"Even little cottages and bungalows cost something, and I am afraid they could not afford even the smallest of those."

"Oh, dear," Jennie sighed again. "I never before wanted school in summer time, but now I wish there were one that Miss Newman could teach in so they would have to stay."

"Why, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsey and then stopped suddenly.

"What were you going to say, Mother?"

"Nothing, only you have given me an idea. Mack, how much time have we?"

Mack glanced at the clock in front of him. "About half an hour, Mrs. Ramsey. It is just six."

"Then you can take me to the Point. Do you children want to go? I shall be making a business call only. Perhaps you'd better go home, for Miss Newman and Miss Eloise will think we have deserted them. I will be back to dinner. Just go as far as the gate, Mack. The children won't mind walking the rest of the way."

So the children were set down at the gate and the motor-car went off in a rush. This latest talk had driven all thoughts of Louis out of mind, and the three little girls began to discuss the porch party with great eagerness. "I wonder if we may tell Miss Eloise," said Edna.

Jennie thought they would better not, but they could speak of their regret in her leaving.

They found the two sisters settled in their favorite corner of the wide porch. "Oh, Miss Eloise," cried Jennie, "we think it is just dreadful for you to think of going so soon. Why, I never dreamed but that you were going to stay all summer."

"But, my dear, think of how long we have been here. Nothing we could ever do would repay your dear mother for all

her kindness, and we certainly would prove ourselves very ungrateful if we imposed ourselves upon her to such an extent."

"It wouldn't be imposing," protested Jennie.

"It might not be if we could return the hospitality, but that we cannot do, and so, you see--"

"I don't see at all," Jennie persisted.

"But we do," put in Miss Newman. "We feel very much gratified that you don't want us to go, and we shall never forget how happy a season we have had here."

"It will be something to treasure for the rest of my days," said Miss Eloise, her eyes fixed on the glittering sea, now gathering radiance from the evening sky. "Isn't it lovely?" she said. "Don't you want to sit down here and enjoy it with us?"

"We must go and dress for dinner," Jennie told her, "but we will hurry."

However, they were not ready till dinner was announced and Mrs. Ramsey had returned. Her eyes were bright and there was a little excited flush on her cheeks. The talk at the table was of the porch party, the prospect of which delighted Miss Eloise, but after dinner, Mrs. Ramsey said: "Miss Newman, I want to have a talk with you." So she and Miss Newman took themselves to the further corner of the porch while the little girls gathered around Miss Eloise till the stars came out and it was too cool to sit out longer.

CHAPTER V
THE LITTLE BUNGALOW

Immediately after breakfast the next morning Mrs. Ramsey bore off Miss Newman in the automobile, and the two were gone most of the morning. "And there is the porch party this afternoon," said Jennie. "It must be something very important or mother wouldn't stay so long."

"What do you think it could be?" asked Edna. Louis had not yet made his appearance and the little girls had resumed their old harmonious attitude toward one another.

"I'm sure I don't know, but I think it must be something about Miss Newman."

"Let's ask Miss Eloise if she knows," suggested Dorothy.

But Miss Eloise could give them no satisfaction. "Sister said they were going off on a little matter of business and that she would tell me when they came back," she informed the children.

"Well, lunch is on the table," said Edna, "so we won't have to wait very long."

She was quite right for at this moment the two ladies arrived. "What did keep you so forever, Mother?" asked Jennie as her mother joined the others who were already at table.

"Well, my dear, it is quite a story. We have had a great morning of it, and as soon as we get something to eat we will tell you all about it. I am sure Miss Newman is half starved, for we have been from Dan to Beersheba this morning."

"Those sound like Bible places," spoke up Edna.

"So they are," said Mrs. Ramsey laughing, and though Edna was puzzled she did not stop to inquire further because just here Miss Newman said, "And what do you think we have been doing?" And then before anyone could guess, "We've been house-hunting," she said.

"House-hunting," repeated Miss Eloise. "Sister, what do you mean?"

Then Mrs. Ramsey broke in with, "And the best of it is we have not hunted in vain."

This all sounded so very mysterious that everyone began asking questions until Mrs. Ramsey cried, "Do be quiet all of you and we'll try to tell you." So everyone subsided into expectancy and she began. "The house is for Miss Newman and Miss Eloise, and it is the Duncan's bungalow."

"Oh, Mother," Jennie broke in, "that dear cunning little place at the edge of the woods? You don't mean that."

"That is just what I do mean and it has all come about in the loveliest way, but I am not going to tell anything more till after lunch. You have had sauce enough for your curiosity and you can wait."

"It all sounds so bewildering that I am not sure whether I am awake or not," said Miss Eloise. "Either I am dreaming or I shall have to believe in fairies. I think I would rather believe in fairies, for I am sure a very good one has been at work."

Luncheon was disposed of in such short order that Mrs. Ramsey declared that everyone would have an attack of indigestion on account of such hasty eating, but she agreed to gratify the curiosity so very apparent and led the way to the porch where they all usually settled for a little talk after meals.

"Shall I tell or will you, Miss Newman?" she asked.

"You, please, for you can begin further back of the facts than I can who did not come into them till this morning."

"Well, then," began Mrs. Ramsey, "it all began with Jennie."

"With me?" came in a surprised voice from Jennie.

"Yes, you," Mrs. Ramsey nodded. "It was when we were out in the automobile yesterday afternoon and were talking of how soon Miss Newman and Miss Eloise must end their visit, and you said you wished they could stay and wasn't there some little cottage they could take. Then you further set the ball rolling by adding that you wished there were a school that kept open all summer so Miss Newman could be occupied there. That was the very beginning, for it set me thinking. I remembered that Mrs. Duncan had said to me the last time I saw her, that she was afraid Rudolph wouldn't be able to enter college this fall as he had lost so much time on account of his illness last spring, but that she did not want to send him away anywhere to prepare for his examinations as he needed the sea air and the attention he would get at home. Moreover, her husband objected to his having a resident tutor for various reasons, and they thought Rudolph would overtax his strength if he went into Boston every day. All this suddenly came up to me and I said to myself, Why shouldn't Miss Newman be as capable of coaching him as a tutor? That was the first thought, and then I

remembered the little bungalow. I knew the Duncans had met with some losses this year, that their two eldest sons, for whom the bungalow was built, had gone abroad, and that maybe they would let Miss Newman have it in exchange for coaching Rudolph. That is what took me over there last evening."

Miss Eloise's face was lit up as with a flame and her lovely eyes were like stars. "Oh," she breathed, "didn't I say I had to believe in a good fairy?"

"So," Mrs. Ramsey went on, "I had a most satisfactory interview with Mrs. Duncan who promised to talk over the matter with her husband when he should come home last evening, and I went away promising to go over this morning with Miss Newman. Mr. Duncan stayed at home to see her and we talked and talked, first with Mrs. Duncan, then with Mr. Duncan and last of all with Rudolph, and before we came away it was all settled. Miss Newman is to have the bungalow and Rudolph is to have the coaching."

"Good! Good!" cried Jennie clapping her hands. "Did Miss Newman see the bungalow?"

"Yes, we went all through it."

"Isn't it a dear little place? I went all through it, too. Oh, Miss Eloise, it is so cunning. There are just four rooms: a living room with a big fireplace, two bedrooms and a cunning kitchen. The boys used to have spreads there, and would cook all sorts of messes. There is a bath-room, too. You can have either salt water, or fresh water, just as we have."

Miss Eloise put out her hand to clasp her sister's. "It sounds too good to be true," she whispered.

"But, Mamma," cried Jennie suddenly, "have you forgotten the porch party? It is almost time for the children to come."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsey, "I very nearly forgot, though I told Emma what preparations to make, and I am sure it will be all right. Still, you little girls had best go change your frocks so as to be ready."

The three flew upstairs chattering like magpies, and when up they flew around excitedly so as to get down again to ask more questions, though this they were not able to do as the very first relay of guests arrived before they were quite dressed. These happened to be the Potters. They were followed by Louis and two other boys from the hotel, and then the arrivals did not cease till twenty children were established around Miss Eloise. For an hour they were delighted listeners, for it seemed as if this teller of tales had never been in better spirits nor had she ever told a more entrancing story, and when at last it came to an end there were many long drawn "Ahs" which showed that no one was ready to have her stop.

Then the carriages and automobiles began coming up and the children were whirled away, though in several cases the mothers who had come for them remained to speak to Miss Eloise, and one or two remained in earnest conversation with Mrs. Ramsey long after the others had gone.

It had been such an exciting day for Miss Eloise that she retired very early, and the little girls sat by themselves in a corner of the living-room while Mrs. Ramsey and Miss Newman talked in a low tone before the open fire. The evening was cool and it was not only too chilly to sit on the porch, but none too warm for the fire. The little girls themselves, though animated enough at first, soon began to grow drowsy and presently Edna's head was in Jennie's lap while Jennie's head was on Dorothy's shoulder, and Dorothy herself was propped up against the wall trying in vain to keep her eyes open. The murmur of voices went on and in a few minutes Jennie, finding that her prop was beginning to sway over toward a chair, roused up to hear her mother say:

"Are you sure she will not find it too much of a task, Miss Newman?"

"I am quite sure she will not, for she has her Children's Hour every day in the city, and she will be so rejoiced at the idea of earning something that she will be more than ever eager to do it. Then, consider, Mrs. Ramsey, how much stronger she is."

Of course this must be about Miss Eloise, but what could she be going to do to enable her to earn money? Jennie was wide awake at once. She had more than once heard Miss Eloise long to be earning something, and now she was going to do it. Rather unceremoniously Edna's head was transferred to Dorothy's lap and Jennie got up to go to the two by the fire.

"Oh, Mamma," she said, "I do so want to know what you are talking about. Is it Miss Eloise and what is she going to do?"

"Dear me," said Mrs. Ramsey, "I thought you children had gone into the other room, you were all so quiet."

"I think we were all half asleep. I know Edna is in Dreamland, and I think Dorothy is, too."

"Well, my dear," spoke up Miss Newman, "I am sure Eloise will not object to your knowing that when we get into our little bungalow she is to have a porch party of her own every day. Several of the ladies who were here this afternoon, said they would be so pleased if she would agree to give an hour each day to the telling of tales to a certain number of children, and offered to pay very liberally for it. Many of the ladies are boarding, and would like a quiet hour when they

could be sure their restless little children were not annoying anyone by their noise, and when this plan was proposed they were more than pleased."

"And what did Miss Eloise say?" asked Jennie. "Does she know?"

"Oh, yes, for she had to be consulted, of course. I have seldom seen her so pleased."

"Then I am very glad," said Jennie. "May I tell the other girls?"

"Certainly you may."

"And since you are all tired out I think you'd better run up to bed," said her mother. "It has been a very full day and we shall all turn in early."

Thus charged Jennie went over to rouse the others who, though still sleepy, were ready to show interest in what Jennie had to tell them, and were heard talking of it all the way up the stairs.

A more careful examination of the little bungalow showed that there would be some things wanted for the entire comfort of the Newman sisters, but these Mrs. Ramsey insisted upon furnishing, or at least lending from her own home, so the next week saw the inmates happy as two birds in a nest. Cap'n Si's grand-daughter was engaged to come over every morning to do up the dishes and help get dinner and the rest was easy enough, Miss Newman declared. Everyone missed Miss Eloise from her place on the porch, but she was so happy in her new surroundings, that all rejoiced for her. The little girls found amusement enough and managed to get along very well indeed when only the three were together, but when Louis appeared there was nearly always sure to be discord.

Therefore one morning when Louis was seen coming in the gate, Dorothy gave an impatient "Oh, pshaw! I thought we were going to have a nice pleasant time to-day, and here comes Louis."

"I wish you wouldn't talk that way about my cousin," said Edna, her loyal spirit rising within her.

"I can't help it if he is your cousin, he is always doing or saying something to stir up a fuss. I don't see why he likes to play with girls, anyhow. I should think he would much rather play with boys."

"There aren't any but very big boys or very little ones at the hotel," explained Edna.

"Then why doesn't he go play with Billy Potter?"

"Billy Potter, that stick?" Edna spoke in great contempt. "Why he is such a lump that he couldn't play with anyone."

"Well, at least he wouldn't fuss with them. We were going to play dolls, this morning, and Louis will never do that."

"I'm going to play dolls, whatever Louis does or says," spoke up Jennie.

"So am I then," declared Dorothy. "What are you going to do, Edna?"

"I don't know," said Edna doubtfully. She dearly loved dolls, but she did not intend to desert Louis.

"Well, if you want to play with Louis you can," continued Dorothy; "but unless he will play with dolls he cannot come with us."

Edna turned slowly and went forward to meet Louis who had crossed the lawn and was nearly up to them. "Hallo," said he.

"Hallo," returned Edna rather dejectedly. "The girls say they are going to play with the dolls out in the summer house; I don't suppose you want to play with them."

"With dolls? Not I. If that's what they are going to do you and I can go down to the beach and build a sandcastle or go fishing or something."

"Oh, not fishing," replied Edna quickly. Her tender heart could never stand that. "I'd just as lief build castles though." She followed Louis down to the beach and for a while they played quite contentedly.

After a while Louis tired of castles and proposed that they go further along. "I know where there is a cave," he said. "We can play at being robbers, or smugglers."

"How far is it?" asked Edna.

"Oh, not very far." Louis waved his hand toward the point which curved beyond them. "It's just down that way."

They set off together along the beach, but though they climbed over great boulders and scrambled around scraggy roots of trees the place was ever beyond them.

"I think it is awfully far," said Edna at last.

"Oh, it can't be far now; the boys told me it was this side of the point."

"Oh, but I thought you knew just where it was."

"So I do. Didn't the boys tell me?" Louis spoke with such assurance that Edna followed on and was presently

relieved to hear him say:

"Look there. What did I tell you?"

Sure enough just ahead of them was a hollowed place in the bank which might easily be called a cave. The bank was quite high just here and stretched down almost to the sea so there was but a small stretch of sand in front of the cave. The children clambered into the shelter to rest, but Louis was not content to sit still for long.

"I'm going out to explore," he said. "You sit here till I come back. I won't stay long."

He was as good as his word for in a few minutes he returned. "Guess what," he began. "There's a boat out there. I'm going to borrow it and then we can pretend you are a female smuggler or you can be a robber maid and will rescue me to rob me. No, I'd rather have it the other way. I'll be the robber and will find you in this sea cave with a hoard of jewels that were left with you after a shipwreck. I'll go get the boat and row in."

"Oh, Louis, indeed you'd better not," said Edna in fear lest he be too foolhardy.

"But I'm not going out to sea really. The boat is just round the little bend the other side of us. I don't mean to steal it. I'll take it back when we get through playing."

"Please don't, Louis. I'm so afraid you will upset or something, besides I don't think you ought to take the boat even for a little while. Suppose the owner should come and want it."

"Oh, no, he won't." Louis was always very ready to believe things were going to happen just to suit him. "Isn't that just like a girl to get all worked up over a little thing like that? Why, I rowed ever so far the other day, and this is only a few yards."

"But suppose, just suppose the boat should leak. It may be an old one."

"I'll examine it first. You don't have to come, you know. All you have to do is to be the robber maid, no, I mean the ship-wrecked one. You might be gathering some pebbles for make-believe jewels. You can hide them in that corner and I will discover them. You must be asleep when I come."

Seeing no persuasion was of any avail, Edna watched Louis go off and then set herself to work to gather pebbles. This was rather a pleasant amusement, and she soon had a nice little pile of those which were either milky white, which showed some faint color, or which shone with spots of mica or quartz. Her jewels in order, she began to think it high time to be expecting the robber, so she lay down on the sand to compose herself in pretended slumber.

She lay there for some time, and being tired could almost have dropped off into a real sleep, only that she felt anxious about her cousin. Why didn't he come? "Perhaps he is fishing, or maybe he is talking to the man that owns the boat. The man might have come up and he might be angry with Louis for meddling. I think I'll go and peep."

She crawled out of the cave surprised to find the strip of beach much narrower than she remembered it. Really there was no beach to speak of now, for just as she was venturing out a wave came curling up to her very feet. She retreated, a good deal alarmed. The cave was high enough for her to stand upright, but was not very deep. She stood for a moment watching the water at the entrance. It didn't come so far in the next time, but still it was quite far enough to cause alarm. Suppose the tide were rising and it should come up, up into the very furthest corner of the cave. The thought filled her with terror, and gave sudden purpose to her movements. She would flee while there was yet time. She dashed out, unheeding the water through which she splashed, and which came over her ankles. Her main thought was to climb up the bank and get beyond any possibility of the tide's over-taking her. Scrambling, falling, clutching at the bayberry bushes which fastened themselves securely into the soil, she managed at last to reach the top. From here she believed she could see up and down the coast. But all at once it was made evident to her that she could not see, for a chill grey fog had crept in, and was enveloping land and sea. Strain her eyes as she would there was no house visible, neither was there sign of Louis nor the boat.

CHAPTER VI IN THE FOG

For a moment Edna stood still bewildered, then she ran a little way along the bank calling "Louis! Louis!" terrified at receiving no answer. The bank which here reached its greatest height, sloped gently down on the north side, and curved away from the sea, leaving a tiny cove in which Louis had seen the boat. There might be another cave on that side. Edna resolved to go down and investigate.

The going down was much easier than the coming up, for at some distance away the shore was nearly level with the bank, and one had but to walk to reach it, no scrambling necessary. The grass, short and stubbly, was strung with fine mist and at each step Edna grew wetter and wetter, but she did not heed this, for her whole thought was centered upon Louis, and she was imagining all sorts of things. Perhaps he had drifted away in the boat far out of sight. Perhaps the boat's owner had seen him and had borne him off to be locked up for meddling with another's property. Perhaps he was really out there now on the water, hidden by the fog, and was trying to row ashore.

She reached the beach at last. The tide was coming in higher and higher, and was sweeping around the point where the cave was, rushing in and out with a great noise. Edna shuddered as she thought; suppose she had not been able to get away before now and had been hemmed in on both sides by the waves. Once in a while the fog lifted slightly, and she strained her eyes for a sight of the boat. Once she was sure she saw it, but a second view disclosed a lobsterman coming in from hauling his lobster-pots. He rowed steadily, but passed by too far out for the little girl to attract his attention. It had grown very damp and chilly, and the east wind cut like a knife. The child's clothing was wet through and her teeth chattered as she faced the sea. She was not quite sure where she was, for she had never walked so far along the shore, but had reached different places by way of the road. Moreover, the fog hid all landmarks, and there was not even a fisherman's hut to guide her.

At last she made up her mind that it was useless to stand there and concluded that she would best turn away from the shore and try to find the road. She went up the bank again by the easier way and then turned at right angles, stumbling through the stubbly grass and over hummocks. She thought she was going in a straight line, but she was really zig-zagging across the field and bearing toward the north instead of the south.

Suddenly she saw through the veil of mist, a small building ahead. "It must be a fisherman's hut," she told herself. "Perhaps it belongs to the man who owns the boat. I'll go there and see." This gave her a new impetus and she hurried on, and presently was surprised to see that it was not a fisherman's house at all, but a small bungalow, set with back to a grove of trees and facing a small strip of beach. "Why," exclaimed Edna, delightedly, "if it isn't the little bungalow where Miss Eloise lives. Well, I am surprised. I hadn't an idea I was anywhere near it."

On she went with better heart. Here were friends close at hand who could advise and comfort her. She reached the door and lifted the little brass knocker. The door was opened to her by Miss Newman.

"Why, Edna Conway, what in the world brought you over here by yourself?" was Miss Newman's surprised greeting. "Why, the child is drenched to the skin. Come right in to the fire." She ushered her into the tiny living-room where a cheerful fire was blazing on the hearth. Before this Miss Eloise was sitting. "It is Edna, Ellie," said her sister, "and the child is soaking wet. My dear child, why did you come out in this fog wearing that flimsy gingham? And no rubbers, no coat? What were you thinking of?"

This was too much for Edna and her lip quivered, the tears filled her eyes and she stood forlornly without saying a word.

"You poor little dear," said Miss Eloise, who was watching her. "You shall not scold her, sister. You do not know what accident may have happened. Come over here, darling child, and tell me all about it."

The effect of Miss Eloise's sympathy finished what Miss Newman's censure began and Edna burst into tears, sobbing out. "It--it was all--all nice and bright when we came away from the--the house, and--and I d--didn't know there was going to--to be any fog."

"Of course you didn't," said Miss Eloise soothingly. "What did I tell you, sister? Go on, dear, and tell us how it all happened."

"Louis and I went to find the cave, and it was ever so far." Edna drew a long breath but checked her tears. The fire was very comforting and Miss Eloise was a tower of refuge. "Then he went off to get a boat and was coming back to the cave. I was going to be a shipwrecked maiden with jewels and he was a bold robber, but--but he didn't come, and the tide--the tide--" Here she broke down into a second fit of weeping.

"There, there, don't try to tell any more just yet. You see," she said to her sister, "the child is all wrought up. There is no knowing what she may have been through. She ought to have some dry shoes and stockings, sister, and she'd better take off that soaking frock. That little blue flannel kimono of mine will be just the thing."

So Miss Newman went off to bring back the dry things, helped Edna off with the wet frock and on with the dry shoes and stockings, and by that time she had become calmer. The shoes were not very much too big, and the kimono was not much too long, for Miss Eloise was a tiny creature. "Now do you think you could tell us the rest," said Miss Newman taking example from her sister and speaking very gently.

"I'll try," said Edna more at her ease. "I waited ever so long for Louis to come, and he didn't. I was inside the cave, you know, and I was pretending to be asleep, and when I knew it was too much of a long time I thought I would go out and find Louis, and then I saw the fog and the tide was coming in just as fast. I was so scared, for I knew it might come all the way up into the cave, and so I just tore out as hard as I could. It was up real high, for it splashed 'way over my feet. I had to scramble up the bank for the water was coming up all over the beach and there wasn't any other way. When I got to the top I saw that I could get down very easily on the other side. There was a little cove there, a tiny little one, and I guessed that was where Louis saw the boat, but the boat wasn't there and I called and called but nobody answered. Then I went down as far as I dared but I couldn't find Louis. Oh, Miss Eloise, I am so afraid he is drowned."

Both ladies looked very grave, for there seemed likelihood of this being the case. Edna's tears began to flow again, and she buried her head in Miss Eloise's lap.

"Poor little girl, you have had a sorry time of it," said Miss Eloise, gently caressing the child's head. "What do you think had better be done, sister?"

Miss Newman sat thoughtfully looking into the fire for a few minutes before she answered, then she said: "I think I'd better go up to the Duncan's. They have a telephone, you know, and can let Mrs. Ramsey know where Edna is. She will be worried, I am sure. Then we can telephone to the hotel and find out if Louis is there. We need not necessarily alarm his mother, but if he is not there I will get Rudolph Duncan to go out and inquire about whose boat that was which Louis saw by the cave, and we may discover something that way. Rudolph will like to go, for he has his sou'wester and rubber boots, while as for me I am used to going out in all sorts of weather. I will not be gone any longer than I can help, and--why Edna, you have not had any dinner. Of course you haven't."

"Why, is it dinner time?" she asked.

"It is past our dinner time. We had just finished when you came in, or at least Amelia had just finished washing the dishes. We have dinner in the middle of the day, you know, on account of having Amelia come to do the dishes. Ellie, dear, I wonder if you could see that the child has something to eat while I am gone. Everything is in the refrigerator, but I am afraid there is not much beyond bread and milk."

"There is pie," Miss Eloise reminded her, "and there are plenty of tomatoes. We can manage, I am sure, sister. You go right along."

So Miss Newman did not waste time in getting ready, but started forth in a very few minutes, and then Miss Eloise sent Edna out into the little shed to report upon what she might find in the refrigerator.

The child realized now that she was really hungry, and having shared her anxieties with some one to be depended upon, she felt that there was nothing further to be done. Holding up the blue kimono so it would not drag on the floor, she went out into the little shed, annexed to the back of the bungalow. She looked inside the refrigerator. There was a plate of cold fish. Not very appetizing, thought she. A dish of cold baked potatoes--neither did these appeal to her--, a few tomatoes, butter, milk, and a little saucer of stewed apples. She took out the milk, the butter, the tomato and the stewed apples, and set these on the table. "I've found something," she called out.

"Bring it in here by the fire," said Miss Eloise in reply.

Edna carefully carried the things into the front room.

"There is salt on the shelf over the sink," Miss Eloise told her. "The bread is in the bread-box, and the pie is on the kitchen table covered with a tin lid. It gets soggy if you put it in the refrigerator. The knives are in the table drawer, and I think there are forks there, too."

Edna returned to the kitchen to get these things. There was quite a large section of blueberry pie, and there were some slices of bread already cut. The pie looked very good and she was pleased to think that a whole pie had been too much for the two Newmans and Amelia. "I am going to eat the tomato and some bread and butter first," she told her friend; "then I will eat some bread and milk and the stewed apples, and keep the pie till the last. I am very glad it was such a big pie that you could not eat it all."

"I am glad, too," said Miss Eloise smiling, "and I am glad you could find something else you liked."

Edna ate her meal with a good appetite, and then carried the empty dishes out into the kitchen. "Shall I wash them?"

she asked.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't try," said Miss Eloise. "You might set them in the dish pan and run some water over them so they won't get dry or attract the flies."

Edna did as she was told and then returned to watch for Miss Newman. She had not long to wait before she saw her coming across the field which separated the Duncan's house from the little bungalow. "Here she comes," cried Edna trying to get to the door in such haste that she forgot to hold up the blue kimono and came near to sprawling at full length. However, she did get to the door in time to open it before Miss Newman should turn the knob, and to be ready to ask, "Did you find out anything about Louis?"

"Well, I did and I didn't," Miss Newman told her. "Let me get off this waterproof and I will tell you." She slipped off the garment and hung it over the back of a chair, then she removed her rubbers and came over to the fire to dry the edge of her skirt. "We called up Mrs. Ramsey first of all and told her where you were, then we called up the hotel. I let Rudolph do the asking, so Mrs. Morrison would think it was someone at the Duncan's who wanted to know about Louis. He was not with his mother, and she said she had not seen him since he went out after breakfast to see Edna. 'He is probably at Mrs. Ramsey's,' she told Rudolph."

"Oh, dear, where can he be?" sighed Edna, anxiety written on her usually happy face.

"Then I told Rudolph the circumstance of the boat. 'Oh, I know whose boat that is,' he said, 'it belongs to Dick Fenton. He is a fisherman. I can get hold of him easily.' So now Rudolph has gone to hunt up Dick and he has promised to come around this way and let us know. So now, my dear, all we can do is to wait till Rudolph returns. Did you get something to eat?"

"Yes, indeed, I did, and the pie was delicious. I am so very fond of blueberry pie. Thank you so much, Miss Newman for leaving me such a nice big piece."

Miss Newman laughed. "I am glad you take it that way, though the truth is, we didn't know we were leaving it for you."

"I am afraid I drank up all the milk," Edna went on. "I hope you will not need it for your supper."

"No, we shall not, for neither of us takes milk in tea and they will bring more for the morning."

"Did Rudolph think that anything dreadful had happened to Louis?" asked Edna after a pause.

"No, he seemed to think that no one could take the boat without Dick Fenton's knowledge, and said that anyhow there were no oars in it, as Dick always took the oars up to the house."

It was a great relief to hear this, and Edna began to feel much more hopeful. "Only," she said, "I don't see why he didn't come back."

"That is where the mystery is," acknowledged Miss Newman.

The mystery was not solved till an hour later when not only Rudolph, but Louis himself appeared. Miss Eloise was entertaining Edna with a story that the time might not hang too heavily. The bad weather had made a porch party out of the question, and this afternoon Edna was the only listener. The fairy prince had but just entered into the tale when a knock at the door scattered all hope of his ever being recognized as the little bird on a bough.

Edna flew to the door, reaching it less clumsily this time as she had resumed her own frock which was now quite dry. "It's Louis! It's Louis!" she screamed. "Oh, Louis, why didn't you come? I was in such a trouble about you."

"Well, I'll tell you how it was," said Louis, entering the room. "It wasn't my fault at all. I went down and got into the boat, but I found there were no oars, so of course there wasn't any use for me to try to go out in it. While I was sitting there Dick came along; he's the man the boat belongs to, you know. 'Hallo, sonny,' he said, 'Waiting for a trip to sea?' I said I was just sitting there pretending I was out at sea. 'I'm going to draw my pots,' he said, 'Want to come along?' Now, you know, Edna, of course I couldn't miss such a chance as that, for I had never seen anyone draw lobster-pots, so of course I said yes, I'd like to go. I didn't think we would be gone very long, and I knew you would stay until we got back. I never thought about the tide coming in, or would have made Dick wait till I had gone to tell you not to wait."

"You should have gone to tell her anyhow," said Miss Newman severely. "It was inexcusable to leave a little girl all that time by herself."

"Well, but you see," said Louis in self-defence, "I was afraid Dick wouldn't wait for me."

"You could have asked him whether he would."

Louis did not reply but hurried on with his story. In his heart of hearts he was conscious of having neglected his cousin for the sake of his own amusement, and had really no excuse to offer. "Well, so I got in the boat and we went off. It was further than I thought, but just the minute we got back I went right around to the cave, or at least I tried to get there. Gee! when I saw it was full of water, wasn't I scared for a minute? Then I said to myself, 'Edna's not such a

fool as to stay and get drowned. Of course she's gone home,' but just the same I thought I'd better go see, so I went back to Mrs. Ramsey's, or at least I started to go, but I met Rudolph and he told me where you were and that everybody was kicking up a fuss about me, so I came back with him, and here I am."

It was all so little of a tragedy, and all Edna's alarm had been due merely to the thoughtlessness of one careless and selfish boy, so no one felt the least sympathy with Louis when he said. "I missed my dinner, too."

"Serves him right," said Rudolph, under his breath to Miss Newman.

"Then I would advise you to go straight home to your mother," said Miss Newman in her most freezing manner, "and I hope it is the last time Edna ever trusts herself to your tender mercies."

Here Miss Eloise held out her arms and gathered Edna to her with kisses and caresses, whispering to her that she was a darling child.

Louis looked a little ashamed, but was evidently so much more sorry for himself at missing his dinner than for Edna in any state of mind or body, that no one detained him when he said he would go to his mother. Rudolph did not offer to see him on his way, but turning to Edna said, "Whenever you are ready to go I can take you to Mrs. Ramsey's as easily as not. We haven't our motor-car this year, but I can drive over in the surrey."

Edna thanked him and he went off promising to return in half an hour. Neither Miss Newman nor Miss Eloise made any comment upon Louis, but Edna was perfectly aware that they did not approve of him. She wished Louis were not so selfish, and she looked back to the time when she and her cousin were together at school, with Uncle Justus and Aunt Elizabeth. Louis was really nicer then, though more than once, even at that time, he had put Edna at disadvantage. She looked so sober that Miss Eloise asked what she was thinking about.

"Louis," was the laconic reply.

"I wouldn't think about him," said Miss Eloise with more spirit than she usually displayed.

"What that boy needs is to go to boarding school," said Miss Newman firmly. "He ought to be where there are a lot of other boys to teach him he is of no importance whatever."

"He was so unhappy at Uncle Justus's school that his mother says he shall never go away to school again," remarked Edna.

"Poor boy, then there is no hope for him," replied Miss Newman.

Edna did not exactly understand what this meant, but she did not say so, but seeing she still looked very sober, Miss Eloise changed the subject, and began talking of Edna's friends, Dorothy and Jennie. "Why didn't you all play together, Edna?" she asked. "I thought you three little girls were inseparable."

Edna hung her head. She wanted to shield Louis, but at the same time she did not want to say anything against her two friends. Finally she compromised by saying, "Boys don't like to play with dolls."

"Oh, I see," said Miss Eloise with a smile, for Edna's words had given the key to the situation.

It was not long before Rudolph appeared with the surrey. He brought a warm coat of his sister's to wrap Edna up in, and they set off after Edna had given earnest thanks to her entertainers.

CHAPTER VII
A SAILING PARTY

"What a time you have been done!" exclaimed Jennie when Edna appeared. "How did you happen to go to the bungalow? Come in and tell us all about it. Mother, here's Edna," she sang out.

"Come in to the fire," said Mrs. Ramsey from the door of the living-room. "These sea-turns chill one to the marrow. Was that Rudolph who brought you over? That was very nice of him. I was just about to tell Mack he'd better go for you."

Edna entered the house and stood before the fire. Dorothy who was established near at hand, looked up from the book she was reading. "Hallo, Edna," she said, and then returned to her book.

"How did you happen to go to the bungalow?" Jennie repeated her question, coming over to where Edna stood.

"It was the fog," Edna told her, and then she went on to give an account of her adventures. She had not proceeded very far before down went Dorothy's book, and she was as interested a listener as Jennie and her mother.

"Oh, Edna," she said, when the tale was ended, "how dreadful it all was, and here we were half mad with you and not knowing anything about what was happening. Suppose, just suppose, that the tide had come up and, oh dear, oh dear, Edna I am so sorry we were hateful to you this morning."

"But you were not hateful," Edna protested, "and I don't suppose I ought to have gone off with Louis, but you see--"

"Yes, we do see," Jennie interrupted her, "and nobody was to blame but Louis. Wasn't he the one, Mother?"

"I am afraid so," responded Mrs. Ramsey, "though my dear, I think you should have remembered that both Edna and Louis were your guests and that the proper thing to do was to propose some play in which you could all join. Little boys are not expected to play with dolls, you know."

Jennie hung her head, but Edna gave Mrs. Ramsey a grateful look, for what she said was very true. But seeing that Jennie looked quite downcast Edna spoke up cheerfully. "Well, it is all over now, and I did have a very nice time at the bungalow. I had lunch out of the refrigerator, and Miss Eloise told me a lovely story. No, she didn't either, she didn't but half tell it for Louis came before it was done. Oh, Jennie, I wore Miss Eloise's shoes and stockings while mine were getting dry, and they were only a little bit too big for me. I wore her blue kimono, too."

"I'm awfully glad you had a good time," said Jennie earnestly, "but if I had known what was going on I should have been very unhappy. We didn't have a very good time as it was, did we, Dorothy?"

"No, we didn't," Dorothy agreed. "We missed you, Edna, and we were out of sorts all the time. Please stay with us next time."

"I think Edna will do that," said Mrs. Ramsey gently, "for I think we must make a rule that no one of you is to go anywhere that you cannot all go, and then you will all be safer."

Edna felt that this was a very good rule, and was sure that Mrs. Ramsey had made it for her protection, since now she could always say to Louis, "No, I can't go unless the others do." So she looked up in Mrs. Ramsey's face and said, "I like that rule."

Mrs. Ramsey smiled down at her. "I am glad you do."

However, so far as Louis went, there was little need of rules, for he kept away several days, having found a playmate in the person of a boy of about his own age who had come to the hotel to spend a few weeks. "The boy's father had a boat, a sail boat," Louis informed the girls when he saw them, and Louis was invited to go out every day in it, so any other amusement which they could offer paled before this.

At the end of the week Mr. Ramsey came up for a longer stay than before, and who should appear in the harbor about the same time but Edna's big boy cousin, Ben Barker. Everybody liked Ben, for he was an entirely different sort of somebody from Louis. He had come up with some of his college friends on a yacht, but was frequently ashore.

"I thought no one less than the King of Spain had arrived," declared Mr. Ramsey when he beheld the tumultuous welcome given Ben by the three little girls.

"He is much nicer than the King of Spain," Jennie told him.

"And this from my own daughter whose father has just arrived," said Mr. Ramsey laughing. "You are certainly a popular young man, Mr. Barker."

"Oh, don't call him Mr. Barker; call him Ben; we do," said Jennie.

"That is as he likes, my dear."

"Oh, everybody calls me Ben," the young man told him.

"Ben be it, then. And where are you staying, Ben?"

"On the yacht with the boys, sir. We are cruising up the coast, and thought this would be a good place to anchor for a few days. We're not all boys, for the father of one of my chums, the fellow who owns the yacht, is with us, so is one of the college professors, and Edna, you will never guess who is one of the party."

"Who?"

"Guess."

"Celia, my sister Celia."

"Wrong. No ladies aboard."

"Then, let me see--not papa?"

Ben shook his head. "You're a little warmer."

"One of the boys; Frank or Charlie."

"No small fry."

"Then, please tell, I can't possibly guess."

"Your Uncle Justus."

"Oh, Ben, really?"

"Yes, ma'am, thy servant speaketh truly."

"But where is he? and why didn't he come up with you?"

"Because I wasn't sure how far it might be to this house, or how difficult it might be to get here."

"You don't mean that it is Professor Horner of whom you are speaking," said Mr. Ramsey.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Justus Horner."

"Well, well, well. Certainly we must have him over here. I will go speak to Mrs. Ramsey about it. How did you come over, Ben?"

"I rowed over."

"Then, if you will permit me to take an oar I will go back with you and call upon your goodly company. Whose is the yacht, did you say?"

"Clem McAllister's."

"Son of Davis McAllister? Why, I know his father well, and his father is on board, too, I believe you said. A double reason for my going." He hurried off to speak to his wife while Ben and the three little girls continued the conversation.

"What do you think we saw in the water last night?" Ben asked them.

"Oh what?" they asked in a breath. "Was it a whale?" said Jennie.

"No."

"Not a man? Oh, Ben, was it, and had he fallen overboard?"

"No, it wasn't a man."

"Then maybe it was a shark." This from Dorothy. "I'd hate to see a shark; it would scare me to death."

"It wasn't a shark."

"Then perhaps it was only a porpoise. They do come in quite near sometimes," Jennie ventured this.

"No, it was nothing of a fishy nature."

"Then we can't guess. Tell us, Ben," Edna begged.

"All give it up?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"It was a--" he paused and looked impressively at each one, "a--I hardly know how to describe it, for it seemed to be amphibious, having once lived on land, and yet I doubt if it will live there ever again."

"Do you mean it will never be on land again?" Dorothy asked.

"I didn't say that. I said I doubted its ever living on land. I really don't see how it could, though of course it might possibly be there. This is a case when there is a difference between being and living."

"What was it doing when you saw it?" asked Jennie.

"It was headed for the harbor, I should say."

"Then it might have been a ship or a boat." Jennie began to think she was getting some light.

"You are a very clever child, Miss Ramsey, but your intuitions fail you upon this occasion."

"Then we give it up. We did give it up, Ben, you know, and then you started us guessing again. What was it?"

"It was about five feet long, I should judge," Ben went on thoughtfully, and as if he had no idea of their having stopped guessing. "Its body was reared some distance above the water, but it was making its way very successfully, I thought."

"It was a dog!" cried Edna triumphantly.

"Of course it was," echoed the others. Ben heaved a long sigh. "How mistaken persons can be when they are sure they are right. I admit that if I were writing about this object you might think I was writing about a dog, but I wouldn't be because it was not a dog."

"Then it was a horse or some kind of animal." Dorothy was very sure of this.

Ben slowly shook his head. "On the wrong track, my dear Dorothy."

"But you said it had lived on land, though you doubted if it ever would do so again."

"Yes, verily, so said I."

"Then we won't guess any more, will we girls? We gave it up and it has to stay given up."

"Do you really want to know?"

"Oh, we're not particular," replied Dorothy, with a little toss of her head.

"Oh, well, then," said Ben, "I won't bother myself to tell you." He picked up the morning paper as if the last word had been said on the subject.

"Ben Barker, you are just the worst tease," said Edna, tousling his hair. "You've just got to tell us after rousing our curiosity."

"Oh, I am willing to tell you if you really want to know, but I thought you didn't. It was a large piece of driftwood."

"Oh, you mean, mean thing!" Edna began to pommel him with her fist and the others joined in.

"See here," cried Ben, "three against one isn't fair, is it, Mr. Ramsey?" he appealed to that gentleman who just then came in.

Mr. Ramsey laughed. "I see it is high time to come to your rescue. Are you ready? If so, I am at your service."

Ben shook himself free of the little girls, picked them up one after another and tossed them in a heap among the cushions of the divan, then strode off in Mr. Ramsey's wake.

The girls, laughing and squealing, crawled out from the cushions to run after the departing figures, but these had already gone too far to be overtaken and they returned to watch them row off.

In about an hour they were back again, bringing a third person. It was Edna who first caught sight of the approaching boat. "I see the boat coming," she sang out, "and there are three persons in it. Oh, girls, I know who is coming; it is Uncle Justus. I know him by his whiskers and his eyebrows, though he isn't wearing a hat, but a funny cap. Do come and see."

"Let's go down to the landing and meet them," proposed Jennie.

This was at once agreed upon and the three little girls went flying across the sands, so as to be on hand when the boat should come up. It seemed very queer to see Uncle Justus in yachting cap and flannels when he had always appeared in most severe dress, and never on any occasion wore such a frivolous thing as a cap. He appeared to have thrown off some of his dignity, too, for he stepped ashore with much agility and actually ran up the long board landing to meet Edna.

"Well, well, well, little girl," he cried, "isn't this a great meeting?"

"It is just fine," returned Edna. "I am mighty glad to see you, Uncle Justus. Are you glad to see me?"

"Not a doubt of it. Did you ever expect to see your old uncle sporting around with a lot of college boys? I am continually surprising myself by saying or doing something I had forgotten, and which belongs properly to youth. They are a great set, those college boys."

By this time Jennie and Dorothy had come up and were given hearty greetings. Professor Horner in the character of a yachtman was rather a different person from the grave and severe schoolmaster whose school they attended. As for Edna, she was so divided between her desire to be with her favorite cousin Ben and with Uncle Justus, of whom she was very fond, that she swung between her two desires like a pendulum till Ben caught her and pretended he was going to throw her overboard because she would not walk with him up to the house. By the time this pretended squabble was over Uncle Justus was well ahead with Mr. Ramsey, so the three little girls attended Ben like satellites.

"You're going to stay to dinner, Mr. Horner said so," Jennie told Ben in a satisfied voice.

"And do you know what we are going to do to-morrow?"

"No. What are you going to do?"

"We are going to have our breakfast on the yacht." Ben gave this information as if it were a great piece of news.

"But I thought you always did that."

"So we do."

Jennie looked puzzled, but Edna laughed. It was so like cousin Ben to do that way. "It is so nice to have you here," said Edna, fondling the hand that held hers. She and the others had settled it that as Ben was her own cousin she had prior claim to his right hand and the other two hung on his left arm, getting in one another's way a great deal in an effort to establish an equal right.

Ben's presence at the lunch table kept the little girls in a state of giggles, which was aggravated by the inquiring look Uncle Justus would give them over his spectacles once in a while, as if he would say, Why all this merriment when there is no apparent cause?

It was at the lunch table that Mr. Ramsey proposed a sailing party for the next afternoon. "I have been promising these young people for some time that I would take them out," he said. "Old Cap'n Si has a good boat, and Mrs. Ramsey has promised we shall have a supper to take with us. Gosling Island is a pretty place, and I think you will all enjoy the sail. What do you say, Mr. Horner? Will you and Ben go with us?"

"I cannot speak for my young friend," replied Mr. Horner, "but for myself, I should be delighted to go, especially as you and your good lady are to be my shipmates."

At the words "good lady," Ben opened his eyes very wide at Edna and she collapsed into a fresh attack of giggles while Ben turned gravely to Mr. Ramsey to say, "And I shall be delighted, too, Mr. Ramsey. I think it will give the boys on the yacht a treat if I spare them my presence for one afternoon."

"Now, Benjamin, you are entirely too modest," said Mr. Horner. "He is quite the life of the party, Mr. Ramsey, I assure you. They will not miss an old foggy like me, but young blood like Ben's gives a great infusion of spirits."

The little girls stole a glance at Ben. He had meekly folded his hands and was looking down with such an expression of humility that not only the little girls but Mrs. Ramsey had to laugh. Truly it was anything but a solemn meal.

The next day dawned bright and fair to the delight of three rather anxious little girls who were fearful lest gray skies would put a stop to any plans for the sailing party. But alas, as the day wore on it became more and more doubtful whether one of the three little maids would be able to go, for Edna, who waked with a little headache, became worse and worse, and by lunch time found it would be impossible for her to eat anything, and could be comfortable only when lying down. She was so disappointed and tried to persuade herself that the feeling of dizziness would pass away, and that she would be better by the time they were ready to start.

However, it was Mrs. Ramsey who finally decided that she must not think of going. "Dearie," she said, "I am much afraid you would be worse for going. It isn't everyone who can go in a sailing vessel without being seasick, and I am a little doubtful for Dorothy and Miss Eloise, but in your present condition I am very sure it would be anything but a pleasure to you."

Jennie who stood by listening with much concern, spoke up. "Couldn't we put it off, Mother?"

"I think we can promise to go another time, but not with the same party, for the yacht will continue her cruise up the coast, so Ben tells me, and will not be here after to-morrow morning. Your father wants particularly to have Mr. Horner go with us, you see--"

"Then I'm not going," said Jennie decidedly.

Edna raised herself on her elbow. "Indeed you must," she said. "I think it is lovely of you, Jennie, to want to stay, but you see, I couldn't play or do anything but lie still, and I should be very unhappy if you were to stay on my account. Please say she must go, Mrs. Ramsey. If she stays, then Dorothy will think she must and it will spoil it for so many that it wouldn't do at all."

"I think Jennie ought to go," said Mrs. Ramsey, after a moment's thought, "for we have asked Mrs. Duncan and her

little girl, but I shall stay to take care of you."

Edna raised her head again. "Oh, but Mrs. Ramsey, that will be just as bad. I am not so ill as that, indeed I am not. It is only that I feel dizzy when I raise my head. If I keep very quiet I may be well by the time you can get back. Besides, if it isn't polite for Jennie to stay home because you have invited Grace Duncan, then it wouldn't be polite for you because you have invited Mrs. Duncan."

Mrs. Ramsey smiled at this laying down of the law, but continued, "I am sure our friends will understand why I am not going when it is explained to them."

"Oh, but," Edna went on, "I shall be much sicker if you stay, because I shall feel as if it were all on my account. It makes me sicker just to think of it. Please, dear Mrs. Ramsey, go. Emma can take care of me and I shall not want anything, but just to keep still."

She looked so imploring and was really so distressed that Mrs. Ramsey wavered. "I am sure it is not a very serious illness," she admitted, "and Emma is really a very good nurse. I could leave word with her to telephone for the doctor if you were to grow worse, I suppose."

"Oh, yes, that will be all right, and I shall not be any worse unless you stay at home."

"In that case," returned Mrs. Ramsey smiling, "it would seem the wisest plan for me to go. I will tell Emma to keep within hearing. She can take her mending in the next room and sit there, or would you rather lie on the divan in the living-room?"

"I'll stay here for awhile, and if I get better I can go down there," Edna decided.

So, in due course of time they all left her, with many protestations, and loving farewells. "If you can get to sleep," said Mrs. Ramsey, "I think you will wake up feeling better. Emma can darken the room and it will be very quiet."

So off they went, and Edna turned with a little sigh of regret and tried to compose herself to sleep. She closed her eyes and presently heard Emma tip-toeing about the room, softly drawing down the shades. After all it was rather pleasant and restful to lie there undisturbed, to know that nothing was expected of her, and that she did not have to pretend to feel better than she really was. Her head did not ache so badly when she kept perfectly still, and there was Emma near at hand if she should want anything. She heard the gentle plash of the water on the beach, and once in a while the distant "Putter, putter" of a motor-boat, but that was all. She wondered if Ben would miss her. She was sure Uncle Justus would. They were all getting in the boat now, and now they were sailing off, sailing off, and presently Edna herself sailed off, too, into the sea of Dreams.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRE

For about half an hour the child slept peacefully. Once or twice Emma stole softly in to find her with hand under a cheek, now rather pale, and with red lips half-smiling as if in a pleasant dream. "Bless the child, it's nothin' but a sick-headache," whispered Emma. "She'll be all the better for the sleep." At the end of the half hour Edna stirred, sighed, opened her eyes and then sat up. The dizzy feeling was nearly gone.

Emma came to the door. "Well," she said, "and how are you feeling?"

"A good deal better," said Edna cheerfully. "I think I'll get up and go down to the living-room, Emma."

"Do you feel equal to it?" asked Emma.

"Oh, yes I think I do. Besides the sun is coming in here now, and I've been here all day, so I'd like a change."

"Then I'll tell you there's someone down there waiting for you. He wouldn't have you disturbed, but said I was to bring him word when you waked up. He's been there about a quarter of an hour, I should say, but he said he would amuse himself with the papers and magazines, and you were not to hurry on his account."

This didn't sound as if it could be Louis, as Edna at first supposed it might be. He had not been asked to go on the sailing party, and could easily have come over. "It isn't my cousin Louis Morrison, is it?" she asked.

"No, it's the owl gentleman with the eyebrows. I don't just remember the name."

"Why, it must be Uncle Justus," cried Edna getting up with alacrity. "He was to have gone sailing with the others. I wonder why he didn't go. Is it the gentleman who was here to lunch yesterday, Emma?"

"That very same."

"Oh, then I'll go right down."

She slowly descended the stairs. After all her head did still feel a little queer, and she was rather faint from eating nothing since breakfast, so she did not enter the room with her usual animation, and Uncle Justus did not see her till she had nearly reached his side. Then he looked up over his spectacles. "Well, well, well," he cried, "how is my little girl feeling?"

He held out his arms and Edna went to him. "I'm feeling a little better," she said, as he took her on his knee and settled her comfortably with her head against his shoulder.

"Poor little lamb," he murmured, "poor little lamb. I am so sorry--we were all sorry to hear about the headache."

"But, Uncle Justus, I thought you were going on the sailing party."

"So I was, my dear, but I couldn't have enjoyed it knowing you were here without your mother or any of your family. I know little folks like their mothers when they are not feeling well, and though I couldn't in any way take the place of your mother, I wanted to come and look after you a little."

Edna put up a hand and softly stroked the cheek above the curled grey whisker, and even a part of the whisker itself. "I think it was dear of you to do that, but Uncle Justus, I am afraid Mr. Ramsey was disappointed not to have you go, and I did not mind so very much being alone. I did want mother awfully, when I was feeling the sickest, but I tried to think how lovely everyone was to me, and of how nice it was to be in this lovely cool place by the sea, instead of in the hot city, and I didn't feel so."

Uncle Justus murmured something which Edna couldn't quite make out, something about babes and sucklings which really did not appear to have much to do with the subject.

"Aren't you really disappointed about not going on the sailing party?" she asked presently.

"No, my dear. I prefer to be here. Besides, do you remember a little girl who gave up having her Thanksgiving at home that she might share a lonely dinner with her old uncle? If you have forgotten, I have not."

"Oh, but," returned Edna, quite embarrassed, for the little girl was none other than herself, "you see you were quite well, and didn't have a headache." Just what this had to do with it was rather puzzling and Uncle Justus smiled at the attempted argument.

Then they fell into talking about various things, and in the course of the conversation Edna told of her adventure in the fog, of how scared she had been, and how fearful lest Louis were drowned. Uncle Justus listened attentively, and asked such adroit questions that though Edna tried to shield Louis, she knew that Uncle Justus was aware of everything that had happened. He was Louis's Uncle Justus as well as Edna's.

When the story was ended Uncle Justus was silent for a time, but he stroked Edna's hair thoughtfully. At last he said half to himself, "I shall have to have a talk with the boy's mother. He will be ruined if something is not done." And then Emma came in to know if Mr. Horner would have tea, and then since he declined this, she asked if he would dine with Miss Edna.

"Oh, you will, Uncle Justus, won't you," begged Edna.

"I will if you would like me to," he said simply.

So Edna sat up straight and said, "He will stay, Emma, but you must give him more than I am to have, for Mrs. Ramsey said I'd better not eat anything very hearty."

"You were to have some broth and toast, Miss Edna," Emma told her, "and if you wanted more before bedtime I was to give you some hot milk."

"But they will be back by bedtime, Emma, I am sure."

"Very well, miss. I will see that the gentleman has something proper."

She went out and Edna, feeling that she had been coddled long enough, took a seat on a low chair, and pretty soon dinner was announced, the two eating it very happily together. Edna had her chicken broth and toast for which she was quite ready by this time, declaring that she was actually hungry and that her head was steadily getting better.

As she had predicted, it was not bedtime when the sailing party returned, full of their doings. Edna was ready with plenty of questions and was told how Miss Eloise proved to be a good sailor, and had enjoyed the trip immensely, of how Ben and Mr. Ramsey had carried her ashore bodily, of how they had made a fire and cooked their supper, and last of all, how they had all missed her.

It was after Ben and Uncle Justus had departed for the yacht that Edna watching the lights in the harbor, heard Mr. Ramsey say, "We saw Mr. Horner in a new light to-day. Who could ever imagine him so tenderly anxious about his little niece? He always seemed rather a cold undemonstrative person to me. I was certainly surprised when he insisted upon returning that he might be with Edna in our absence."

"I was rather surprised myself," responded Mrs. Ramsey, "though now I remember it, Jennie has told me that he is devoted to Edna, and though all his other pupils stand in awe of him, that she alone seems to have no fear. He must have a tender heart, for all his bushy eyebrows and stern exterior."

The twinkling lights in the harbor were still shining when the little girls went to bed, but before morning a wilder light was blazing from the point where old Cap'n Si's little house stood, and, the next morning when the children looked across to where yesterday they had seen the old man sitting on the bench outside his door, the smoke curling from the chimney and the flowers in his little garden making a brave showing, they beheld but a heap of blackened ruins.

Jennie was the first to see it and ran to her father who had just come down. "Oh, Papa," she cried, "just come here. There isn't any Cap'n Si's house any more."

"What's that?" said her father joining her at the window where she stood.

"Just look."

Mr. Ramsey did look but he saw only the charred bits of wood from which a slight smoke was rising. "That's bad, very bad," he said shaking his head. "Why it was only last night that he was telling us that he was born in that house and hoped to die in it. I wonder how it could have happened. I hope no one was hurt. Who lives with him, daughter? Do you remember?"

"His daughter and her family, Bert is the oldest; he is off fishing in Captain Eli Brown's boat, then there is Louberta, but she's married. Amelia comes next, and then there's little Si, and Kitty is the youngest. They haven't any father, for he was lost at sea two years ago."

"I remember, I remember. It is all very sad. I must go over as soon as I have had some breakfast and we will see what is to be done."

As one after another came down the news of the fire was told, and Mrs. Ramsey declared she must go with her husband to find out all about it. So they started off in the automobile as soon as breakfast was over, leaving three deeply interested little girls. There was no talk of calling Cap'n Si that morning, for he would not be looking for the flag to be run up, instead he was lying helpless on a cot, his hands swathed in cotton, and his stubbly beard singed by the fire he had vainly tried to put out.

It was two hours before Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey returned, and then it was to tell a sorrowful tale. A lamp burning in one of the two little upper rooms had been overturned by one of the children very early in the morning, and before the full danger was realized the house was in flames. Fortunately no one was very seriously hurt, Cap'n Si was badly scorched, and his hands showed some bad burns, but the doctor had pronounced these not so very deep. Everything in the house was consumed, however, and the family were destitute and homeless.

The children gathered around Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey listening with absorbed interest. "What will they do, Papa?" asked Jennie. "They have nowhere to go and no clothes and no furniture. Oh, dear, isn't it dreadful?"

"Some of their neighbors have taken them in temporarily, and as soon as needs be we shall gather up whatever can be spared in the way of clothing for them. Then there is a plan on foot to get up a bazar in order to collect money for their furniture when they shall have another house."

"How will they be able to build a house? I know they are very poor."

"We hope enough money will be subscribed for that. Everyone respects Cap'n Si, and we think there will be enough forthcoming to build a house sufficiently large for their needs."

"Has papa subscribed?"

"Yes, dear; it was he who started the subscription paper."

"Were none of the children hurt at all?" asked Edna.

"One of them, the youngest was slightly burned, for she was asleep when the fire broke out. It was in saving her that Cap'n Si was burned."

"Are they going to ask those young men on the yacht to give something?" asked Edna. "They are not going off till this afternoon, you know."

"We didn't think of them, did we?" said Mrs. Ramsey to her husband.

"That is true, we didn't and most of them can well afford to make a contribution. I will see McAllister myself."

"What can we do?" asked Dorothy wistfully.

"Oh, yes, we want to help, of course," chimed in Jennie. "I will give all the money I have left of my allowance, Mother, and all that is coming to me for the rest of the time we are here."

"I think you'd better allow yourself a little, dear child, but I am sure papa will advance you whatever he thinks is right for you to give."

"I think I could give a dollar," said Edna after a pause. "I have that much, and I am sure I don't have to spend it for I have six postage stamps, that will make two a week till I get back home. Would a dollar do any good, Mrs. Ramsey?"

"It would do a great deal of good, but instead of giving the money outright how would you children like to buy materials to make fancy articles for the bazar? In that way I haven't a doubt but you would get a better return."

"I think that would be a fine plan," said Dorothy, for, to tell the truth, her savings were of small account, and as she calculated she told herself that thirty-five cents would be the very limit. Money always burned a hole in Dorothy's pocket, and it was hard for her to pass a candy shop without spending her pennies. Mrs. Ramsey knew this and knew also that while Dorothy was quite as generous as the other two she would have less to offer.

Both Jennie and Edna agreed with Dorothy that it was a very good plan to spend the money in this way and they at once began to plan what they should buy.

"I think we all might make a trip to Boston in a day or two," said Mrs. Ramsey. "How would you like that? I think we might spend our money to better advantage there."

"That would be simply perfect," cried one and another.

All this had made everyone entirely lose sight of Edna's headache and it was not till Ben came in to say good-bye that anyone remembered it. "Well, Ande," he said, "how's that head? A pretty trick you played on us yesterday."

"I didn't play any trick. It was my head played me a trick."

"Oh, that was the way, was it? Well, how is the tricky head to-day?"

"Why, it is about well, I think."

"But you are not sure. I've known heads to act that way before. Let me see how you look." He turned her around to the light. "A little pale I should say. Did you eat any breakfast?"

"Oh, yes, I ate an egg and some milk-toast."

"Good enough. I reckon you'll do for a while. I say, wasn't it great for Uncle Justus to sneak away from us all in that way? I didn't think it was in the old chap. He wouldn't budge any more than a balky mule. Soon as he heard you were alone and laid up with a headache off he must trot in the other direction."

"I think it was perfectly lovely of him," said Edna earnestly.

"So it was, Pinky Blooms--by the way, you aren't Pinky Blooms to-day. To tell you the truth if Uncle Justus hadn't made up his sedate mind to come, yours truly intended to say ta-ta to the sailing party himself."

"Oh, Ben, did you really?"

"Yes, my lady, though it is too late in the day to make boastful vaunts, and it would have spoiled Uncle Justus's little game if both of us had come. Moreover, it wouldn't have been polite for all of us to have fled from the sailing party. You see Mr. McAllister took Uncle Justus's place and there would have been no one to take mine."

"Did you hear about the fire?" Edna asked next.

"Indeed I did, and I am glad enough that a plan is on foot to raise money for those poor fisher people. I wonder who is receiving subscriptions. All the fellows chipped in and I have quite a wad here which I am instructed to turn over to the proper authorities."

"Oh, Mr. Ramsey is just the one, for he started the paper."

"Good! I'll get rid of it at once if you will help me find the gentleman."

Edna was only too ready to do this and together they hunted up Mr. Ramsey whom they found in the little room where he had his desk, and which was called the smoking-room.

It was indeed quite a roll of bills which Ben handed over. The boys said never mind specifying names, just say it is from the Pippin. "Nobody knows how much anybody gave. We just passed around the hat and this is the result."

"A pretty handsome result, I should say," remarked Mr. Ramsey much pleased. "At this rate we shall be able to put up as good a house as need be. Please thank the Pippin in the name of myself and the family of Cap'n Si."

"I'll do it, sir. The boys were glad to come up to scratch."

"I think it is very lucky the fire was last night instead of to-night," remarked Edna gravely.

"And why?" asked Ben.

"Because if it hadn't been till to-night you all would be gone and then you wouldn't have passed around the hat."

Both Mr. Ramsey and Ben laughed at this subtle reasoning, and then Ben said he must say good-bye to Mrs. Ramsey, so they went out leaving Mr. Ramsey to other matters.

"I wish you would tell me why the yacht is called Pippin," said Edna.

"My dearest child, I see you do not make yourself acquainted with slang, and far be it from me to intrude it upon your youthful attention. If you were to ask Clem McAllister why he named it that he would say, 'Because she is such a pippin,' meaning a beauty, and that is all there is of it."

Edna understood by this that a pippin was another name for a beauty and was quite satisfied. She had two brothers of her own, and cousin Ben had passed the previous year at her home; therefore she was not at all unfamiliar with boyish slang.

The good-byes to Mrs. Ramsey and the other two little girls being made Ben took his departure, telling Edna she would see him early in the fall, and as Uncle Justus would not on any account leave without learning how Edna was, his was the next call. It was not a long one, for the yacht was to leave the harbor early and there was not much time left though Edna managed to tell about the fire and the bazar, and to send a great many messages to all at home whom Uncle Justus would see before she herself would.

Edna felt a little homesick and lonely after these two relatives had left her. She was still a little the worse for her yesterday's illness, and wished for mother and Celia, for her father and the boys. It certainly would be very good to see them again, and she was glad that in two weeks she would be turning her face toward home. But these thoughts did not last long, for Jennie called her to come and see the pile of clothes her mother had laid aside for Cap'n Si's grandchildren, and began to tell of the many things which they could make for the bazar, so she was soon interested in all this.

"We are going to see Miss Newman and Miss Eloise after lunch," Jennie told her, "for we want to tell everyone about the bazar, and they will be so interested on account of Amelia."

"We might stop at the hotel, too," suggested Edna, "and I can tell my aunt about it, then she can tell the other people there and we might get a lot of things from them."

"That will be a fine plan," declared Jennie. "We will go with mother in the automobile for she wants to see Mrs. Duncan. A lot of ladies are to meet here to-morrow to make all the arrangements, and mother wants to tell Mrs. Duncan to come."

So there was quite enough on hand to drive away homesickness, and Edna started out with the rest with no thought of anything but the bazar and the promised trip to Boston.

CHAPTER IX
TO BOSTON

The trip to Boston became such an important topic that you would have thought the bazar was planned merely on its account, and not that the trip was planned on the bazar's account. Each of the little girls made a careful list of the things she meant to buy, and everyone was consulted about these lists; even Emma's advice was asked.

They were to make an early start so as to have plenty of time for their own shopping and that which Mrs. Ramsey meant to do. So on the all important morning there was much bustling about and comparing of notes.

"What are you going to wear, Edna?" asked Dorothy.

"I thought I would put on my gray linen. What are you?"

"White, of course."

"Now why 'of course'? People don't always wear white when they are traveling."

"But this isn't exactly traveling; it's just going to the city and we're not more than an hour on the train."

"Well, I don't care. I am going to wear the linen. At least I am going to ask Jennie what she is going to put on, for of course I shouldn't want both of you to wear white and me not."

"What are you going to wear, Jennie?" Dorothy called out to the next room.

"My blue linen, the embroidered one."

"There, what did I say?" exclaimed Edna in triumph.

"Well, anyhow, it is much more dressy than yours; it is more color, and it is embroidered. I wouldn't wear that plain thing if I were you."

All this made doubts arise in Edna's own mind, and she sat disconsolately looking at the frock she had brought out to wear.

"You'd better hurry and get dressed and not sit there dreaming," Dorothy warned her.

"I wasn't dreaming," Edna contradicted, "I was just making up my mind. I might wear my Peter Thompson, only it might be too warm. I think I'd better go and ask Mrs. Ramsey." Suiting the action to the word she went to Mrs. Ramsey's door and tapped gently. Mrs. Ramsey herself opened to look down on the little figure in its pink wrapper. "Well, dear, what is it?" she said.

"I don't know just what to wear," Edna confessed. "You see mother always tells me. Dorothy thinks I ought to wear one of my white frocks and I think my gray linen would be better. I could wear the Peter Thompson, but it is flannel and is pretty warm."

"Wear the linen by all means; it will be just the thing. You might take a little jacket of some kind and we can leave it at the station, in the package room, with my things. It may be cool coming back."

So Edna went off in triumph, donned her gray linen and was ready quite in time. She was too excited to eat much breakfast, and when they were told that Mack was at the door with the automobile she clutched her little handbag very tightly, for it contained the precious dollar which was to buy so many things that day. It was but a short distance to the station, but they were none too soon, for the train had whistled at the next station, and it seemed but a moment before they were aboard and on their way. The train was filled with men on their way to business, with ladies on their way to the city for a day's shopping, and there were a few who were bound for further places, their holiday over.

Edna, Jennie and Dorothy all sat together with Mrs. Ramsey a little further along in front. Edna wondered how the conductor would know who they were, for Mrs. Ramsey had a book of tickets. She thought maybe she would say, "I have the tickets for my little girl in the blue frock and the one sitting with her in gray, and there is another with fair hair dressed in white." Would the conductor think they were all named Ramsey? She looked around her to see if there were any other little girls dressed in blue or gray or white, who might be mistaken for the right ones. But there was no trouble at all, for the conductor seemed to know intuitively and passed them by without so much as a question.

The big North station reached, the matter of shopping seemed very near, and there was some discussion as to where they should go first. Each little girl had determined to buy at least three dolls to dress; with the money that was left they would buy materials for fancy articles, for Mrs. Ramsey had promised them pieces enough for doll's clothes. The dolls being such a very important matter, it was decided to get these off their minds at once, and therefore to a big, though inexpensive shop they went.

Such a bewildering array as was laid before them nearly distracted them. There was such a choice between blue eyes and black, brown hair and golden. Then, too, it was not every doll that had a pretty face, or there might be two whose claims to beauty were equally great, but at last the nine dolls of different types were picked out. To these Mrs. Ramsey added three more on her own account, and that purchase was declared to be satisfactorily made.

Each little girl had decided to spend but half her money on dolls, though as Dorothy had but fifty cents to spend, her dolls did not make as much show as she would have liked, but the others comforted her by saying that the small dolls were just as pretty as the large ones, and would probably be sold at once.

"I almost wish I had bought two little ones and two big ones," Edna said, "but I suppose it is too late now."

"If you had done that," said Jennie, "you couldn't have had the three shades of hair, and you did like those three so much."

"That is so," returned Edna, "I reckon I will let it go, but I don't see how I am going to give up any of them; they are all so pretty. I do love dolls."

"They are perfectly sweet," agreed Dorothy, "while Jennie's are even lovelier."

"They are bigger," said Edna, "but I don't think they are really any prettier, but Mrs. Ramsey's are perfectly magnificent. I wish I had Celia to help me dress mine; she does know how to make such pretty things."

"So does Agnes, but I tell you who will help us out, and that is Miss Eloise." Dorothy thought of this.

"So she will, though I expect she and Miss Newman will be busy making things themselves, for the bazar," replied Edna.

"But she can give us hints," Dorothy continued. "Oh, Edna, do you know I have thought of something."

"What?"

"Why, we can write to our sisters and tell them about the bazar, and maybe they can make some things for it. We will ask them to. I know Agnes will."

"And I know Celia will. That is a lovely idea, but do you know, Dorothy, I have thought of something else that isn't a bit nice, and that is we won't have a penny to spend at the bazar ourselves."

"That is so. I never thought of it before. I shall hate to go and not buy a single thing, but it can't be helped and if we give the things we are getting to-day it will be the same as buying things."

This view of the matter satisfied Edna, and they followed Mrs. Ramsey and Jennie, who were walking ahead, into the next shop where they were to get ribbons, gilt paint and a variety of things.

By one o'clock they were quite tired out and were glad when Mrs. Ramsey proposed that they have some lunch before doing any more. So they were taken to a pleasant restaurant and ate with a relish the broiled steak, fried potatoes and salad which Mrs. Ramsey ordered. Then each chose her own dessert, Dorothy taking a chocolate éclair, Edna peach ice-cream and Jennie charlotte russe.

Then they started out again, and with Mrs. Ramsey's help managed to spend every penny to the best advantage, and that quite early in the afternoon, but they were tired enough to be ready to go when Mrs. Ramsey said they could get the four o'clock train. "Some day," she said, "we must come down on a pleasure trip. We will have the motor-car, and can stay all night in town so you little girls can see something of the city. There is much that will interest you."

"Oh, do take them to see the glass flowers at Cambridge," cried Jennie.

"Yes, they shall see those, and we will go to old North Church which is made famous by Paul Revere's ride, and they shall see Lexington."

"Oh, yes, and mother, they must go to Concord where Louisa Alcott lived."

"That is a large order, as Ben would say, but I think we can manage it even if we have to stay two nights."

"Aren't we having the loveliest time?" whispered Edna to Dorothy.

Dorothy nodded, and took a peep at the three dolls which she had insisted upon carrying herself. The others were to be sent.

"I wish I had kept out one of mine," said Edna enviously; "it would be so nice to have it on the train to play with."

"I can't play with all three," said Dorothy generously, "so I can lend one to you and one to Jennie."

This was a fine plan, and the three little girls crowded into one seat on the train that they might have the satisfaction of playing with the little dolls which they dressed up in handkerchiefs. Such a good time they had over them that Mrs. Ramsey had to call them twice when they reached their station. Then they hurried out, nearly tumbling over one another lest they be left in the train.

Mrs. Ramsey had telephoned Mack to meet them, so the three little dolls had their first ride in a motor-car and were the first of their company to arrive at the sea-shore. The children were so eager to get them dressed that they could scarcely wait for Mrs. Ramsey to get out her pieces. "Do, Mother, let us have them right away," begged Jennie.

"Don't you think you'd better wait till to-morrow when the other dolls will have come?"

"Oh, no, there is lots of daylight left, and we can help Dorothy dress these and then she can help us dress ours; it will be ever so much nicer that way. We are going to take them out on the porch and sew there."

"But, dearie, I think I ought to be with you, because these dolls for the bazar should be dressed very neatly, and not botchily as they might be if you were doing them merely for yourselves."

"Indeed, indeed we will try to be very neat."

"Can you cut out the things yourselves? To-morrow I thought I would let Emma help. She could do some of the work on the machine."

"But these littlest dolls don't need a machine. It will be lovely to have Emma help with the bigger ones. Edna can cut out real nicely. Her Aunt Elizabeth taught her how to sew, and she is as neat, oh, just as neat as can be. I wish you could see."

"Very well, go along, then. I don't suppose it will do any harm since you are so very eager, and if I find they don't look well enough I can see to it afterward."

Jennie scouted the idea of their not looking well enough and bore off the bag of pieces in triumph, and a happy trio was soon established on the porch, work-bags in evidence and dolls carefully placed out of danger. Edna, who had been taught by her Aunt Elizabeth Horner to be very systematic, proposed that they first select their materials. "This white stuff will do for their underclothes," she told the others. "I'll put that aside and then you each choose what you want for frocks. Dorothy must choose first because they are her dolls."

"Then you choose second because you are company," said Jennie.

"We'll take turns, then," said Edna. "You can choose first when it comes to your dolls and Dorothy can be second, then when it comes to mine I will choose first, you can be second and Dorothy can be third." This was considered a very just arrangement and Dorothy began to turn over the pieces for her first choice.

"I think I should like this pretty piece of blue silky stuff," she said, "and I will dress the doll with the middle colored hair; I think it will be becoming to her."

"Then I will take this little speckly piece for the doll with the lightest hair. She can have a pink sash and will look too sweet."

Jennie decided upon a thin bit of yellow for her doll of decidedly brunette type and they set to work.

"I can cut out for mine and then you two can cut yours exactly the same," Edna told them, "for the dolls are all the same size and it will be very easy." But the cutting out had scarcely begun before it was time for dinner and the dolls had to be put away till later in the evening when all should gather around the big table in the living-room.

However, after dinner it was found that the larger package had arrived, so of course this had to be opened, and what with talking over this and admiring that, it was bedtime before anyone knew it. But the dolls were all carried upstairs and were set a-row where the children could see them first thing in the morning. The bag of pieces was lugged along, too. "For we might want to get up early and work before breakfast," said Jennie with industrious intent.

But the breakfast hour arrived before the children were out of bed, so tired were they from their trip, and the row of staring dolls was given little attention in the haste to get dressed. After breakfast the piece bag was dragged out again. Emma's work was taken by one of the other servants and the morning long hands and tongues were busy, so that by lunch time the three little dolls appeared nicely clad, and one of Edna's and one of Jennie's were nearly ready. To dress nine children was quite a task even for three little girls, especially as the children increased in size as the work progressed and though a skirt for a doll six inches long required but few stitches, when it came to one twice the size the fingers grew very tired.

"Suppose you don't do any more doll clothes to-day," said Mrs. Ramsey noticing the weary sighs. "You have done a fine morning's work, and to-morrow you can start in again. I think this afternoon you'd better take the pony and do some errands for me, and I will make a fair exchange by helping you with the dolls to-morrow."

This was such a sensible and just arrangement that the little girls readily agreed and started off in high spirits to leave an order here, take a note there, and finally to wind up with a call upon Miss Eloise, who, they knew, would be interested to know about their trip to the city.

"I was just thinking about you children," said Miss Eloise from the little porch of the bungalow, where she was sitting when they drove up. "I am going to have a sewing-bee to make things for the bazar, you know, and I want you all to come."

"Oh, lovely," cried they. "Tell us about it, Miss Eloise."

"Day after to-morrow, it is to be, and those that have dolls to dress can bring them, or you can bring anything else, fancy work or anything. I can't sew very long at a time, but I can try to entertain you and can come in strong with advice." She laughed, and the girls crowded around her.

"Tell me about the trip to Boston," she went on. "How many dolls did you buy, and what else did you get? Sister and I have thought of several nice things to do for the bazar, and ever so many of the young people are going to help. Rudolph is going to donate some photographs and will take orders for others; then some of the boys are going into the woods for tiny little cedar and pine trees which we are going to plant in pots. Mrs. Morrison's sister has promised to make some paper dolls--I remember the beautiful one she made for Louis to send to you last year, Edna,--and, oh my, we are going to have a big time."

She stopped to take breath and the children began to tell of their trip to the city, of their purchases, and all the rest of it.

"If Ben were only here," said Miss Eloise when they had finished their account, "we might give the little play that the G. R. club gave at the close of the year, but we couldn't do it without him."

"Besides," said Jennie, "we are the only ones of the club who are here, and there wouldn't be enough time to get it up."

"Why couldn't we do it when we go back?" suggested Edna. "We might sell tickets, you see, and get ever so many to come, for there were quantities of people who wanted to come last time, but we could invite only so many."

"Why, Edna, that is a great scheme," cried Miss Eloise. "It would be very little trouble, for those who took part before, as they all have their costumes and would only have to look over their parts. Let's tell sister." She called Miss Newman from the house and it was agreed that such a plan might easily be carried out. "And," said Miss Eloise, "it will be a true Golden Rule performance. Dear me, what wonderful things are happening all the time, now that I have come out of my shell."

This new idea was talked of all the way home and the children were so eager to tell Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey of it, that the little pony was urged on at his smartest pace. Of course Mrs. Ramsey was charmed at the new plan for raising funds for Cap'n Si, and Edna felt much pleased that she had thought of it. "Although," she said when she was praised for her quick wit, "I might not have thought of it if Miss Eloise had not spoken of how nice it would be to have it here."

"Then we'll give Miss Eloise her share of credit," said Mrs. Ramsey smiling at the child's honesty.

That evening was given to the winding of worsteds, the marking of designs, and the cutting out of various bits of card-board for certain fancy articles. Four more dolls were dressed the next morning by the help of Mrs. Ramsey and Emma, and in the afternoon there was a sewing-bee on the bungalow porch, and more plans were made for the bazar. Mrs. Ramsey was present and organized an idea party to meet at her house the next day. Everyone was to bring an idea to be carried out at the bazar and so the ball was kept rolling and the work for the entertainment went forward in a way that promised a very successful affair. Dorothy and Edna did not fail to write home about the fire and the bazar and made their request for contributions of money or fancy articles. They watched eagerly for replies, and when these came in the shape of two letters apiece, they gave little squeals of delight, for both Mrs. Conway and Mrs. Evans wrote and enclosed a dollar to be spent at the bazar. "For," said the mothers, "we know you have taken all your spending money for the dolls and things, and will not have any to spend."

"Now I am perfectly happy," cried Edna. "Is yours a dollar, too, Dorrie?"

"Yes, a whole dollar. And Edna I think I shall buy back one of my own dolls. I love the one in blue so much that I just can't give her up."

"Maybe I will buy my dear one with the light hair," returned Edna. "I don't suppose a dollar would be enough to buy one of Mrs. Ramsey's beauties, though I believe I would rather have one of those than anything in the world, even if I didn't have a cent to spend on anything else."

"Oh, but I think it would be more fun to spend the money for different things, and not for just one."

"But when the one is a doll like that exquisite creature in evening dress, with the cunning fan and the sweet little lace handkerchief, I think I'd be perfectly satisfied not to have another thing."

"You mean the one with the golden hair? She is a darling but although I like her dress, I think I would rather have the dark-haired one."

"That is because you have golden hair yourself; you always want dark-haired dolls, I notice." The two were sitting on the porch with Jennie just inside by the window busily working away at an embroidered centerpiece she was doing in outline. She did not join in the talk, but had long ago decided that her choice of the three handsome dolls would be the one with ruddy brown hair dressed in street costume with hat and feathers.

Her father, in whose smoking-room she was sitting, looked up with a smile as Jennie arose to join her friends. "Bless their dear little hearts," he said to himself. "I think they are about the sweetest three it has ever been my lot to see, and my own girl is the dearest of them all, even if she isn't quite the beauty Dorothy is."

CHAPTER X
THE BAZAR

So the days went by till the time came for the opening of the bazar. It was to be held in the little hall which served as a place of amusement for the community of summer visitors. Here concerts were given, dances took place, lecturers found a platform. On this occasion it was decorated with greens from the woods. Tea was served in a tent outside near a gypsy camp where pretended fortunes were told by a pretty girl with dark eyes, whose costume made one almost believe she really belonged to that wandering race. A bower of green in one corner of the hall sheltered the flower girls who offered all kinds of blooms, from a bunch of field flowers to a bouquet of American Beauty roses. Another table showed such an array of cakes and candies as made one's mouth water, while the articles of fancy work were so numerous that the children were afraid the half would not be sold. The dolls had a place of honor to themselves, the three donated by Mrs. Ramsey occupying the most conspicuous place.

Dorothy and Edna made their way to this table first of all, and Dorothy was prompt in exchanging a quarter for her little doll in blue. "I was so afraid it would be sold first thing," she explained to Edna, "and I still have seventy-five cents to spend on other things."

Edna was not so fortunate, for the doll of her choice was already sold, while the impossible one among Mrs. Ramsey's trio, was far beyond her pocket-book. "It is marked three dollars," she whispered to Dorothy. So she put this out of her mind, and decided that she would first buy something to take home to her mother and sister and then, if there were enough left, she might get one of the little dolls.

The room was beginning to be thronged with people, although the children had arrived early, and it was noticed that sales were being made rapidly. Everyone was eager to buy, though the cheaper articles went first, and Edna had some difficulty in getting something very pretty for the amount she could afford. However, Miss Newman came to her rescue.

"Here is a little girl," she said to one of the ladies behind the table, "who has worked very hard for this bazar, and who wants something very nice to take home for her mother. What is the very prettiest thing you have for twenty-five cents?"

"Why, let me see," said the lady smiling down at Edna, and then casting her eye over the table, "there ought to be some of those nice little handkerchief cases. There were several on the table, but they went off like hot cakes. I will see if there are any more that haven't been put out." She rummaged around in the boxes at the back, and finally produced what she was looking for which pleased Edna greatly, and it was handed over to her. Next a pretty picture-frame was chosen for Celia and the most important purchases were made.

Dorothy and Jennie were wandering around together, the doll in blue sitting up very stiffly where Dorothy carried it on her hand. Jennie's father had given her two dollars to spend, and she had already parted with most of it. The caramels and panuchee were not to be resisted, and there were so many pretty things that one's money did not last long. "I wish papa would come," she remarked to her two friends. "I know he would buy something for me when he knows I can't buy it for myself."

"There he is now," cried Edna as a tall man was seen making his way toward them.

Jennie wedged her way between ranks of small boys who were consuming peanuts and pop-corn, and reached her father's side. "Oh, Papa," she cried, "I am so glad you have come. There is such a lovely crocheted sacque over here that I want you to buy for me to give to Miss Eloise."

"For you to give to Miss Eloise? Why shouldn't I be giving things to Miss Somebody-or-other?"

"Because I think it would be nicer for me to. You can buy things for mother and me, if you want to."

"And for no one else?"

"Oh, yes, you can get anything you choose for Edna and Dorothy."

"Thanks for your kind permission. I think I know exactly what those young ladies would like. Let's see about the worsted thingamabob first."

Jennie led the way to the fancy table where the pretty light sacque changed hands, and with it under her arm, Jennie followed her father across the room to where the array of dolls, considerably lessened in numbers, was displayed. Mr. Ramsey halted before the three which his wife had donated, and regarded them closely. "Are those what your mother contributed?" he asked Jennie.

"Yes," she told him, "and they are the very prettiest ones."

"So they are," put in the lady in attendance, "but because they are the highest priced they have not been sold yet. Don't you want one for your little girl, Mr. Ramsey?"

"I want three for three little girls," he said taking out a roll of bills. "Where are Edna and Dorothy, Jennie?"

"Oh, they are over there at the candy table."

"See if you can get them to come over here. I can't be seen carrying three dolls around with me."

Jennie wormed her way through the crowd with surprising agility and reached her two friends who had just bought five cents worth of panuchee apiece. "Come over here," she said breathlessly; "papa wants to speak to you." Tall as he was Mr. Ramsey was easily discovered and the three little girls were not long in reaching him.

"Here you are," he said. "Now, which one of you did I overhear expressing her admiration for this giddy creature in a ball dress?"

"Oh, did you hear?" asked Edna. "I think it must have been I who liked it so much."

Mr. Ramsey lifted down the doll and placed it in Edna's arms. "O!" she breathed rapturously, "do you really mean she is mine? I don't know how to thank you."

"Then don't try," replied Mr. Ramsey laughing. "Now then, it seems to me I heard someone say that this one with the dark locks would be her choice. The voice sounded very much like Dorothy's if I am not mistaken. How is that, Dorothy?"

"Oh, I did say I liked that one best."

"Then yours she is." And Dorothy was made happy by receiving the dark-haired doll into her arms.

"Now, Miss Jane," continued Mr. Ramsey, "there is but one left for you. Do you think you would like this smiling creature with the wonderful hat?"

"Oh, Papa, of course I would. If I had had first choice I would have taken that one."

"Then here you are, my lady Jane." And the third doll was embraced by her new mamma.

"I think you are the loveliest father ever was," said Jennie. "Oh, girls, isn't it fine that we have all three? Do let's find mamma and tell her." Holding their dolls very carefully they made their way through the crowd to Mrs. Ramsey, who was serving as cashier at a little table near the door. "Oh, Mother," cried Jennie, "do see our dolls. Papa bought us each one."

"Why it seems to me I recognize them as old friends," said Mrs. Ramsey.

"Aren't you glad papa bought them?"

"I am very glad if you are, and I should judge by your looks that you are not ill-pleased."

"I would rather have mine than anything else in the whole room," said Edna fervently. "I was so in love with this one in her party dress."

"And I did admire this dear child in her automobile coat and bonnet," chimed in Dorothy.

"And I am perfectly satisfied with mine," said Jennie. "Mother, what shall we name them?"

"Suppose you wait till we get back home. Just now I am pretty busy, as you may see."

"And have you taken in much money?"

"Nearly two hundred dollars according to the last count."

"Oh, that is a great deal, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is really more than we hoped to get, and I am sure we shall have the full two hundred, if not more, though there is not much left except eatables."

The little girls walked away proudly carrying their dolls. "Have you spent all your money?" Dorothy asked Jennie.

"No, not quite. Have you?"

"Nearly all. I think I have only about ten cents. Have you any, Edna?"

"A little. What are you going to buy with yours, Jennie?"

"I haven't decided, but I suppose something to eat or some flowers, for nearly all the cheap things are gone except those. I don't want my fortune told, do you?"

"No, I would rather spend it at the fishpond."

"Then let's go there. I think that will be more fun than anything else."

The fishpond was out of doors and had been so greatly patronized that it was a very difficult matter to keep it

stocked with fish of proper quality, and latterly there had been frequent raids upon the candy stand for such things as might serve for fish. The three little girls standing in a row waiting their turn noticed a small chap holding fast to his smaller sister's hand. Both were deeply interested at each draw from the pond, and watched eagerly as the small packages were opened. They were a quaint little pair, for the boy's trousers were very long for his short legs and his shirt sleeves were correspondingly short for his arms. The little curly-headed girl wore a very stiffly starched, very short frock which stood out all around and showed her chubby knees and bare legs. She kept her eyes fixed with admiring awe upon the three dolls, and lost all interest in the fish-pond as soon as the three friends arrived upon the scene.

"What did you get from the pond?" asked Jennie who was standing nearest the boy.

"Didn't get nawthin'." he answered.

"Oh, didn't you? Why not?"

"Didn't have no money."

"Oh, that was too bad. Did you spend it all before you knew there was a fishpond?"

"Naw. Didn't have none to spend."

"Oh." Jennie looked at the pair and then she looked at her two friends. Edna interpreted the look and nodded understandingly, but Dorothy looked a little puzzled. The coast was not clear and Dorothy stepped up, but Edna gave her skirt a little twitch. "Wait," she whispered.

"What for?"

Then Edna said something in a low tone and Dorothy turned to look at the little boy and his sister who had crowded near to watch.

"Wouldn't you like to try?" asked Jennie.

"Course I would," said the boy, but with no hope of such good luck.

"All right," said Jennie, laying down his nickel and handing him the pole.

The boy shot her one look of delight and surprise and let his line drop into the pond. When he drew it out with a package dangling from the hook, he turned to his little sister. "Come on, sis," he said, "you and me'll open it together."

Curly-Head followed him with pleased expectancy, and when they opened the package to disclose several pieces of panuchee, it was share and share alike.

"That's a nice generous boy," whispered Jennie to her companions. "I know what I am going to do; I am going to let him spend the rest of my money."

"And I'll let the little girl spend mine," declared Edna.

"Where do I come in?" asked Dorothy. "To be sure I have only ten cents and it wouldn't go a great way. I wonder if there are any more children who haven't had any money to spend."

"I don't see how we can find out," said Jennie, "for they might pretend if we asked. This little fellow told without our asking, you see."

"Oh, well, I know what I can do. I will buy him something to take home to his mother, and that will be just as good."

During this time the two children had been devouring the candy, and soon had finished the last piece. "Do you want to fish in the pond?" Edna asked the little girl.

"Yeth," she answered bashfully.

"Then come on." She was given the pole and with a rapturous giggle drew forth another package which proved to contain two little cakes, which soon followed the way of the candy.

"Now they must have some ice-cream," decided Jennie.

"You don't suppose it will make them sick, do you?" said Dorothy.

"Of course not. It hasn't made us sick, and why should it make them? We have eaten twice as much stuff as they have."

This silenced Dorothy, and the children were made happy by being served with two saucers of ice-cream which they ate solemnly, aware that they were being watched by their benefactors.

When the last drop had vanished Jennie and Edna each took her last nickel and gave it to the children. "Now," said they, "this is for you to spend anyway you like."

"And this," said Dorothy, bringing forth her ten cents, "is for you to spend for your mother. Now don't forget," she charged the boy. "You understand it is to buy something for your mother."

He nodded, and without a word started at once for the fish-pond, the money clutched safely in one hand and the other holding the fat little fingers of his sister. Evidently there was no joy in life equal to fishing, in the eyes of this son of a fisherman.

"Do you suppose he is going to spend it all at the fish-pond?" said Dorothy as she watched him trudge off.

"Oh, never mind if he does. No doubt his mother will be just as well pleased with what he brings from there as anything."

By this time the tables in the hall were swept of nearly everything salable, and the tea had given out in the tea-tent. Only a few persons remained, and these were making ready to go. As they passed the fish-pond, they saw that the lines were taken in and the young lady in charge was preparing to shut up shop. Ahead of them Young Fisherman and Curly-Head were toddling home, each clutching a parcel.

"I wonder what they have," said Jennie. "Let's run after them and see."

They were not long in catching up with the toddlers. "What did you get?" asked Jennie.

The boy slowly unwound a long piece of string from the package and brought to view a piece of soap. "That's for mother," he said.

"Thith ith for muvver, too," said Curly-Head holding out a small paper bag. Jennie opened it to find therein a roll of tape.

The little girls tried to keep from laughing, but hardly succeeded. "You'd better toddle home," said Jennie. "The bazar is over."

The children did not stir, but watched their friends depart. When they were nearly out of hearing, came back to them these words: "The ice-cream was awful good." So did Young Fisherman make known his appreciation. Curly-Head echoed his words, but her little voice did not carry far enough for the girls to hear.

"Where have you been?" asked Mrs. Ramsey when they at last returned to the hall.

"We've been spending the last of our money," Jennie told her. "Did you make two hundred dollars, Mother?"

"We think so, though it has not all been turned in yet. Your money seems to have lasted pretty well if you have just spent the last of it."

Jennie laughed, and then told about the funny pair with their piece of soap and roll of tape. But somehow it didn't appear so funny to her mother as she expected it would, for instead of laughing she gathered the three children to her and kissed them all three, murmuring, "You dears."

When all the returns were made it was found that a little over the two hundred dollars had been taken in, and this was expected to be quite enough to buy furniture for the new house when it should be built. Cap'n Si was quite overcome, but had few words. It was not like his kind to express many thanks. The house was to be begun at once that it might be ready before cold weather. Enough had been subscribed for a beginning to be made, and several gentlemen had pledged themselves to see it through in case there should be a lack.

The dolls returned in state to the house from which they had been taken, and the matter of names was much discussed. Finally Edna decided that she would name hers after Mrs. Ramsey and so her doll was called Virginia. Dorothy wavered between Edna and Jennie, but finally concluded the latter would be more in keeping with the occasion. Jennie was not long in making up her mind that Eloise should be the name of her doll.

"I have always thought it such a lovely name," she said, "and Miss Eloise will be so pleased, I know," as indeed she was.

Mrs. Morrison and Louis had gone home just before the bazar came off, as they were to stop on the way to see Mrs. Morrison's sister, but Louis told Edna that his Uncle Justus had persuaded his mother to send him to boarding-school the next year, and strange to say he liked the idea, so it will be seen that Uncle Justus did have the talk he had in mind that evening of the sailing party. Edna was not allowed to go away without having the sail to Gosling Island, and this time there was no headache to interfere, but all went smoothly, and the sail home by moonlight was something to be remembered. It was decided that the Ramseys should go as far as Boston with the little girls when they were ready to go home, and that a stop of a couple days should be made. Miss Newman and Miss Eloise closed the little bungalow, but hoped to return to it another year.

"I never dreamed of such a wonderful summer," Miss Eloise told her three little friends as they were taking that moonlight sail. "To think that I, poor invalid I, should actually have earned some money, and am so much better that I may be able to earn more. Oh, my dears, you don't know what it means to me to help sister who has sacrificed her life to me. I am going to tell you that she gave up her lover and all her dream of a happy home, such as other women have, because I must be her first care. I want you to know how dear and good she is, for I don't think people always appreciate her. I have found that out since I have been more in the world and have seen more people."

This little group was to itself, Miss Eloise lying on a pile of rugs and the children around her. The others were in another part of the vessel.

"I am glad you told us," said Edna, "for now we shall always remember how good she is, and we shall love her more than ever, but we can't help loving you best, Miss Eloise."

"Oh, my dear, don't say that. I don't deserve half as much love as sister."

However this might be, it was a fact that no one could help loving Miss Eloise the best, though the little girls said to one another that night, "We must try to be extra nice to Miss Newman next year, because Miss Eloise wants us to."

It seemed quite as if it were time to go when the little bungalow was closed and the cottages, one after another, showed no sign of lights at night. There was a sound of hammers over on the point where the new house was going up for Cap'n Si, and it was expected the family would move in by Christmas. The children wondered what kind of furniture would be bought with the two hundred dollars, but this they could not know till next year. However, Amelia told Jennie that her ma rather guessed they'd have a parlor organ if they didn't have anything else, and Amelia was much set up in consequence.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Ramsey when she was told this, "I was afraid of that. It is just like these people. But what is one to do?"

The days were growing shorter and September was well on its way when the trunks were packed ready for the start for home. "I should feel dreadfully about your going if I didn't expect to see you so soon," said Jennie the night before her friends were to leave.

"We have had the loveliest time," Edna told her, "and we're such intimate friends now that I am sure we shall never be anything else, even when we are very old."

But here Mrs. Ramsey appeared to say that if all three were to sleep in one bed, as they had begged to be allowed to do this last night, they must stop chattering and go to sleep. So there were only faint whispers for a little while after that and then these ceased.

CHAPTER XI
OLD NORTH CHURCH

"I am so mixed up in my feelings," said Edna in confidence to Dorothy when they were seated in the train. "I want awfully to see them all at home, but yet I hate to leave here."

"I feel exactly that way myself," Dorothy confessed. "But even if we weren't going to-day we couldn't stay very long, for the house will be closed next week, and we shouldn't want to stay there alone."

Edna admitted that this was true, and then Jennie came over to sit with them and they talked of the things they were to see and the places they were to go in the next two days.

"I think we will go to the Old North Church first," said Mrs. Ramsey as they left the train. "We will send the baggage to the hotel, then we will not have to come to this part of the city again."

"Oh, what a funny place," said Jennie, as they took their way through streets where queer-looking foreigners congregated.

"I think the people are funnier than the place," remarked Edna.

"They are mostly Polish or Russian Jews," Mrs. Ramsey told her. "It is not the neighborhood it was in Paul Revere's day. Here is the old church."

The children looked with awe and reverence at the ancient edifice, and, going inside, were shown some of the Revolutionary relics which were there on exhibition. Just as they were coming out they met a young man coming in.

"Hallo!" he cried in surprise.

"Why if it isn't Ben," cried Edna delightedly. "Why Ben Barker how did you get here?"

"I might ask you the same question," he replied.

"We came by train."

"And I came by boat. I thought it was a shame to be so near this city and not stop off to see a few things, so I got my friends to let me off and left the yacht to go on to New York while I should stop here for couple of days."

"That is just what we are going to do."

"Good! then maybe we can join forces."

"That would suit me nicely," put in Mrs. Ramsey. "My husband will not be down till to-morrow evening in time to take the train for Fall River, and meantime I have these three little girls on my hands and no man to look after us, so if you will come along to see about tickets and things I should be pleased."

So Ben fell into line to the great satisfaction of all. "Where were you going next?" he asked.

"As long as it is such a pleasant day I thought we'd better make sure of Lexington and Concord, and leave the places nearer at hand till to-morrow. Of course you will want to visit Harvard, and the children have talked of the glass flowers so much that they must see them. While you are visiting other points more interesting to you, we will look at the flowers."

"Then, ho, for Lexington! We must take a subway car, and seek the 'rude bridge' where 'the embattled farmers stood to fire the shot heard 'round the world.'"

The little girls did not quite understand this till Emerson's poem was explained to them.

"Oh, I do want to see the place where the British general said: 'Disperse, ye rebels,'" cried Dorothy.

"Then we'd better trot right along," said Ben. "You and I will go ahead, Mrs. Ramsey, and lead the way."

But Jennie wanted to walk with her mother too, and so the other two little girls dropped behind to pursue their way through the crooked streets where odd sights met their eyes; queerly dressed women and children jostled them; at the doors of houses swarthy faces and strange forms appeared. The shop windows held many things the children had never seen before, and once or twice they stopped to see what these very unusual articles could be. "Do look here, Edna," said Dorothy as they were passing one particularly foreign looking place. "I must see what those funny things are," and she turned back, Edna following her.

"We mustn't stop," said Edna, "for we might lose the others."

"Oh, just for a second. They are right ahead and we can't miss them." But they could not decide what the funny things were and so went on.

"Why, where are Ben and Mrs. Ramsey?" said Edna in alarm. "I saw them a minute ago."

"They were right ahead of us when we stopped," said Dorothy, hastening her steps. "They must have turned the corner."

They hurried along as fast as possible, turning the corner and looking around. But there was no sign of their friends, and after they had gone a short distance, "we'd better go back," Dorothy said.

They tried to retrace their steps, but it was a very crooked street with others leading from it, and in their bewilderment they took the wrong turning, so that in a few minutes they were hopelessly beyond any possibility of finding their companions. They looked at one another confronted by a problem.

"What shall we do?" at last said Edna in a weak voice.

With one consent they stood still and looked around as if hoping to see a familiar face, but here was a denser crowd of foreigners and only the dark eyes of Russians and Poles met theirs.

"I don't like it a bit here," said Dorothy as a hideous old woman leered down at them.

"Neither do I," quavered Edna. "I think we'd better ask our way back to the church and start from there."

They accosted the first person they saw, who happened to be a young girl, but at their question she shook her head. "No unnystan," she replied.

The next one questioned nodded and began to jabber something in a foreign language, so it was the children's turn to say, "No unnystan." The next of whom they inquired the way spoke brokenly, but said he would put them on the right track, and under his guidance they managed to reach the church, and here they met a man in clerical dress who looked down at them with a smile. "Did you come to see the old church?" he asked. "I am going in, and perhaps you would like to come with me."

"We have been here once this morning," Dorothy told him, "but we have lost our friends and don't know which way to go."

"Where were they going?"

"Why, I don't know, I think to the subway."

"Oh, that is easy to find. I will call a policeman and he will take you along and show you." He looked up and down the street and finally saw a policeman in the distance, and he was coming toward them.

"There he is," said the man. "Just wait till he comes up. I say, Mike," he called to the policeman, "just show these little girls the way to the subway, won't you? They have turned the wrong way and are out of their bearings." He smiled down on the children, lifted his hat and passed into the church, leaving the children with the policeman.

"Which way was you going?" asked the policeman pleasantly.

"We were going to Lexington," Edna told him.

"Then I'll go with you to the end of my beat and pass you along, so's you'll get on at the right place."

They walked quietly along wondering a little, as passers-by looked at them curiously, if it was supposed they were under arrest. They felt a good deal worried, but had a vague idea that the others would wait for them at the subway, wherever that might be.

True to his word the policeman turned them over to another of his order when they had reached the end of his beat, and this one piloted them safely to the entrance of the subway. They had said so confidently that they were going to Lexington that neither man questioned, but that they knew the way once they had reached the proper station.

They descended the steps with some misgivings, for if Mrs. Ramsey and Ben were not there what was to be done next? They had never been in the subway before for Mrs. Ramsey had wanted them to see the city streets when they had visited the city in the summer, and had taken a taxicab to go up town. Mr. Ramsey had done the same when they arrived on their journey in his company. A most bewildering place they found this same subway to be, full of people rushing for trains, noisy from the whizzing of cars from out of cavernous dark places and departing into equally unknown darkness. It seemed terrible to the two little girls and they were on the verge of tears. Impossible to find anyone in such a place as this. Best to get out of it as speedily as they could. The roaring of passing trains was so confusing, the jostling of the crowd was so unpleasant that the children held fast to one another and hurried up the steps and into the open air.

"Oh, dear," sighed Edna.

"Oh, dear," echoed Dorothy. "Wasn't it terrible? I felt as if I were having a dreadful nightmare."

"I felt as if my head had been taken off and they were rolling it up and down the car tracks." This relieved the tension a little and they both laughed. "Now what are we going to do?" said Dorothy.

They stood on the sidewalk looking this way and that, uncertain what would be the best move. Presently a lady who had just come out of the subway, paused and looked at them. "Have you lost anything, little girls?" she asked kindly.

"We've lost our way and our friends," Edna told her.

"My, my, that is a great deal to lose. Where do you want to go?"

"We were going to Lexington, but it was so awful down there," Edna nodded toward the door through which they had just come, "and we would not go back for the world."

The lady smiled. "But what about your friends? Do they live in Lexington?"

"Oh, no, we are all staying at the Parker House. We went to see the Old North Church, and we were going to Lexington and Concord, all of us, but somehow we got separated from them, and we couldn't find them anywhere."

"We knew they were coming to the subway, for Ben said so," Dorothy chimed in, "and we thought we might find them there. A policeman showed us the way."

"That was like looking for a needle in a haystack," said the lady, "for you didn't know which of the subway stations they meant, did you? There are a great many, you know."

"We didn't know, for we never went down there before. We thought the subway was just one station, like the one we came into from the shore."

"Oh, I see. Well, I am a stranger in town too, that is, I don't live here, although I know Boston pretty well. I am staying at the Parker House, and as it isn't so very far from here, I think your best plan will be to go to the Parker House with me and wait there. I am sure your friends will think that is what you would be likely to do, and will make inquiries there before starting up an alarm for you."

"Oh, do you think they would do that? Do you mean they would ring bells or anything?" Dorothy asked with a vague idea of what might be done in the case of lost children.

"They mightn't ring bells," said their friend with a smile, "but they would notify all the police stations."

Edna nodded. "That's what papa did when I was lost. I wasn't really lost, only I was afraid of the cattle and I went up the steps so fast I fell and Mrs. Porter lived there; she was a friend of mine, you know." Dorothy had heard all about this adventure before, and their new friend did not press inquiries. She felt sure the children would be anxiously looked for and that it was best to get them to their hotel as soon as could be.

It gave the two little girls a great sense of security to enter the place from which they had departed that morning, and they were heartily glad to reach the building. They found out that their kind acquaintance was named Mrs. Cox, and that she was from Washington. She told the clerk, at the desk, that if Mrs. Ramsey or any of her party came in or telephoned inquiries, that they were to be told instantly the little girls were there.

"I am always getting lost, it seems to me," said Edna plaintively, "and yet I am never really lost, or I wasn't before this time, only people will keep thinking I am. You know, Dorothy, I was perfectly safe at the bungalow when Louis thought I was lost, and I was perfectly safe at Mrs. Porter's when papa and mamma thought I was lost."

"And you are perfectly safe now when Mrs. Ramsey thinks you are lost," added Dorothy in a somewhat aggrieved tone. She felt a little conscience-stricken, knowing she was to blame in this instance, for it was she who insisted upon stopping to look in at the shop window.

They had not very long to wait, for from their place in the reception room, where Mrs. Cox told them it would be best to sit, they presently saw Ben hurrying along, a worried look on his face. The two children sprang out. "Here we are," they cried.

Ben rushed over and grabbed them both. "You young lunatics," he exclaimed, "don't you know better than to get yourselves lost in a city like Boston?"

"We didn't mean to, Ben," said Dorothy meekly.

"You didn't mean to," mimicked Ben in a mocking voice. "Well, you have scared us nearly to death, if that is any consolation to you."

"Where are Mrs. Ramsey and Jennie?" asked Edna, fearing one or the other might be in hysterics for Ben's manner was anything but reassuring.

"They are in a cab trying to follow you up. Mrs. Ramsey said she would go over the ground we had just left when we missed you, and in the meantime I was to come here, if by any chance you had sense enough to come straight back to the hotel."

The children looked at each other with rather abashed faces, for they had not had sense enough to do that, and might not have thought of it but for Mrs. Cox.

"Before you give an account of yourselves," Ben went on, "I must telephone to Mrs. Ramsey and relieve her mind. We agreed that I was to do that and settled on a drug store where she would go to get any message I might have." He rushed off, leaving the little girls feeling very guilty. After all that Mrs. Ramsey had done for them to give her so much uneasiness, struck them both as being very heartless.

"I wish that old window was in the bottom of the sea before I ever stopped to look in," presently said Dorothy vindictively.

Edna made no reply. She knew that it was not the fault of the window, but of their own curiosity and heedlessness. They should have kept directly behind their friends, she well knew. Her mother had told her times enough that it was cowardly to blame inanimate objects for things which we were to blame for ourselves, and Aunt Elizabeth went further and said no one but a person without any wits would abuse a senseless thing for what was his own thoughtlessness or carelessness.

But she was spared moralizing upon this to Dorothy, for Ben returned saying that Mrs. Ramsey would be here in a few moments and that the expedition to Lexington and Concord would be given up for the day, as it was too late now to undertake so long a trip. He was quite grumpy about it and the little girls were most unhappy at being under his displeasure, for Ben was usually the sunniest of persons and rarely gave them a cross look. He did not stay to talk to them now, but went to the door to meet Mrs. Ramsey when she should return and the children sat one at either end of the sofa, silent and downcast.

Mrs. Cox had not waited for further developments once she had seen that her charges were safe, and had gone out again. After what was a long time to the two culprits they saw Mrs. Ramsey and Ben approaching with Jennie. At sight of them Edna could no longer restrain her tears, but burst into a noiseless fit of weeping, and Dorothy, seeing this, began to do the same.

This was too much for Ben. He was very fond of his little cousin and hated to see her cry. "Here, here," he cried, "don't do that. Why, Ande, you are safe now. What's the use of crying when it's all over?" He sat down beside her and began to wipe away the tears. "I say, Mrs. Ramsey," he went on, looking up, "it is really my fault as much as theirs. In that thickly settled part of the city, among all those crooked streets, I ought to have kept a better lookout for these children, and we don't know yet how it happened, anyhow. I haven't even asked them. They may have been knocked down or anything else may have happened for all we know."

The two felt that this was very generous of Ben, and their tears flowed less plentifully. Mrs. Ramsey drew up a chair and said in a pleasant, confidential tone, "Now tell us all about it. How did it happen?"

The children faltered out an explanation in which the queer things in the shop-window, the hideous old woman, the man at the church and the subway all figured. Once or twice Mrs. Ramsey repressed a smile, though for the most part she listened very soberly. At the close of the narrative she turned to Ben. "It is just as you said; we ought to have kept better watch upon them. One of us should have walked with them instead of leaving them to follow alone."

Ben nodded. "That's just what I think. Now, chicks, dry your eyes. We are going to have an early lunch and go somewhere, to see the glass flowers, very likely."

"Yes," put in Jennie, "please don't cry any more, girls. It makes me so miserable to see you. I might have done the same thing if I had been with you."

Thus comforted, the girls dried their eyes and followed Jennie and Mrs. Ramsey upstairs to bathe their faces and get ready for lunch. It was too bad to have lost a whole morning, but there could be a great deal crowded into an afternoon, and, by the time the glass flowers had been found, peace reigned and everyone was happy.

There was a drive around the beautiful parkway that evening and a visit to the splendid library that night. "We shall have to leave Plymouth Rock till another year," Mrs. Ramsey remarked as they set out for their trip the next morning. "I think you will enjoy Lexington and Concord more than a rather longer journey by water as you have just come from the seashore." This time there was no delay and there was plenty of time to visit the old battle-field, to see the brown house where dear Louisa Alcott used to live, to hunt up Emerson's home and the spot endeared by memories of Hawthorne. Ben was intensely interested in it all and told the girls many things which made them understand much better what they were seeing.

They must return in time to meet Mr. Ramsey at the Parker House, and to get ready for their journey home, but there was a chance to walk through the botanical gardens and the Commons, to look across at the gilded dome of the State House, and to see the church where the great Phillips Brooks had preached.

It was hard to part with Jennie and her mother, but the thought of home and the dear ones there was too happy an anticipation to cause any tears to be shed, and the little girls went off with a memory of Boston marred only by that unfortunate shop window in the foreign quarter.

CHAPTER XII
HOME AGAIN

"Are you going all the way home with us?" Edna asked Ben as they left the boat at the wharf.

"Yes, Mr. Ramsey thinks he should stay in New York for the day, and has handed you over to my tender mercies, so if we can get a good train you will be at home in a very few hours."

"Now that we are so near I'm just crazy to get there," said Dorothy. "Will they know exactly when we are coming, Ben?"

"We can easily let them know either by telephone or telegraph."

"I think I'd rather surprise them, wouldn't you, Edna?"

"It won't be such a big surprise, for mother knows we are coming some time to-day."

"Then there is no use in sending word ahead," decided Dorothy. "They will be looking for us anyway."

Just here Mr. Ramsey came up. "Well, young ladies," he said, "so you are going to leave me. I think this young man can be trusted to take care of you the rest of the way, and I hope as soon as Jennie gets back you will come in to see her. We have all enjoyed having you with us, and I hope you will feel perfectly at home in our house always."

The little girls thanked him and said they had had a very happy time and wouldn't he tell Jennie to come out to see them as soon as she returned. So they parted, and then there was the rush of getting to the train and the pleasant sense of knowing this was the last stage of their journey. Ben whiled away the time by asking them ridiculous conundrums which made them so hilarious that more than one fellow traveller smiled in sympathy with their merry laughs.

The more absurd the conundrums the better the children liked them, and those that Ben made up as they went along pleased them best of all. "When is a fence not a fence?" asked Ben and the answer was, "when it's an advertisement." "What would you do if company came and there were no more tea in the teapot?" was the next question.

"I'd send out for more tea," responded Dorothy.

"What would you do, Ande?"

"I don't know. What would you?"

"I'd add hot water and serve just as the sign tells you to do."

"But that means for soup."

"Well, but it answers just as well for tea. Now, here is another one for you. Suppose you couldn't get tea, what would you do?"

"I'd go without."

"I wouldn't; I'd use Horlick's malted milk."

"Oh, that is the sign just over there, isn't it? Too late, Dorothy, we've passed it."

"Make up another, Ben," urged Dorothy.

"Well, here goes. If I wanted to be sure of an intellectual meal, what would I do?"

They guessed several things, but Ben shook his head at each answer. "I think it is a very hard one," declared Edna. "Intellectual is a hard word anyhow. You will have to tell us, Ben."

"Give it up?"

"Yes, I do; don't you, Dorrie?"

"Yes, it is too hard for me."

"Then this is the answer: I'd put my roasts through a course of Browning. I think that's pretty good myself. I shall have to salt it down to ask your elders. I'll give you an easy one now. Why do they call the man who drives the locomotive an engineer?"

Edna finally guessed this. "Because he is near the engine," she said.

"Good girl; go up head," cried Ben. "You seem to be improving. Now each of you try to make up a limerick and I'll do the same."

"Oh, we can't do that," objected Dorothy.

"Yes, you can if you try. I will give you a model.

There was a young person named Dorrie
Who said to her comrade, 'I'm sorry
I came on the train,
But I'll do it again
When Ben isn't with us to worry.'"

The girls laughed at this and set themselves to work to produce something of the same kind. After many attempts Edna gave this:

"There was a young man named Benny
Who said, 'Please give me a penny.
Some peanuts I'll buy
All nice and dry,'
But he didn't give us children any."

"That's not bad at all," said Ben laughing. "Did you mean that for a hint, and do you think I'd buy peanuts and keep them all to myself?"

"Oh, no." Edna was shocked that he should think she really intended a hint. "I just had to make up something and that was the best I could do."

"Oh, dear, I can't get my last line," complained Dorothy. "I've tried and tried and I can't find a rhyme for Barker and Parker. This as far as I can get:

There was a young man named Barker
Who stayed at the Hotel Parker
And ate lots of rolls
And drank from the bowls--

I had to say bowls to make it rhyme, though I really meant cups, and there I am stuck."

Here Ben came to her rescue.

"And drank from the bowls
Until his complexion grew darker,"

he added to the amusement of the girls.

They kept up the limericks for some time, though Dorothy found it such hard work that she finally refused to try any more, and Ben looking at his watch decided it was time to go into the dining-car for dinner. This was a new experience and made a pleasant break in the monotony of the journey. By the time the meal was finished they were so near their own station that the rest of the way seemed nothing at all. At the station they had to change cars or else make the trip by the trolley.

"Which shall we do?" asked Ben.

"Which will get us there first?" asked Edna.

"Let me see." Ben pulled out a time table. "There will be a train in half an hour. It is a pretty good one, and I think will get us there about five minutes ahead of the trolley. It's a choice between sitting in the station or going ahead on the trolley."

"Which would you rather do?" Dorothy asked him.

"I think perhaps the train will be better on account of the baggage which can go right through with us." So they sat down to wait till their train should be called and found enough to amuse them in watching the people go and come.

"It does look so natural," remarked Dorothy, when the train began to move. "Just think, Edna, in a few days we shall be starting to school again, and be coming this way every day."

"And we shall be seeing Uncle Justus and Aunt Elizabeth and all the girls. I wonder if we shall have as good times at the G. R. Club as we did last year. We must go to see Margaret and Nettie very soon, Dorothy, for we shall have such heaps to tell them."

"We shall want to tell our own families first."

"Oh, of course. I wonder if Uncle Justus is still with the others on the yacht. I never thought to ask Ben." She leaned over to speak to her cousin who was sitting directly in front and learned that Mr. Horner had left the yacht at Portland and had come home by rail from that city.

"The old chap had a good time while he was with us," Ben told her, "and I think it limbered him up a lot."

"Why, was he stiff from rheumatism like Cap'n Si?" asked Edna innocently.

Ben laughed. "No, he was stiff from eating too many ramrods."

Edna knew this wasn't true, but she didn't ask any more questions just then. The train was nearing the familiar station where they were to get off. She wondered if Celia and the boys, or Celia and Agnes would be there to meet them. She thought it very likely, as the family must know they would arrive about this time.

But as the train moved off there was no sign of any of their friends. "They didn't come after all," said Edna to Dorothy. "I wonder if they know Ben is with us?"

"Why, how could they know. Did you tell them on the post-card you wrote from Boston, or the one you sent Celia from Concord?"

"No. Did you say anything about it?"

"Not a word."

"Then that will be a sort of surprise, for even if they expect us they won't expect Ben."

It was not a very long walk from the station to the home of either little girl, though it had appeared long enough to Edna one evening the winter before when she had been caught in a snow-storm.

"I won't stop," said Dorothy, when they had reached Edna's gate. "I can scarcely wait to see mother."

"I feel just that way," said Edna. "Will you come over this evening?"

"Maybe. I can't promise, for I shall hate to leave them all. You come over."

"But I shan't want to leave them all either. I reckon we'd better wait till to-morrow."

"All right. Good-bye till then." And Dorothy started off at a run while Edna and Ben turned in at the gate.

How quiet it seemed! No one was on the porch, and the sound of their voices did not bring anyone down from upstairs. "I wonder where they all are. I'll go up very softly and s'prise them," whispered Edna to Ben, "and in a little while you come up and have another s'prise." Ben nodded understandingly and Edna crept softly up the stairs. There was no sound of voices anywhere. "They must all be asleep," the child murmured, but as it was just about lunch time, that seemed to be rather an unusual state of things. She went from room to room. Not a soul was to be seen.

"That is the funniest thing," said Edna disappointedly. "I wonder where in the world everybody can be. Surely they could not be hiding," but to make sure she looked in closets and even under the beds, then she went slowly downstairs to Ben.

"There isn't a soul anywhere," she told him. "Oh, Ben, I am so dreadfully disappointed. What do you suppose has become of everybody?"

"Can't say, my dear. Have you interviewed the cook? I thought I heard sounds of life in the kitchen."

"Why, of course I can ask her. I never thought of that." She flew to the kitchen. "Oh, Lizzie," she cried, "where is everybody?"

"Saints above!" cried Lizzie, "and where did ye come from all of a suddint like this?"

"Why, we came out on the train!"

"Not by yerself?"

"No, Dorothy and Cousin Ben came with me."

"Hear to that now. And didn't ye see the mother nor none of thim that's gone to meet ye?"

"Why, no! When did they go to meet us?"

"This morning. Sure it was your mother that said, 'Thim children will be gettin' in fair and airy and I'll just be goin' in to Mистер Ramsey's office and meet thim when they git there and bring thim right along with me.' Thin Miss Ceely speaks up and says, 'I'll be goin,' too.'"

"But we didn't go to Mr. Ramsey's office. We left him in New York and Cousin Ben Barker brought us on from there."

"Did ye ever hear the likes of that now? She'll be as disappointed as yerself when she gets there and doesn't find ye."

"Where are the boys?"

"They're off too. When they learns that their mother was going to town they says we'll go to one of the neighbors, I

disremember which one it was, but they says they won't be back to lunch, bein' as they don't like to ate without the ithers. Have ye had any lunch yerself, child?"

"No, and neither has Cousin Ben."

"Then, jest you kape quiet and I'll have ye a bite in three shakes. Run along in and tell Mr. Barker not to be oneasy, that he shall have something right away."

Edna returned to Ben with her tale of cross purposes. "Do you suppose mother will be worried when she gets to Mr. Ramsey's office and finds we haven't come?"

"It is possible she might be. I reckon I'd better telephone in and tell them that we have arrived and if Mrs. Conway comes to tell her we are here. I'll call up your father, too."

"Oh, that will be the very best thing to do."

But Ben learned that Mrs. Conway had been to Mr. Ramsey's office, and not finding her daughter had gone at once to her husband's office. From this latter point it was learned that Mr. and Mrs. Conway and their daughter had just gone out to lunch. "Haven't been gone five minutes," Ben was told. "Say to Mr. Conway when he comes in that his daughter Edna is at home," said Ben and then he hung up the receiver. "Can't get anyone of them," he told Edna, "but your father will hear where you are as soon as he gets back. In the meantime we'll have to make the best of it."

They made the best of it by eating the very good lunch which Lizzie prepared, and then Edna's trunk having arrived she set to work to unpack it, being glad to release Virginia from her long confinement. Next it seemed a good plan to hunt up her old dolls and introduce them to this lovely new sister.

Ben, who had grown tired of waiting for his aunt and cousin, went to the house of one of his friends, and after Edna had seen that all her children were in good condition she seated herself at one of the front windows to watch for her mother. It seemed very funny that it should be she who was watching for someone to come instead of someone watching for her. She would not go to Dorothy's for fear she should miss her mother and sister, and likewise for the reason that she felt it would be a very flat report she would have to make to Dorothy of her homecoming.

She sat for what seemed a long time, but at last her patience was rewarded by seeing a group of four coming up the road, and as they drew near she saw that it was not only her own mother and sister, but Dorothy's likewise who had gone to town to meet the travelers.

She could hardly wait to get down stairs, and she heard Celia's surprised voice say, "Why there she is now," and in another minute she was in her mother's arms.

"Why, you little rogue," cried Mrs. Conway, when the hugging and kissing had ceased. "You have certainly stolen a march on us all. How did you get here?"

"Is Dorothy with you?" asked Mrs. Evans anxiously.

"She isn't here with me, but she is at home," Edna made reply.

"Oh, then, we must hurry along," said Mrs. Evans, and without waiting to hear more particulars she and her daughter Agnes hastened away.

Then Mrs. Conway sat down and gathered Edna to her. "It is so nice to have my baby again," she said. "I don't believe I can ever consent to let her stay so long away another time. Now tell me all about it. How did you happen to get here so early and why didn't I find you at Mr. Ramsey's office as I expected?"

"Did you expect to find us there?"

"Why, certainly, Mrs. Ramsey wrote that you would come back with her husband, and that you would arrive at about noon, so naturally I didn't expect Mr. Ramsey to bring you all the way out here, besides his clerks told me that he had not returned, but had telephoned from New York that he would arrive this evening. So of course I thought you would not get here till then."

"And were you disappointed?"

"Oh, I was indeed; but you haven't told me how you did get here."

"Ben brought us."

"Ben? Where is he?"

"Oh, he was around a little while ago, but I reckon he got tired of waiting and went off somewhere; he will be back after a while."

"But I don't understand yet. Where did you come across Ben?"

"In Boston at the Old North Church; he was going in just as we were going out, and he stayed with us the rest of the time and we all came on together; then when Mr. Ramsey found that Ben could come with us he said he thought he

might as well stay in New York and attend to some business and let us come on. Ben was going to telephone, but it was just as well he didn't."

"It is all very clear now, and I can see that no one was to blame, for of course no one knew that we were going to meet you."

"But, oh, Mother, it is so good to have you again," said Edna, giving her mother another squeeze. "I haven't kissed sister half enough either." There was another season of hugging and kissing, and then all went upstairs that Edna might show her new doll and present the little gifts she had bought at the bazar. Then Ben came in and there were more explanations, and next the boys came rushing upstairs to give boisterous bearlike hugs and to tell Edna she looked fine as silk, and so the hours went on till it was time for Mr. Conway to come and that gave a new excitement and questioning and explaining.

After all had been smoothed out Mr. Conway made the remark, "I saw Uncle Justus this afternoon. He came into the office to ask if Edna had arrived. He certainly is fond of the child."

Then Edna told of how Uncle Justus gave up the sailing party on her account and of how gentle and kind he was.

"Gee!" cried Charlie, "I should think you'd rather he would have gone." For Uncle Justus had never shown the boys his gentler side and they stood in great awe of him, scuttling out of sight whenever they saw him coming.

Everyone smiled at Charlie's speech, but Edna said gravely, "I loved to have him stay. He took me in his lap and rocked me and we had a lovely time."

Charlie could scarcely believe this, but he said nothing and the talk went on to other things. Edna and Ben were the center of interest that evening, for when Edna was not telling something that went on at Ramsey's, Ben was relating some of his yachting experiences. He would leave for his own home the next day, but would return later to take up his studies at college, and, as last year, to spend the winter with his aunt and cousins.

It seemed warm and murky after the sharp fresh from the sea, and Edna, for all her excitement, was ready for bed early. Just as she was going upstairs the telephone rang, and Celia answered. "Someone for you, Edna," she said, and Edna went to the 'phone.

"Hallo, Edna," came Dorothy's familiar voice "I couldn't go to sleep without saying good-night to you. I thought I could but I couldn't. Are you all right?"

"Yes. Are you? Wasn't it funny that we didn't find anyone home when we got here. Why didn't you come over?"

"Why didn't you?" Then each heard a little giggle, for the same reason was in the mind of each.

"Well, good-night. I kind of miss you, Edna," came Dorothy's final words.

"And I kind of miss you. Good-night."

There was no sound of murmuring waves on the beach, no Jennie in the next room, and no Dorothy as bed-fellow, but instead there was the murmur of leaves making a pleasant song, there was Celia playing softly on the piano, and best of all there was mother very near; so Edna turned over with a sigh of content, glad that she was in her own home.

THE END.