What Gladys Saw
"THE LITTLE LADY FLEW TO THE BROAD SILL TO INVESTIGATE"
What Gladys Saw

A Nature Story of Farm and Forest

BY

FRANCES MARGARET FOX
AUTHOR OF "FARMER BROWN AND THE BIRDS"

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHARLES COPELAND

W. A. WILDE COMPANY
BOSTON AND CHICAGO
Copyright, 1902,
By W. A. Wilde Company.
All rights reserved.

What Gladys Saw.
DEDICATION

To the many children who have been under my care and teaching, this book is lovingly dedicated by the author.
Contents

CHAPTER                        PAGE
I.  The Robin’s Surprise        11
II. The Coming of Gladys        18
III. Getting acquainted with Aunt Rebecca  31
IV. Her Father’s Own Folks      41
V.  A Hero in Rags              52
VI. The Thinking Corner         61
VII. How Gladys set the Fashion 67
VIII. A Long Sunday             72
IX.  An Evening Sermon          77
X.   Studying a Monarch         83
XI. “Daughters of Noon”         99
XII. The Robin’s Neighbors      107
XIII. A Sparrow Story           118
XIV. Wild Ones by the Way       125
XV.  Gladys writes to her Mother 137
XVI. A Few Questions            141
XVII. A Bit of Color            147
XVIII. A Tragedy                154
XIX. Meeting the Enemy          168
XX.  Meadow Folks               172
XXI. Ted Bennet’s Revenge       177
XXII. Mr. Birney signs a Paper  187
XXIII. An Unsuspected Talent    190
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>XXIV.</td>
<td>Gifts and their Obligations</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXV.</td>
<td>Gladys reports to her Mother</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVI.</td>
<td>The Story of the Silver Fox</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVII.</td>
<td>Crickets and Pond Folks</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXVIII.</td>
<td>Holes in the Ground</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXIX.</td>
<td>How the Katydid went Calling</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXX.</td>
<td>Mary Ellen’s Wedding</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXI.</td>
<td>Gladys explains Matters</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXII.</td>
<td>The Book of Common Things</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIII.</td>
<td>Baby Tumble-Bug’s First Journey</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIV.</td>
<td>A Lazy Fellow in Blue</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXV.</td>
<td>Jack discovers the Yellowbirds’ Home</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVI.</td>
<td>Interviewing the Goldenrods</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVII.</td>
<td>Gladys writes to her Grandfather</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVIII.</td>
<td>The Red Squirrel on Saturday</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXIX.</td>
<td>The Way Home</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The little lady flew to the broad sill to investigate&quot;</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;'That's Jennie Wren'&quot;</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;'Oh, you funny buzzing bee'&quot;</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;'What a little beauty it is'&quot;</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The greedy fellow ate all the food that was brought to the nest&quot;</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT GLADYS SAW

“A lover of nature never takes a walk without perceiving something new and interesting.”

— John Burroughs.

CHAPTER I

THE ROBIN’S SURPRISE

HERE was commotion in the old farm-house. The robin was not only puzzled but somewhat alarmed by it. Season after season she had built her nest in an apple tree within reach of an upper-story window, without fear of being disturbed.

On this particular June morning the little dormer window had been thrown open with energy—an act without precedent within the robin’s memory. In apparent curiosity, the little lady flew to the broad sill to investigate. Her chirp of amazement when she saw a woman in the room met with a ready response.
"Well, I declare! Did you ever see anything like that — the very birds of the air walk right in!"

The robin was in a great flutter; but as the woman made no attempt to approach the window, she held her ground, possibly determined to see all she could.

"Suppose you think you've a better right here than I have," continued the stranger; "but I am Richard Birney's aunt, though I haven't been in this house for eight years. Eight years! It doesn't seem so long since Richard's wife took the children and left. Not that I ever blamed her — the neighbors did that.

"Dear me! I haven't any more notion how to begin here than a rabbit. Spiders, dust — dirt — I don't wonder Richard asked me to come over and get this room ready for Gladys. Mrs. Bennet wouldn't have known which way to turn. Poor woman! it isn't likely she knows how dainty a little girl's room ought to be anyway, living as she does in a speck of a house, with nobody knows how many children to keep things all cluttered up.

"I don't see how she's managed to do so
much work for Richard all these years—his washing and baking and house-cleaning. Presume she felt, though, that as long as her husband was working on the farm, and they were living in a house of Richard's, she ought to help him all she could, though as I look at it, he doesn't deserve any comforts of a home. He ought to be made to live in a dug-out in the woods; guess that would suit him too well, though.

"This used to be his room when he was a little boy. Doesn't seem long since brother Jacob built this house—after the old house was burned to the ground. Built it contrary to the advice of all his relations and the neighbors, way back from the road, with the front door facing the river. Why would he do it? The very idea of putting the barn where the house ought to be! Well, they said Jacob was eccentric; but I don't know what excuse could be made for Richard, though I do know that it's never been said among the neighbors that he takes after his Aunt Rebecca.

"Well, I guess I'll dust everything here and put it in the room across the hall. Helen was a good housekeeper, and everything in this
closet seems to be just as she left it,—all in perfect order, but covered with dust.

"These hooks are too high; the child could never hang up her own clothes. I'll ask Richard to change them.

"There! I must go to work!"

Aunt Rebecca's decision was followed by such sudden activity that the robin flew away.

But a few days before, the last fledgling of the robin's first brood had followed its father to the woods and she had given her attention to the repair of the nest. It was a good nest, strong and well made; yet the robin feared that it must be abandoned.

There was something startling in the presence of Aunt Rebecca, something in striking contrast with the gentle, quiet ways of the man of whom the robin knew no fear. It had never been his way to rush madly about the house, nor, indeed, had he ever been known to rush at all—a fact appreciated by all the wild things on the farm.

The robin wasted the greater part of the morning in hopping anxiously about the apple tree, and peeping in at the dormer window. Finally, Mr. Birney came up the stairs, and
seeing the robin on the sill, he began talking with her, as was his custom.

Aunt Rebecca was nowhere in sight.

"Good morning, madam, good morning," said he, "trust you will pardon all this intrusion, but I am preparing for a visitor, and I want you to help me entertain. First time, since long before you were a nestling, madam, that this window has ever been opened. All I ask of you is to furnish music occasionally. I would like to have you practise up your rainy-day song, for instance. There is nothing finer than that when it is rendered in style."

"Fiddlesticks!" ejaculated Aunt Rebecca, emerging from the closet and flourishing her broom in a threatening manner behind her nephew.

"Pardon me, Aunt Rebecca," said he. "I wanted to know what you think of the room; that is, can it be made to look as it should — kind of womanish — so that it will please her, I mean."

"It is hard to tell," replied Aunt Rebecca, "children in these days aren't so easily pleased as they used to be; but surely it is a pretty room, bright and cheery, and when it is per-
fectly clean, I think it ought to please any little girl.”

“You know best how a little girl would like things,” replied the man; “I don’t understand their tastes very well myself,” and with these words he walked away.

Aunt Rebecca stood shaking her head until the sound of his footsteps died in the distance.

“Shouldn’t think he did understand, nor try to. A man so selfish and queer should have been a frog in the first place. I haven’t any patience with him. Had the sweetest, brightest wife in the country and tried to bury her out here. Wouldn’t take her anywhere, not even to the neighbors — didn’t want company, always had his nose in a book in the house, and an old microscope in his hand outdoors. Helen was right — the children would have been worse than heathen Chinese if they had stayed here.

“Richard may be a scholar and all that, as some folks pretend, but I call him up and down selfish and shiftless. Look at the way he has let this farm go to rack and ruin, and he spending his time in the swamp and woods and the fields watching squirrels and mice and such.
"If he wasn't my own nephew, I wouldn't care; but as it is I can't get used to it. I would like to tell him just what I think."

The robin kept at a safe distance the rest of the day. Not until twilight did she venture upon the window-sill again.

Whether the robin knew it or not, the room suggested peace and comfort. There were the two low windows draped in white; one overlooking the broad river, the other the orchards. There was the old-fashioned wall paper, with its wreaths of wild roses. In a plain oaken frame was an old-time print of the Saviour blessing little children. The painted floor was bare, except for a bit of rag carpet laid before the bed, itself gay in patchwork-quilt attire.

In the orchard the robin sung her sweetest song until the day was done and darkness hushed the evening chorus of the birds.

Perhaps she knew the little nest was safe.
CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF GLADYS

UNT REBECCA not only offered to get dinner and do some extra baking the day Gladys was expected, but insisted so strongly upon it that Richard Birney's courteous protest went for naught. She came early in the morning and took possession of the kitchen.

Mr. Birney kept at a distance. He felt that Aunt Rebecca, with a rolling-pin in her hand, was a person to be feared as well as respected. Walking through the hall on his way to the sitting room, he paused for a moment to listen, then went on his way thankful that the scoldings of that well-intentioned woman were directed to the inanimate things, the wood box and the kitchen pump, where they fell harmless.

Mr. Birney closed the door of the sitting room behind him with expressive firmness.
He didn't know that Aunt Rebecca was making a layer cake of wondrous size to please his little girl, nor could he have dreamed of the surprise she was preparing in the way of sugar cookies.

Every year Aunt Rebecca furnished cookies for the Sunday-school Christmas tree in the village—cookies that were the delight and wonder of childish hearts. They were cut in the shape of animals, birds, and stars, frosted and sprinkled with tiny candies.

Never before had Aunt Rebecca used her famous cookie patterns except at Christmas time. It was an honor sure to win the heart of Gladys.

While Aunt Rebecca worked and talked energetically to herself, according to a life-long custom, her nephew, in the sitting room, read aloud snatches of a letter.

"Gladys, of course, has no memory of you, having been scarcely two years old when we came away."

The man frowned.

"It has never been my desire to separate you and the children, and the time has come when it seems best for Gladys to be with you. She
talks of her father constantly. In school she is far ahead of children of her age so that an absence of a year will do her no harm. The boys must be kept in school; but if you wish, I will send Gladys to you, and you may let her stay as long as you think best.

"The child is a great deal like you in many ways, and I believe she will love the old farm and be contented and happy there."

The frown deepened. Mr. Birney walked the floor until Aunt Rebecca reminded him that it was time to drive to the village to meet Gladys.

His appearance at the station was greeted by stares.

"Carculate you're expectin' on meetin' some one," ventured a neighbor, who sauntered out of the waiting room to watch him tie his horse.

"Trust none of us will be disappointed," replied Mr. Birney, repressing a smile.

"Reckon disappointment ain't a thing we're a stranger to, none of us," retorted the neighbor. "S'pose you know the train's half an hour behind time, eh?"

"No, I didn't know it; are you sure?"

"Sartin sure, ticket agent said so. Be you expectin' —"
"Half an hour, half an hour," interrupted Richard Birney, "I can be back in twenty minutes." And he straightway left his fellow-men to think and say what they would, while he, for the first time that season, went forth to visit a colony of bank swallows, old friends of his.

He found them easily enough, where he had known them when a boy. He no longer felt the old-time desire to look into each nest in the river bank—but threw himself upon the ground beneath a tree, where he could watch the busy birds and enjoy the music of their cheerful twitterings.

They were such a happy lot in their modest suits of brownish gray and white.

The man forgot the flight of time in the delight of their presence. As a boy he wondered what they talked about through the long summer days, and now he thought he knew. He was sure they were chattering of domestic affairs; of the tiny white eggs in the grass-lined nests at the end of the tunnels; of prosaic matters—like the food supply and the advantages of community life. As in days long past, he watched the birds flying in wide circles through the air, and felt an ever new amazement that each
returning bird should know its own front door among so many exactly similar.

When an hour had passed too swiftly, the man thought of Gladys. He rose then and walked rapidly to the station, in dread of meeting a tear-stained, reproachful little face. Gladys was scarcely a welcome guest, but her father meant to show her every courtesy as became a gentleman.

The child was not in the waiting room nor anywhere in sight. The station agent sat in the office, reading.

"Pardon me, sir," said the man, "but can you tell me whether or not a little girl got off the train?"

The station agent was careful not to reply with undue haste. He continued his reading with patience until the question was repeated.

"Oh, that you, Birney? Yes, yes, a little girl did come—she looked forsaken until the neighbors asked some questions and found out who she was. When they told her that was your horse and buggy out there she would have her baggage put right in the buggy, and—"

"Where is she now?" asked Mr. Birney,
"gone with some of the village folks, I suppose."

"Not much," laughed the agent; "they wanted to take her, but she wouldn't go; said, 'No, thank you, she'd wait for her father.' She's right down the mill road there, happy as you please."

The agent returned to his book while Mr. Birney continued his search. He had gone but a little way from the station when he heard the merriest kind of a laugh; down the mill road, in a flood of sunshine stood a little girl, intently watching something in the shrubbery.

"What is it, Gladys?" called her father.

"Funny caterpillars," replied the child, running to meet him and kissing him, as though all fathers must be kissed whether they expected it or not.

"How do you know who I am?" asked the man, recovering his breath.

"Oh, you look just like your pictures, only nicer; and besides that, who would say 'Gladys' that kind of a way 'cept your own father."

It was pleasant to be regarded with the approval expressed by the child's face.
"Well, sis, we would better be jogging on, I guess," remarked her father.

"Oh, but, papa, do come and see these caterpillars. I never saw any like them before — now look! There's a whole family of them and see how they go — jerking their heads from side to side and keeping time as though maybe they could hear a band playing somewhere. How do they know enough to keep together like that — our teacher in school says, 'left, right, left, right,' to make us keep step, and then we don't always do it; but these caterpillars, — why first all their heads go right, all the time, and nobody makes them. What are they anyway?"

"They are caterpillars of the Mourning Cloak," replied the man, "and that peculiar habit is their way of scaring their enemies."

"Oh," acknowledged Gladys, "they are the queerest caterpillars I ever saw. Can't we stay and watch 'em a while longer? I'm afraid I'll never see any more like them."

"We might stay as well as not, Gladys," assented her father, "but our Aunt Rebecca offered to get dinner to-day in honor of my little guest, and we ought not to keep her waiting, had we?"
"Oh, no," agreed Gladys; "but who is our Aunt Rebecca — mamma never told me about her."

"In the first place, Gladys, Aunt Rebecca is our nearest neighbor. She was my father's youngest sister; that makes her my aunt and your great-aunt."

"Oh, good!" put in Gladys, "is she pretty?"

"She was pretty once, sis, when I was a little boy, but she has worked too hard."

"Oh, is she poor?"

The man laughed. "No, Aunt Rebecca has never been considered poor," he continued; "her husband is a well-to-do farmer."

"Then what makes her work too hard?"

"What made your father watch bank swallows so long he missed meeting his little Gladys this morning?" retorted the man.

"Same thing that made me watch caterpillars, I guess," laughed the child. "We all want to do what comes in our minds."

How the village folks and the country folks along the way did stare when Gladys and her father drove home. It seemed incredible that Richard Birney was talking and laughing with a child.
Said Gladys: "But I do so want to know about caterpillars. Now why do some caterpillars go so slow, slow, and some caterpillars go so fast? I would like to know the reason."

Said her father: "It is like this, Gladys: caterpillars always try to hide themselves; they usually feed at night and do their best to keep out of sight in the daytime. Most of them never move except on their way to new feeding grounds, and then some of them think to escape notice by crawling slowly along, and others move as quickly as possible for the same reason."

"Oh!"

"During the daytime many caterpillars hide themselves on the under surface of a leaf; others trust to the colors they wear for protection. Striped caterpillars, for instance, stretch themselves out on grass blades and stems; brownish ones drop to the ground."

"And, oh, papa," interrupted the child, "did you ever see caterpillars curl all up and drop quick when you scare 'em just a little bit?"

"Certainly, that is one of the habits of butterfly caterpillars."

"Don't all caterpillars turn into butterflies?" protested Gladys.
"Why, no," replied her father; "didn't you ever hear of moth caterpillars?"

"Oh, that's so, I forgot. When I see caterpillars, papa, I always wonder what their names are, and what kind of flying things they are going to turn into — what color their wings will be, and all about it. Caterpillars do so many queer things, and did you ever see how they act when they get mad? — no, I mean angry. They shake their heads and snap at you. I never saw a caterpillar smile, they always look ferocious in the face, and I wouldn't touch one anyway, would you? Now what makes them have such thick fur?"

"Because their bodies are warmer than the surrounding air, and the fur, as you call it, though 'pile' is the correct term, prevents the too rapid escape of the heat."

"Oh, that's it. Another thing, papa, I believe caterpillars could make spider-webs if they wanted to; they work and work, and seem to make zigzag ladders on leaves."

"That's right, Gladys, exactly, they do spin ladders of silk upon which to tread; otherwise they would easily lose their hold upon the leaves, especially when the wind blows. The
caterpillars you thought so strange, though caterpillars of the Mourning Cloak are common enough, spin wherever they go, making carpets, in fact, over which they crawl swiftly. Many caterpillars make nests—did you ever see one?"

"Never heard of a caterpillar’s nest, papa; tell me about them."

"You can find some easily enough any day, Gladys, if you use your eyes, and it is better to see one nest than to hear about forty."

"Yes, but, papa, maybe I wouldn’t know if I did find one. What do they look like, and why do caterpillars make nests? Do all caterpillars have nests?"

"No, child, not all caterpillars, and the ones that do, wish to hide themselves. Some caterpillars make nests on the surface of leaves, in which they rest after every meal. Another kind fastens the edges of a leaf together by the silk it spins, and doesn’t leave the nest until it has eaten it and has to make another. Some caterpillars fold over part of a big leaf; others draw several small leaves together, fastening them with the silk. The caterpillars that feed on grasses make their nests of blades of grass."
"Oh, papa, I remember now; once I found a plant by the roadside most all eaten up, and it was full of caterpillars and dead leaves and cobwebs. I poked it with a stick."

"Then, Gladys, you have seen a caterpillar's nest. There are caterpillars that live together in just such a fashion, covering an entire plant with their webs. You must have made a sad disturbance among them with your stick, because they intended to stay there all winter, and not come out until spring."

"Well, their nest wasn't a bit nice, and they must have been horrid caterpillars to live in such a mix-up. If I were a caterpillar and had to stay in one place all winter, I'd make me a nice, clean, little house."

Gladys's father laughed and shook his head.

"You would probably be a caterpillar of the Viceroy, then," he said.

"What kind is that?"

"Oh, sort of an Aunt Rebecca caterpillar," continued the man, "good housekeeper, neat and particular. Its winter home is made of a willow leaf. It begins at the tip of a leaf and eats about one-third of it, leaving the midrib. You know what that is, Gladys, the back bone
of the leaf. Then it brings the edges of what is left of the leaf together, fastening them with silk. After this the caterpillar covers its house, inside and out, with brown silk. It then spins more silk, with which to fasten the leaf to the stalk, so that neither frost nor wind can loosen it."

"Papa, why doesn’t it bite off the — what do you call it — the midrib of the leaf, I mean?"

"Because, Gladys, when everything is ready, the caterpillar creeps along the midrib into its dark house, head first, and there it sleeps until spring, safe as any caterpillar can be."

"Have we any willow trees on our farm, papa?"

"Plenty of them down by the river. Why?"

"Then I guess, if you don’t care, I’ll stay here next winter. There isn’t anything worth seeing in town in the winter, when you go to walk, you just see houses and store windows."

"Poor Gladys," laughed her father.

Aunt Rebecca, when she saw the truants coming, wondered, as did the neighbors, what they were talking about.
CHAPTER III

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH AUNT REBECCA

AUNT REBECCA’S face was pleasant to look upon when she saw Gladys.

"The dear little girl," she commented, giving the child a hug that surprised her father. She had never treated him in that fashion. Aunt Rebecca disapproved of the father of Gladys when he was a little boy, and she seemed never to realize that he had outgrown his childhood.

"Favors her mother," continued Aunt Rebecca, straightening her apron and adjusting her spectacles. "Only her hair is yellow. Well, likely as not her mother’s hair was that same color when she was her age. Her cheeks aren’t red enough, but they will be soon, out here in the country. She’s a little mite, it seems to me. Now my girls, Jane and Mary Ellen, were twice as big as she is when they were her age.
“Want to get washed up, don’t you, Gladys? Just step this way, out on the back porch. On the wash bench there you’ll find a basin of water on purpose for you. A body gets so dirty travelling.

“What did you say? A toad out on the back steps? Well, it won’t hurt you, and hurry now, Gladys, dinner’s all ready. What do toads eat? Oh, fiddlesticks! What difference does it make what toads eat? I know what men and women and children eat, and that’s all that concerns anybody. Here, here’s the towel in the kitchen.

“Yes, that’s a honeysuckle there by that window; this house is overgrown with green stuff. Wonderful bird, there, you say? Oh, nonsense! that’s nothing but a humming-bird, common as daylight. No, I don’t know how it makes its wings go so fast. Where do they build their nests? Don’t ask me, I haven’t had any time in my busy life to bother about such things. What difference does it make?

“Trot along in the dining room now, Gladys. Do you wear bibs at home? You don’t? You have a napkin? Oh, I think you’re too small for a napkin; I’ll make you some pretty bibs—
my girls wore bibs. You may sit there, opposite your father. Richard, you ask the blessing."

It was useless to protest. The golden head across the table was bowed; the dimpled hands were folded. Aunt Rebecca had managed better than she knew. Gladys’s father always asked a blessing after that, as did his father before him.

Aunt Rebecca poured the tea, and her nephew waited on the table as though dinner parties in the old farm-house were of frequent occurrence. They made no more ado about the position in which they found themselves than did the old-fashioned blue dishes, fresh from their eight years’ rest in the china closet.

Gladys, unconscious of anything unusual in the atmosphere, tried to behave like a lady, as she had been instructed to do before leaving her mother. She replied to all Aunt Rebecca’s questionings with a promptness that won the good woman’s approval.

"Does your mother keep hired help in the house to do your cooking and such?"

"Oh, no. We’ve always lived with grandpa and grandma, and they have a cook and two housemaids and a man."

"Is your grandma feeble?"
"No, she's real fashionable; she goes out to drive and she goes calling—and she powders."

"Gladys, you aren't telling me that that old lady with one foot in the grave puts powder on her face!"

"No, no, Aunt Rebecca, her feet are all right, but she powders; and she looks almost as pretty as mamma sometimes."

"Well, powderin's a sin; hope you'll never do it, Gladys. I don't want any blood relation of mine to powder."

"Grandma belongs to the church," protested Gladys.

"Oh, that doesn't count in the city," sniffed Aunt Rebecca, "city churches are mostly for show. Now, out here in the country, belonging to the church means something. You go to meeting, don't you, Gladys?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Rebecca, every Sunday."

"Our folks'll drive around and take you with us."

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Rebecca, but I'm going with my father."

"Oh, you are! Well, if he doesn't happen to go next Sabbath, you are welcome to go with us and have dinner at our house."
Gladys’s father smiled at the platter. He had not been inside the village church since Gladys was a baby, as Aunt Rebecca well knew.

“How’s your grandpa; is he real spry?”

“Oh, I guess he never was exactly spry, Aunt Rebecca.”

“Old gentleman is feeble, is he?”

“Oh, my, no. He’s a great man—my grandfather—he makes speeches and the people cheer. He looks kind of sober, but mamma says that’s because he’s so wise and has to think about important things all the time. He’s got a gold-headed cane, too, and you mustn’t touch it.

“Say, Aunt Rebecca, did you ever see a caterpillar with horns and a tail?”

“Fiddlesticks! no. It isn’t mannerly to talk of such things at the table. Is your grandfather always hunting up caterpillars when he goes out to walk?”

“Oh, dear, no.”

“Are you fond of him?”

“Why, Aunt Rebecca, he’s my relation! You always love your relations, don’t you, papa?”

“Pass your plate, Gladys, and let papa give you some more chicken.”
"Oh, no, thank you, I don't want anything more on my plate, because I want to see the pictures on it. I thought I never could eat through to the pictures."

In the afternoon Aunt Rebecca took Gladys to her room and helped her unpack her trunk.

"Now, Gladys," said she, "you have surely been taught to have a place for everything and everything in its place. Now we'll hang your gingham dresses on these hooks, and your best dresses right here — you have four best dresses, you say! Well, well! In my day a little girl was lucky if her best dress was as pretty as one of your ginghamss."

"Did you ever have a silk dress when you were a little girl, Aunt Rebecca?"

"No, indeed; have you a silk dress, Gladys?"

There was a tone of reproach in Aunt Rebecca's voice.

"No," replied the child; "but I've always wanted one. Mamma says they are not appropriate for me; but I know some girls that wear silk dresses, and I think they look real 'appropriate."

"Your mother has good sense," said Aunt
Rebecca, nodding her head in approval. "It's poor taste to put silks on little girls."

The dolls in Gladys's trunk put in their appearance; one by one, to the astonishment of Aunt Rebecca. She had never seen so many together outside of a store.

"Who made your dolls such beautiful dresses?" she asked.

"Made them myself. See, Aunt Rebecca, this box is full of ribbons and scraps of silk and things to make doll clothes of."

"Do you play with all these dolls, Gladys?"

"Yes, every one," replied the child, wondering why Aunt Rebecca sighed, and then seemed to lose all interest in dolls.

"Remember, Gladys," she cautioned, "that a 'stitch in time saves nine,' and whenever your clothes need mending, sit right down and sew them up. You are too young to be away from your mother; but I presume she knew how willingly I would help you keep yourself in order. And be sure you don't put on your Sunday clothes on week days. You can run over 'cross lots any time you want to see me, too."

Everything in the room was finally arranged
to the satisfaction of Aunt Rebecca, and she and Gladys went downstairs, where they spent the rest of the afternoon getting acquainted with each other. Aunt Rebecca, knitting as she talked, told Gladys stories of her childhood, and delightful stories they were.

“Gladys,” said she, at last, “there were once two little girls. One had a great many dolls and the other never owned one. The little girl who had the dolls was a healthy, happy child who could run and play all day long, if she wanted to. The other was a cripple; a child who had been sick all her life.”

“Why didn’t the well child give the sick child one of her dolls?” interrupted Gladys.

“Probably because she didn’t know about the sick child,” replied Aunt Rebecca. “This little cripple lives on your father’s farm, Gladys; she can’t walk a step and never has, though she is as old as you. She is a patient little thing, I never knew her to complain; but her folks are poor, and I just found out this morning that she never had a doll and has always wanted one.”

Without listening for another word, Gladys flew up the stairs, returning with a bisque doll.
"Take her, Aunt Rebecca, take her," she cried; "this doll's my very own because I bought her with my own money. Grandpa gave me five dollars for having the highest standing in my class at school—and this doll goes to sleep and has real hair—her name is Rosalind Marie, and I want you to take her to that poor little girl."

There were tears in Aunt Rebecca's eyes as she watched the child's earnest face.

"A little doll will do just as well, Gladys," she said, "even better, because this is too large to be handled easily. One of your tiniest dolls would be a treasure to a child who has never even held one for a minute."

"What is the little girl's name?" asked Gladys.

"Nora Bennet."

"Is she pretty?"

"No, not a bit."

"Has she any brothers and sisters?"

"Yes, six brothers and one sister."

"Are they pretty?"

"No, nor even clean half the time."

Aunt Rebecca had great difficulty in persuading Gladys to send one of the little dolls
to Nora, in place of her dearest Rosalind Marie.

On her way home after supper, Aunt Rebecca made a few remarks to the night wind as she walked.

"I'll send Mary Ellen right back in the morning, if I can spare her, to tell Gladys how delighted that poor little Nora was with the doll and the animal cookies. I ought to be ashamed of myself. I never would have thought of sending cookies to that poor little scrap of humanity.

"Well, I'm proud of that little Gladys. I was afraid that she'd see that I approved of her. I wanted to tell her that she's the most unselfish child I ever saw, but I wouldn't; it isn't right to spoil children. She isn't a bit like Richard. There he sat all through supper-time, mum as a mouse. I don't see how a talkative child like Gladys will ever get along with him, and be contented. I am going to show her pretty face to the neighbors, first chance I get."
CHAPTER IV

HER FATHER'S OWN FOLKS

"Papa, what are those pretty birds? They seem to know you and the horses and cows, and me, too, I guess. I am sure they're saying in their little twitter, 'Glad to see you, glad to see you.'"

"Those are my—our barn swallows, Gladys."

"Do the swallows live on our farm, papa? Where are their homes?"

"You watch them a few minutes, Gladys, and when we go in the barn, I'll show you their nests."

It was a perfect morning. The birds themselves were no more delighted to be out in its sunshine than Gladys, who had followed her father's every step since they left the house.

The child watched the swallows until a wren attracted her attention.

"Oh, wait a minute, papa. Just listen to that
little bird on the fence. What is its throat made of? Did you ever hear such a song? I'm glad I came home if all the folks are so glad to see me. How can such a little bird sing so loud! Isn't that the merriest song? — and what a saucy little bird it is, too! See it jerk its tail! Papa, do listen! That little bird says just as plainly, 'Glad to see you, Gladys; Gladys, glad to see you. Glad you came home, glad of it, glad of it,' — oh, papa, what is its name?"

"That's Jennie Wren, Gladys, the busiest bird on our farm. Her home is in a box on a pole near the strawberry patch."

"Why, papa, see her watch you. She seems to be scolding now."

"She is something of a scold, Gladys, but she never scolds Father Wren nor the children, so we ought to forgive her. She is a great worker, is Jennie Wren. She doesn't like callers, but I'll let you climb up a ladder and have a peep at her eight children."

"Eight children, papa! I don't see how she can find time to sing. How can she feed so many? What do they eat, anyway?"

"Jennie Wren can work and sing, too, Gladys; and if I were a little girl, I would learn
"THAT'S JENNIE WREN"
that lesson from her. Your father wants you to be a beautiful woman, and that you surely will be if you do what you must, cheerfully."

"Oh, yes, I know that; but what do the baby wrens eat?"

"They eat bugs and tiny worms, Gladys. Jennie Wren is after bugs now, on that rose-bush by the fence. See her, how carefully she searches among the leaves, and how quickly she works? There she goes home to the nestlings."

"She looked like a little mouse running over the bush," replied the child. "But, papa, isn't it queer to have a rose-bush in the barn-yard? They don't have rose-bushes in barn-yards!"

"'They,'" repeated her father. "Who are 'they,' Gladys?"

"Why, 'they'; 'they,' that's what they always say, just 'they.'"

"But whom do you mean by 'they,'" persisted the man.

"Don't you know, papa? Why, I guess 'they' must be everybody. Lots of times you want to wear things but you can't because 'they' don't. I can't just explain to you, but it's in my mind."

"Well, from this time on, little daughter, you do your own thinking, and don't you ever ques-
tion what 'they' will think of your actions. Jennie Wren doesn't object to the rose-bush in the barn-yard, and neither do we—so what difference does it make to any one else. Then, again, the rose-bush has a perfect right to her bit of earth, because she was first planted there years and years ago when this spot was a front yard. There was once a large house about where the corn-crib stands, which was burned to the ground when your grandfather was a little boy. The rose must have been a beauty in those days, but left to itself so long, it is no better than a wild rose now. No one but Jennie Wren has ever given it any care."

"Why, papa, how can a wren take care of a rose-bush?"

"By keeping it free from spiders and bugs, Gladys. If it were not for the work of the birds, there wouldn't be a green thing left on our farm. Don't you remember what greedy fellows the caterpillars are?"

"Yes; but surely, papa, that little wren isn't after caterpillars,"

"True enough, but she eats millions of butterfly eggs that would become caterpillars if they were left to hatch; and as she and Father
Wren feed their young thirty-six times in an hour, you can see what useful birds they are.”

“Even if wrens didn’t do a bit of good,” declared Gladys, following her father’s every step, “I would love them for their singing. Does all the world love wrens, I wonder?”

“That’s a subject I never investigated, Gladys, though if you really want to know, we can find out.”

“How?”

“By research.”

“What’s that?”

“Patiently hunting through dozens and dozens of books for information regarding the subject you are interested in.”

“Oh, well, I guess I don’t care about research. The days haven’t time enough in them for that. I’d rather be watching things grow.”

The man laughed.

“Books are good friends, Gladys,” he replied. “And the more you watch things grow, the more anxious you will be to learn all you can about them. Now in regard to whether or not all the world loves wrens, I recall the fact that in France the wren is known as ‘the good
God's little hen.' I also remember reading somewhere about the wrens in Ireland. It seems that more than a hundred years ago men and boys used to hunt wrens on Christmas day. They each carried two sticks; with one, they beat the bushes, and with the other they killed the wrens when they flew out. On the following day, St. Stephen's Day, boys, who called themselves 'Wren Boys,' would each tie a bird, in a way I do not quite understand, Gladys, between two hoops which were decorated with ribbon. The boys would then parade the streets singing a song about the wren and begging money to bury it with."

"What made them ever do such a dreadful thing, papa?"

"No one knows with any certainty, but it is supposed that when the inhabitants of Ireland were heathen, they worshipped the wren. When the Christian missionaries came, so the story goes, they compelled the people to kill wrens once a year, to show that they didn't believe in the old heathen religion any more.

"I guess I am ready to go to the house, now, little daughter."

"But the swallows, papa; you said you would
show me the swallows’ nests. Why are they called swallows? Is it because they swallow worms and things?"

"Have you seen them swallow worms?" laughed the father.

"No, I guess not. They don’t feed their children as often as the wrens do. I haven’t seen them do anything except fly round and round in the air. Why don’t they come down after worms?"

"They don’t want worms, Gladys. Swallows catch their food on the wing, devouring all kinds of flies and mosquitoes. Do you know who the Scandinavians are, Gladys?"

"Yes; they are folks who live in Norway and Sweden. Why?"

"Oh, I was going to tell you the Scandinavian story about how the swallow got its name. It is said that when the Saviour was crucified, the swallows flew around and around the cross, saying, ‘svallow, svallow,’ a Scandinavian word meaning ‘console, consolation.’ So the bird came to be called ‘svallow’ or ‘swallow,’ the ‘bird of comfort or consolation.’"

The child made no comment. She followed
her father into the barn listening with a serious face while he explained the habits of the swallows. He showed her their nests on the beams and rafters, telling her they were made of grass and mud, and lined with feathers. Told her all he remembered of the swallows' life in the air; how they skim low over the ponds and fields, and dart swiftly through the village streets after insects; pointed out their small, weak feet which they need only for perching; telling her of their strong wings, and how they use their forked tails as rudders.

Yet Gladys said nothing. She walked backward out of the barn, throwing the swallows a kiss as she left them.

The next moment her mind was filled with the beauty of the road to the house.

"Maple Lane, Gladys," said her father, removing his hat as he entered the shade of the green archway.

Gladys seemed to have lost the use of her tongue. When she recovered her speech, she said, "This is where I'll bring my dolls." Satisfaction expressed itself in her tones. "They are nice folks," she continued.

"What, the dolls?" questioned her father.
"No, the maple trees," replied the child. "Where did they come from?"

"Your grandfather planted most of them, Gladys."

"No, I didn't mean that, papa; I mean, where did the first maple trees come from? where was their first home?"

"Asia, my child, Asia. We have about nine different maples in America, but China and Japan have over thirty. Most of these trees are sugar maples."

"Oh, yes, I know all about sugar maples, we took them once."

"What do you mean, Gladys?"

"Why, we studied about them in school — about making sugar, I mean, and all about what makes maple leaves turn such pretty colors in the autumn. Our teacher said folks used to think the frost made them turn, but now men say that isn't so; that if the summer has been rainy, so the leaves are kept full of sap, why then the colors are brighter in the fall; but if the summer has been dry, then the colors are dull."

"That's all right as far as it goes, Gladys, but there is a great difference in the trees them-
selves. Right there is a silver maple tree with the deeply cut leaves on the long stems."

"Where the robin is singing, papa? the tree with the silvery leaves?"

"Yes, that is the one; it is the first tree to blossom in the spring, sometimes opening its buds in the winter. Its foliage is never bright in the autumn, always a pale yellow. On the other side of the lane is another maple whose foliage is pure yellow in the autumn — the tree with the downy leaves, Gladys, its name is the ash-leaved maple."

"Why, papa, I wouldn't call that tree a maple tree at all, because its leaves don't look like maple leaves — how do you know for sure that's a maple tree?"

"Because of its keys, Gladys; do you see the drooping clusters of maple keys? No other kind of tree bears such fruit."

"Oh, that is what you call the pretty seeds with the wings, — keys, I never knew before. But, papa, the trees I think the prettiest are those with the red stems. Oh, those pretty red stems! What do you call those maple trees, papa?"

"They are the red maples, Gladys, and red is their autumn coloring."
"This is the first time in all my life, papa, that I ever knew there were different kinds of maple trees. I always thought that a maple tree was just a maple tree. Do you know the names of all the trees upon our farm, papa?"

"My little Gladys, do you know the names of your own folks?"

"Why, yes, 'cept some relation I never heard of. Why?"

"Because these beautiful trees, Gladys, and the trees of the old forest and swamp, and all the wild things living in their branches, or beneath their shelter, or anywhere upon this old farm, are your father's own folks."

The child was silenced. Though the birds along the way sung of their homes among the maples, though the bees welcomed her, and the little yellow butterflies played beneath her very feet, she asked no further questions. Once she glanced into her father's face. He seemed to have forgotten her, seemed to be alone. The child hesitated a moment, then slipped her little hand into his.

So, leaving the maple lane behind them, they passed into the sunlight.
Gladys was left to entertain herself in the afternoon. Her father went away saying that he wouldn’t be gone more than an hour. He was afraid she would cry or beg to go with him, and was greatly relieved when Gladys said she didn’t mind being alone.

The child had no intention of staying in the house, and ran to her room for a doll to take out under the trees.

Suddenly she remembered Aunt Rebecca’s warning about wearing Sunday clothes on week days.

“I guess I’ll just have a look at my Sunday dresses,” she thought. They were so fresh and pretty hanging in the closet that Gladys took one down—a lace-trimmed white dimity.

“I’d like to put it on,” she whispered.

The dolls only stared.
"I wouldn’t sit down in the grass, nor get it dirty, and I can’t see a bit of harm in dressing up once in a while. I’d like to walk up and down the maple lane in this white dress, and play I’m somebody going to the coronation. The trees and weeds and things could be just the common folks staring at me in the procession. I believe I’ll do it."

Gladys began unbuttoning her dress, talking back to her conscience as she worked.

"My mother didn’t tell me not to wear a white dress this afternoon. Aunt Rebecca doesn’t live in this house and this is a week-day dress anyway. I wear it on week days when I go to dress-up places. My father doesn’t care what dress I put on. He hasn’t told me what to wear. I won’t put on my very best white petticoats because this isn’t my very best white dress. I guess my mother’d like to have me dress up, and Aunt Rebecca wouldn’t mind if she knew how careful I am going to be.

"No, Josephine Antoinette, you can’t go, because children aren’t allowed in coronation processions."

The doll didn’t say a word; but something
about the expression of her face made Gladys feel guilty. Not that the doll stopped smiling, but the mother of Gladys and Aunt Rebecca seemed both to be looking out of her eyes.

"You go to sleep!" said Gladys, placing Josephine Antoinette on her back so suddenly her eyes threatened to drop out—or rather, in. "Now, keep your eyes closed until I come back."

Josephine Antoinette had reason to be thankful that children weren't allowed in coronation processions.

Scarcely had Gladys entered the maple lane when her knees began to tremble and her heart thumped violently.

"I'll play it's a lion escaped from the zoo," she whispered, marching slowly on instead of retreating before it was too late.

"Who's afraid of an old sheep, anyway?"

On went Gladys and on came the sheep, bowing as he walked. Not until Gladys was near enough to see the expression of his face did she think of running, and when she fled, the old sheep threw politeness to the winds. In less than a minute he had knocked poor Gladys down in the road.
Bravery is a fine thing; but when Gladys faced the prospect of being killed by an old sheep with no one near to tell of the heroism with which she met her fate, she screamed and cried at the top of her voice.

The old sheep liked the game and seemed pleased with the music.

He would stand back to give Gladys a chance to get up, but it wasn’t part of his plan to allow her to escape—down she would go again with her nose in the dust. She hadn’t time to think of her dress then, but it was soon torn into shreds.

Once the old sheep made a mistake; he stopped to laugh. That gave Gladys the chance of her life; she had just time to scramble to the top of an old stump before he made another charge. Then he stood on guard while she screamed for help.

The trees and weeds and other common folks in the vicinity had plenty of reason to stare.

Gladys had never felt such misery. She was sure she would die. After a while she would be too tired to keep her place on the stump and then the old sheep would kill her. He would probably eat her afterwards, and her father wouldn’t find anything left of her but
bones. There was one comfort, though it was a slim one: no one would have much to say about the sin of disobedience; everybody would feel too sad to blame her.

Gladys was all but hopeless when the hero arrived in the lane. He was dirty, freckled, and ragged—worst of all, he was grinning.

“Wa’n’t afraid of him, was you?” was his greeting.

“Oh, boy, boy!” begged Gladys. “Come and drive him away or kill him or something! O dear! O dear!”

“Had you down, didn’t he?” continued the boy, with a broader grin.

“Oh, hurry up, boy; if you only knew what a dreadful time I’ve had, you’d hurry up.”

The boy, having met that same old sheep before, caught him by the horns.

“Now cut for the house,” he commanded.

“Run for your life.”

Gladys was thankful to obey, but fresh terror seized her as the boy called out:—

“I don’t know but he’ll get away, you better go a little faster. Oh, say! he’s a-comin’, I believe his horns are a-gettin’ loose.”

“Well, I can’t help it,” cried Gladys, in des-
peration, "if he gets me, he'll just have to—I can't run another step."

The boy stopped laughing. "He can't get away from me, I was just a-tryin' to scare you a little. If you wasn't the girl that sent my sister a doll, I'd set him on you sure enough, but now I'd hold him if he was a roarin' lion."

Without stopping to thank the boy, Gladys rushed into the house, just as Mary Ellen, cool and pretty, walked up the path.

"Why, what's the matter?" she asked, following the sobbing child.

Thankful for a sympathetic listener, Gladys told her story, a little at a time, between spells of weeping.

Mary Ellen didn't even smile; she waited until afterward when she repeated the story to do that. To poor Gladys she was a friend in need.

"Mother's model child," she whispered to her rocking-chair. Then she took Gladys in her arms, dirt and all, kissed her and comforted her, and talked as only a young lady would know how to talk to a little girl in deep distress. Such kindness had its effect on
Gladys. In a short time she was talking and laughing gayly as usual. Mary Ellen’s dress had lost some of its freshness, but its very color was forgotten in the course of years, while its owner’s unselfish sympathy impressed itself upon the life-long memory of a child.

Gladys loved Mary Ellen from that hour.

"I don’t believe I’m hurt much," confessed Gladys, searching for possible injuries, "but I was frightened almost to death."

"I guess your dress was frightened quite to death," laughed Mary Ellen. "I think we would better go upstairs and take it off, and possibly soap and water might help your hands and face."

"I presume I do look like a beggar child," agreed Gladys. "Who do you suppose that beautiful boy was?" she continued, as Mary Ellen went with her up the stairs.

"Why, I don’t know, unless it was Ted Bennet, and he isn’t exactly beautiful to look at."

"Well, I guess you’d ’a’ thought anybody was beautiful to look at if you’d been on that stump, ’stead of me. Who is Ted Bennet? He must be a remarkably good boy."
“No, he isn’t even good,” declared Mary Ellen. “He’s a regular terror. His father is the farmer who works for your father. They live not far from the barns, in a house back a little way from the road.”

This reminded Mary Ellen of her errand. She told Gladys what her mother wished her to about Nora and the doll, and answered about thirty questions each minute until Gladys looked presentable once more.

“*This dress can never be mended in the world, Gladys,*” she remarked, examining the ruined dimity.

For a moment Gladys looked truly penitent; then she hung the dimity on the bedpost, repeating under her breath, “*A stitch in time saves nine.*”

Mary Ellen didn’t hear, but the dress looked so forlorn and friendless that she joined Gladys in a merry laugh.

Mary Ellen made a strawberry shortcake and stayed to supper. She was surprised to find that Gladys’s father could be entertaining, and he was surprised to find that having company could be so pleasant.

“Wish we might invite Ted Bennet over
sometime,” said Gladys, when Mary Ellen had gone home. “That’s one thing I wish.”

Her father only whistled, and Gladys somehow felt that she had better not invite Ted Bennet.
CHAPTER VI

THE THINKING CORNER

MY DEAR MAMMA: Papa says it is time for me to write to you again, and it is raining so I guess I will. June rains in the country are like the music in church when they are taking up the contribution—you know it won't last long, and it is soft and sweet, and it is going to help somebody, and you like to keep still and listen to it. We didn't go to church last Sunday.

"Papa has given me a corner in his sitting room for my own, only I don't dare talk much, just think and write to you while he reads and studies. It is a little like being in school, only my father smiles back at me always. I can walk around, too, and sometimes I feel of all the books—the room is full of books. Do you remember the post in the middle of the room, that goes clear to the top? Papa has made
book shelves around it, and they are full of books that everybody likes.

"My corner has a little table in it. Papa sawed off the legs of a high little table on purpose for me, and he sawed off the legs of a queer little old chair, too. Aunt Rebecca said it was a sin to spoil furniture so; but papa said he wanted me to be comfortable, and I am. He lets me have all the nice white paper I want to use, and Aunt Rebecca says that's a waste. I know nobody but my father would let me do it.

"I asked papa once where you used to have your corner in this room; and he said you didn't like corners, you wanted a whole city. Papa looked sad as anything when he said it, and I didn't know what to say, so I kissed him. Then I went back in my little corner.

"Yesterday it rained, too, and papa told me to sit in my corner and think. I couldn't think of anything to think about, and I told him so. He smiled, and wrote something on a piece of paper; then he told me to pin it on the wall by my table where I could read it every day. He said Longfellow wrote it and he guessed it would make anybody think. I
am going to copy it for you — maybe it will make you think; I know it didn’t me. All I could think of for a while was about what a comfortable father I’ve got. His face is so kind and smoothed out, and he’s always happy; and he’s never cross, and he says I’m a comfort. I know he wishes you’d come home, and so do I.

“This is the verse; I know you will like it because I do:

"‘And Nature, the old nurse, took the child upon her knee, Saying: "Here is a story-book thy Father has written for thee, Come wander away with me,” she said, “into regions yet untrod, And read what is still unread in the manuscripts of God.”’"

“The next day: — It’s raining again this morning. I got tired of writing yesterday so I played go calling. I went to see Julius Cæsar and George Washington and the Napoleons, all in the low bookcases, you know, and had lots of fun without making a bit of noise. I played travel, too. Books are the countries I visit. When I went to Mexico, I played ‘Prescott’s Conquest of Mexico, was Mexico itself, and I looked at pictures — the read-
ing is too hard. When I play travel, I take a few of my dolls.

"I should think papa would call this room a library. Grandpa's library hasn't nearly so many books in it, and he told me they cost so much children mustn't touch them. Papa says this room was the sitting room when he was a little boy; and when he got to be a man, he kept buying books and buying books, until now the room is the nicest one I was ever in, except my little bedroom here.

"Everything in this dear old house means something. The pictures are pictures about something, and the chairs are all solid,—you wouldn't have to watch the boys all the time for fear they would break one. I will never forget how Tom broke grandma's little gold chair in the parlor; she told him he ought to have known better than to sit in it. And papa says the first chilly day we'll have fires in both the fireplaces. He says they were made to build fires in, and he doesn't mind if they do make a little dust. He would have planted pop-corn if he had known I was coming.

"Next day:—It stopped raining and the sun came out yesterday morning, so I went out
and played on the lawn barefooted. That's why I didn't get my letter finished.

"The red-headed woodpeckers wake me every morning; they have a nest in an old oak tree near my window, and how they do hammer and hammer. I like to watch them, but I never could love a red-headed woodpecker if I tried.

"Some robins have a nest in an apple tree, and they are the dearest birds I ever saw. The mother robin hops right on my window-sill sometimes before I am out of bed, and I don't hardly dare breathe for fear she'll fly away. There are four eggs in the nest, the prettiest blue I ever saw. When I first came, I left a doll's sash on the window-sill,—a little narrow red ribbon,—and that robin got it and put it in her nest. She watched me all the time she was weaving it in, too; but I was as happy as anything because she had it.

"The first night I was here I had a dreadful scare. I heard a roaring noise in the chimney that frightened me, so I called papa. When he came, he told me I heard chimney swallows. Did you ever hear of them, mamma? He says they aren't really swallows, but swifts, and
belong to the same family the whippoorwills do. I hear a whippoorwill every night. Whippoorwills lay their eggs on the ground. Did you ever know that? Well, papa told me all about the chimney swallows — how they stick their nests to the walls of the chimney. You get a bird book, mamma, and you can read all about them. Papa says they feed their young at night, and that is the reason I heard the dreadful roaring. He says chimney swallows are queer birds, and never get acquainted with other birds. I have seen them since. They flap their wings a little as bats do, when they fly. Oh, yes, there were bats in my room, too, that first night, and they frightened me, but papa told me bat stories and swallow stories until I went to sleep.

“This is the sure end of this letter, from

“Your loving daughter,

“Gladys Birney.”

“P.S. — The old sheep is in a field where he can’t get out.”

“B.”
CHAPTER VII

HOW GLADYS SET THE FASHIONS

"FATHERS can't do everything, can they?"

There was a lump in Gladys's throat, and tears in her eyes.

"I wish mamma was here, don't you, papa? You can't get ready for church alone much better than I can. Grandma always helps grandpa get ready."

"Now don't be discouraged, Gladys; I'll get this sash tied after a while. No, I don't need any help in getting ready for church myself. I'm satisfied with my appearance."

"Oh, papa, I don't want to hurt your feelings, but you don't look a bit nice; your necktie sticks up so funny, and O dear, I can't tell what ails you. Mamma'd know, in a minute; you need mamma, and so do I. How can I go to church without having my hair curled?"

"There, there, Gladys, don't cry about such
a little thing. Your hair curls itself, and it looks much more tasty combed out as it is, than it would divided up and twisted into golden sausages all around your head. I'd make the sausages if I could, though.”

The child laughed through her tears.

“You are just as good as any father could be,” she admitted, “but we need mamma in this house, don’t we?”

“Do you want to go back to mamma, Gladys?” asked the man.

“No, but I want her to come home to us, don’t you?”

The silken sash fell in shimmering folds about the child’s feet.

“Why, what’s the matter, papa?”

“The sash is too long, Gladys, too long. I can’t wad it up enough, no matter how hard I try. Let’s cut it and use half; then I can tie it in a hard knot and the ends will still be long enough to reach the bottom of your dress. It will look so neat and tidy.”

“They don’t wear sashes that way, papa; they wear sashes tied in big bows. Oh, I forgot. Fix it the way you want to, I don’t care,—only it’s a dreadful thing to cut a sash,
papa; I don't know what mamma'd say. She won't mind, though, after all, because she told me to always do as you think best.”

Gladys watched the cutting of the sash with a serious face.

“Now hold still, Gladys, and we'll have this blue decoration disposed of in a minute. There! now it looks smooth and flat — looks more like it! Ought to suit anybody!”

“It does look pretty,” agreed Gladys, gazing over her shoulder into the mirror. “I wanted to wear this sash because it matches these blue stockings. I won't have to be afraid of mussing my curls this morning when I put on my hat. No, papa, that isn't the way. I don't wear the rubber under my chin, it goes behind my ears, like this. Don't you think my hat is pretty? It had just daisies on it first, but I coaxed mamma to let me have some pink rosebuds, too.

“Yes, mamma made this white dress her own self. She sewed on all the lace, and made these little tucks. Mamma can do anything she tries to.

“Where is our pew in church, papa? I hope we don't have to go way up in front, on account of my hair.”
Gladys's father, brushing his coat, pretended not to hear.

The child repeated the question.

"It has been my custom, Gladys, to sit in your grandfather's pew; it is pretty well up in front, by a window. If we're late, there may be somebody in the pew; and if there is, we'll sit where it happens."

The clergyman was astonished by the size of his congregation that Sunday morning.

Aunt Rebecca sat in her pew, stiff in black silk and satisfaction. Within her field of vision were Gladys and her father in the old Birney pew, as she had promised. The little church was crowded to the doors. Aunt Rebecca knew it without turning her head. At the village sewing circle, at the prayer meeting, at the neighbors, everywhere through the country, far and near, had Aunt Rebecca spread the news that Gladys and her father were going to church that Sunday.

The good clergyman, in the innocence of his soul, rejoiced in the reunion of his flock. Deep gratitude mingled with emotion in his tones, when he announced his text, "Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee."
There were two who listened attentively to the sermon—Gladys and her father.

When the service was over, Mr. Birney left the church with Gladys before any one could question him or shake hands. The child couldn't understand why he snapped his whip and laughed when they drove away. Neither could she understand why so many little country girls afterward wore sashes tied in hard knots, nor why their mothers combed out all their pretty curls.
CHAPTER VIII

A LONG SUNDAY

It was time for the evening sermon in the village.

Gladys and her father were eating their luncheon on the wide front porch when the music of the church bell was wafted over the field to them.

"Papa, the bell is calling us, may we go?" The child was lonesome. The Sunday afternoon had been so long. She had talked to the willows by the river; she had peeped in the ground-birds' nests; she had wandered through the corn-fields where rogues in black were teasing the scarecrow; she had made dandelion curls, and wreaths of oak leaves and gathered the wayside flowers.

She had gone unbidden to the catbird's home in the thicket, and been scolded while she lingered; for how did the cat-birds know that Gladys would not molest their nest nor touch the complaining babies in it?
She had walked down the maple lane and back, singing the while. She had visited the barn-yard and the orchards. She had tried the wild grape-vine swing in the locust grove. Sitting idly there, she recalled what her father had told her of the locust trees; how rapidly they grew and how their creeping roots sent up shoots that soon became trees themselves. She noticed the furrowed, twisted trunks of the old trees, and the awkward, ragged branches. She had leaned far back in the swing to note the changing color of the foliage caused by the mingling of new, yellowish green leaflets with the older, darker ones. It seemed strange to Gladys that any tree should keep putting forth new leaves even into midsummer. She knew that the leaflets were folded in wet weather and at night, and smiled in memory of the little girl who said, "It is not bed-time; the locust tree has not begun its prayer."

Then in the corner of the locust grove had Gladys sought her bed of stars-of-Bethlehem. They had bloomed in that spot for years and years, so still and pure and white. Gladys touched their waxen petals reverently. They were her stars-of-Bethlehem, and she loved them.
From the locust grove Gladys had followed an ancient foot-path to the river; there she had thrown herself upon the grass, tired and half homesick. She had never been so utterly alone before, and thought with longing of the children's faces she had seen in church. She thought of Ted Bennet and Nora, and wondered what they were doing.

Then from the river had come the voice of gentle waves, saying, "Tired, sleep. Tired, sleep." In droning tones the bees in the linden above Gladys sung a lullaby song so soft and low, the river had no longer need to say, "tired, sleep."

The Sunday afternoon had certainly been a long one.

The church bell ceased ringing even as Gladys said, "May we go?"

"Why, Gladys," replied her father, "we would have to miss the glory of the sunset."

"There'll be more sunsets, papa," — the tone was wistful.

"True enough, my daughter, but this particular sunset will never be repeated, and soon, if we listen, we will hear the voices of the night."
"I would rather hear the voice of the minister," protested Gladys, laughing.

"Oh, you are anxious to hear a sermon, are you, sis?"

"Yes, papa, I never was so anxious to hear a sermon in my life—'most any kind of a sermon would do."

"Very well, then; what was the text this morning?"

"It was from Job: 'Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee.'"

"Good; now tell me what you can remember of the sermon."

"Honestly, I can't remember anything else; I listened, though."

"I know you did, Gladys, and the text is so good, I've decided to preach a sermon on it that you will remember."

"You, papa?"

"Yes, why not? I have just been reading a book called 'The Great World's Farm' that I think you will want to read yourself after you hear my sermon. You may be the audience, with the privilege of interrupting the sermon by asking all the questions you care to. What do you say?"
"All right, only I do wish there were more folks here. Don't you ever have company, papa?"

"Certainly, Gladys, I have plenty of the best company in the world—the original inhabitants of my farm, who do as they please and let me do the same. But next Sunday, little girl, I will drive you over to Aunt Rebecca's to spend the day. Now are you ready for the sermon?"

"Yes, papa, though honestly I don't enjoy sermons much as you think."
CHAPTER IX

AN EVENING SERMON

"To go back to the beginning of things, Gladys, this world was once—"

"Don't go back so far, papa. Begin a hundred years ago."

"That's too near our own time, Gladys, but if you prefer, I'll skip a few thousand years of the beginning, and we will consider the condition of the globe when Madam Nature began her farming. But first I must explain to you," and he talked for about twenty minutes or half an hour in a monotonous fashion on the formation of the earth, a subject that had interested him all the afternoon. "Everywhere were solid rocks," he continued, "which had to be broken up and made into soil before any plants could grow. You understand, Gladys, that plants cannot live upon air and water alone, but need the mineral substances in the rocks."
The child said nothing, unless one chose to interpret her long-drawn sigh.

"Madam Nature," continued the man, "caused earthquakes to break the rocks; then she bade the gases of the air and water, and the winds and the rains to do their work, until slowly the great rocks were crumbled into dust. Would you like to have these processes carefully explained, Gladys?"

The child made a gesture of dissent, drawing her chair nearer her father's as she did so. "I don't like the way the river looks, papa," she said, "and the sky is so black. See those cloud mountains, papa, piling high over the tree-tops there. Listen! Was that thunder?"

"Possibly," replied the man. "We may get a shower after such a sultry day — shouldn't be at all surprised.

"Sometime I will tell you all about the action of the frost and about the glaciers — those mighty grinders that crush the rocks into powder as they move on their silent way. Volcanoes do a wondrous work in pouring forth lava, and scattering dust and ashes over the surrounding country."
“Rivers and streams, too, wear away the solid rocks, and do their part in preparing the soil for Madam Nature's farm. Why, what's the matter, Gladys?”

“Papa, there is going to be a dreadful storm. See how the trees are tossing their branches. And hear the leaves rustling, papa; and there's lightning all over the sky—first in one place and then in another. Please take me, papa, and don't preach any more.”

Gladys climbed into her father's lap, hiding her face on his shoulder.

“But, Gladys, a summer shower is nothing, and I want to tell you about how vegetation begins upon the earth.”

“I don't like vegetation, papa.”

“But it is a most interesting study to trace the beginning of plant life, how the spores of the lichens, floating about in the air, settle upon the rocks or upon the streams of lava, and there begin to grow. After the lichens, come the mosses, and the mosses are followed by mould in which plants gain a foothold; then come the shrubs, and later the tall pine trees. Why, are you crying, Gladys? I have scarcely begun the story suggested by that
text, 'Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee.'"

"Oh, papa, the thunder talks too loud. I can't listen — indeed, I can't."

"Forget that it is thunder, Gladys, and imagine you hear the barn door rolling back and wagons rumbling along upon the highway. I want to call your attention, as the good clergyman would say, to the preparation of Madam Nature's farm. As the ages passed and plants and trees lived and died and forest fires swept over the earth, the soil became rich and fertile. Madam Nature sent the earth worms to plough the land, keeping them busy even to this day. All the burrowing animals are doing the same kind of work,—the moles, the chipmunks, the prairie dogs of the west, the gophers — Why, I thought you had stopped crying. Are you so afraid of the storm?"

The man himself was startled by the lightning flash of the next moment. Gladys clung to him in terror. "Isn't it lucky we didn't go to church?" she sobbed.

"Lucky is no name for it," agreed her father, caressing the golden head. Then he carried the child into the house, pulling down the
shades and lighting the lamp with her in his arms.

"Surely the little daughter isn't afraid when her father is with her," said he.

The man held the child close, rocking her as he used to in the days gone by, when he felt that she was all he had and that he must surely lose her—in the days when he would not try to keep her, but let her go without a word. He seemed to have his baby back again.

There was no break in the fury of the sudden storm, but Gladys lost her fear. "Anybody needs a good strong father," she whispered, with her arms about his neck, "just as much as they need a mother to tie sashes and do things that fathers can't do."

"Gladys, I am going to show you something that has been my dearest treasure all these years since you have been away."

The father opened a drawer, lifting out a pair of baby's shoes—shoes with holes in the toes—dear little shoes, bearing the impress of the plump baby feet that wore them; bits of old leather, perhaps, but priceless bits.

"These, Gladys, are the shoes that followed
papa all about the farm one long-ago summer."

"Papa," said the child, solemnly, "I am never going to leave you until I have to go to college. Mamma has the boys, and I guess they won't miss me."
PAPA, I read something this morning when you were in the fields at work.”

Gladys and her father were eating dinner.

“Something about you, too. Now listen.”

Gladys was fumbling in her pocket for a bit of crumpled paper which she spread upon the table.

“I copied this out of a book, and it tells what Mr. Emerson thinks about you. We took him in school last year.”

“Well, let’s hear what you copied, Gladys.”

“All right, listen. ‘He who knows the most, he who knows what sweets and virtues are in the ground, the waters, the plants, the heavens, and how to come at these enchantments, is the rich and royal man.’ So that’s what you are, papa, the ‘rich and royal man.’”
"To be that man, Gladys," replied her father, "is better than to care for nothing but a bank account. Money isn't worth the sacrifice commonly made to obtain it."

Gladys had never seen her father frown before. In a thoughtful mood she cleared the table, washed the blue dishes, and put the dining room in order—duties she had taken upon herself. While Aunt Rebecca might have approved the spirit of the undertaking, she would never have countenanced the manner of its execution. Yet the average man could have done no better than little Gladys,—a fact doubtless appreciated by her father, who was liberal with his compliments.

Usually Gladys sang as she worked, but on this occasion she went about so quietly, her father feared she was lonesome, and asked her to go with him to the fields to study butterflies. Gladys, delighted with the idea, went with him, asking more questions about butterflies in five minutes than her father could answer in thirty.

"Not so fast, Gladys, not so fast," he begged; "your father isn't a walking encyclopædia."

"Well, papa, you are the only man or woman I ever met who could answer questions about
STUDYING A MONARCH 85

things outdoors. Truly, papa, hardly anybody knows the difference between a worm and a caterpillar."

"The woful ignorance of this nation!" mocked her father. "What are you going to be when you grow up, Gladys—a professor of entomology?"

"What's that, papa?"

"Are you going to teach the science of insects in some college where the youth of our land are longing for enlightenment on the subject?"

"Yes; I wish I could, for mamma told me long ago that you love the birds and insects, and they always remind her of the life on the dear old farm."

"Your mother didn't say that, did she, Gladys?"

"Yes, papa, she says 'dear old farm' lots of times. Ever since I was a little baby she has talked to me about you and our farm. That's the reason I wanted to come home. I would never have known about it all, if she hadn't told me. And now I am going to stay here; it's where I belong.

"Why, papa dear, see what you are doing!"
You are spoiling butter-and-eggs with your stick."

Sure enough, all along the roadside were scattered the bright blossoms of the butter-and-eggs.

"An undoubted tragedy, Gladys, for which this stick must pay the penalty. See! It is broken and left with its victims. Don't laugh, child, about anything so sad.

"There, Gladys, on the red clover blossom is our butterfly — the one we are going to study."

"Why, that's the commonest kind of a butterfly, papa. They are everywhere on the farm; they are orange-brown, and black, and they go in flocks. They are never in a hurry. I love to watch them flying so easily along; they seem to think that life is all honey. I've watched them sailing slowly along, and I've caught them, too. They can fly high, papa, and right against the wind. What's its name, papa? I never knew its name."

"That is the monarch butterfly, Gladys; and now I think of it, here is a little couplet I want you to memorize:—

"'And what's a butterfly? At best, He's but a caterpillar, drest.'"
"Oh, that's easy, papa."

"There goes our butterfly, Gladys, into the clover field. Let's sit here in the shade awhile. Take this, my hat will make a better fan than yours. What do you know about the monarchs?"

"Why, only what I know about all butterflies; there isn't very much to know about butterflies, is there—just their names?"

"There's everything to know about butterflies, little girl; the different kinds of butterflies have as many distinguishing habits as birds. The monarchs are native Americans, and are supposed to go south in the winter, just as the birds do, returning to the north in the spring. Let me take my hat, Gladys; I want to catch a monarch."

The man was back in a minute with the struggling captive.

"First, I want you to notice the long, slender body, which is divided into three parts—the head, the thorax, and the abdomen. Attached to the thorax you see three pairs of legs. These two pairs are used for walking, so that the monarch belongs to the family of four-footed butterflies."
"What's the other pair of legs for?"

"For clinging, Gladys. Don't you remember the butterflies' habit of clinging?"

"Lucky creatures," commented the child; "they can fly or walk or hang up in the air to give their wings and feet a rest. What are these threadlike arrangements on its head, papa,—these little things with the knobs on the end?"

"They are the feelers, called the antennae, Gladys, and are what the butterfly smells with. Butterflies have a strong sense of smell. I will hold this one while you run and find a butterfly on a clover blossom—there's one, across the road. You go and see what it does with its feelers."

"Oh, papa," she called, "the butterfly keeps lifting the feelers up and putting them down again, first one and then the other, and now both of them; and is it really smelling of the clover? I'll be back in a minute, but I want to watch this butterfly until it—There it goes!"

"Now notice the wings of this one in my hand, Gladys; here are four wings trimmed with broad, black borders, and in the borders you see double rows of white spots. When the
butterfly is hungry, it keeps its little wings quivering; but when it finds the honey in the clover, it folds its wings back and keeps perfectly quiet until the honey is gone. Hunt for another butterfly and see for yourself.”

“Yes, sir, that’s the truth,” said Gladys, a few moments later. “And, papa, the butterfly does look like a little brown leaf when its wings are folded tight, just as you tried to tell me the other day when you were explaining to me about—about—What did you call it?”

“Protective coloring?”

“Yes, that’s it. I suppose birds don’t pay any attention to monarchs because they think they are dead leaves,” remarked the child.

“The birds never touch a monarch except by mistake, because they are such bad-tasting butterflies. Oh, no, Gladys, I never tasted of one. Just hold this butterfly while I get the microscope in my pocket. Now, we’ll study the wings. In the first place, you understand that the wings are formed of a framework of gauze in which are blood-vessels and air-tubes—the veins which cause the markings. The beautiful colors in the butterfly’s wings are in the scales and their arrangement upon the
framework of gauze. Can you see the shapes of the scales and how they are overlapped like shingles? When we handle the butterflies we rub off the scales."

"What kind of eyes have the butterflies, papa?"

"Compound eyes, Gladys, like the eyes of all insects — made up of thousands of tiny eyes."

"They must have wonderful sight, papa."

"That's where you are mistaken, Gladys; their sight is so defective they have to depend upon the sense of smell. They can see nothing clearly.

"Have you observed the monarch's tongue, little daughter? No, you can't see the tongue of the butterfly in my hand, because it is coiled up and hidden. This tongue is a long, hollow tube. When the butterfly smells its food, it uncoils its curious black tongue, thrusts the end of it in the flower and sucks the honey into its stomach."

The man rose, releasing the captive butterfly as he did so.

"What are you going to do now, papa?"

"Hunt for the eggs of the monarch butterfly," he said.
"How do you know where to look?"

"How do you know where to look for hens' eggs, Gladys?"

"Because I know where hens are apt to lay their eggs," replied the child.

"In the same way," said her father, "I know where to look for the eggs of the monarch butterfly; they are sure to be found on milkweed — the food-plant of the young caterpillar."

"Gladys easily found a milkweed plant, standing tall and straight by the roadside, its head slightly bowed by the weight of clustering buds. Her father found the butterfly eggs scattered singly over the plant, most of them on the underside of the pale leaves. By the aid of the microscope the child gained some idea of the beauty of the eggs, while her father explained its structure as best he could.

"There are many different shaped butterfly eggs," he told her, "and all of them are wonderful. Even with that microscope you cannot see the tiny rosette which crowns the monarch's eggs. From the delicate lines of the rosette to the base of the egg are ridges, from twenty-one to twenty-three — it is a pity we cannot see them plainly."
"The caterpillar comes out of the top of the egg, after which it eats the egg-shell."

"How long before the eggs are hatched, papa?"

"In four or five days, if they are not eaten up by the crickets or spiders. Perhaps we will find some young caterpillars in the top of this milkweed. When the little caterpillars are two days old, they have eaten so much and so fast they have outgrown their skins and have to shed them. Here, Gladys, is a little fellow among the buds. Do you observe the twelve bands of black separated by the bands of yellow and white encircling the slender body; and do you see the short, black horns at each end of the caterpillar? This is one of the caterpillars, Gladys, that rolls itself into a ball and drops by a thread when it is disturbed."

"Does it ever shed its skin again, papa?"

"Yes, twice more. The greedy little fellows eat night and day, and so grow fast. Look among the milkweeds, Gladys, and perhaps you will find a full-grown caterpillar. Look on the under side of a leaf."

Gladys's search was followed by a scream.

"Oh, papa, I found one; it fell to the
ground here among the leaves; the worst-looking caterpillar, black and yellow and green, with long, waving horns."

"Pick it up, Gladys, pick it up," laughed her father, "it won't hurt you."

"Catch me picking up that looking creature!" protested Gladys, watching her father shake another large caterpillar from the milkweed upon a burdock leaf, where it lay curled up like a ball. With two little sticks he stretched the caterpillar full length, to show Gladys its legs.

"These three pairs of legs near the head are the true legs; you see they are jointed, and are retained when the caterpillar becomes a butterfly. These five pairs of legs back farther are called prolegs, and are not true legs at all—you see they are not jointed, and appear more like feet. At the bottom of each one are hundreds of sharp hooks which enable the caterpillar to keep its hold on the rough surface of the milkweed leaf."

"No wonder they can rest on the under side of leaves," interrupted Gladys.

"The monarch caterpillar spins silken pathways, too, Gladys, so that it certainly does
travel safely. Do you notice how leisurely these caterpillars are in all their movements; they never run as some caterpillars do, but behave in a dignified manner, as do the monarch butterflies."

"Papa, here is a caterpillar eating. It takes the edge of the leaf in its hands,—its front legs, I mean,—and eats as though it were starving. How do caterpillars breathe, papa?"

"Through their sides, Gladys, just as butterflies do."

"Papa, here on this milkweed across the road I've found a caterpillar resting on a thick, thick mat of silk! Please come and see! Maybe it's dead, though."

Mr. Birney carefully examined the resting caterpillar before speaking.

"It's getting ready to moult, Gladys," he said, "and if you come out here to-morrow forenoon, you may see the whole process. The caterpillar will remain quiet like this for twenty-four hours before shedding its skin."

"Why does it have to shed its skin again, papa; isn't this old one good enough?"

"It is too tight, Gladys. This outer covering of our poor caterpillar will neither grow
nor stretch, and the caterpillar is as uncomfortable as you would be in a dress too tight for you."

"How will the caterpillar get out of its skin, papa? Can you tell me?"

"I'll try. This loosened, outer skin slips forward, and the caterpillar draws its head back. This stretching splits the skin here on the top; then the skin shrinks quickly back over the legs, without any trouble to the caterpillar, who has to work, however, to get its head free from the old head covering. It will use its front legs as hands in getting rid of this part of its skin.

"Now we come to the reason the carpet was spun. All the little hooks of the prolegs, Gladys, are firmly fastened into this silk, so that the caterpillar, with its head and front legs free, will simply step out of the rest of its skin."

"Then what will happen, papa?"

"The caterpillar next eats the old skin, Gladys, after which it waits an hour or two for the new skin to harden. Then for two or three days it eats milkweed more greedily than ever before. At the end of this time it grows restless and wanders about in search
of a place in which to change into a chrysalis. Having found a suitable support, it spins on the underside a new carpet of silk, which is made thick in one spot,—which spot is known as a button of silk. Our caterpillar then walks over this carpet until its last pair of legs are fastened in the button of silk; then it drops, hanging by this one pair of prolegs. The body is then curved upward until the head almost touches the button of silk, and in this position our caterpillar stays for another twenty-four hours. This time, Gladys, when the old skin splits and shrinks upward, there is revealed the chrysalis with all the parts of the butterfly, wrapped and folded together.

"The slender end of the chrysalis, called the cremaster, is provided with hooks, and when the chrysalis is finally free from the old caterpillar skin, the hooks of the cremaster are fastened into the button of silk, and our chrysalis works to remove the old skin, which it does not eat this time, from the button of silk. After this work is done, the chrysalis is quiet while its outer covering hardens.

"You must hunt for a chrysalis, Gladys, it will be shining green with yellow spots,—a
beautiful thing to see; a veritable green and gold palace of a king, my child, for when the chrysalis awakens, is it not a monarch?"

"How long will the chrysalis hang like that, papa?" asked the child, who investigated every weed in the vicinity while her father talked.

"About two weeks, Gladys; at the end of the first week the green coloring is gone from the chrysalis, and the butterfly can be seen through the skin. Finally, the covering is torn, and the butterfly walks out.

"There is no reason why you can't see all this for yourself, Gladys, and a great deal more than I can tell you. If you have the patience to watch, you have an opportunity to observe wonderful things every day."

"Yes, papa, but I wouldn't like to see Barnum's circus all alone. Oh, papa, come here quick! here's the queerest butterfly having a dreadful time with its tongue; its little wings hang straight down, and its body is so big I don't see how it is ever going to fly. Do hurry, papa!"

"Well, well, Gladys, that butterfly has just emerged from a chrysalis, and we missed seeing it; what a pity."
"But its tongue, papa, what ails its tongue?"

"Don't be so excited, Gladys; the butterfly is simply getting its tongue ready for business. You see it is now in two pieces; these pieces are grooved, with curved teeth along the edges. The butterfly is trying to fit the edges together — there, do you see? Its tongue is all right now, formed into a tube by the fastening of the two pieces."

"But, papa, see the wings; they are getting bigger all the time. Now the butterfly is beginning to wave them, and do look at its body — getting smaller every minute, sure's you live."

For half an hour Gladys and her father watched the graceful monarch prepare for its first flight. At last it floated away — another bit of perfection added to the beauty of earth.

The child sighed. "I was just thinking of mamma and the boys," she said in reply to her father's questioning look. "I don't like to enjoy things without having them here, too; do you?"

That night while the mother robin in the apple tree cuddled her children beneath her wings, Gladys sat long by the dormer window, thinking.

She wanted her mother.
CHAPTER XI

"DAUGHTERS OF NOON"

GLADYS spent the following morning by the milkweed plant down the road, where the monarch caterpillar changed its suit.

"The only thing I didn’t like about it, papa, was that I was all alone—no one to talk to and no one to laugh with me. I think we ought to have a party, don’t you? Or else let’s write to the boys to come home and watch caterpillars and things."

“You may write to the boys, if you like, Gladys.”

“Oh, the boys tease me, papa. They make fun of my spelling, and laugh at me, and call me ‘professor’ until I’m most crazy, sometimes. It wouldn’t do for me to say anything about caterpillars to them, but you could; I know you could make the boys like the farm.”

"There is no use, Gladys, in trying to in-

99
terest folks in what does not attract them, naturally."

Something in her father's tones checked Gladys's impulse to say more on the subject. She contented herself with asking questions about butterflies until her father suggested another after-dinner walk.

The child gladly consented to accompany him, but the day was so warm they were both glad to seek the shade of the orchard, where they seated themselves upon the grass to await the coming of stray butterflies.

"There is a big, black one, papa, trimmed with a yellow, spotted border, with one red spot in each wing. I've seen so many of them; what's its name?"

"That, Gladys, is the black swallowtail; it passes the winter here in the north in the chrysalis state. It deposits its eggs on parsley—we will find the young caterpillars in the garden in September. The caterpillar of the black swallowtail, Gladys, has a dangerous enemy in the ichneumon fly, which is much like a wasp in shape and color. This fly deposits its egg in the body of the caterpillar—"
"And the caterpillar dies," put in Gladys.
"No," replied her father, "the caterpillar doesn't die, although the egg of the ichneumon fly hatches into a little grub, that feeds upon the caterpillar. Finally, however, when the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis and the fly has undergone many changes, the butterfly in chrysalis form can no longer supply enough food to nourish itself and the fly, and it then dies. After this, the ichneumon fly comes full grown from the chrysalis. It is said that only three or four butterflies mature in every sixty eggs that are laid."

"Oh, what a shame!" exclaimed Gladys, thinking only of the beauty of the black swallowtail.

"No, Gladys, it is a wise provision of nature to keep the swallowtails from becoming pests in our gardens, where the caterpillars feed upon carrots, parsnips, celery, and other cultivated plants."

"What do the caterpillars look like, papa? —so that I will know what they are, if I ever see one."

"They are black at first, except for a spot of white in the middle. Later, they are usually
green, encircled with bands of black in which are orange spots. If you want to see a performance of remarkable interest, you must watch one of these caterpillars when it sheds its last skin before reaching the chrysalis state. It spins a silken loop, Gladys, which it passes over its head and slips a little way down its body; it depends upon this loop for support when it is in the chrysalis state."

"And when you see these chrysalises, papa, —"

"Chrysalids, child, chrysalids."

"Oh, when you see these chrysalids, papa, you don't know whether butterflies or ichneumon flies will come out of them, do you?"

"No, Gladys, it is impossible to tell, though the chances are small in favor of the butterfly."

"Papa, I have seen other butterflies with tails on their wings, in different colors."

"Of course you have, if you notice butterflies, because there are twenty-five kinds of swallowtails in America. There by the fence, Gladys, are three saucy tiger swallowtails this minute."

"Those big, yellow butterflies, marked with black, papa?"
"Yes, they are a bold, careless tribe and like company as well as you do. Their favorite flower is the lilac; I wish you could have seen them feeding on an old lilac bush this spring. You must watch for the caterpillars of the tiger swallowtail this fall, Gladys, they are the most savage-looking fellows you ever saw. They are green when full grown, and naked."

"Oh, I remember, papa, the ugly caterpillar that puffs all up and sticks out its horns if you touch it with a stick. Only I didn't know its name.

"Oh, papa, tell me about the mourning cloak butterflies. I have wanted to know what they look like ever since I saw their caterpillars. Did I ever see one, do you think?"

"Keep your eyes open and you will see one now, if you never did before," and her father motioned toward a fluttering bit of yellow-edged brown, sailing low through the orchard. "There is your butterfly of the mourning cloak. Isn't it a beauty?"

"I saw one of those caterpillars only yesterday, papa, and it looked for all the world like a piece of bark until it spread its wings and flew away."
"A protective trick, Gladys," observed her father, "and another thing the butterfly does to save itself from its enemies, is to play dead. Catch one sometime, and you will find that you may toss it about as if it were indeed a piece of bark, so motionless will it be."

"I can't see how that trick would save the butterfly, papa."

"Because, Gladys, its enemies wouldn't touch a dead butterfly."

"What becomes of the pretty things in the winter, papa? Do they go south as the monarchs do, or do just their chrysalids live through the winter?"

The butterflies of the mourning cloak sleep all winter, hanging beneath fences, under loosened bark or in stone piles — indeed, you may look for them anywhere in sheltered places. They are the butterflies to welcome the first warm days of spring."

"I should think they would starve, papa, waiting for the flowers to come."

"They would, my child, if they had to wait for the flowers, but they live well on the sap in the trees; and in the autumn, when the flowers are gone, they feast upon apples and decaying fruits."
"Another butterfly you must study, Gladys, is the painted beauty, which hibernates in its butterfly form, though its winter hiding-places have not been discovered. You will see it in flocks, in September and October, fluttering about the thistles, goldenrod, and dandelions.

"It is a beautiful creature, mostly rose color, marked with orange and white—I can't describe it, child; it has as many colors on its wings as Joseph's coat, and on each hind wing are two peacock eye-spots. The eggs of this butterfly are laid on everlasting plants, and the little caterpillars make nests of the blossoms, where they rest and hide.

"A butterfly, very much like this one, is the painted lady; it may be distinguished from the painted beauty by the four small peacock eye-spots on its hind wings, instead of two large ones. Its caterpillar feeds on thistles; and as thistles are found everywhere, the painted lady is known the world over.

"I am not going to tell you another fact about butterflies, Gladys, because I am afraid you will get what you have learned confused."

"But, papa dear, you haven't told me a word about the white butterflies, nor the yellow ones, nor the viceroy, nor —"
“Study them for yourself, little girl,” interrupted her father, “that’s the only way to be sure of your knowledge; and as you will have both books and butterflies to consult, I think your prospects are bright.”

“And I have a father who knows something, too,” added Gladys.
CHAPTER XII

THE ROBIN'S NEIGHBORS

The Robin in the apple tree had neighbors. Just beneath her, in the hollow trunk, lived the Bluebirds, a fine old family, always contented and happy. Their home had once belonged to a Woodpecker, but that was so long ago the fact was never referred to in public. Not that the Bluebirds had any false pride in the matter—they, perhaps, believed it unnecessary to tell all one knows, as the Blue Jays do.

For many seasons the father Bluebird had awakened the apple tree from its winter's sleep. Not that he could sing loud and clear like the Robin, who sometimes came north in March, at the risk of his life; but he knew a song that went right to the heart of the tree. It must have been a low, sweet song of spring, of the happy days to come—a matchless song, for even the Bluebird sung it but once in the sea-
son. The apple tree never failed to respond, and the day of the Bluebirds' coming marked the opening of tiny buds, from which the baby leaves peeped forth, eager to greet the sun.

For a few weeks following, the Bluebird was silent—a fact which puzzled the Robin, who sung to his mate, to himself, and to the world with equal joyousness.

Later, when the grasses and the wild ones of the earth were up and dressed, the father Bluebird and the father Robin sang duets with a bit of help from their mates at times when household duties were not too pressing.

Even the Robin must have noticed that there was never a harsh word spoken in the Bluebird family. The father Bluebird was always a gentleman, and a handsome one at that, in his sky-blue coat and red vest. He was no saint, to be sure, and could fight like a Trojan in defence of his rights, when necessary; but he never forgot his dignity, nor lost control of his voice.

The little lady in blue, his mate, appeared to adore him from the crown of his faultless head to the tip of his black feet. She was such a gentle, sweet-toned bunch of feathers.
Many and many a time, when the father Bluebird has been heard murmuring so sadly, "Dear, dear, think of it, think of it!" he has been oppressed by the knowledge that birds like her have been killed to put on hats. Who wouldn't say, "Dear, dear, think of it, think of it!"

In the oak tree near-by, lived the Redheads, a matter-of-fact, hard-working family, with no music in their souls,—or, at least, the music in their souls never found expression. It isn't fair to be uncharitable in matters of opinion.

The Redheads moved in from the woods—they used to live way back in an old, dead tree, but changed their location for the sake of residing nearer the fruit market. They were an unsociable family, though, and the Robins had no dealings with them.

The father Woodpecker was a busy fellow; from early morning until sunset he was hammering and tapping, and tapping and hammering on the trees, reminding one of the old nursery story of the wolf and the little pigs. So far as the Woodpecker is concerned, the worms and grubs all live in the houses of straw;
and when the Woodpecker knocks at the door, as did the wolf in the story, why not imagine that he says, not, "Little pig, little pig, may I come in?" but, "Little worm, little worm, may I come in?" Then when the Woodpecker stops to listen, isn't it possible that the little worm replies, as did the little pig in his house of straw, "No, no; not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin." Then the Woodpecker says as did the wolf, "I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in," so he huffs and he puffs, as the old story goes, and he blows the house in and eats up the little worm, as the wolf ate the little pig.

Who can say that the father Woodpecker never tells the Woodpecker children this old-time, favorite story—the queer little Woodpecker children in the deep, dark nest. How they must have admired their father's and their mother's crimson heads, and wondered if their own plain feathers of grayish black would ever look the same. It may be that the sound of the Woodpeckers' drumming was the sweetest music to the little ones at home.

Would that all the Redheads were as safe from harm as the family in the old oak tree.
To them has been given the preservation of the forests in which other birds rejoice. Long may they live.

Then there was the Baltimore Oriole in the elm tree; such a fine fellow. He had a way of coming north when the cherry trees were in bloom—as though he knew how stunning he looked in his suit of orange and black among the white blossoms.

More than once the mother Robin had contended with Madam Oriole for the same bit of string, pulling and tugging in the most impolite fashion, until one or the other bore the prize to her nest. It isn't right to repeat gossip, but Madam Oriole, whose hanging nest has always been considered a work of art, was once known to twit the mother Robin with having no style about her work, making taunting remarks about her careless housekeeping and disgraceful untidiness.

The mother Robin, although too generous to long hold a feeling of resentment, reminded Madam Oriole that the best housekeepers are not always the best home makers. Then she declared herself thankful that her babies were contented little darlings, and not continually
fretting and complaining after the manner of Oriole babies.

The quarrel might have been serious in its consequences but for the timely interference of the barn cat.

The truth is, the Oriole babies were to be pitied. Their father was always threatening to leave home, though he hadn’t the least intention of doing so. He used to sing out again and again, in his clear, ringing voice, “I’m going to leave you, leave you, leave you!” No wonder the poor babies cried and cried. Yet there wasn’t a better father on the farm than that same Oriole. He was untiring in his care of the nestlings, and brought them food from far and near—insects, worms, and grubs—anything to fill their hungry stomachs.

The Oriole was a brave, cheerful citizen, and if a cat or a chipmunk wandered into the neighborhood, he not only warned his own folks to be on their guard, but he roused every bird, within hearing, of the danger. He was a good musician, too, whose full, strong voice joined with the Robin’s in praise and thanksgiving.

In the orchard lived some cousins of the
Baltimore,—shy little birds in plainer feathers, who made no pretensions whatever, but lived quietly, sung their perfect songs for a brief season, content to escape all notice.

The Robins knew them well; the mother in olive green gown, the father in chestnut and black.

Their nest was a basket woven of grasses; beautiful cradle for the babies in the tree-top,—strong little babies who made their first trip to the south in short dresses.

The mother Robin wouldn't have consented to allow her children to travel in their speckled bibs, but the orchard Orioles always left for Central America before the first of September. The little folks had to wear their baby clothes, because they had nothing else at that time of the year.

It is a noticeable fact that the Orioles, having ideas of their own, managed their affairs accordingly. They did what they considered best for themselves and their family, regardless of the ways of other birds.

What a tiresome lot that of the birds would be if they could and would copy one another and change their feathers at will. To be sure,
successive seasons would offer some variety to the observer. There would be times when all the babies, great and small, would wear speckled bibs! Then again, white would be the proper thing, and the Robin children would be tumbling over the grass like animated balls of snow. Topknots would occasionally be the rage among the grown folks, and everybody from Crows to Wrens would have to wear them or be out of style. Sometimes a single white feather would be worn by every bird on the farm. Again it would be the fashion for all to wear blue, and in that event, what would become of the Scarlet Tanager if he rebelled! Suppose all the birds wore yellow tails for a season; or, how interesting the feathered folks, from Fish-hawks to Humming-birds, would appear bedecked in polka-dot wings!

In such a state of affairs there would be one consolation. The entire winter could be spent in wondering what the birds would wear in the spring.

It isn't generally known, but the Cow-bird is a rascal and an outcast to-day, simply because, instead of trusting to his own instincts in the matter of nest building, he thought to imitate
all the birds he knew. He naturally became bewildered by the infinite variety of nests around him and the varying materials used in their construction, lost courage, and gave up building altogether. After that he went from bad to worse, until, dreaded and despised by all birds, he is known everywhere as a villain, all because he lacked the courage to follow out his own ideas. He failed to live up to the best there was in him.

Not far from the Robin's ancestral tree, the Kingbird reigned. A noble fellow, wearing an orange-red crown, white vest, and coat of gray. He carried his head with an all-conquering air, standing erect like a knight of old. He defended his mate, his home, and his little ones with energy never excelled.

His mate was a stately dame, well worth defending with one's life.

His home represented untiring labor, as the materials in it were collected from all parts of the farm. It was a deep, strong nest, made of weed stalks, grasses, and moss, and lined with the down of plants, rootlets, and fine grasses. It was about twenty feet above the ground, securely fastened in the extremity of a branch.
As for the little ones, they were treasures of whom the father Kingbird and the mother Kingbird were justly proud, and to whom they were most devoted.

The Kingbird children believed that their father owned not only the tree in which they lived, but everything they saw from the rim of their nest—including the very air, as well. Their father may have shared that belief, if his actions were to be taken into account. He certainly tried to convince the hawks and the crows that he had rights that must be respected, rights for which he fought valiantly, as though he enjoyed charging upon the enemy.

Many and many a time when the father Kingbird has been quietly perched upon a branch, waiting to catch a big insect as it sailed by, that he might give his children a treat, he has seen a hawk or a crow in the distance. Then, giving his peculiar cry, he has gone in pursuit, swooping down upon his victim and fighting as though the safety of his family depended upon the result of the battle.

Sometimes the Kingbird babies were badly
frightened, but oftener they longed for the time to come when they could leave the nest and go forth, brave and fearless birds like their father.

Oh, the Robin had no lack of neighbors; there were the Wrens, the Yellowbirds, the Cherry-birds, the dear little Chipping Sparrows, the saucy Cat-birds, the Bobolinks, in the near-by meadow, and ever so many others, all of them interesting folks and good citizens.

Yet the one the Robin seemed to love the best was Gladys — the child who lived among them, respecting their rights while observing their ways. The birds feared her no more than a wayside flower. The Robin grew accustomed to her presence in the dormer window, and comforted the sometimes lonely child with songs of cheer and courage.
CHAPTER XIII

A SPARROW STORY

GLADYS was homesick. The rain knew it and said so in dismal tones. The sun would have laughed about it and dried the tears that rolled down her cheeks, but the rain wept with her, nor whispered one word of comfort. He might have told her of thirsty plants that welcomed his coming; of drooping wayside beauties who lifted their heads and took courage when they heard his music on the hills.

The rain is a capricious fellow. Sometimes he sings a lullaby song, low and soothing; again, he scolds and blusters, trying to drive all before him. Other times, in persuasive tones, he reads poems of the cloudland to those who care to listen. Often, however, he weeps and wails as though he were the chief mourner at nature's funeral.
The day Gladys was lonesome he cried like a great baby. His tears splashed and splattered upon the window-sill with such vehemence that Gladys's father was roused from his study of a time-worn volume.

He glanced around quickly as though some one had called him. Then he realized that Gladys had been quiet longer than usual. Something in her attitude suggested dejection, to express it mildly. The smile that hovered for a moment on the man's face was caught and smothered by his reproving conscience.

"Well, little daughter," he said, "the thinking corner must be a dreary place at this hour; hadn't you better come and sit in your father's lap and have a little talk?"

The child needed no urging, but rested her head against her father's broad shoulder with a sigh of satisfaction. The man pretended not to see the tear stains on her cheeks, nor the little wet handkerchief she held so tight.

"What shall we talk about, Gladys?" he asked.

"Oh, anything."

"Caterpillars, for instance?"

"No, I've had enough about those crawling
things for a while. I'll tell you, papa, I'd like a good bird story—one with some sense in it—a story about something that really happened."

"How the geese saved—"

"No, I know that one, we took it once. Don't you know a story about a bird that really lived long ago and did some great thing, as the geese did?"

"Certainly, little girl, the pages of history are full of such stories. One simply needs patience in searching for them. I have in mind now, a story that I think will interest you, about a Spanish sparrow. It is strictly true, many accounts of it being found in the magazines and papers of the day.

"A great many years ago there was raging in Cuba what is known in history as the Ten Years' War. At the beginning of this war the Spaniards, admiring the courage of the sparrow, had chosen it to represent their cause, naming the cat as the symbol of the Cubans, whom they hated.

"It so happened, that soon after, a flock of sparrows were eating breakfast in the road, when a cat sprang into their midst and killed
one of the little birds before the soldier who witnessed the deed had time to interfere.

"Using his musket for a club, the soldier instantly made the cat drop the dead bird. Then he smoothed its ruffled feathers while he answered the questions of the crowd that had gathered around him. The soldier suddenly found himself a hero among his comrades.

"Before the morning was over, some one told the story to the captain of the guard, who ordered the cat put in prison. Perhaps the soldiers needed amusement; however that may be, the cat was captured and put in prison."

"Honestly, papa, cross your heart and hope to die, is this a true story?"

"It is history, Gladys, and absolutely true; and when I have finished, you will have reason to think it a strange and all but impossible story.

"The same afternoon the cat was led forth, tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot; when this sentence had been carried out, the body of the sparrow was embalmed.

"Soon afterward the story was told to Captain-general Domingo Dulce who was in command of the island of Cuba. He listened
quietly, and to the great astonishment of all Havana, he decided to give the sparrow a great funeral and bury it with military honors.

"The captain-general gave as his reason that the sparrow, as their symbol, represented the 'admirable qualities possessed by the soldiers of Spain.'

"The bishop was sent for; when he reached the palace he was told to do his part in the services just as he would if a soldier were dead. All the great men of Havana were invited to attend the funeral; among them was the judge of the Supreme Court, two famous authors, and the editors of all the newspapers published in the city. An invitation from the captain-general was the same as a command, and no one dared refuse to go.

"The wives of the commanders of the eight battalions in Havana, sent offerings of flowers. The tiny bird of the street was placed on a bier laden with beautiful blossoms, and solemnly borne to its grave.

"The drums were muffled and the procession, led by the captain-general and the bishop, marched with bowed heads to the cemetery, as though in honor to the memory of a great man."
“Surely, Gladys, in all bird history, there is nothing quite equal to the story of the ‘Grand Burial of the Sparrow.’”

Gladys recovered her spirits and her ability to ask questions at the same instant. She wanted to know the exact color of the cat, who owned it, and if it was kindly treated before its execution. She asked about fifty questions regarding the sparrow before her father managed to change the subject.

“Gladys,” said he, “do you know what bird sings in the early morning ‘Maids, maids, maids, hang on your tea-kettle, ettle, ettle?’”

“No,” laughed the child.

“It is the song-sparrow, one of our best musicians, who sings throughout the season. He wears a plain coat of russet and gray with a conspicuous black spot in his vest.”

“Oh, papa, is his nest on the ground?”

“Yes, or in a low bush.”

“Then I have seen song-sparrows and their nests,” she said. “Way down on the river path there is a nest almost hidden by mullein plants. You remember what you told me, papa, about how the Romans used to dry the mullein stalks, then dip them in suet and burn them for funeral
torches, and how the Greeks used the leaves for lamp-wicks; well, when I saw those mulleins, I stopped a minute to look at them and then I saw a nest with five eggs, all speckled with brown. I tiptoed away just as softly, and the birds didn’t even know I peeped at the nest because the mother bird came right back and didn’t make a bit of fuss. Afterward, the father bird came and sang a long time. I could see him plainly because he perched on a bush near the nest. I kept still as a mouse, though.

"I know where there are hundreds of nests, papa, and I go calling every day, but the trouble is, I don’t know the names of all the folks I visit."

"Jump down a second, Gladys, while I find some bird books; this is just the kind of an afternoon to look at the photographs of our friends. We will have a pleasant as well as a profitable time the rest of this day," and they did.
ONE day Gladys wandered into the old forest alone. She didn’t intend going so far from home when she started, but the wild ones led the way, and she followed gladly. In the first place, there was Bouncing Betsy down the road in a flutter of rosy bloom, running on and on ahead of her. Many and many a year Bouncing Betsy had walked about the farmhouse, down the maple lane toward the barn, and back again in the direction of the river, always seeking the farmer’s children, whom she missed.

When Gladys came at last, she danced about the place for joy.

Strong and cheery was Bouncing Bet, the old-time friend of children. Gladys knew her story — how her ancestors ran away from the gardens in England years and years ago to
join the wild ones; the bright-faced dandelions and the daisies who were always peeping through the garden fences, laughing at the prisoners within. Those ancestors of Bouncing Bet loved freedom; and when once they found themselves out in the lanes and meadows; they could not be reclaimed, but followed their wayward fancies, even daring to cross the Atlantic in search of more adventures.

So Bouncing Betsy tempted Gladys to wander on and on, past the field where her father was at work, past the orchards, and away through the sunshine and the shadows of that summer afternoon, until the Quaker Ladies rose in protest.

Being a descendant of a well-bred family Bouncing Betsy was never rude. With utmost courtesy she stepped aside to allow the Quaker Ladies a chance to express themselves.

They may have wanted to tell Gladys to go back; but they stood erect and speechless by the roadside, perhaps too shocked to say a word. Quaker Ladies never go to walk alone as Gladys did.

The child smiled when she saw them. She had met them in the country near her grand-
father’s home, when for a brief season they wore dainty gowns, and marched in the grand parade of spring—clustering bunches of loveliness. The Quaker Ladies may have heard themselves called Bluets then, and perhaps that is why they changed their gowns so quickly. Even a Quaker Lady might grow vain in time if all the world admired her.

Gladys forgot the Quaker Ladies for an instant, when a slender, Blue-eyed Mary bowed and smiled but a little farther down the road. When she reached the place, Blue-eyed Mary, from her grassy home, motioned toward a Partridge Vine trailing its evergreen leaves over a fallen log, at the same time nodding toward the Quaker Ladies. Gladys was puzzled for a minute, until she remembered that the Quaker Ladies and the Partridge Vine were near relatives. Then how she laughed.

"Excuse me, Miss Blue-eyed Mary," she said, "but it is so funny to think those two belong to the same family; they don’t seem to me any more alike than my father and Aunt Rebecca.

"Partridge Vine, how came you here away from the woods where you belong? I’ve seen
your folks lots of times when I've been out in the woods after trailing arbutus. You are beautiful, and I love you. No, I won't tear you away from your home by the log—I'll sit here beside you and rest for a while. I know that the winter birds like your bright red berries, and I wouldn't rob birds. Your little white blossoms are made of sweet-smelling wax, I think; they are twin beauties peeping from two green leaves at the ends of your vines. I like to feel of your leaves, too, they are so smooth and firm.

"Oh! there's Blue-eyed Mary's whole family. You needn't look so frightened, you pretty little sisters, I wouldn't carry you away from here for anything; you wouldn't be so charming anywhere else. I s'pose you'd die before I could get you into water. Doesn't hurt you to get your feet wet, I guess, or you wouldn't walk around in wet places so much. I should think your folks would have the rheumatism.

"That big cousin or uncle, or whatever relation he is to you, the Button-bush, fairly hugs the river. You needn't look so surprised, because I know a little something, you see; I took you in school, and beside that, my father knows
everything,—'cept how to sew and tie sashes, or trim hats,—I guess he couldn't trim hats.

"There's one thing I like about you flowers: you stand right still to be studied; you don't fly away as the birds do, the minute I come too near.

"Who are your folks, Blue-eyed Mary? let me think—oh, yes, you belong to the Iris family, and that reminds me of something our teacher made us learn about you—something from the Bible. Please bend your heads and listen:

"'For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat
   But it withereth the grass,
   And the flower thereof falleth,
   And the grace of the fashion of it perisheth.'

"Now that means you, for our teacher said that some one, who wrote a book on flowers, thought that the apostle James had the blue-eyed grass in mind when he made up that poetry.

"Why, my dear little Blue-eyed Mary, I see several of your cousins this minute. Why don't you bow to your own folks? I could call to them from here without getting up, but they might think me rude. It would be all right to
sing out that way to Bouncing Bet, but the Fleur-de-lis must be approached with more ceremony, as my father would say. I must go over and see them, so good-by, Miss Mary, you dainty dear, and good luck to you. Any time when I think that the 'sun has risen with a burning heat,' a 'fashion of your flower perish-eth' kind of a day, I'll think of you and bring my father's big umbrella out here to keep you safe from harm."

Gladys looked over her shoulder at the blue-eyed grass until she reached the home of the favorite of a king, the Fleur-de-lis, whose regal splendor caused the child to fall upon her knees before it.

For a time she was silent; then she drew the long, flat leaves between her fingers and touched so gently the violet-blue blossoms. Softly, in a tone of reverence, she repeated a memory gem from Longfellow, regarding the Fleur-de-lis:

"'Born in the purple, born to joy and pleasance,
    Thou dost not toil nor spin,
    But makest radiant with thy presence,
    The meadow and the lin.'"

The coming of a bumblebee next attracted Gladys's attention. It went so busily from
"OH, YOU FUNNY, BUZZING BEE"
flower to flower, making such a fuss about the gathering of a little nectar, that Gladys laughed aloud.

"Oh, you funny buzzing bee, you think the world was made for you; now don't you? You think yourself so smart because you know where to find honey. I've had to listen to so many lectures about the 'little busy bee' that I am going to tell you a thing or two now I have the chance. You put on altogether too many airs. You work hard because you want to and because you have to. Now the Fleur-de-lis stands here all dressed up in purple and fine linen and makes you work for the whole Iris family. Now don't get excited and buzz so loud, it's the truth; I understand all about it. Your little bee children have to be fed on honey and pollen, so, of course, you have to get them food, because no one else will do it for you. I think the Fleur-de-lis father and mother are much brighter than you, because they don't like to work, and they won't, when there is such a goose as you around.

"Oh, go away, bee, go away,—don't sting me, please; that wouldn't be polite. I don't mean to hurt your feelings, I just want to explain things to you. It's like this: the mother Fleur-
de-lis takes care of the babies, of course; baby plants are seeds, you know, and the father Fleur-de-lis provides their food—that’s pollen. This pollen he keeps in the hall that leads to his honey store-room. The father Fleur-de-lis and the mother Fleur-de-lis both know that when you come and stick your fuzzy old head around after honey, that you’ll get all covered with pollen, and that you’ll take the pollen right over to the hungry Fleur-de-lis children, who couldn’t grow without it. Then after a while, when the babies are big enough and strong enough to be trusted away from home, they are sent down to Mother Earth, who takes the best kind of care of them—cuddles them in soft blankets and feeds them until, by and by, they are big children, with roots and leaves like their father’s and mother’s.

“What dreadful tempers your folks do have, bee; now what makes you so angry? I should think you’d be thankful to be of some use to your neighbors. It isn’t nice to be selfish and never think of any one outside your own family.

“There she goes!

“Wasn’t it fun to tease her?” continued the child, addressing the Fleur-de-lis. “If she had
been a little more friendly, I would have told her that you couldn’t live without the bumblebees, and that you wear purple on purpose to attract her.

"I don’t wonder a bit that the French King Louis chose you from all other flowers to be the emblem of his house, for you are most beautiful. I suppose he was delighted to have you called ‘Flower of Louis.’

"I should think you would like to live out here. If I were a garden flower, I would run away just as Bouncing Bet did. Her name used to be ‘Rebounding Elizabeth’—only think of it!"

Gladys laughed until a Blue Jay scolded her from a tree near by.

"What’s the matter, Blue Jay?” she asked. "Did I wake your children? Where is your nest? I suppose it is high up in a tree somewhere. My father says you plant forests. Don’t fly away, Mr. Blue-and-white, wait — I’ll follow you to your home, see if I don’t.”

Perhaps Gladys’s feet tried to be wings. Certain it is that when she chased the Blue Jay her feet flew high in the air and she fell among the Johnny-jump-ups.
Some one from afar called over his shoulder, "Jay, jay, jay, jay," but Gladys paid no attention to his teasing, so pleased was she with the Johnny-jump-ups who crowded about her in evident surprise.

"Oh, you little darlings!" exclaimed the child. "I didn't expect to find you here, indeed I didn't. Just as soon as the snow goes away next spring, I am going to hunt for all your shy little cousins — every one of them packed up and went away before I came. I suppose the rainy weather has kept you here so long. You really must excuse me now because the Black-eyed Susans are calling me to come and play with them in the meadow. Good-by, little Johnnies."

A tumbled-down rail fence surrounded the playground of the Black-eyed Susans — merry daughters of summer. From every nook and corner they were peeping at Gladys, who hung over the fence, speechless.

Here and there were yellow lilies, chaperons perhaps, whose presence served to keep in check undue hilarity.

Gladys had never seen so glorious a gathering of Black-eyed Susans, and the memory of
the scene never left her. The picture was photographed upon her mind in living colors, and the brightness of that meadow cast its glow upon her future years.

For a wonder, the little preacher-bird, the Red-eyed Vireo, who perched upon the fence, was silent too, though surely he never had a better chance to launch into a sermon for the child's benefit. Perhaps it is just as well that he missed his opportunity and made Gladys laugh by trying to look remarkably pious.

She didn't know that he was guarding a tiny nest in the near-by thicket—a pocket-like nest, made of strips of bark, fine grasses, bits of dead wood, plant fibres, and even pieces of newspaper that he had borrowed from her father.

When Gladys left the fence, the gray-headed little preacher adjusted his white vest and olive coat, and straightway lectured the Black-eyed Susans in fine style. He chose for his text "Consider the Lilies,"—and if his sermon proved a bit tiresome, his audience was unconscious of it.

When Gladys reached the woods at last, a
feeling of terror seized her, and she ran back to her father, scarcely daring to look behind.

“No, papa,” she said, in reply to her father’s questionings, “I wasn’t afraid the trees would chase me, I was just lonesome all at once.”
CHAPTER XV

GLADYS WRITES TO HER MOTHER

"MY DEAR MOTHER: Every time I write to you I have so many things I want to tell you that I leave out half of them. I love to get your letters, mamma, but if you haven't time to write to both of us, please write to papa once in a while instead of to me. When he has a letter from you he reads it over and over more than he does his books.

"I know that you have got to live in the city, mamma, where you can be stylish and go to clubs and everywhere you like to go, and papa has got to live on this farm where everything is wild and free; but papa loves you the same way he loves the wild birds; he wouldn't put you in a cage where you didn't want to be. That's why he let you go home to grandma so easily; he told me so when I asked him what
made him, so if I were you, I would write to him often.

"This home isn’t as nice as it would be with a mother in it — makes me cry sometimes. I don’t dare talk about you as much as I did when I first came; I can’t explain the reason. It’s a hard thing to be me, mamma; I love you and I love my father. Half of me likes the city and more than half of me likes the country best. If you and papa lived in a desert, though, I could live with you both and be happy.

"Next week I am going to visit Aunt Rebecca, because it isn’t polite not to visit your relations when they come over and talk to your father about it all the afternoon, and when your father tells you you would better go because he expects to be very busy anyway.

"I haven’t had any chance to get acquainted with the Bennet family yet. Mrs. Bennet comes to do our baking, but she does not talk, and she has not asked me to come and see her children. I wish she would.

"Papa and I keep the house in order by staying out of doors mostly.

"I don’t care so much about dolls as I used to.
"The baby robins in the apple tree have grown up and flown away. The mother comes to see me once in a while, though, and I shall miss her dreadfully when she goes south.

"Papa says we won't be lonesome in the winter because we can go in the woods and follow up the footprints in the snow.

"I am making a collection of leaves now, and we are going to study trees in the winter when we can see the branches easily.

"Did you ever know, mamma, that ants can't hear?

"When I go visiting next week, I shall take some books about bees and such things so I will know what's happening around me.

"Mary Ellen and Jane are pretty and almost stylish. Mary Ellen told me last Sunday that the bird she had in her hat was a crow that died, so I forgave her for wearing it.

"Don't forget to write to papa next week, and tell the boys I am sorry they miss me, and I miss them, too.

"Please tell grandma that I am remembering my manners. I shall not forget to tell Aunt Rebecca that I had a pleasant time.

"Maybe I shall see some children at Aunt
Rebecca's — I know I hope so. With love to you all, from

"Gladys Birney.

"P.S. — Sometimes I think I will have to come and see you Christmas.

"G. B."
PAPA, you are the very nicest man I ever saw, and I am glad to be home with you. Aunt Rebecca is lovely, and you can have lots of fun with Mary Ellen, but they can’t answer questions. Uncle Reuben goes to sleep whenever he sits down.”

Gladys laughed merrily.

“What do you suppose Aunt Rebecca thinks about, all the time, papa?” she continued, seating herself on the grass beside her father.

“I’ll give up,” replied the man. He had missed the child more than he would have thought possible, and was glad to have her home once more.

“Well, sir, she thinks about her work.”

Again Gladys laughed, a joyous ringing laugh that made her father forget the mystery of the twilight.
“Isn’t that proper?” he asked.

“But, papa, when you do work with your hands, like washing dishes, and such things, how can you think of just that? Aunt Rebecca works all day long in the house, cleaning and scrubbing, and I should think she’d have something else to think about.”

“But, Gladys, probably she hasn’t any time to do much thinking.”

“Well, papa dear, folks don’t think with their hands, do they? When she made custard pies one day I asked her where nutmegs came from; she said they came from the village store and that was all she cared to know. One day at the table when there wasn’t anybody saying anything, I asked where we get salt. She said it came in salt bags, and everybody laughed, so I didn’t ask any questions about pepper, but I want you to tell me about all kinds of pepper, everything you know.”

“What other questions did you ask Aunt Rebecca about?” interrupted her father, with a smile broad as Ted Bennet’s own.

“Well, that night we had cocoanut cake, and I just asked where cocoanuts grow and who gets them ready for cakes. Uncle Reuben
looked at me kind of funny and then he laughed and said if he got a piece of the cake and I got a piece, what did we care where the trimming came from. Everybody thought that was a joke on me, so I didn’t ask any questions about chocolate when we had chocolate cake the very next night. But, papa, I couldn’t even eat chocolate without wondering about it.

"Tell you what I want to do. I thought of it at Aunt Rebecca’s. I want to get up a book about common things. I’ll just take a big composition-book and write down all I can find out about tea and coffee and such things, and then when folks ask me questions, I will have some answers all ready for them.

"One day when I helped Aunt Rebecca clean the pantry, I got to thinking about spices, and I just had to ask her some things about them; but she said she had to think about her work all the time, and never troubled herself about where spices came from, not even when she was a little girl.

"I feel as if I have just got to find out about cloves, papa; do they grow on plants or bushes or trees, or where, and what are they anyway? Of course I know what they look like, and that
we have them stuck in pickled peaches and pears and apples."

"Cloves were once used for a different purpose, Gladys; a necklace of them has been found upon a mummy in Egypt. What do you think of that?"

"How did you find it out?" questioned the child, with a gesture of surprise.

"I read it."

"Where do cloves grow, papa?"

"On trees, Gladys, from thirty to forty feet high."

"In what countries?"

"In nearly all tropical countries, I believe. The clove tree is a native of the Southern Philippines and the Clove Islands."

"The Clove Islands," repeated Gladys; "I never heard of them."

"They are the same as the Moluccas," continued her father. "And the Portuguese once had control of them, selling cloves to all parts of the world. In 1600 the Dutch drove the Portuguese out of the islands and destroyed every clove tree not under their protection."

"What made them do that, papa?"

"They wanted to control the clove market."
They didn't want any clove plantations to be in existence but their own.”

“Why, the selfish Dutchmen!” exclaimed Gladys. “Do they own all the clove plantations in the world now?”

“No, indeed, child, other nations managed to get their share of the young plants and seeds, and the cultivation of clove soon spread to all warm parts of the world. Most of our cloves come from Zanzibar.”

“But, papa, what are the cloves we use?”

“They are flower buds of the clove tree, Gladys.”

“They must be queer little brown buds,” said the child.

“When they are first picked, Gladys, the clove buds are red, changing to brown only after they have been laid on grass mats and dried in the sun for a week or more. They are then packed in bags and carried to Zanzibar.”

“Do you know anything more about cloves, papa?”

“Yes, Gladys, because a great deal more has been written about cloves; but instead of telling you anything further I will show you
where to hunt for your own information. I would like to have you make a book of common things, just as you suggested. It will be a pleasant thing to do, or at least I think you will find it so, and you can’t help learning something in the attempt.”

“Papa, you are the biggest comfort in the world,” declared Gladys, giving her father a “bear hug.” “You never laugh at me, and you do answer questions best of any man I ever saw.”

“You had a pleasant time at Aunt Rebecca’s,” asked her father, “even though you are glad to get back to papa?”

“Oh, yes, Aunt Rebecca let me help her cook. I did lots of things. I seeded raisins — oh, that makes me think — tell me about raisins; I know they are made from grapes, but how?”

Gladys certainly didn’t know when to stop asking questions that night.
CHAPTER XVII

A BIT OF COLOR

"So you've found a new bird, have you, Gladys?"

"Yes, papa, and I'm so glad you will come with me to look at him. I've seen him for three or four days flying along in the bushes, and last night, just before supper, he flew to the very top of a tree and sung and sung and sung."

"Didn't you ever follow the bird into the bushes, little girl?"

"No, indeed, papa."

"Why not?"

"You know,—snakes."

"Excuse me, I forgot."

"Now don't laugh, papa, I know the snakes around here won't hurt me, but I'm so afraid of them that I wouldn't go where I might see one if I could help it, for ten bushels of candy. I don't like to even speak of them."
“Here’s where we’ll find the bird, papa.”
“All right, Gladys, I’ll whistle for him.”

Great was the child’s astonishment when the bird appeared at the edge of the thicket in response to the man’s peculiar whistle.

“Can you describe his plumage, Gladys?” he whispered.

“Oh, easily. His head and neck and back and tail are black. The rest of him’s white only along the side under his short wings where the feathers are red — I should call it red — there he goes; now you can’t see him — there he is again. That’s the way he does all the time, papa, — goes dodging through the bushes saying just one word — I don’t know what it is.

“Let’s go up on the side of the hill where we can see the sun shining on the tree-tops, and then you tell me all you know about that bird, if you please. Don’t you wish we could have summer forever?” she continued, when they were comfortably seated on the slope.

“A day like this would tempt one to make such a wish,” replied her father, “but we can preserve the memory of this perfection to brighten the winter.”

“Yes, sir, that’s true. I’ll remember the way
the air smells — so sweet and fresh — whenever I think of that pretty bird. What kind of a bird is it, papa?"

"It has several names, Gladys, being known as the Ground Robin, the Towhee or the Chewink."

"Oh, the Chewink!" exclaimed the child; "is that James Whitcomb Riley's chewink? you know he wrote the dearest little poem about birds, and this is the chewink verse:—

"'The old Bob White and Chipbird;
The Flicker and Chee-wink,
And the little hopity-skip bird,
Along the river brink.'"

I can't remember just what comes next, but the last verse is:—

"'The Jaybird and the Bluebird,
The Sap-suck and the Wren,
The cock-a-doodle-doo bird,
And our old settin' hen.'"

The man smiled. Gladys interested him more than all the wild life on his farm; this he admitted to himself.

"Isn't it fun to find new birds? I believe I am learning a new one every day. There is no use for me to try to find the chewink's nest,
though, because I s’pose it’s in the bushes, and anyway, I’d tear my dresses trying to get through such tangled places, and I might step on nests and knock down other ones and—well, I’m not going in the bushes, anyway, so please tell me about the chewink’s nest.”

“The birds will be just as well satisfied,” assented her father, “for the chewink’s nest is on the ground beneath the bushes. You certainly might step on it. The eggs are white, speckled with reddish brown. The chewinks are always scratching among the dead leaves on the ground for insects except when they sing; then they do as you observed last night—make a business of singing on a tree-top.”

“Excuse me, papa,” interrupted Gladys, springing to her feet, “but there is Ted Bennet, and he is throwing stones. What do you suppose he is throwing stones at?”

“Hard to tell, Gladys; Ted Bennet is a bad boy.”

“Look, papa, look quick—it’s something high up in the trees—maybe it’s a poor squirrel. I don’t see how boys can be so cruel. Oh, papa! There’s what he is after—that
beautiful red bird way up in the tree-top! I’m going down there and make him stop.”

“You stay here, Gladys; I’ll go myself.”

The child made no attempt to follow her father. His tones frightened her.

Ted Bennet, alert as a squirrel, saw the man coming, dropped his stone and fled. Gladys was thankful that he escaped her father’s wrath. She scarcely dared think what might have happened if her father had caught him then. She felt sure it would have been something terrible, by the expression on his face when he returned.

“The young rascal!” he exclaimed. “He’s a thoroughly bad boy. If I ever catch him throwing stones at another bird on this farm, I’ll — ”

Gladys listened breathlessly, but as her father didn’t explain his intentions, she took courage. She couldn’t forget that Ted Bennet was the boy who saved her from the old sheep.

“Perhaps, papa,” she ventured, “if Ted Bennet had a chance to go to Band of Mercy meetings, he might be a better boy.”

“It’s a pity he can’t have the chance, then,” grumbled her father, throwing himself upon the grass.
“Oh, there’s the bird again,” cried Gladys, standing on tip-toe in her eagerness. “Isn’t that a sight! Red, papa, scarlet! Only look!”

“Yes, child, it is the Scarlet Tanager, whose bright coat is a target. Such a bit of color on wings is worth walking miles to see.”

“Why does it stay so high, papa?”

“To escape its enemies, Gladys; birds with bright plumage always fly high. Ted Bennet couldn’t have reached it with a stone; but when he grows a few years older and has a gun, it will be a different thing. A bird in a scarlet coat isn’t safe among savages. No wonder the Scarlet Tanagers are rare.”

“Where are their nests, papa? I should think everybody could see the bird on the nest, or is the mother bird a different color?”

“You guessed right that time, Gladys, the mother bird is olive green, and her nest is usually on the branch of an old oak tree.”

“What color are the eggs,—are they red?”

“No, the eggs are pale, greenish blue, though marked with reddish brown—they are usually three or four in number.”

“Tell me something more about the scarlet bird, papa; why does he stay in that one place so long?”
“He is probably watching his nest, Gladys. The Scarlet Tanager is devoted to his family, and is brave in defence of his home. If he were nearer, you would see that his wings and tail are black. In the fall, before he goes south, the Scarlet Tanager changes his suit, appearing or rather disappearing in russet green.”

“Does he spend the winter in Florida?”

“No, he goes to Central or South America.”

“What makes you get up, papa, is it time to go home? I don’t like to leave for fear I will never see that beauty of a bird again.”

“It is a wonderful bit of color, isn’t it, Gladys; but you will probably see it often enough since you know where to look. That is the first Scarlet Tanager I have seen in our woods for years, and I trust it is safer here than it would be anywhere else in this neighborhood.”

“Do the Tanagers sing, papa?”

“Yes, they are fairly good singers.”

“If singing makes them any happier,” said the child, “I am glad they can sing, but I am sure they don’t need to. It is enough to look at such a bird without asking for music.”

“I agree with you,” laughed her father.
CHAPTER XVIII

A TRAGEDY

It was unusual for Gladys to sit still and say nothing for five minutes, especially on a radiant morning when the outdoor world was all in tune. Her father pretended to be dismayed by her silence.

“Trouble is, I don’t know what to do to make that little Nora Bennet happy,” she said, in reply to his questioning.

“Who told you about Nora Bennet?”

“Aunt Rebecca took me to her house twice, and I have thought about her ever since. Don’t you suppose she might be cured, papa, if the Bennets weren’t poor folks?”

“No, Gladys, everything was done for Nora that could be done when she was a baby; she was pronounced incurable then by the best authorities in the country.”

“Did the doctors come out here, papa?”
“No, no, she was sent away for months and months. Everything that money could do was done for poor little Nora.”

“But, papa, where did the Bennets get enough money to do so much?”

“Gladys, dear. Have you no more faith in your father than that? Do you suppose he would allow a little child to be a cripple if he could help it?”

Gladys put her arms around her father’s neck, and kissed him.

“The Bennets aren’t your relations, papa.”

“They are just as much my relations as the other folks on my farm, aren’t they? I wouldn’t let a dumb creature suffer if it were in my power to prevent it.”

“But, papa, you never go calling on the Bennets, do you?”

“No, not exactly.” The man laughed. “I will leave that part of my duty for you to perform, Gladys.”

“Does Aunt Rebecca know it was you who tried to have Nora cured?”

“I hope not.”

“Does mamma know?”

“Not from my telling her.”
"Papa, you are a queer man."
"So I have heard before."
Gladys gave him a comforting hug, adding emphatically, "But you are the best man in the world.

"Aunt Rebecca told me that the Bennets can't help being poor. She says Ted used to be always breaking his neck or his arms or his legs, and the other children used to catch all the diseases they had in the village, like whooping cough and scarlet fever and things, and she says Mrs. Bennet used to get almost discouraged."

"It's true, Gladys," laughed her father. "All the afflictions in the country have been visited upon that Bennet tribe."

"Tribe! why, papa!" The voice of the river added a protest in the brief silence following.

Gladys sighed. "I don't know what to do to make Nora happy. Mary Ellen taught her to read and to sew, but she is half sick all the time, and I don't see how she can have much fun. The boys have fixed up a queer old box-cart for her, but she had rather be in the house with her mother. One day when I was there,
the baby was asleep, and Nora was rocking the cradle and keeping the flies off the baby at the same time. It had on a pink calico dress, papa, just think of that—a baby in pink calico!"

"What should it have worn?"

"White, papa, of course; who ever heard of a baby wearing anything else! Ted is always ragged, but Aunt Rebecca says that can't be helped—that he would be ragged by night if he was dressed in a new suit of clothes in the morning.

"Poor little Nora can't walk a step and never sees anything, only those young ones and that little house. I just wish I were rich! I'd buy Nora a carload of toys and some silk dresses and new hats and a lace parasol."

"You can do something better than that for Nora, my darling,—something I've often thought of,—but fathers don't know how to carry out their plans very well. I think a little lady like you can do wonders for Nora."

"Tell me how, quick, and I'll do it, if it takes every cent I've got in my bank."

"Money can't do everything,—it can't buy happiness, Gladys, that comes from within.
Do you know what makes you a happy child?"

"Why, I've got a father and a mother, and pretty near everything I want, and nobody is ever cross to me—and I'm well all the time. I don't know how I could help being happy."

"A great many children have all these blessings, Gladys, and are unhappy and discontented. The reason you are happy here on this farm is because you are interested in everything you see. Go to little Nora and open her eyes."

"She can see, papa—I don't know what you mean."

"Tell her about the robin's home."

"She must know all about robins."

"You will find that she doesn't. Gladys, I do not suppose that child has ever thought about the birds."

"Why, papa Birney, and she has lived among them all her life?"

"True, Gladys,—she has lived among them as most folks do,—she knows there are birds; but I doubt if she can name half a dozen, and I am sure she knows nothing of their habits. Tell her what you know about the
bees and butterflies. Teach her all you can of the wild flowers. Interest her in the ways of flies and mosquitoes. Nothing is too insignificant to be studied. That child will probably live years and years in that tiny cottage among the trees, and if her eyes are open to the beauties and wonders of nature, her life will be full of interest, and that little dull face of hers will grow bright as my daughter's own. Go over there, Gladys, and awaken that child's soul."

"Dear me, I wouldn't know how to begin," objected Gladys.

"Why not tell her about the Scarlet Tanager we saw yesterday? You might give her the colored pictures of the birds and their nest I found for you last night. Get ready and go, little daughter."

A little later, Gladys knocked timidly at the open door of the cottage. Four little Bennets who were playing in the yard, watched her with open mouths. The big sister, Rose, responded to her knock, appearing at the door with the baby in her arms.

"He has the colic," she said, "that's why he is crying so hard. Won't you come in?"
“I came to see Nora,” ventured Gladys.
“Mamma will be so glad,” responded Rose.
“There, there, there,” she crooned, trying to soothe the screaming baby. “Sister's got him. Sit down, Gladys. I was afraid you'd think he had something catching. Nora is in the kitchen. Mamma will bring her right in. See, baby, little girl came to see the baby—poor little darling got the tummy-ache—there—there—there.”

The baby stopped crying, making a lunge toward Gladys.
“Want to see little girl?” continued Rose.
“Bess-e-old heart, can't he show toofl-uns?”

The next thing Gladys knew, the baby grabbed a fistful of her bright hair and was pulling with all his might. The performance was evidently a colic cure, for the little fellow began to kick and laugh and crow with the same vigor which had rendered his crying effective.

Fortunately for Gladys, Mrs. Bennet came to her rescue before she had gone beyond the laughing point. Rose, being fourteen, and devoted to the baby, could see nothing but fun in his hair-pulling tendencies.
"Wouldn't Nora like to go out under the trees?" suggested Gladys.

"I wish she would," interposed Mrs. Bennet; "she ought to be outdoors. Won't you go out with Gladys? I have been trying all the morning to get her out with the other children."

"It is beautiful under the trees, Nora," insisted Gladys. "You can look up and see the blue sky through the leaves, and hear the birds singing, and see the butterflies fluttering through the air—and look here! I've brought you some pictures, and I want to tell you what I saw yesterday in the green woods."

Nora smiled at her mother, who lifted the child easily and carried her out of doors, placing her in a swinging seat that Ted had made.

"The children all love her," explained Mrs. Bennet, adjusting the foot-rest and back of the swing to be sure it was comfortable. "Ted made this for her last winter,—planned it all himself,—and it ain't a bad seat."

Again Nora smiled, and when her mother returned to the cottage, the four little Bennets gathered around, still with their mouths open.
"Why don't you like to be outdoors, Nora?" began Gladys.

"Nothing to watch, only the children; and they get hurt and get into mischief, and I can't go to them. I had rather stay in with my mother and Rose."

"I had rather be outdoors where I can watch the birds and see things grow," said Gladys, at the same time passing Nora the picture of the Scarlet Tanager.

"I saw him yesterday in the tree-tops. He is brave and he is happy because in one of the oak trees, his little mate, the mother bird and all his children are cuddled in a little nest. The father bird and the mother bird love their babies just the way our fathers and mothers love us."

Nora listened, while the four little Bennets, drawing nearer, opened their mouths wider than before.

"The mother bird dresses in green so she can hide easily among the leaves in the woods. She is always so afraid that something will happen to the handsome father bird in the red coat, that she begs and begs him to keep out of sight. She loves him dearly. When they built their nest, she wouldn't let him help a bit,
for fear his enemies would see him and kill him when he wasn’t looking.

"If you love me, Father Tanager,' she used to say, 'do take care of yourself, for I don’t know how I could live without you.’ Now Father Tanager thought the mother bird wanted to make the nest all alone because she could do it better than he could, so he let her have her own way—only he watched her all the while she worked, to protect her from enemies. He loved her dearly. She thought it was silly for him to follow her every time she went for a strip of bark, or a bit of grass, but he said if anything happened to her, he didn’t know how he could live without her. She didn’t make a very good nest, just because that father bird bothered her so. He thought it was perfect, though, and how he did sing about it.

"After a while, when the eggs were laid, he used to get food for the mother bird, and sing to her while she kept the eggs warm under her soft wings. If ever she left the nest for a minute, he watched those precious eggs most carefully, for fear a Blue Jay or a Crow would get them.
"By and by, the little birds came out of the shell, and the father bird and the mother bird were too happy for anything. They talked soft baby talk to the nestlings, brought them food, and cared for them night and day.

"Soon the father bird and the mother bird are going to teach the babies to fly, and the father bird is so glad they are safe and growing so strong that he watches and sings most all the time. That is how I happened to see him—a flash of scarlet among the green trees."

It was impossible to tell whether Nora was interested or not. Neither she nor the four little Bennets ventured a word.

"I feel pretty sure," Gladys went on, "that the mother bird says her prayers just after sunset every day. I believe when she cuddles the precious nestlings under her wings, she thinks of the brave bird in the red coat, and prays, 'Take care of Father Tanager.'"

Ted's voice broke the stillness following these words. He came rushing through the orchard too excited to notice the presence of Gladys, shouting in tones of triumph, "See what I've brought you, Nora—killed it with a stone!"
Into Nora's lap he tossed a bunch of scarlet feathers. The child picked it up, and knew she held the dead body of Father Tanager.

Gladys sprang to her feet, choking with grief and anger. Before she could say a word, Nora, stroking the little warm body, began to cry piteously.

The four little Bennets clustered about her, touching the Scarlet Tanager and wailing, "The poor little thing, the poor little thing."

Gladys knew then that her story had been heard.

"Thought you'd like him," pouted Ted; "been trying to kill him for days so you could see what he looked like. Thought you'd like them pretty red feathers for your doll hats."

Ted walked away with his head in the air — walked away kicking the stones in his path, and whistling.

For the moment, Gladys forgot her own grief in her attempt to comfort poor little Nora. "Nobody can make him alive again, now," she sobbed. "He'll never fly again — he's dead, — dead."

The four little Bennets lifted up their voices and wept, whereupon a change came over Nora.
“Listen, children,” said she. “Jake, hold this little dead father bird in your hand, and promise me that you will never kill a bird again as long as you live.”

“Sure, pop—cross my heart, I never will,” vowed Jake.

“Sammie, take him in your hands, now, and promise that you will never kill a bird.”

“Killing birds is what I won’t never do,” he promised.

“Jimmie, you hold Father Tanager, and promise that you’ll never kill a bird.”

“I’ll never kill a bird,” announced Jimmie, in solemn style.

“Hold your little hands, now, Tommie; and Jimmie, you let him take the little dead father. Isn’t it dreadful, Tommie, to see him dead, dead—his eyes shut tight and his wings still, while all his children are waiting for him to come home?”

“Drefful!” agreed Tommie.

“Promise sister that you will never kill a bird.”

“Can’t frow stones good, anyway.” The little fellow’s face was beaming with mischief.

“Tommie, promise sister. You know poor sister can’t walk.”
“Oh, I won’t frow stones nor kill nuffin,” he declared. Then, because Gladys gave him an unsolicited hug, he shouted, “Get out!” — using his fists at the same time.

Everybody laughed.

“Reminds me of signing the pledge at a temperance meeting,” said Gladys.

“Let’s have a funeral, now,” she suggested, “and bury Father Tanager in style.” In this way, cheerfulness was restored.

When Gladys left the children, they begged her to come again soon.
CHAPTER XIX
MEETING THE ENEMY

SLOWLY Gladys walked along, thinking sorrowfully of the Scarlet Tanager. The world had lost a bit of brightness. The child felt it as a personal loss, and walked with downcast head. While she was with Nora, Gladys had tried to keep the tears back. She had meant to make Nora happy, and it distressed her to feel that she had failed.

"I guess, though," said Gladys, addressing the dust, "that she did enjoy the funeral."

Suddenly Ted Bennet appeared before her. He had been hiding in the bushes by the road. There was a hard, defiant look in his face, causing Gladys to recall her father's words that Ted Bennet was a bad boy.

He planted himself in the middle of the road, and waited.

"Let me pass," demanded Gladys, filled with
wrath by the sight of him — the boy who had killed her Scarlet Tanager.

“Not until you promise that you won’t go and tattle about that there bird. Cross your heart, and hope to die, or I’ll skin you alive.”

Gladys was thoroughly frightened. A boy who would kill a bird might be capable of any desperate deed.

“Let me pass, I say!” she repeated, holding her head with lofty firmness.

“No, Ted Bennet, you killed my father’s Scarlet Tanager and you ought to have to tell him yourself. Let me go home.”

“If you don’t promise not to tattle,” threatened the boy, flourishing his fist in Gladys’s face, “I’ll chase you with a pocketful of snakes. Cry-baby, cry-baby! Now will you promise?”

“No, I won’t. You let me go home or you’ll wish you had, you bad boy, you!”

“Don’t you dare to come a step nearer, Gladys Birney, or I’ll stuff little toads down your neck. Will you promise?”

“No, I won’t, and don’t you dare touch me.”

“I’ll set the old sheep on you.”

“Who’s afraid of him!”
“Oh, yes, who’s afraid of him! Cry-baby, cry-baby, tattle-tale! Look-a-here! If you don’t promise, I’ll let the old hooking cow out of the pasture.”

“Who cares if you do! I say, you let me go by, you wicked, bad boy. Don’t you touch me!”

Gladys recoiled. Ted Bennet’s hands were not only dirty, but they were cruel hands—hands that could stone birds. They shouldn’t touch her.

“Why, Gladys Birney! standing in the middle of the road talking to a boy! I am surprised. I’d like to know what you two were talking about so earnestly you didn’t see me coming.”

“Aunt Rebecca,” gasped Gladys, “I am so glad to see you.”

Ted Bennet wasn’t.

“I’ll get even with you yet,” he muttered under his breath. Then, making a frightful face at Gladys, —a face unseen by Aunt Rebecca,—he disappeared.

“He is a bad boy, Gladys,” cautioned Aunt Rebecca. “I don’t believe your father’d like to have you talking with him. I’m glad I happened along just as I did.”
“So am I,” echoed Gladys. “I wish you were going clear home with me, Aunt Rebecca.”

“I’d like to, Gladys, but I’ll have to leave you here. I have just been over to see a neighbor for a few minutes. I wouldn’t run so, Gladys; in the hot sun. Whatever has come over the child!”

“I’m in a dreadful hurry to get home, Aunt Rebecca,” called Gladys, as she flew over the ground, scarcely letting her feet touch the earth in her haste.

“Well, what success, little daughter?” was her father’s greeting. “Did you manage to get Nora interested in the Scarlet Tanager?”

“Yes, she got pretty much interested,” admitted Gladys.

Then she blushed such a rosy red that her father asked no more questions. He knew that something was wrong, and waited for Gladys to tell him of her own free will.

In the meantime, Ted Bennet was waiting too—waiting to get even with Gladys.
CHAPTER XX

MEADOW FOLKS

"PAPA, I wish you'd tell me about some happy little animals."

Gladys had followed her father about all the afternoon. There was safety in his shadow and nowhere else.

"Lucky thing for a certain little friend of mine that you reminded me of him."

"What do you mean, papa?"

"I caught somebody this morning, and detained him for your benefit. He ought to be given his liberty now."

"What do you mean, papa? Tell me quickly."

"He's down in the meadow on a piece of rail fence that is placed upon the ground. Over him is an old tin basin that was lying near when I made the capture. Lest the basin
might walk off, it is kept in place by a heavy stone."

"Whoever he is, he'll smother, won't he, papa?"

"No, he can't smother, because the basin is full of air-holes. He's somebody young ladies are afraid of."

"O dear, papa, I hope he isn't a — you know what."

"Guess again, Gladys; he is one of the prettiest little creatures you ever saw."

"Oh, I couldn't guess in a thousand years. Is he a happy little animal?"

"He and all his folks appear to be happy."

"What does he look like? Is he little or big? Oh, papa, there's Ted Bennet!"

"What of it, Gladys? If you wish, I'll ask him to come with us."

"Oh, but I don't wish." Neither did Ted. He walked away fast as he could, appearing afraid he might be sent for.

"This little creature," resumed the man, "is nocturnal in its habits, and is easily caught in the daytime. His ears are large, and he has beautiful big eyes. His dainty feet are white."
“Did I ever see one, papa? Will he bite?”

“I do not know whether you ever saw one or not, but they are harmless little fellows.”

“I’ll give up, papa; I can’t guess.”

Down on her knees went Gladys by the side of the old tin basin, watching eagerly while her father removed the stone and disclosed to view a field-mouse.

“Poor little fellow!” commented Gladys, without offering to touch it. “What a little beauty it is. Such lovely eyes. I wouldn’t hurt you, little mouse; you may run away to your children, if you want to. There he goes, papa,—the cunning little thing. Tell me about him, please. What will become of him in the winter?”

“The field-mice have the gayest kind of times in the winter, Gladys, because the snow hides them from their enemies. Now they scarcely dare show themselves, even at night, for fear of owls and foxes. They try to keep under cover of bushes and tall grasses; but in the winter they have tunnels under the snow, and go where they please without fear.
"WHAT A LITTLE BEAUTY IT IS"
"In the fall they lay up stores for the winter, hiding grain under stones and filling depressions in the ground with nuts."

"Papa, was this field-mouse one of the kind I have heard about — that shell beechnuts and hide them in a hollow tree?"

"The very mouse, Gladys."

"Do you s'pose he might live in a corn-field?"

"Why, certainly."

"Then, papa, he's the mouse we sing about at the Band of Mercy meetings. The mouse song must surely be about him."

"Sing it for me, little daughter."

"'There was once a little mouse that had made a snug hole
In a corn-field belonging to good Farmer Cole,
In which everything grew that was pleasant to eat,
From beans, oats, and barley, to red and white wheat.

"'At the doorway of his house, on a carpet of green,
There this field-mouse oft sat and beheld the fair scene.
"This is truly a very fine corn-field," said he;
"And doubtless was planted on purpose for me."

"'So he nibbled and he ate, then he rolled on the ground;
He was blithe as a lark, and his sleep, too, was sound,
As he lay in his hole, far from danger and noise,
Not hunted by dogs nor annoyed by bad boys."
"'Farmer Cole, good worthy man, saw him day after day;
But he never attempted to harm or to slay:
"For," said he, "since we've plenty, and God gave it all,
We'll spare a few grains for a creature so small.' "

While Gladys was singing, the field-mouse came forth from his hiding-place and seemed to listen. When she finished, he disappeared.
CHAPTER XXI
TED BENNET'S REVENGE

The fear of meeting Ted Bennet kept Gladys from wandering about the farm as usual. She lived in constant dread of the boy, until, as the days went by, and he kept out of sight, she hoped that he had forgotten her.

The pond always had attractions for Gladys. A little at a time she had been learning about the ways of its inhabitants—the frogs, mud-turtles, and the queer insects whose early life was spent at the bottom.

"Papa, where do you suppose Ted Bennet is?" she asked one forenoon, when a longing to visit the pond was strong within her.

"His mother sent him to the village—why?"

"Oh, nothing; I just wondered."

"Gladys," said her father, "didn't I hear Mrs. Bennet, when she was over yesterday, asking you to go and see Nora again?"

177
"I guess you did; yes, sir."

"I can't understand why you don't go. Mrs. Bennet told me that the children have watched for you every day, and that Nora wants you to tell her more stories."

"I don't like to go there very well," faltered Gladys.

"Hadn't you better tell your father the reason?"

Gladys shook her head. "I've got a terrible secret," she admitted. "I wish you knew it, but I can't tell it, honest truth."

"It seems to me," suggested Mr. Birney, "that a little girl ought to trust her father with her secrets. As for Nora, I did hope my daughter was brave enough and true enough to stick to her undertakings. It would be noble and unselfish to go to see Nora for the sake of giving her pleasure, especially if you no longer enjoy doing so to please yourself. I'm afraid you've disappointed your father, Gladys."

The child counted the dandelion blossoms at her feet; counted them over and over—thinking vaguely that the world had suddenly become a hard place to live in. After a long
silence, Gladys looked up, in time to see her father walking away across the fields.

"I am sure I don't know what to do or what to say," she confided to the dandelions. "One good thing, I don't have to be afraid of Ted Bennet this morning. I'm going to the pond."

Gladys couldn't be unhappy long at a time. The sunshine and the summer air restored her spirits with magic power.

"The water is alive with water-striders!" she exclaimed, climbing upon the trunk of a tree, which had fallen directly over the water. After finding a comfortable position among the branches of the tree, Gladys amused herself for a moment by studying the reflection of the leaves on the still mirror of the pond. Dragon-flies darted through the sunshine. Near by grasshoppers and crickets kept up their ceaseless din, while the frogs called to one another among the cat-tails and from half-buried logs.

Water-striders were skimming here, there, everywhere over the surface of the pond. Gladys saw a company of them gathering among the lily-pads.

"I do believe," she told herself, "that they
are talking over old times; maybe, though, they are telling each other where they intend to spend the winter. Let me see—some of them will hide under the banks of the pond in the mud, or under the leaves; others will go way down to the bottom of the water and hide under stones. In the spring, when the weather is warm, up they’ll come and lay their eggs. The eggs will be stuck on the leaves and stems of water plants—on the pond-lilies, I guess. Wish I could see a water-strider’s egg. Papa says they are long, round eggs, and that the little water-strider comes out through a slit in the side of the egg instead of pushing off a cap at the end, the way other water-bugs do.

“Look at them go. They really seem to row over the surface of the water, using their hind legs as oars, just as the books say they do. You grasshoppers better be careful not to fall in the pond, because the water-striders feed on the juices of folks like you that do tumble in.

“Papa told me that the legs and body of the water-strider are covered with tiny hairs, which keep the little bugs from getting wet. I wish I could catch one so I could see for myself. I
am going to crawl out a little further on the tree."

Gladys had become deeply interested in watching the water-striders lift their legs in the air to dry them, when she heard a twig snap. Instantly she thought of Ted Bennet. When she looked around, her worst fears were realized. There he stood, in his freckles and rags, a veritable genius of evil. A grin of triumph lighted his face.

"Ain't you sorry now you wouldn't promise?" Ted watched his victim's face grow white.

"I told you I'd get even with you, and now I've got the chance. I've got you where you can't get away. Cry-baby!"

Gladys waited in dumb despair. She uttered a low cry of horror, when the boy climbed upon the trunk of the tree.

"I rather think I'll give you a ducking you'll remember, miss."

Gladys shivereded visibly. The water in the pond was black.

"Thought you was smart, didn't you, spoiling the present I worked so hard to get for Nora. I'd 'a' let you off, though, if you'd 'a' promised not to tell."
"I didn't tell, Ted; please, let me go home."

"You expect me to believe that yarn, do you? I tell you right here, it won't work. I know you told, or you'd 'a' promised not to tell. You needn't put on any of your city airs, miss, out here. There comes a darning-needle, and he'll sew up your mouth, sure, if you keep on tellin' lies."

A sudden hope that her father might be near prompted Gladys to call him loudly as she could.

"You'll get your ducking, miss, if it's the last thing I do in this world; so just hang on for dear life. Here goes!"

The light tree bent under the additional weight of the boy.

"This is going to make the best kind of a spring board. Move along a little nearer the end there. Move, I say, or I'll make you!"

Gladys moved. Once she was swept into the pond, and when the tree sprang back into place, she was safe, though dripping with the slimy water.

Ted laughed.

The second time he tried to bend the tree-
top, the whole trunk fell with a splash into the water.

Gladys was at the bottom of the pond.

Ted Bennet didn’t laugh that time. When he saw the golden head disappear, terror seized him. In a moment he had dragged Gladys, choking, gasping, to the bank.

"Knew enough to keep your mouth shut for once, didn’t you?" he grumbled, as she tried to shake the mud from her clothes.

"You bad boy! You wicked boy!"

Ted, wet to the skin himself, sneaked home the back way, allowing Gladys the same privilege.

Mr. Birney was nowhere to be found. Gladys called and called him, determined to tell the whole story of Ted Bennet’s cruelty.

It wasn’t easy for the child to change her clothes without any help; but she had to do it. Later, she found a note from her father, explaining his absence, and telling her that he would return in the afternoon.

Tired, and feeling utterly forsaken, Gladys threw herself upon the couch in her father’s sitting room, and slept until long shadows marked the hour upon the lawn. Her father was beside her when she awoke.
"Gladys, this is the first time I ever knew you to sleep in the daytime. What's wrong?"

"Did I go to sleep?" questioned the child.

"Oh, yes, I remember; I fell in the pond, and afterward I was so tired I didn't know what to do."

"You fell in the pond!" exclaimed her father.

"How did you get out?"

"Ted Bennet pulled me out." Gladys frowned.

"I'm glad to hear something good of that boy," declared the man. "I am beginning to believe he may become a respectable citizen in the course of a century."

"What makes you laugh, papa?"

"The memory of my encounter with the young rascal this morning will make me smile ten years from now. I must have met him, Gladys, immediately after he pulled you out of the water, for he looked like a wet kitten—a half-starved, stray kitten at that. He began to run when he saw me, so, being unable to catch him any other way, I collared him and gave him a good lecture about trying to kill birds. He looked so sheepish and thoroughly ashamed of himself, that I relented, feeling that perhaps I
was too severe in my judgment of the boy. Perhaps, Gladys, he didn't intend to kill the tanager, and was throwing stones that day without dreaming that he could hit the bird."

"Papa Birney, don't you let him fool you that way. He is a wicked, bad boy, and I know he intended to kill our tanager."

"Possibly, but we may as well give him the benefit of the doubt, my child."

"I think he ought to be put in jail!" announced Gladys.

Mr. Birney laughed. "If you could have seen him this morning, Gladys, you might change your mind. He evidently expected a thrashing. Finally, I talked to the boy, just as I often have to you. I tried to make him see how much better it is to study the wild life about us than to destroy it. If you will believe it, before I let him go, that hardened youngster had promised me that he would never throw another stone at a bird as long as he lives."

"Ted Bennet promised you that, papa?" There was more than ordinary surprise in the tones.

"Yes, Gladys, and it was an unsolicited promise. It seems that Nora has been talking
to him. Now I feel that I am responsible in a
great measure for that boy's attitude toward
creation in general. I have been too absorbed
in my own pursuits to try to influence him as I
might have.”

Just at dusk, when Gladys and her father
were sitting by the bank of the river, talking
about fishes, Ted Bennet appeared. In his
hands he carried a great bunch of pond-lilies.
These he thrust toward Gladys, saying, as she
took them:—

“Maybe I'm bad, but there ain't nothin' bad
about them lilies.”

Then he was gone.
CHAPTER XXII
MR. BIRNEY SIGNS A PAPER

"PAPA, I'm going over to tell Nora and the little Bennets about the bobolinks—because I found so many bobolink pictures in an old magazine."

"Glad to hear it."

"Papa, I wish I had a lot of brown paper."

"What for?"

"So Nora could make a bird-picture scrapbook."

"That's a good idea, Gladys; it will give the poor child something to do, and something to think about. Let me see—here is a blank book for her, Gladys, with large, white pages; and here is a bottle of library paste to go with it."

"Oh, thank you; it will make her so happy, you dearest father. Now I want to ask one favor of you."

"Name it."
"Will you do what I want you to, honest truth?"

"Certainly, if you don't ask too much. You must have a little mercy on your father."

"Well, sign your name right here. Now, isn't that an easy thing to do? Be sure and make the writing plain," cautioned the child, as the man took the pen offered him, and wrote his name.

"How's that?" he asked, regarding his signature with assumed pride.

"Pretty good," replied Gladys, with an indifferent air, also assumed.

Out in the orchard, on her way to the Bennet cottage, Gladys gave vent to her joy—singing and dancing, and kissing the paper her father had signed.

"Guess I'll sit down and read it over again. Oh, I was so afraid he'd ask me what I wanted him to sign his name for. First time I ever played a trick on him or my mother. Dear, dear, I hope it'll work."

Gladys unfolded the paper, and read it.

"The two folks that are going to sign this paper don't like to live in a house without a
mother. One of the folks is a man, and the other is a little girl. They both want the mother to come home. The man loves the mother, and the little girl does too.

"The man gets along the best he can, and the little girl gets along the best she can, but it's hard not to have a mother. The man always looks nice because he is tall and handsome, but the little girl looks like a beggar child most all the time, and she pretty near got drowned yesterday; and once she almost got killed.

"Maybe nothing will happen to the man and the little girl, but they miss the mother so much they don't know what to do anyway, and they wish that she would come home to the two folks who love her most of all.

"Richard Birney, Gladys Birney."

The child folded the paper, and placed it in an envelope.

"I do wonder what she'll think when she reads it. I hope it'll work; and won't it surprise papa if it does, and she comes home? What will they say to me?"
OR A was under the trees. The four little Bennets, who were playing near, told her when they saw Gladys coming.

"I was afraid you had forgotten me," she said, "and I have wanted to see you so much. I have been out here under the trees every day watching things."

"What have you seen?" asked Gladys, seating herself upon the grass.

"Oh, something every time I have been out here. Once I saw some ants trying to carry off a little worm."

"Was the worm dead?" asked Jimmie.

"No; it was a little wiggly worm."

"What for did the ants want the little wiggly worm?" inquired Sammie.

"Tell him, Gladys." Nora supposed Gladys knew everything.
“Oh, I don’t know; did you ask your father?”

“I don’t believe he would know,” replied Nora. “Once two ants got hold of two ends of that worm and pulled two ways.”

“And broke the worm,” interrupted Tommie.

“Sure pop!” put in Jake.

“No, no,” corrected Nora. “After a while both the ants let go at the same time, and the little worm crawled away hopity-skip.”

“Will the ants ever catch another worm?” asked Jimmie.

“You can’t tell what ants will do, children, unless you watch them; and to-night, if you’ll be good, quiet children, when bedtime comes, I will tell you some other things I have seen ants do.”

“Oh, I know,” interrupted Gladys; “and if you’ll be awful good children, we’ll play have a lecture sometime, and I’ll get my father to tell us things we can’t find out ourselves about ants. Don’t you think that’ll be nice?”

The four little Bennets shook their heads.

Gladys was surprised. “All right,” she agreed, “but there’ll be a lecture just the same,
and they'll pass stick candy around as long as the lecture lasts."

The four little Bennets took courage.

"We'll come, sure pop," promised Jake.

"What's that book for?" questioned Johnnie, nodding toward the package in Gladys's lap.

The explanation which followed was most satisfactory.

"I know him," exclaimed Jake, pointing to one of the colored pictures in Nora's hand.

"He's the boberlink."

"Bobolink!" corrected Gladys.

"I had some boberlink eggs in my pocket just before school let out," Jake went on, "but I smashed 'em, climbing a fence. I was bringing 'em home to show Nora."

Gladys was about to call Jake a cruel, bad boy, when Nora touched his curly head, saying, "Dear old Jake, he'd do anything for poor sister, and so would Ted."

"Well," pouted Jimmie, "I didn't know you wanted birds' eggs. I fired all I found at the trees."

Gladys was speechless with horror, when Sammie piped in, "All the eggs what I found, I gave to the girls; and I guess I got hun-
dreds what were in trees. I'm the only little kid in school what dares to climb high, and let go and wave your arms."

"That ain't nuffin'," remonstrated Tommie. "You wait till I get bigger!"

"Oh, such horrible children!" thought Gladys.

"Tell Nora about the boberlinks," entreated Jake.

Gladys didn't know how to begin. She longed to say some dreadful things to the four little Bennets, but wished to spare poor Nora's feelings. As she was wondering what to do, Tommie, pointing toward the road, called out, "There's your pa."

"Goodie!" exclaimed Gladys, running to meet him. In a few words she explained the situation.

"Please come, papa," she begged, "and tell about the bobolinks yourself. I would chew up that Jake Bennet if I could be an elephant for a minute. Come over and make him feel like a sinner. Stealing bobolink eggs! The bad boy!"

Mr. Birney could not resist such an appeal.

"Gladys tells me that you want to hear of a
friend of mine who often goes by the name of Robert O'Lincoln," he began.

The four little Bennets were astonished. Here was the man who had scarcely spoken to them all their lives, making himself perfectly at home beneath their trees. Not one of them doubted but that the birds and animals actually talked to him, and a feeling of awe hushed the little group.

Often and often the children had listened to strange stories regarding Mr. Birney. How he had spent weeks in the dead of winter in the wilderness across the river, watching the wild animals there. How he guarded his forest, and was always learning something of the ways of its inhabitants. He was in the habit of roaming days at a time through the cedar swamp, always interested in the wild ones and never caring for the opinions of his fellow-man. The country children, knowing this and a great deal more, regarded the man with superstitious dread. They believed that he was in league with the wild life about him, and could command the very insects to do his bidding. It was commonly supposed that if he chose to use his power, he could tell the "darning-
needles” to sew up the mouths of all the school children, and it would be done. Only Ted Bennet had ever dared roam at will over the farm belonging to so strange a man.

The four little Bennets could scarcely believe their eyes when he seated himself upon the grass beside them. Their mouths expressed their wonder by falling open when he spoke.

“When I was a boy,” went on Mr. Birney, “Robert O’Lincoln was one of my best friends. I have never known so jolly a soul as he appears to be during May and June. He tells me that he feels bursting with joy at that time of the year, and I believe it.

“Just before I came over here this afternoon, children, I had a little talk with him.”

The four little Bennets opened their mouths wider.

“He was hiding in the bushes. I said to him, ‘Why, my dear bobolink, what are you doing here? Why don’t you get out in the sunshine and sing?’ The next minute I was sorry I spoke as I did, for the poor fellow was all in rags. I wish you could have seen his coat tail. He explained to me that he was
having a new suit made, and that it was his custom to keep out of sight until he could make a decent appearance.

“Robert O’Lincoln wouldn’t sing for me this afternoon—said he couldn’t.”

“Didn’t you know that bobolinks quit singing when they moult?” demanded Ted, who had joined the group unnoticed by any one but Nora. “Why, say!” he continued, “bobolinks never sing after their black and white feathers come off.”

“How do you know, Ted?” asked Nora.

“Well, I guess I know a thing or two about birds.”

Ted stopped suddenly, conscious that Gladys was looking intently at him. When she gave him a reassuring smile, he blushed.

“How I wish I could hear a bobolink sing?” said Nora.

A quick light in Ted’s eyes caught Mr. Birney’s attention.

“Ted,” he suggested, “imitate the bobolink’s song for the children.”

“Who told you I could whistle like the birds?” asked Ted.

“Perhaps the birds told me,” laughed the man.
Ted stared. "Cross my heart and hope to die," he declared, "I never told a living soul. That was my secret."

The four little Bennets weren't a bit surprised that Mr. Birney knew what the birds had found out.

"Can you, Ted? Can you whistle the bobolink's song?" Nora leaned toward him in her eagerness.

"Well, I should say!" admitted Ted.

"Please, then, let me hear you."

Without waiting to be coaxed, Ted rose, turned his back on his audience, and with his hands in his pockets, whistled the indescribable song of the bobolink.

Mr. Birney was astonished; the imitation was perfect.

The four little Bennets, to satisfy themselves that it was not a bird singing instead of their brother, crawled on their hands and knees until they were in front of Ted. The admiration expressed by the attitude the four assumed, and the ever open mouths, made him laugh.

"You look like young robins," he commented. "Can't you keep your mouths shut?"
“Do it again,” begged Tommie; and Jake, Sammie, and Jimmie repeated the request in concert.

Ted’s first public performance was a success. Nora, Gladys, and Mr. Birney joined the four little Bennets in begging him to whistle more.

“It is wonderful, my boy!” said Mr. Birney.

So Ted whistled not only the bobolink’s merry song, but unnumbered wild-wood favorites until the little Bennets made him laugh again. When he finished, Nora was in tears.

Ted was a homely, freckle-faced, sunburned, barefooted boy. He had killed the scarlet tanager and nearly drowned Gladys—yet the child forgot it all beneath the spell of his music. Before he had time to think, or to defend himself, she had put her arms around his neck and kissed him,—a thing that had never happened to him before, or at least not since he was a baby,—and he hoped to be preserved from such attacks forever after. The boy resented the performance with spirit.

“Ted,” said Gladys, in no way dismayed by his frown and the vigor with which he wiped the kiss away with his ragged coat sleeve, “Ted, from the bottom of my heart, I forgive you for all your sins.”
“Don’t you ever dare kiss me again or I’ll get even with you,” he retorted.

“Boys are queer,” laughed Gladys.

Nora beamed with pride and happiness. She knew Ted would whistle for her whenever she wanted him to.

“How did you ever learn to do it, Ted?” asked Mr. Birney.

“Oh, I’ve mocked the birds ever since I was a little kid,” answered the boy. “Did it for fun. Are you going to tell Nora more about the bobolinks?”

“Robert O’Lincoln told me,” resumed the man, and instantly the four little Bennets stopped turning somersaults to listen, “that he’s had a hard, sad time this year. He began the season happily enough. Early in the year, dressed in a new suit of black and white, he came from the south with a band of minstrels. They stopped in Louisiana and gave a series of concerts. Nothing like it is ever known here in the north. One bobolink begins with a thrilling solo, and soon hundreds of birds join him in a matchless chorus.

“Robert O’Lincoln didn’t appear surprised when I told him that the concerts are famous
in the United States, because Mr. Audubon not only attended them years ago, but wrote a great deal about them, thinking that everybody would want to know all that it is possible to learn about our greatest American singers. One striking thing about the bobolink chorus is that the music stops instantly.

"Why don't they have concerts up here in the north?" interrupted Gladys.

"Because when the concert season is over, the birds separate into flocks and finally into pairs.

"In Louisiana the concerts are usually followed by feasting upon newly sown rice. Thinking of the damage so many birds might cause the rice crop, I told my friend Robert that he and his band ought to eat something else; but he explained that they had to have a change of diet. Then said I, 'Robert, what did you eat in the far south?' 'Ate the babies of the Sea-Island Cotton Worms,' he answered; 'and if it wasn't for our folks, the men down there wouldn't have any Sea-Island Cotton, because those Cotton Worm babies would eat it all up. Never saw such greedy things as they are. We just have to help ourselves to
a little rice to get the taste of them out of our mouths.'

"'Excuse me, sir,' said I, 'who could blame you?'

"Robert O'Lincoln then went on to tell me of his troubles. It seems that he and two others of the concert company wanted the same mate. She was a dear little lady, dressed in striped brown. Her shawl and her little bonnet were trimmed with darker stripes. Robert O'Lincoln said that she was the sweetest creature in the meadow, and he felt that he must have her. The other two birds felt the same, and she said she really couldn't tell which she admired the most. They all looked alike to her—she didn't think she cared for any of them. This queer little lady finally promised to love the bird who could sing the best. She was fond of music.

"Robert O'Lincoln told me that he sung incessantly for the sake of winning that little bunch of feathers. He poured forth his melody from the swaying stalks of plants, from the top of the fence, and from the low bushes. He soared upward, singing as he went—then dropped to the ground to sing beside her."
“She married him, of course,” insisted Gladys.
“Yes, they were married,” laughed her father.
“One May-day there was a wedding among the violets and blue-eyed grass in the meadow. Robert O’Lincoln promised to care for and protect his little wife with his life if necessary, and she promised to take care of their home and the children as well as she knew how.
“ If only the two birds had built their home in that particular meadow, among the buttercups and clover, they might have been spared their heart-breaking trouble. They chose instead to make their nest in a timothy field not far away. They found a little hollow in the ground, which Mrs. O’Lincoln lined with woven grasses, and whenever she left the nest or returned to it, she went by a roundabout way. Nothing would have tempted her to have flown directly up from the nest.”
“ Why not?” asked Sammie.
“ Because her enemies would have known where she lived, and she wanted to keep her nest hidden from them.”
“ What enemies did she have?” asked Jimmie.
“ Oh, crows and hawks,” replied the man.
“And boys who maybe didn’t know how she loved her home,” added Nora.

“I have heard,” admitted Mr. Birney, “that there are boys in some parts of the world who would be cruel enough to spoil a nest that they couldn’t make themselves if they tried ever so hard. Mrs. O’Lincoln was proud of her nest. She had finished it the best she knew how. Robert O’Lincoln was happy as could be; used to hover above that little home of his, singing thrilling songs of joy.

“There came a time when there were six precious eggs in the nest. Beautiful little eggs they were, pointed on one end—”

“Oh, yes,” broke in Sammie, “Jake knows all about ’em, he—”

“Shut up! will you?” roared Jake, knocking Sammie on his back in the grass.

Mr. Birney paid no attention to the skirmish.

“It was an anxious time for the little mother and for the father as well. Inside those six eggs, bobolink babies were waiting to break their shells. Think of it, children, six more wondrous singers tucked away in those tiny eggs. The mother bird kept them cuddled safe and warm beneath her wings, and no one
will ever know how she loved them, nor how happy her little heart was when she heard the baby bobolinks faintly peeping to her. The father bobolink used to bring her food so she wouldn’t have to leave the nest.

"One day something dreadful happened!"

"Who told you?" demanded Jake.

"The bobolink," said Mr. Birney, ignoring the child’s agitation. "To tell you the truth, I was in the hay-field soon after the accident and saw the poor birds’ ruined home."

Jake collapsed.

"He’s sorry," remonstrated Nora. "Jake didn’t realize —"

"It was a sad thing," interrupted Gladys’s father, "I don’t wonder the boy feels sorry about it; but the men who were cutting the grass destroyed the nest, eggs and all."

"Why?" demanded Sammie.

"They didn’t mean to—they didn’t realize what the old birds were making such a fuss about. The nest was so carefully hidden I doubt if they could have found it anyway in time to save it."

"Lucky for you, Jake," began Jimmie, but Nora shook her head.
“Did the bobolinks build another home?” asked Gladys.

“No, child,” answered her father; “bobolinks raise only one brood each season.”

“It seems to me,” said Nora, looking beyond the boys, “that stealing bird babies—birds’ eggs—is just as bad as killing the birds themselves. Whoever wants me to be happy, must promise not to touch them.”

The four little Bennets looked most uncomfortable, but offered no remarks upon the subject, until Ted swiftly placed them upon their feet facing Nora.

“Now, you little sinners, say what Nora wants you to, or I’ll meet you one at a time when you go after the cows.”

The boys were about to rebel when Gladys stood beside them. “Nora,” she said, “I’ll promise you that I’ll never touch an egg nor even scare the mother bird nor the father bird.”

“Me too,” chimed in Jake, and “Me too,” echoed Sammie, Jimmie, and Tommie.

“Tell the children about the bobolink’s new suit, papa.” Gladys had to say something or laugh—and she didn’t want to laugh if she could help it.
“Robert O’Lincoln’s new suit is to be like Mrs. O’Lincoln’s in color, and when it is finished, he is going south. He will travel by night and expects to join a great many old friends in the marshes along the Delaware River. There they will be known as Reed Birds. In South Carolina, their next stopping-place, where the whole band will feast on rice, they will be called Rice Birds.”

The four little Bennets were growing restless.

“If I see Robert O’Lincoln again before he leaves, I will tell him you children are sorry he had so sad an experience this year, and you hope he will be more successful with his family another season.

“Boys, if Nora wants to watch the birds, there is no reason why you can’t take her into the fields next summer before their nesting season is over — of course you’ll have to find the nests for her, but you won’t mind doing that to please your sister.”

“We’ll put up some bird houses here in the yard, too,” said Ted; “we’ll make ’em this winter, boys,—for wrens and bluebirds,—so Nora’ll have something to watch all the
time. Ain't it queer we never thought of it before?"

The minute Gladys was alone with her father, she indulged in a stage whisper. "That Jake did feel like a little sinner, sure as anything."

When the Bennet children were left by themselves, Ted whistled bird songs. Gladys and her father listened until they were beyond reach of the sweet, clear music.

"That boy has a wonderful talent, Gladys," said the man; "I have never known or heard of any one who could equal his ability in imitating bird calls, and you know I have travelled the world over."
CHAPTER XXIV

GIFTS AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS

R. BIRNEY was puzzled. Why his wife should suddenly write letters addressed to "Dearest Papa and Gladys"—letters brimming over with tenderness—was more than he could understand. Meditating upon the subject didn’t make him cross.

Soon after, an express package found its way to the old farm-house. In it were dresses, aprons, and other belongings for Gladys. To the child’s unspeakable delight, there were gifts for Nora,—an albatross dress of cherry red, a pretty coat, and a matchless hat.

The last thing Gladys noticed in the package was a box. Removing the cover, she found a note.

"You read it, papa, while I see what’s in the box."

"‘Dear little daughter,’” he read, “‘why don’t
Gladys stared at her father. "Why, I don't know enough to get up a Band of Mercy; and just think, there would be only seven children in it, counting me! That would be a funny Band of Mercy, enough to make anybody laugh!

"Why, papa, what is this? Help me open it, please. It says, 'Gladys from grandpa.' Opera glasses! Well, what will I do with opera glasses out here in the country? Wait, there is writing on the other side of the slip of paper. It says, 'This gift is sent to the little girl, with the wish that it may help her to study the actors on the stage of her theatre.' The 'stage of my theatre' and 'actors'—what is grandpa thinking about? Oh, I understand—the birds, of course! Wasn't he good?

"What else is in the box? Microscopes! They are all marked. One for Nora and Ted,—yes, sir,—and Jake. All six of those Bennet children will own a microscope."

"What are these, Gladys?" asked her father, removing from tissue-paper wrappings seven large blue buttons, each decorated with a white star.
“Band of Mercy buttons, papa; and see, mamma has sent me a pile of Band of Mercy reading. Well, I guess I'll have to get up one, if she wants me to so badly.”

“Do explain the meaning of all this, Gladys,” said her father. “I never heard of such an organization. What is its object?”

“To be kind to everything,” answered the child.

“That is not very definite.”

“Well, this is the pledge you have to sign if you want to belong: ‘I will try to be kind to all living creatures, and try to protect them from cruel usage.’ Children love to go to Band of Mercy meetings. We used to sing songs and speak pieces about birds and animals, and everybody told what they knew about being kind to stray cats and not letting folks be cruel to horses. I can’t half explain to you about it. You read some of these leaflets, and then you’ll know.

“I can teach the Bennet children to sing Band of Mercy songs. I’ll sing one of my favorites to you, papa:—

“‘Hail to the elm, the brave old elm!
Our last lone forest tree,
GIFTS AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS

Whose limbs outstand the lightning's brand,
For a brave old elm is he!

"'For fifteen score of full-told years
He has borne his leafy prime,
Yet he holds them well, and lives to tell
His tale of the olden time.

"'Then hail to the elm, to the green-topped elm,
And long may his branches wave,
For a relic is he, the gnarled old tree,
Of the time of the good and brave.'"

"Your father likes that, Gladys; sing another."

"How would you like 'Each Little Flower that Opens'?"

"Sing it, child."

"'Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.
The purple-banded mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning red
That brightens up the sky,

"'The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them every one;"
The tall trees in the forest,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the river-side
We gather every day,—

"Yes, all things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
And all things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all."

"Sing one more for your father."
"All right, I love these songs. Guess I'll
sing you the 'Honest Old Toad' this time.

"Oh, a queer little chap is the honest old toad,
A funny old fellow is he;
Living under the stone by the side of the road,
'Neath the shade of the old willow tree.
He is dressed all in brown from his toe to his crown,
Save his vest that is silvery white.
He takes a long nap in the heat of the day,
And walks in the cool dewy night.

"When winter draws near, Mr. Toad goes to bed,
And sleeps just as sound as a top;
But when May blossoms follow soft April showers,
He comes out with a skip, jump, and hop.
He changes his dress only once, I confess,
Every spring; and his old worn-out coat,
With trousers and waistcoat, he rolls in a ball,
And stuffs the whole thing down his throat."
"'K-rruk, krruk,' says the frog,
From his home in the bog;
But the toad he says never a word;
He tries to be good,
Like the children who should
Be seen but never be heard.'"

"Go over, Gladys, and begin the good work. I see that mamma has put in some pledge cards for you to have the children sign. If you can teach those little Bennets to sing Band of Mercy songs, you will have accomplished something worth while."

Gladys shook her head. "It will be a queer kind of a Band of Mercy," she objected, "but I will do the best I can."
CHAPTER XXV

GLADYS REPORTS TO HER MOTHER

"MY DEAREST MOTHER: Such a time as we have had since I wrote to you and grandpa to thank you for the presents. I did get up the Band of Mercy, and you can’t guess how easily the little Bennets learn the songs. I feel like laughing at Sammie every time he sings the ‘Honest Old Toad.’ He puffs all up and looks like a toad himself—he gets so dreadfully in earnest. The children want to have Band of Mercy meetings every day, and we did just at first; but papa says that is a bad plan, because they might get tired of it and never want to have any more meetings, so we have them only twice a week now.

"The other day Aunt Rebecca asked Tommie what he wore the blue button for. He said it was because he belonged to the Band of Mercy."
Then she asked him what that meant, and he told her it meant that he was going to be kind to elephants. Now, what do you think of that? I had to stuff my handkerchief in my mouth to keep from laughing. Aunt Rebecca winked at me, and said she was glad to hear it.

"Our meetings are not a bit like the ones I used to go to, and I do not believe they do any good; only we have some fun, and Mrs. Bennet says it makes her happy to have the children learn to sing pretty songs. She talks more than she used to. I guess, after all, the Band of Mercy does do some good, for Mrs. Bennet says the children do not quarrel as often as they did, and Aunt Rebecca says they certainly behave better. They did use to chase her hens and chickens, but now they don't.

"Out here in the country, mamma, the cats and dogs and horses and cows are taken good care of, and I wondered what the children could tell in the meeting about trying to do acts of kindness to dumb creatures. I thought they wouldn't have anything to say, but they did at the very first meeting. Tommie said that he saw a 'catakiller' and didn't step on it. Jimmie owned up that he used to spoil all the ant hills
he could find—but he won’t any more. Sammie told about daddy-long-legs—how he caught one and said when he went after the cows one night:

“‘Gran’-daddy, gran’-daddy-long-legs,
Tell me where my cows are, or I’ll kill you.’

Sammie explained that if you lift a daddy-long-legs by one leg, it will point where the cows are with another; but if it won’t point, then you always kill it. Sammie was just going to kill the daddy-long-legs when he remembered that he belonged to the Band of Mercy and maybe the daddy-long-legs wanted to live, so he let him go.

“Jake looked kind of ashamed, but he confessed that he always thought it was lots of fun to turn mud-turtles on their backs; so one morning, when he found a big, ugly one, he poked him on his back and was going to leave him there, when he happened to think what Sammie remembered, that he belonged to the Band of Mercy, too, so he poked the mud-turtle over on his feet again.

“I was the only one who had not been kind to something. Even Nora helped a fly get away from a spider.
"Ted Bennet is the queerest boy I ever heard of. He won't belong to the Band of Mercy and he won't sign the pledge, but he comes to all the meetings. When Nora told about the spider and the fly, he said he would like to know why we ought to be kind to all creatures and not kill them when they are killing each other all the time. He says he knows what he is talking about, because he has been outdoors all his life more than he has ever been in the house, and he has watched everything that lives on the farm. I didn't know what to say, but I told him that I guessed if the wild things have such a hard time to get along anyway, we ought to be willing to help them all we can, and not make them have more trouble and suffering. He stuck his nose up dreadfully and said that was what any girl would say, but it wasn't any reason. Then I happened to think that wild things may kill each other, but it is because they are after food, and not because they mean to be cruel. But when you don't understand things yourself, mamma, you can't explain them to any one else; so I gave up and asked Ted to whistle bird songs for us. He is teaching us the different bird calls, so we will know what
bird is singing even if we can’t see it. Every time I see Ted Bennet now, I think of that dear old ‘Barefoot Boy.’ Ted is getting better looking, too, mamma,—the freckles don’t show half as much as they did; but he doesn’t like girls very well, only Nora.

“You wanted me to tell you all about the Band of Mercy; but, you see, there isn’t very much to tell, so I hope you’ll excuse me if you are disappointed.

“The best thing that has happened this summer was Mary Ellen’s birthday party. She had one in the orchard, and nobody was invited only all the Bennet children, Rose, too, and my father and I. Mary Ellen is the most beautiful young lady I ever saw anywhere. Her sister Jane waited on the table, and we had ice cream and everything good. Papa told funny stories, and made everybody laugh—even Uncle Reuben stayed awake and laughed. Jane says Mary Ellen isn’t a young lady at all, only a big little girl.

“Nora wore her new dress, and honestly, mamma, she looked pretty. Mary Ellen curled my hair for me the way it ought to be curled, and honestly, I was thankful.
“There was a birthday cake with I don’t know how many candles on it. I didn’t have a chance to count, we had such a happy time.

“After supper we played games in the orchard for a while; then we children sung and I spoke a piece, and last of all Ted got over being bashful and whistled bird music. When that boy stops saying ‘ain’t,’ I think he will be most perfect. He was dressed up at Mary Ellen’s party, and he did look remarkably nice. He said he didn’t feel comfortable, though.

“Jane asked her father if he wouldn’t hitch up the lumber-wagon next Sunday, and take the whole crowd to Sunday-school. Uncle Reuben said he would be glad to, if the children would go, but they used to say they wouldn’t. Isn’t it queer how children change their minds? They all want to go now, and I am going with them. What do you suppose the superintendent will think?

“I can’t write any more now, because my fingers are pretty nearly broken. When my father allows folks to get acquainted with him, they think just what I do—that he is a fine
gentleman. If you were here, mamma, the world would be perfect. Good-by, from

"Your loving daughter,

"Gladys Birney.

"P.S. I wrote to the boys last week.

"G. B.

"Another P.S.: The Band of Mercy story the children like the best is the one about the bell of justice. I have to tell it over again at every meeting. It is about the tower in Italy in which the king had caused a bell to be hung so any one who had been wronged could ring it to summon the magistrate, whose duty it was to see that justice was done. Do you remember the story, mamma, how the rope got worn out, and a wild vine was tied on to make it longer? And a poor old starving horse, that had been turned out to die, tried to eat the vine. That made the bell ring. When the magistrate came and saw the old horse, he made the owner take care of it as long as it lived.

"I like the story, myself.—G. Birney.

"P.S. If I could see you, I could tell you more things than I can write."
CHAPTER XXVI

THE STORY OF THE SILVER FOX

ONE evening when it rained, Mr. Birney told Gladys a story.

"Tell me about something that happened in the woods near grandpa's city."

"Let me think," said her father. "Now I have it. I can tell you something that happened not long ago."

"What is it about?"

"A silver fox, Gladys."

"It is true?"

"As true as I am able to tell it. I read the principal facts in a newspaper."

"All right, I am listening. First, though, are there any foxes on our farm?"

"Indeed, there are, Gladys. The folks in the poultry yard know it better than I do."

"Where do they live, papa?"

"In the old woods, where no one will harm
them nor their neighbors. Are you ready for the story, or shall we talk about our own foxes instead?"

"I guess I had rather have the story this time," decided Gladys, resting her head on her father's shoulder in the most comfortable fashion.

"The shadows of the trees grew longer and longer as they fell upon the bit of open ground in the forest where five baby foxes were playing. It was a special treat to be taken to this playground, and the little ones scampered about in high glee. There was nothing near to harm them, for the proud mother fox was careful of her babies and never let them leave the safety of their cosey home when danger was near.

"It was no wonder she was proud of her family, for they were cunning little foxes, with sharp, bright eyes brimful of mischief. They were so fat and round that their mother sometimes laughed until her sides fairly ached when she watched them play leap-frog. Their bushy, white-tipped tails were her special pride; and she loved to bury her nose in their soft, silken fur when they lay cuddled together in the burrow."
"These were silver foxes, and the only ones within many, many miles of their home. Long ago the silver foxes were quite numerous; but their beautiful fur made lovely muff[s] and trimmings, so the hunters and trappers gave them no rest, but shot them and caught them until they have almost disappeared.

"The little foxes not only had no cousins, uncles, nor aunts, but their handsome father went away one evening and never came home. Their mother guessed his fate; she knew there were plenty of people in the world who coveted his rich coat, and well understood that she and the little ones would never hear his cheerful bark again.

"With five hungry young children to provide for, the mother fox had no time to mourn the loss of their father.

"When the babies had played as long as she thought they ought, each little fox obediently answered her call, and soon five little forms were snuggled together in the bed their father and mother had made of old leaves and grass, the autumn before they were born.

"The mother fox waited until they were asleep, and then started forth in search of food."
It was nearly dark in the forest by this time, and as she hurried along in the deepening gloom, her mind was full of serious thoughts of the future.

"To continue living where they were was out of the question; for one thing, it was almost impossible to get a bite for her little ones to eat without risking her life. Many a time she had been chased by a dog, when, perhaps, she had secured nothing but one small chicken for her big family.

"It was seldom she found a rabbit; the hunters were after them, too. It was hard to catch birds, and her children, one and all, disliked toads. There was nothing left for her to do, then, but watch for lambs in the fields and rob hen-coops.

"It was dangerous work, but the precious little ones at home must be fed. She couldn't let them starve.

"One thing, however, she decided to do; just as soon as the babies were a little bigger and stronger, she would take them with her up north where, perhaps, there would be enough to eat, and as she fondly imagined, they would be safe from the cruel hunters."
"She reached a farm-yard at last, and to her
great surprise and delight, captured a plump
old gander with scarcely any trouble at all. Al-
though hungry herself, after her long journey,
the poor fox resolutely turned her back on the
tempting bunches of feathers perched on the
roosts in the hen-house, and thankful to have
secured enough for her little ones, she took the
heavy gander in her mouth and started home-
ward.

"With no thought of impending danger she
sped along, her heart gladdened by her unex-
pected good fortune. Alas! when about half
way home, the poor fox was caught in a trap
which held her tight in its merciless grasp.

"The trap was an ingeniously arranged affair,
and although she was quite unhurt, her cries
were piteous in the extreme; struggle frantically
as she might, escape was quite impossible. Five
hungry babies at home, who would miss their
mother and starve to death if she never came
back to them! She tried again to free herself.
All her strength and agility availed her nothing.

"Five hungry babies with no one to care for
them! Again and again she tried to tear her-
self away. It was useless."
"The hours crept slowly but steadily on. When the morning light flooded the waking world, it brought added anguish to the suffering captive; for then the hunters found their prize.

"Two great men were wild with delight when the beautiful creature met their gaze. It was in vain she lifted her tired, mournful eyes to them in mute appeal. They called her a wretched thief, when they saw the gander she had taken to feed her hungry children, and at the same time were loud in their praises of the long, silvery black fur God had given her, and they were taking.

"Instead of killing the unfortunate fox, they bound a long rope about her shapely limbs and body, while the proud head, held so gracefully but the day before, drooped upon her silken breast.

"When she learned the fate for which she was destined, her anxiety was all for the hungry little ones; for herself, she had no thought. She listened intently to the conversation of the trappers, for with the sagacity common to her kind, she meant to escape even then, if possible.

"A famous riding club in the near-by city intended giving a fox-chase that very day.
Fifty hounds were in readiness for the chase, but the fox the sportsmen had secured was ill; this, then, the hunters agreed was their chance to make some money; they would sell their prisoner to the club.

"This matter was arranged easily, and not a member of the club knew that the fox to be sold was a beautiful silver fox worth many times what they agreed to pay the trappers at the close of the chase.

"Poor mother fox! Sometimes she moaned and cried in a heart-rending fashion; at other times she snarled and barked, showing her sharp, white teeth in a savage manner. But all that long day, until the hour appointed for the chase, her heart ached for the hungry babies.

"When the fatal hour came an unlooked-for occurrence took place. Four officers of the Humane Society put in their appearance, and declared that chasing a live fox is nothing less than extreme cruelty, and that they would never allow such a thing to take place if they had power to prevent it.

"A heated argument followed, with the result that the long-talked-of chase was a disap-
pointment to the members of the riding club, and ended in a 'drag,' which means that a dead fox was dragged over the moorland at the tail of a horse; the club, in the meantime, refusing to pay the trappers for the fox they no longer needed.

"Then it was that the officers of the Humane Society together visited the beautiful silver fox, and at last her appeals were heeded. Strangely enough, the trappers who captured the fox knew so little of the value of her fur that they readily agreed to sell her to the four men for the price promised them by the riding club, and the only condition imposed upon them was that the handsome creature should be taken back to the forest and set at liberty, on the very spot where she was captured.

"That night there was a happy reunion in the home of the silver fox, who now lives with many sturdy grandchildren about her, in the region of Hudson Bay."
CHAPTER XXVII
CRICKETS AND POND FOLKS

"PAPA, wouldn't it be fun if this house was Noah's Ark?"

Gladys could keep still no longer. For an hour her father had been reading, and she had cut pictures from old magazines for Nora's scrap-book.

"Do you know what I think of when I look out of doors to-day?" continued the child, in nowise discouraged by her father's silence. "I think of what the Bible says about the flood. 'The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.' I learned that one rainy Sunday long ago."

Mr. Birney smiled and closed his book. "It does rain, Gladys, that's a fact."

"Why, papa, it pours, I can hardly hear the little cricket singing. Aren't you glad we have
that little 'cricket on the hearth'? You know it’s good luck to have a cricket in the house.

Listen, do you hear him now?"

"Yes, Gladys, do you know where he lives?"

"Of course I do, but I had to hunt before I found his little house. Here, papa, right here in this little crack by the fireplace. There, he stopped singing, but pretty soon he’ll poke his little head out again. He sits with his head in his doorway most all day.

"Oh, papa, what do you think Ted Bennet told me?"

"I am sure I don’t know, little daughter."

"Well, yesterday morning we went to the pond after cat-tails for Nora, and there I saw in the soft, damp earth some little ridges that looked just like the piles of earth the moles have thrown up, down by our currant bushes, only of course, they were much smaller — oh, just tiny little ridges. And who do you think Ted Bennet says made them?"

"Gladys, I can’t guess."

"He says they were made by mole-crickets. I said, 'Who told you, Ted?' He said he didn’t have to be told things, he discovered things for himself; but I said to him, 'Ted Bennet, look
a-here, you can’t discover the right names for things all by yourself, because pretty near everything in the world has been named.’”

Mr. Birney laughed. “What happened next, Gladys?” he inquired.

“Well, Ted said he’d show me that he was right, so we got down in the mud and he dug out the queerest, dirtiest-looking bug you ever saw. ‘There,’ he said, ‘Gladys Birney, if that ain’t—I can’t get him to stop saying ‘ain’t,’ papa—‘if that ain’t a mole-cricket, what kind of a cricket is it?’ Before I had a chance to say a word, he explained to me that that little bug lives alone in its hole and never comes out except at night.

“Then I got a chance to say I didn’t believe it was a cricket at all, because it wouldn’t jump. Ted said he knew it was a cricket, because he had been studying some with the microscope mamma sent him, and its song is made in regular cricket fashion by rubbing its wings together. He made me look at the wings through the microscope, and, papa, the veins in them were rough-looking, raised veins.

“Now, papa, what is that creature’s true name?”
"Ted is right, Gladys, it is the mole-cricket."

"I suppose he'll think he's wonderfully smart now," laughed Gladys; "but he'll make a mistake some day. The idea of a boy trying to name things himself!"

"It is better to be often mistaken, Gladys, than to depend on books alone. That boy surprises me greatly. We have called him a bad boy always because we knew no better."

"It was his fault, papa, just the same; he didn't try to let anybody understand him. He didn't care much what anybody thought—he says he didn't, and I think he was a regular mole-cricket himself; he got into his burrow and stayed there. Nobody would have known there was anything remarkable about him if somebody hadn't dug him out—so there!"

Gladys laughed merrily. It didn't occur to her mind that her own father had been far more misunderstood than Ted Bennet.

"The mole-crickets are a determined race, Gladys," commented her father; "and when they begin their galleries, they allow no obstacles to stop them—digging their way through roots and destroying everything they encounter."
“Suppose they should meet a worm, papa, what would they do then?”

“Eat him up to get him out of the way, Gladys. Woe be to the worm or insect that interferes with the work of a mole-cricket.”

“Do the mole-crickets live on worms, papa?”

“No, they prefer vegetation.”

“Where does the mother cricket lay her eggs?” persisted Gladys; “and how many eggs does she lay?”

“Only about three or four hundred, Gladys, and they are laid in the remotest part of the gallery, in the spring of the year.”

“Three or four hundred!” echoed Gladys. “I don’t wonder there wouldn’t be anything green left on the earth if it wasn’t for the birds!

“Ted lifted up a stone, papa, and showed me some of those horrid little soft-bodied insects without any wings, and he told me they were stone-crickets. Was he right?”

“Yes, Gladys, he undoubtedly knew what he was talking about.”

“He couldn’t tell me a thing about the jumping-crickets in the fields, papa. Are they called field-crickets, I wonder, because they live in fields?”
“Certainly, child, they are peaceful ground-dwellers, too. Never have any quarrels among themselves or with their neighbors. Each cricket lives alone in his own little burrow, and never ventures far from home.”

“Why not?”

“Perhaps because they fear the birds.”

“There must be a good many different kinds of crickets on our farm; Ted told me that Rose read something about snowy tree-crickets to him and Nora,—something she found in one of the magazines I took over there,—and he has been trying to find some ever since.

“What becomes of the crickets in the winter, papa?”

“Most of them die, my child.”

“Then I shouldn’t think there would be any crickets the next summer.”

“Most crickets lay their eggs in the autumn, Gladys, and the eggs hatch out on the first warm days of spring. We would be overrun with insect life if it were not for the work of winter birds who feed on eggs.”

“Being overrun with insects, reminds me of the electric-light bugs,” interrupted Gladys. “Ted Bennet says he never heard of them, but
I've seen hundreds of them under the electric lights—great brown bugs with ugly-looking front legs and tough wings. Nobody I asked about them, when we found them beneath the electric lights, could tell me one thing. What are they, papa, and where do they come from?

"These great insects are giant water-bugs," replied her father, "and when they dash themselves against the electric lights, they are on their way from one pond to another. The eggs of the giant water-bugs are attached to the stems of water plants, and when the young are hatched, they go to the bottom of the pond where they hide among the stones to watch for mud-minnows and frogs. They grasp their prey with their front legs, and suck its blood."

"They look as if they might," remarked Gladys, with a shiver. "Can they swim, as the water-striders do, papa?"

"Surely they do. It seems to me you must have seen the giant water-bugs skimming over the pond, Gladys. Their bodies, you remember, are flat, and shaped like a boat. Their hind legs they use as oars. These insects have no wings until they are full grown."
“If they live in our pond, papa, why don’t we ever see them flying?”
“Because they fly by night.”
“There is a great deal to learn about what lives in ponds, isn’t there, papa?”
“Indeed there is,” assented Mr. Birney.
“Did you ever hear of the Back Swimmers, Gladys?”
“No; never.”
“Did you ever hear of the Water Boatmen?”
“No.”
“Do you know anything about the River Zaitha?”
“Not a word; now please tell me about all of them.”
“Not until you have seen them first. They are all living in our pond, and you must go down and introduce yourself to them before I will tell you anything about their lives, only,” cautioned her father, “be sure you don’t go without Ted, because if you go alone, you may fall in.”
CHAPTER XXVIII

HOLES IN THE GROUND

ANYBODY who wants to see things ought to get right down on the ground and watch.” Gladys made this remark to her father without looking up.

“What are you watching this time, Gladys, — ants?”

“No, sir, — holes in the ground. I have seen things all the forenoon. Over there in that sandy place I noticed a wasp walking around, and acting kind of queer, so I got down to see what was going on.”

“What color was the wasp, Gladys?”

“Black — it was a little black one.”

“Then it was a sand-wasp.”

“She seemed to be looking for something,” continued the child, “and I guess she didn’t know for a few minutes where to find her own front door. I discovered that her home was
down in the ground—in a regular cave she must have made herself, because after a while she found the place she was looking for, and with her feet—no, I mean her hands—she brushed away a pile of dirt, and then I saw a hole in the ground. I wish all the Bennet children could have seen what I saw next. That wasp went a little way off and found a dead grasshopper that she dragged to her hole—I mean her house. Then she went into her house backward, and pulled the dead grasshopper in head first.

"Now, papa, I am telling the honest truth, and this isn't a bit of a fairy tale. That wasp came out, turned her back to her front door, and kicked sand over it so nobody could see the opening—you wouldn't know there was a hole there at all. I stayed right there and watched. I guess there were some wasp babies in the house, and the mother was afraid they would run away and get lost, or be eaten up by birds, for in a little while she came back with another dead grasshopper, which she dragged into her house the same way. Every time she left home, she covered the opening just as carefully as she did the first time. I watched her
take four grasshoppers to those wasp children, then I got tired of waiting for her to come back again. Maybe she couldn’t find any more dead grasshoppers, and maybe she was afraid the children would kill themselves eating. It is pretty hard to tell what a wasp is thinking about. How many children do you suppose there were down in that hole in the ground, papa?"

"None at all, Gladys."

"Why, papa Birney — why did she take the dead grasshoppers home if they weren’t for her children to eat?"

"The grasshoppers weren’t dead, Gladys."

"They were the deadest-looking grasshoppers I ever saw," declared the child. "They were lying on their backs, facing the sky. Their arms were folded this way, and they looked peaceful as anything. You wouldn’t believe they ever expected to hop again."

"Neither will they," laughed the man.

"Well, if those grasshoppers weren’t dead, papa, what ailed them? Did the rain pretty near drown them?"

"They were paralyzed, my child. The sand-wasp knows just where to sting the grasshop-
pers in a way to paralyze them instead of killing them. She puts them in her storehouse so her wasp baby will have fresh grasshoppers to feed upon."

"Thought you said there weren't any children in the house."

"True, but the wasp laid an egg on one of the grasshoppers, and when the egg hatches out, the young wasp will have plenty of food to last until it is big enough to leave home and go hunting for itself."

"Why didn't she leave the house open, papa, to let in a little light and air — instead of shutting it up so tight?"

"For the simple reason, Gladys, that certain little flies that have no way of paralyzing juicy grasshoppers would have walked right in and left their eggs in the house, so the fly children would have been sure of enough to eat when they were hatched. Then again, she wished to shut out the light and air in order to preserve the grasshoppers in a fresh condition."

"Well, I am going to tell the Bennet children to watch the little black wasps that walk in sandy places, if they want to see something
truly wonderful.” Gladys seemed to be thinking aloud.

“You may learn a great deal more yourself if you continue your observation of sand wasps,” advised the man. “They often drag caterpillars into their holes instead of grasshoppers, and have even been known to pile tiny stones above the entrance to their burrows, to prevent other insects from discovering and digging their way into the treasure-house.

“The next rainy day, Gladys, you and I will hunt up everything we can find in the library about wasps; and in the meantime use your eyes.”

“Trouble is, papa, you can’t always find out what you’d like to know, no matter how much you watch. I’d like to find out a few things about daddy-long-legs. Have they any other name?”

“Yes, they are called harvest spiders, though they are neither true insects nor spiders.”

“What are they, then?”

“They belong to a family of their own, Gladys, and are related to both insects and spiders.”

“I know, they have eight legs,” commented
the child, "because I've counted them—but what do they eat? I could never find out."

"The harvest spiders are useful creatures," replied the man, "because they feed upon plant-llice, the tiny green insects so commonly found upon vegetation everywhere—on our rose bushes, for instance."

"Where do they lay their eggs, do you know that?"

"In little holes in the ground, where they remain all winter, hatching out in the spring."

"Where do the daddy-long-legs stay in the winter?"

"All but one species die on the approach of cold weather. The cinnamon harvest spider is hatched in late summer or early autumn, and spends the winter sleeping under logs and boards."

"Thank you. I do like to know about the common things we see every day, papa. Ted Bennet doesn't know a thing about daddy-long-legs, and he has always liyed among them—just think of it!

"Don't go, papa, I want to tell you about something I guess even you never heard of. Do you see that little hole in the ground?
What do you think I saw come out of it? You never could guess. It was a big spider with a lot of little spiders on her back. She ran off into the grass with the whole family, and I haven't seen her since. Did you ever hear of anything like that? Don't laugh, but tell me."

"Yes," confessed her father, "I have observed a few ground spiders myself."

"Well, then, tell me all you can about them, for I want to know. Where was that mother spider taking her children?"

"Instead of carrying food home for her family," replied Mr. Birney, "she was taking them with her on her wanderings, intending to feed them in the open air. Soon as they are hatched, the mother spider takes her children on her back and starts out. When they are self-reliant enough to leave her, they dig burrows for themselves in which they rest and hide. Their principal food is grasshoppers, crickets, and flies."

"What are you looking for now, papa?"

"Another hole in the ground. Now I have it, Gladys; come here, please."

"What is it, another spider's den?"
“No, unless I am greatly mistaken, this is the retreat of a curious creature, the larva, or child, of the tiger-beetle. You noticed some tiger-beetles a few days ago, flying by the roadside?”

“Oh, yes, I remember. Look, papa! — something is at the top of the hole now — is that the head of the tiger-beetle’s child? I can’t see it very well.”

“Wait a minute, Gladys, and we’ll dig him out. He won’t like it at all, but after we examine him, we will let him make himself another burrow.”

“Here he comes. Oh, oh! Is that the way the tiger-beetles’ babies look? I should think they would hide in the ground. Look at that flat head and those ugly jaws. What’s that hump on its back for? Please tell me all about the queer worm or whatever you call it?”

“Call it larva, Gladys, and then you will be speaking correctly.”

“See, papa, it’s waving one pair of legs in the air instead of using them to walk with. Oh, I don’t like the looks of that — that larva.”

“Neither do the ground dwellers for whom
it lies in wait," observed her father. "This larva digs a long burrow, but spends most of the time at the top watching for some worm or insect to walk by its front door. It prefers large, soft worms, but whatever wanders too near those grasping jaws must say good-by to the daylight, for the larva pulls it into its hole, and eats it up."

"Only," remonstrated Gladys, "doesn't it ever get pulled on the top of the ground itself by a big worm that would fight and try to get away?"

"Oh, no, child, its feet are provided with claws which enable the creature to cling not only to one side, but to the opposite sides of its burrow at the same time. That accounts for the pair of waving legs you noticed. That hump you observed on its back is also supplied with hooks which are fastened into the walls of the burrow so firmly the larva knows it cannot be pulled out.

"If you will have patience enough to watch one of these holes long enough, Gladys, you will be sure to see, perhaps, a big cabbage worm disappear before your wondering gaze."

"Wouldn't it be terrible, papa, if we didn't
dare walk on the earth for fear some creature was waiting to swallow us up, or rather down! That tiger-beetle larva is the worst kind of a child I ever heard of. I don’t want to look into any more holes in the ground for a week, anyway."

Gladys changed her mind. Before the day was done, the Bennet children were all hunting with her for more holes in the ground.
CHAPTER XXIX

HOW THE KATYDID WENT CALLING

The baby was sleeping. Nora sat by his cradle with her scrap-book and a pencil in her lap. She had grown weary of copying the bird pictures in it, when a green-winged creature fluttered in at the window. In days gone by he might have entered that same room unnoticed.

"Mamma! Rose!" called Nora, softly, "come here, please."

"What is it, Nora?" asked Mrs. Bennet, leaving her work in the kitchen in response to the child's request.

"There's a beautiful grasshopper on the wall; won't you bring it to me so I can look at it through the microscope?"

"It is a Katydid, Nora," said Mrs. Bennet. "I will put it here on the table beside you, and if it tries to fly away, you may put this tumbler over it."
“What do you know about Katydid s, mamma?” asked Nora.

“Why,” hesitated Mrs. Bennet, “I know if a Katydid flies into your house, it is a sign you are going to have unexpected company. I’ll send Rose, as soon as I can spare her, to tidy up this room.”

Nora sighed.

“Don’t you want to lie down awhile, Nora?”

There was a world of tenderness in the mother’s voice.

“Oh, no, mamma, I am not tired a bit. I want to watch this Katydid.”

Nora’s smile was reassuring. She looked happy and comfortable.

“The poor young one seems like a different child since Gladys Birney came home,” Mrs. Bennet told Rose, a moment later.

“The boys behave better, too,” assented Rose; “they aren’t nearly so rough. Maybe you and I would be happier, mamma, if we got interested in things outdoors.”

Mrs. Bennet shook her head. “We have no time to waste,” she said.

“Anyway,” continued Rose, “I am going to
have flowers next summer. Mary Ellen says I may have all the flower seeds I will plant, and Ted is going to help me make a garden. We are going to do the way Gladys's father does—have wild cucumber vines and gourds hiding all the ugly places. Maybe we will have a vegetable garden, too," she went on.

Her mother smiled. "I used to make such plans myself, but I lost my ambition long ago."

"Eight young ones, no wonder," sympathized Rose. "But don't I help you do the sewing and the mending now, mamma, and I believe Ted's going to amount to something, and we've had all the diseases—whooping cough, scarlet fever, measles, chicken-pox—everything, I guess. It's time for us to have some good luck now. Then, too, we have each other."

"Yes," interrupted her mother, "but that is about all we do have, Rose." A smile accompanied the words.

"Think of poor Gladys, mamma, always separated from part of her family, and she says she loves everybody in it so much she can't tell who she loves most."

"It's a pity," agreed Mrs. Bennet; "even the little boys have thought of it, and are sorry
for her. She is a beautiful child. I am sure we have all been happier since she came. I wish she were going to stay all the fall and winter."

"Isn't she?" asked Rose, in tones of astonishment.

"No, she is going back to school in a few weeks."

"Why, mamma, you must be mistaken. Gladys says she is going to stay here always."

Mrs. Bennet shook her head. "Her father told me just the other day that he is going to send her back to her mother."

In the meantime, Nora and the Katydid were getting acquainted. In a way, Nora was rude to her guest. She examined every stitch of his garments with a microscope. The work on his suit was faultless. The more closely she examined it the more beauties were revealed. Finally the Katydid became indignant. He had intended to make a fashionable call; but found himself detained by force when he wished to take his departure. Worst of all, the young lady whom he had honored with his presence began asking personal questions about his mode of life and family affairs. When he
would not reply she thrust him in a glass prison.

"Wonder if I could make a picture of him?" said Nora. "I never tried copying anything that was alive. I am going to see what I can do."

The Katydid watched Nora closely while she drew his picture. Once he ventured to sing, but gave it up when Nora dropped her pencil, and bent nearer to see just how he made his music. Such a curious child was enough to discourage any Katydid.

"If that wasn't queer," commented Nora. "He just jerked his wings part way open and then closed them slowly. It's a lucky thing that music-boxes don't grow on Jake and the rest of them. Sing some more, Mr. Katydid."

Mr. Katydid wouldn't. Perhaps he didn't know that a caller should try to be entertaining, especially when the hostess had thrown formality to the winds.

He might have astonished Nora by telling her that he had from one hundred and fifty to two hundred brothers and sisters — though possibly he didn't realize the fact himself.

The autumn before, his mother had left him
fastened to a little twig with thirty of her other children. He was tucked away in an egg then, and never knew that he was left an orphan when Jack Frost came down with the North Wind to herald the approach of winter.

Through the long, cold months while the snow lay deep upon the farm, the baby Katydid waited, as his mother had told him to wait, with patience for the spring.

When the warm, bright days again visited the earth, the baby Katydid found his egg-shell too small and uncomfortable. His clothes were too tight by far, because he had been growing so fast. Finally, when he began to feel smothered in his prison, he struggled to get free, and at last managed to burst the egg-shell through the top, and halfway down one side.

Out walked the baby Katydid, leaving the long clothes he had outgrown, clinging to the egg-shell. He was more than an inch in length, and when he looked at his long, stiff legs and felt of his plump, little body, he must have wondered how he ever could have been folded up and tucked away in so tiny a shell.

Soon the baby Katydid began to leap and
jump—he had no wings then because he was too young. Katydid children never have wings.

A few minutes later the little fellow began to feel hungry, and ate the tender young leaves he found everywhere around him. It wasn't long before he outgrew his clothes again and was so uncomfortable he could scarcely move. His clothes didn't fasten with buttons, so there was no way to get out of them except by making an effort to split open the back of his coat. This done, the baby Katydid managed to crawl out of the tight suit. Then he ate his old clothes. The latter act is a family custom among the Katydids.

When the little fellow had his fourth new suit, he was no longer considered a baby. His wings were beginning to grow, and there was dignity in his manner. Gladys, meeting him in the fields one day, declared that his little face was pretty. "You look so wise, you make me laugh," she told him.

The great day came at last when the baby Katydid shed his fourth suit and appeared in wings. He might have been discouraged at first because his wings hung by his sides, damp
and shapeless. Soon, however, they began to
dry in the air and to grow hard and firm. The
front wings, which were at first transparent,
became a beautiful green, marked with leaf-
like veinings. The under wings folded like a fan beneath them.

How the Katydid rejoiced in his perfection. Night after night he sung of the joy of exist-
ence. More than once in the daytime he was chased by birds, but always escaped without
injury — escaped to tell of his adventures when the field musicians were gathering for the
evening concerts.

He was one of the happy, free creatures of earth when he called on Nora that summer day.

Though he knew it not, the Katydid never performed a finer act than when he posed for
the child during his brief captivity.

Nora was so busily engaged in making sketches of the Katydid, that Mary Ellen passed
the window and entered the room without attracting her attention. Instinctively the child tried to hide her work.

"Please let me see what you are doing, Nora," begged Mary Ellen — and what child
could resist Mary Ellen?
“Whoever taught you to draw like that?” she exclaimed.

Nora looked pleased. “I didn’t know, myself, that I could make pictures of anything alive.”

“Who taught you, Nora?”

“I am not taught.”

“How did you learn to draw?”

A pitiful look stole over Nora’s face. “There was so little I could do,” she apologized, “that I used to make pictures to keep the children quiet.”

Mary Ellen studied the lifelike sketches of the Katydid without venturing another word. After explaining her errand to Mrs. Bennet she walked slowly home, thinking of Nora, and wondering how her talent might be turned to account. She determined that it should be cultivated; and whatever Mary Ellen planned to do, was done.

When the four little Bennets had seen the Katydid, he was given his liberty.

“The next time you come,” said Nora, “I will understand all your secrets.” But the Katydid never called again. He had been a silent guest, but one never to be forgotten.
In the happy years that followed there were many who wondered why the famous artist, Nora Ellen Bennet, chose the Katydid as her mark.
MARY ELLEN was going to be married. Gladys couldn’t understand why the Bennets weren’t invited to the wedding. It troubled her, though the Bennets themselves didn’t seem to mind being left out—they took it as a matter of course.

“Perhaps,” decided Gladys, “perhaps papa and I wouldn’t be invited if we weren’t relation.” This being a comfortable conclusion, so far as the Bennets were concerned, Gladys made the most of it.

Day after day she and Nora talked of the wedding—what Mary Ellen was going to wear, who the guests were to be, and what they were going to have for the wedding supper.

The neighbors had all been impressed with the fact that Mary Ellen was going to marry well. Aunt Rebecca had done her part in that matter.

On the morning of the great day Gladys promised Nora and the four little Bennets that
she would tell them everything about the wedding,—exactly what the dresses were like and what the minister said; just how Aunt Rebecca looked, and whether Uncle Reuben went to sleep or not.

Mary Ellen sent for Gladys early in the morning. The child knew that Aunt Rebecca’s house was full of company from the city, and was delighted to go. It was to be a great wedding—Gladys was sure of it the moment she entered the house. Every one was at work—every one but Mary Ellen. The young ladies from the city, who had been Mary Ellen’s friends in boarding-school, were decorating the house with green things brought from the woods by the young men.

Aunt Rebecca and Jane were so busy that Gladys decided to say nothing, and keep out of the way.

Every one was happy, or seemed to be. Gladys delighted in watching the gayety. She hung over the banisters, or fluttered through the halls, intent on seeing all the merriment and trying to escape attention herself.

Soon after lunch Mary Ellen took Gladys to her room.
“I know it is rather early to get you ready for the wedding, Gladys; but if I dress you now, you will keep yourself in order, won’t you? You will be careful not to muss your hair or soil your dress?”

“Of course,” interrupted Gladys, “I won’t get the least bit out of order, and here’s my bundle; Aunt Rebecca told me to bring it right up here first thing, so nothing would happen to it.”

When Gladys was dressed, Mary Ellen stepped back to admire her. The bewitching blue bow on the little girl’s hair seemed caressing the curls of gold.

“Gladys,” she exclaimed, “you are a beautiful child!”

“And you are a beautiful Mary Ellen!” was the retort.

“Now run downstairs and don’t spoil that pretty white dress.”

“It will take me a long time to get ready,” Mary Ellen confided to her mirror, “so I believe I’ll begin now, without saying a word to anybody. I had rather get dressed alone, anyway; and surely if Gladys can keep herself in order, I ought to be able to.”
Mary Ellen dressed leisurely, stopping to admire her own reflection from time to time.

"I certainly do look pretty," she admitted, "though mother would say it's a sin to believe it. Of course, now, I mustn't be seen in my wedding-dress until time for the ceremony, and I'll just have to sit here for two hours."

Accordingly, Mary Ellen seated herself by the window, prepared to be patient.

Gay snatches of music floated up to her. There was some one at the piano most of the time.

Suddenly a great sadness swept over Mary Ellen's spirit. She was about to leave her father and her mother, her sister, and the only home she had ever known. Tears splashed upon her wedding-dress.

"I can't stay here," she whispered. "Perhaps if I go down to the river for a walk, I can conquer this feeling."

She opened her door softly. There was no one in sight. Swiftly she ran down the back stairs. The door into the kitchen was shut; the back hall was deserted.

Another moment, and Mary Ellen had escaped from the house, unseen. Soon she was hidden by the trees and the shrubbery.
"I'll go just as far from the house as I can, and have a good cry. Then I will get over it; but if I had stayed in my own room—"

Mary Ellen couldn't say another word, even to herself. The very trees seemed shaken by her convulsive sobs.

Straight to the river she went, by the way of an old lane.

"There!" she declared, when she had cried for a few minutes like a great baby, "now I guess I can go back and behave myself; hope I don't meet anybody."

Mary Ellen was far from home when she did meet—the old sheep. Knowing too well that polite speeches would be wasted on him, she gathered up the precious wedding-dress and climbed a fence. It was the only thing she could have done. The sheep was an old-time enemy. He was no respecter of persons, but served his day and generation impartially.

Perched upon the fence, Mary Ellen watched his approach with a sinking heart. There was no mercy in the sheep's grim face. He would keep her there until the stars came out—perhaps longer.

One by one Mary Ellen recalled the stories
of his life. She knew they were considered funny stories, for she had laughed about them herself. Now she thought of their possibilities from another point of view.

Mary Ellen's memory furnished her with abundant food for thought, and time for reflection seemed unlimited.

In the meantime the guests had begun to arrive at the house. The dullest of them were quickly aware that something was wrong. Scarcely had Mary Ellen left the house when she was missed. Her mother, sister, and the girl friends stared blankly at the blue morning-dress, hanging speechless, yet eloquent, in her room. It was evident to them all that Mary Ellen had dressed for the wedding before she disappeared.

Searching parties were sent in all directions but the right one; yet no traces were found of the missing Mary Ellen.

The guests wandered aimlessly about the rooms, or sat in stiff, uncomfortable groups, possessed by a vague dread. Mary Ellen had been a favorite among them since her birth. Through all that country the neighbors had rejoiced in the glory of the sunshine as they
told each other, "This is Mary Ellen's wedding-
day."

Gladys clung to her father's hand, oppressed with fear. She dared ask no questions, but when the old clock in the hall told the hour for the wedding ceremony, and no bride appeared on the broad stairway, she knew that something had happened to Mary Ellen.

Aunt Rebecca maintained an appearance of outward calm, but the tears rolled unheeded down her cheeks when she caught a glimpse of Mary Ellen, crossing the lawn, accompanied by the four little Bennets. Rose and Ted appeared with Nora, a few minutes later.

"The old sheep had her treed!" announced Sammie, to all whom it might concern.

There was a moment of silence as Mary Ellen appeared at the door; then rose a cheer that could not be suppressed. Mary Ellen was never lovelier to look upon. She was dressed in her grandmother's white silk wedding-gown, whose shimmering beauty was forgotten by all who beheld her face.

So Mary Ellen was married, and the Bennet children, one and all, were invited to the wed-
ding.
CHAPTER XXXI

GLADYS EXPLAINS MATTERS

"MY DEAREST MOTHER: Mary Ellen couldn’t have got married if it hadn’t been for those blessed Bennet children. Papa still calls them a ‘tribe.’ She went out to walk in her wedding-dress, — Aunt Rebecca says it was an unheard-of thing to do, — and the old sheep got her on a fence a long way from the house. On the other side of the fence was a swamp, so Mary Ellen couldn’t do anything but stay there and wait.

"Mrs. Bennet had dressed all her children in their best clothes, because it was Mary Ellen’s wedding-day, and she said you couldn’t tell who might see them.

"Rose wanted to see Mary Ellen in her wedding-dress, so she took the four little boys with her, and went out walking. Rose had an idea that they might go to the back of the house by

264
a roundabout way, and then hide somewhere, and maybe catch a glimpse of Mary Ellen.

"When they saw her 'on the fence, they didn't have a minute to think about her wedding-dress or her white slippers, because the old sheep got after them, and they had to scramble for their lives.

"At last that sweet little Jake took off his shoes and stockings, and ran along the swampy side of the fence, until he got far enough away so he dared climb over and go for Ted. When Ted got there, he tied up the old sheep, and Mary Ellen invited all the children to her wedding. Rose asked if she and Ted might bring Nora in her cart, and Mary Ellen said yes; but she guessed they would all be a little late for the wedding, and they were.

"Jake was the only barefooted one there.

"Every one had the gayest kind of a time, even if everything didn't go just as Aunt Rebecca and the city girls planned — about Mary Ellen marching down the stairs, I mean, and such proper things.

"Nora was all the style, and I guess she is going to have a happy life after all. They say she is an artist, and one of the city girls,
who is rich, is coming for Nora in the fall, and is going to keep her all winter if her mother will let her go, so she will have a chance to learn to be an illustrator.

"Aunt Rebecca thinks Mrs. Bennet will surely let her go, because the girl's mother is a nice woman and it will be a good chance for Nora.

"Mary Ellen looked almost as pretty as you, mamma, and when papa and I got home after the wedding, you can't guess how big and still and lonesome our own home seemed. Every old chair was calling for you. Papa and I just couldn't stay in the house. We went out on the porch, and he held me in his lap, and we watched the moon rise.

"We don't have any more Band of Mercy meetings, I am sorry to say. We all got tired of them. The little Bennets wear their buttons and learn all the new songs I will teach them, but they won't have meetings, and I am glad of it because I got so sick of them myself.

"The other day I went in our shut-up parlor and tried the piano, but I got out of there quick and shut the door again, tight. The piano is out of tune, I guess."
"Papa and I go to church every Sunday twice a day. He will do anything I want him to, 'anything within reason'—that is what he says.

"You ought to be here now, mamma, so you could see the walking-sticks. They are the queerest insects you ever heard of. The oak trees are full of them; you shake a limb and down will come the walking-sticks on your head, maybe. They look just like twigs, and you would think them part of the tree unless you happened to see them move. Their long legs are like twigs, too, and they haven't wings.

"Papa told me the eggs are laid in the autumn, and that in the springtime the lids of the eggs are pushed open and out come little green walking-sticks. When they grow older, they change in color; but while they are green, they feed upon the grass where they won't be seen so plainly. Later, when they grow darker, like bark, they climb trees.

"Maybe you can see some walking-sticks at home, if you will go out in the park and look for them. They are about three inches long."
"There are some nice folks out here in the country. Papa and I are getting acquainted with them. We are invited out to tea often, and we always have a good time. If you would come home, I think you could get up a 'Woman's Club.'

"It's going to be lonesome without Mary Ellen.

"Write soon, to your loving daughter,

"Gladys Birney."
CHAPTER XXXII

THE BOOK OF COMMON THINGS

"APA, do you feel like answering about two hundred questions?"

Mr. Birney tossed his newspaper upon the grass, bestowing on Gladys an expression of mock despair.

"There is no doubt in my mind regarding your ability to ask two hundred questions in succession," he retorted.

"Thought I could scare you," laughed the child. "Trouble is, I have neglected my book of common things. Now, papa, here is my vegetable list. I want to know where all these things came from first: potatoes, onions,—I put them down just as they came into my mind,—beets, cabbages, cucumbers, celery, lettuce, radishes, and—"

"Hold on, my child, hold on! Your poor old father can't tell you of the origin of anything you have mentioned so far, except potatoes."
"What shall we do, then?" Gladys stared at her father, scarcely believing it possible that he meant what he said.

Mr. Birney went into the house, returning with a large book.

"Here we have it," he said. "Now get your note-book ready and we will study this subject together."

All through the long afternoon the father and child enjoyed themselves poring over the volume entitled, "The Origin of Cultivated Plants."

"You will help me put these things down in my book, won't you, papa, because it takes so long to think how you ought to write things so they will read straight?"

"That is a fact, Gladys; yes, I will help you this time. Are you ready?"

"Yes; begin with potatoes, papa."

"All right, 'Potatoes,' page 45, 'Sweet Potatoes,' page 53. We will read the sketches before deciding what you need for your valuable work."

"First, papa, won't you please print my title on the cover? Just say, like this: —
To be sure, my child; and I believe Nora would enjoy doing the illustrating for you from time to time."

"Yes, sir, I know she would."
The next morning Gladys carried her book to the Bennet cottage for the purpose of consulting her illustrator.

Nora considered it an honor to be allowed to make the sketches, and straightway sent the four little Bennets for potato-vines.

"I really don’t know what potato leaves look like, nor whether they grow in clusters or pairs, or how," she admitted.

"Neither do I," confessed Gladys. "Isn’t it fun to have to find out about things?"

"Guess it is," agreed Nora. "Please read to me what you wrote yesterday."

"All right. I think my vegetable pages are pretty good."

"Why, of course they must be," interrupted her listener.

"The common potato is an American. It
grew wild in Chile, and was cultivated in South America long before the New World was discovered. When Darwin made his voyage in the *Beagle*, he found potatoes growing wild in Chile. Some of the plants were four feet high, and the potatoes didn’t taste bad when they were cooked."

"Who was Darwin?" interrupted Nora.

"Darwin was a man of science who died long ago," hesitated Gladys. "I don’t know much about him myself. I guess I will have to ask my father some questions about him.

"The potato was first introduced into Europe by the Spaniards. Later, Sir Walter Raleigh, finding the potato in Virginia, imported it into Ireland. To tell the truth, the man who really took the potato to Ireland was Thomas Herriott, instead of Sir Walter Raleigh, who always got the credit for doing everything because he was a great man, anyway.

"Mr. Richard Birney says, though, that potatoes were discovered by a Frenchman, because he has seen his grave in France, with potato-vines growing on it.

"The sweet potato belongs to a different
family. Nobody can be sure just where it came from in the first place. It is generally supposed to be an American. It is said that Christopher Columbus, when he returned from his first voyage, offered some to Queen Isabella as one of the productions of the New World.

"The Greeks, Romans, and Arabs didn’t have sweet potatoes; neither did the Egyptians.

"Some people pretend to believe that the sweet potato originated in Asia, but Mr. Richard Birney is sure it is a native of South America.

"No botanist ever found it growing wild anywhere in the world, and that is why it is impossible to tell where its first home was.

"Onions belong to Asia. They have been found growing wild there. The ancient Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians had onions. The Egyptians made pictures of them on their monuments. The onion is cultivated in India, China, and Japan.

"Cucumbers are natives of northern India. They have been cultivated in India for three thousand years,—though they were not introduced into China until the second century
before Christ. The Greeks and Romans cultivated cucumbers.

"Europe is the home of the cabbage. It has been found growing wild on rocks by the seashore in northern Europe.

"Wild beets grow in the Canary Islands and along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The beet was not cultivated until three or four hundred years before Christ. The ancient Greeks and the Romans used its leaves and roots.

"It is hard to tell about radishes. They have been cultivated in the gardens of the Old World since the earliest times. The man who wrote the book read by Mr. Richard Birney, says they probably came originally from western Asia.

"Horse radish is a different thing, and originated in eastern Europe.

"Celery grows wild in parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. It has been a garden plant for a long time.

"The ancient Greeks and Romans used to make lettuce salad. Lettuce has been cultivated extensively during the last two thousand years, and originated in the temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and Africa."
"Spinach came from Persia.
"Parsnips, carrots, and turnips are from Europe.
"The author is thankful to find that pumpkins and squashes originated in North America, and tomatoes came from Peru."
"Is that all?" inquired Nora.
"No, but I got tired of writing, so I didn’t put down much about different kinds of fruit."
"Well, read the rest,—don’t stop."
"Oranges came from China, lemons from India. Grape-vines grow wild in Europe, Asia, and Africa. Birds scattered the grape seeds, perhaps, before the existence of man. Grapes were cultivated, and wine was made in Egypt six thousand years ago.
"Strawberries grow wild in almost all parts of the world, even in Iceland.
"Plums and cherries, apples and pears are from Europe. Peaches originated in China; the Chinese have many legends and superstitions regarding them.
"The watermelon is an African.
"The banana comes from southern Asia.
"The pineapple is an American plant.
"There, Nora, that is all I wrote."
“Was there anything else in the book?”

“Oh, yes, but I was tired of writing; and then, too, I was afraid I couldn’t remember much more.”

“Can you remember all you have just read to me?” asked Nora, in tones expressing doubt.

“Indeed, I can. I guess when you get up a book yourself, you won’t forget what is in it. You will know everything I do, by the time you get the pictures made,” laughed Gladys.

“What else was in the big book?” persisted Nora.

“Oh, all about where peas and beans and grains, and all kinds of cultivated plants originated. I shall put more in my book of common things the next time we have a rainy day.”

“And I guess I will copy everything you find out, in my scrap-book,” announced Nora.
CHAPTER XXXIII

BABY TUMBLE-BUG’S FIRST JOURNEY

"Mr. Birney, do you know where Gladys is?" Jake was out of breath.

"I came over here as fast as I could run, because Nora wants her to come over and see her pictures."

"Why, no, my boy, I don’t know where she is. I haven’t seen Gladys for more than an hour. Perhaps you will find her in the orchard or down the maple lane. She can’t be far away."

Jake departed without ceremony, returning in a few moments, somewhat after the manner of an exploding fire-cracker.

"Come quick!" he gasped, "Gladys wants you."

Mr. Birney needed no urging. He followed the plump little Jake immediately. Gladys was on her knees in the barn-yard.
“What is the matter, child?” called her father.
“I have discovered some new bug that I want you to see.”
“Is that all?”
“All! Why, papa, these bugs are regular circus performers. I never saw anything like it.”

Jake stretched himself face downward upon the grass.
“The tiger-beetle’s baby will nip your toes, if you don’t watch out,” warned Gladys. “He lives down in a little hole in the ground, and he’ll think your toe is a nice, soft worm.”
“Aw, who’s afraid?” said Jake. Surely he wasn’t, but he kept his feet waving in the air after that, in the most unconcerned fashion.
“Oh, papa, I wish you had been here sooner; right under there in the ground is a bug—like this one that I have penned up here. What is its name? Its back is flat, and it is the black-est bug I ever saw. Do tell me.”
“That is a tumble-bug, Gladys.”
“Look, papa, quick! The buried bug is coming out of the ground again.”
“Certainly; you didn’t suppose Mother Tumble-bug was going through to China, did you?
BABY TUMBLE-BUG'S FIRST JOURNEY 279

She is looking for Father Tumble-bug, Gladys; you'd better let him go."

"All this fuss about two black bugs!" Jake was plainly disgusted.

"Well, Jake Bennet, I guess if you knew what those two black bugs did, you'd open your eyes. When I first saw them, sir, they were rolling a ball that was bigger than they were."

"Aw,—who ever heard of such a thing?" pouted Jake.

"You have, haven't you, papa?"

"Come, Jake," laughed Mr. Birney, "let's hunt for a pair of these circus bugs for ourselves."

"I'll help," offered Gladys. "I'd like to watch them forever, only I don't believe there are any more like them here, because I never saw any before, and maybe they were only playing with that ball. Though what did they bury it for, papa?"

"Because a hole in the ground is the proper nursery for Baby Tumble-bug, who was tucked away in an egg in his crib."

"What was his crib?"

"That ball of dirt."

"But, papa, how could Baby Tumble-bug
ever get out? Don't you see how the hole is all filled up with dirt?"

"He'll get out just the way his mother did, by digging his way to the surface with his strong feet."

"Look a-here!" announced Jake. "I've found 'em at work, and now I believe it. Will you keep watch of 'em while I go for Sammie and Jimmie and Tommie?"

"Yes, yes," consented Gladys, "bring Ted, too. He won't let the grass grow under his feet, papa. Just look at him go! Why is it," she continued, "that I never saw tumble-bugs before?"

"Simply because you never looked for them, Gladys; the world about us is full of unnoticed wonders."

Soon the Bennet flock arrived.

"There! Ted Bennet, what do you think of that?" exclaimed Gladys.

Mother Tumble-bug climbed upon the ball, tipping it forward by her weight, while Father Tumble-bug, standing upon his head, pushed it with his hind feet. Over and over went the ball, keeping Mother Tumble-bug constantly remounting.
“What are they doing?” inquired Ted.
“Rolling a ball—can’t you see?” insisted Tommie.
“They are giving Baby Tumble-bug a ride,” explained Gladys. “He is inside the ball in an egg.”
“What’s the use of rolling the poor young one around like that?” asked Jimmie, seriously.
“Oh, he doesn’t care; that ball is his go-cart, I guess, anyway. When Father and Mother Tumble-bug find a place that suits them, they’ll turn the go-cart into a crib. A hole in the ground that Mother Tumble-bug will dig, will be the nursery.”
“Oh,” interrupted Ted, “she’ll dig a hole, will she, and afterwards roll the ball right in?”
“No, sir! I guess that would break Baby Tumble-bug’s neck, maybe, or wake him up, because she rolls him into the nursery gently.”
“I’d like to know how?”
“Oh, she just got under the ball and ploughed up the ground beneath and around it. First thing I knew the ball began to sink.
"You see, don't you, that the tumble-bug has three pairs of legs. She got right under that ball, children, with her back down and her feet up. Just at first I could see that she pulled on the ball with her middle legs, and dug and tossed up the earth with her front legs and her hind legs. Another minute and she was out of sight. The ball kept sinking until the earth caved in on top of it. After a little while the tumble-bug came out and walked away."

The four little Bennets laughed merrily at the ups and down encountered by Mother Tumble-bug and Father Tumble-bug in their efforts to roll their go-cart into a place that suited them. Often they appeared to stop and talk about which way to go. More than once Mother Tumble-bug rolled over and over with the ball from the summit of a little hill. Mr. Tumble-bug, always walking backward on his head, couldn't tell into what trouble he was pushing Mrs. Tumble-bug. She, like a good mother, never released her grasp of the precious go-cart, no matter what happened.

The little Bennets weren't satisfied until they had seen the ball disappear into the hole Mother Tumble-bug prepared for its reception.
“If I hadn't seen the whole performance,” declared Ted, “I wouldn't have believed it.”

“That beetle,” Mr. Birney informed the children, “was once worshipped in Egypt. He was the sacred scarab then, the emblem of immortality."

“What's that?” questioned Jake.

“Oh, every time you saw one it would remind you that your soul can never die,” Gladys volunteered.

“The tombs of Egypt,” continued Mr. Birney, “were decorated with engravings of this beetle, and it was painted upon their coffins. “It was also carved in precious stones as personal ornaments.”

“Was it the very same, funny old tumblebug?” asked Gladys.

“The very one.”

“Were its habits the same?”

“Exactly — the sacred scarab of ancient Egypt did just as you saw the tumble-bugs do to-day. Father and Mother Tumble-bug have the most distinguished ancestors of any insects.”

“I'd like to stay right here until Baby Tumblebug comes out of his crib,” said Gladys.
"Well, I wouldn't," declared Ted, "because I'm hungry."
"So we all are," Sammie chimed in.
A few minutes later the tumble-bugs were left to their own devices, unobserved.
CHAPTER XXXIV

A LAZY FELLOW IN BLUE

“PAPA BIRNEY, you pretty near stepped on a whole family, right here in the path. What are they, anyway? Oh, the clumsy creatures! Will they bite? Dare I touch one?”

“No, they won’t bite, but you’ll be sorry if you pick them up. Touch one with a grass and see what it will do.”

“Oh, papa, see it turn on its back; and now — did you ever hear of anything like it? — that bug is pumping yellow drops out of its joints. Oh, the fat, horrid, bug — only, it’s a lovely blue color, isn’t it? What do you call it?”

“That is a floundering beetle, Gladys, and is called either the oil-beetle or the indigo beetle.”

“It seems to me the beetles have a lot of relations,” protested Gladys, examining the one
in question with her microscope. "It can't be much fun to be this one, without any wings. Its eyes are blue, too, papa. What does it eat?"

"In its present condition, Gladys, it feeds upon buttercup leaves."

"Can you tell me its story, papa? Where did it live when it was a baby?"

"Its first home was in a meadow under a stone, where it had been tucked away in an egg all winter. It first saw the light in April, when it crept out of the egg-shell. It was then a lively little fellow with thirteen joints in its body. Its three pairs of legs were each provided with three claws.

"The baby beetle waited until a bumblebee came near enough so he could catch a ride."

"Now, papa, are you making this up?"

"No, I am telling you exactly the doings of any young indigo beetle. The lively baby jumped on the bumblebee's back, walked all over him until he found a place that suited him underneath the great body; then he clung to the bumblebee with his eighteen claws while they went sailing through the sky.

"Afterward the little adventurer left the
bumblebee for a honey-bee. He liked the taste of her, and ate her tender flesh whenever he was hungry. You must remember that he was small then.

“Finally he went to sleep in a honeycomb; and when he awoke, his long legs were gone, and in place of them were six short ones—simply feet. Being desperately hungry, he ate up the baby honey-bee that was in his cell. After that the honey-bee, supposing she was feeding her own child, kept bringing him bee bread, made of pollen and honey.

“Then came another change: he went to sleep again, and when he awoke, he was a full-fledged floundering beetle—as you see him now. His early days were his happiest.

“Now shut your eyes, Gladys, so you won’t see another thing to ask questions about until we reach the house.”

“All right, here’s my hand; lead me—play I’m blind.

“I can’t help thinking,” she added, “that if the beetles should have a family reunion, they would have a great many, strange, different stories to tell.”
He yellowbird, the goldfinch, was too busy to bother her head with legends or family history. She had delayed her nest-building until the time of thistledown, and her mind was completely filled with housekeeping affairs.

The American goldfinch, the little lady who worked so cheerfully through the long days of late summer, has been well named the bird of the "beautiful soul."

How could she know that, way in the past, her first mother was a sunbeam. Yet such is the story. The wind and the hemlock loved the sunbeam, but the wind was so rough and wild, she feared him.

She sought the shelter of the hemlock because he was gentle and loved her tenderly — hiding her close in his great heart.
There came a day when the wind found her and carried her away to his home in the wilds. He tried, in his rude fashion, to make her happy; but the sunbeam was ever sad until the sun, in pity, set her free. Thus the sunbeam became the yellowbird, the goldfinch.

Straight she flew to her old home in the hemlock and built her nest in his branches.

Again the wind found her, but the yellowbird no longer feared him. She knew he was her friend at last, for he gently swung her nest, and sung to her the soft, low songs she loved the best.

Ever since that day the wind has trained the little yellowbirds to sing. It is he who has taught them their high, shrill notes and their sweet, woodland melodies.

When the concert season was over, the yellowbird and her mate had chosen to build their home among the thistle plants. The year before they had built earlier, in a maple tree.

One season they had a dreadful experience with a cow-bird. The mother yellowbird had stepped out just a minute to speak to a neighbor, when a cow-bird entered her home and left one of her great children to be cared for. The
helpless outcast was tucked away in an egg, just as the yellowbird babies were at the time, and the mother yellowbird adopted him without question.

The cow-bird came out of the shell and began crying for food long before the yellowbird's precious nestlings saw the light. Later, the greedy fellow ate all the food that was brought to the nest for the whole family, and pushed and crowded the little yellowbird babies, until one by one they died of starvation and neglect.

Yet the mother yellowbird, though she must have been heart-broken, did not desert her adopted child. Every inch a lady, she tried to make a gentleman of the wretched cow-bird — tried to make him refined and gentle in his manners, but without success. He was a tyrant in his treatment of her. When he was nearly twice her size, he followed her around, compelling her to feed him — rascal that he was.

The father bird tried to teach him to sing yellowbird music, but gave it up as a useless task.

Finally the cow-bird child, strong and full grown, joined his own tribe without a word of thanks to the little yellowbird mother.
"THE GREEDY FELLOW ATE ALL THE FOOD THAT WAS BROUGHT TO
THE NEST."
Thus it was that the father yellowbird was determined to harbor no more adopted children in his home. While the mother yellowbird worked at nest-building, he, though pretending to help, spent most of his time watching the black-robed cow-birds.

The nest was finished at last. The two birds had reason to be proud of its perfection. Woven of fine grasses, moss, and vegetable fibre, in shape like a cup, it was thickly lined with thistledown.

Soon, six bluish-white eggs were resting in the bed of down, like jewels in a casket.

Then the father bird sang while he watched, "Hear me, hear me, dearie."

Down among the thistles "Dearie" cuddled the eggs beneath her wings and was happy.

It was then the enemy appeared — an enemy the yellowbird father had forgotten.

A barefooted boy tramped through the meadow, whistling. In a moment he read the yellowbird father's secret.

"Oh, yes, I know; you've got a nest along there by the fence," said the boy, Jake. "Can't fool me; I know how birds act when they've got a nest. I'll find your house, Mr. Bird."
The father yellowbird warned the mother yellowbird of danger; but she, brave soul, remained on guard until the enemy’s face shut out the blue sky.

“Oh, such luck!” exclaimed Jake, reaching for the nest.

“Please don’t, please don’t, please don’t!” begged the father bird.

“Well, I’d like to know why not?” retorted Jake, withdrawing his hands and looking hastily about the meadow. No one was there unless it was the One who made the birds. Jake felt that He might be watching.

“That’s the worst of going to Sunday-school,” the boy grumbled.

In all his life Jake had never before looked at birds’ eggs without taking them instantly. He had considered them his property by right of discovery.

Again he stretched one hand toward the nest, withdrew it, and tried the other. Neither hand would do the deed.

The birds hovered near, crying piteously.

“Who cares!” said Jake, leaning over and gazing earnestly into the nest.

The Band of Mercy button fell to the ground.
Jake picked it up. The pin was broken. The boy frowned at the white star; that seemed to reproach him.

Into Jake's pocket went that Band of Mercy button, and he reached resolutely toward the eggs. Nora would like to see them. No,—she wouldn't. He wouldn't dare show them to Nora. He wouldn't dare let any one know that he took them. He would be so ashamed if Gladys should ever find it out. The One who created the birds would be displeased—angry.

Then, too, Jake had promised to be kind to every living thing and to protect it from cruel usage. That settled it; Jake would keep his promise.

The barefooted boy tramped out of the meadow, whistling.

Father Yellowbird and Mother Yellowbird returned thanks.

Every day after that they entertained callers, and soon lost all fear of children who simply looked at them without disturbing a leaf near their nest.

Before the yellowbird babies were strong enough to fly, their pictures had been taken
again and again, by a tall man with a camera.

Jake was never happier in his life than he was the day Nora was taken to the meadow to see the eggs he would not steal. Mr. Birney gave him a picture of the nest as it looked at that time—a picture Jake treasured then and always.
CHAPTER XXXVI

INTERVIEWING THE GOLDENRODS

The goldenrods are good listeners. Aunt Rebecca talked to them freely. No member of their family was ever known to interrupt a conversation.

They waited down the road while Aunt Rebecca called upon her nephew, Richard Birney; then they accompanied her home, keeping close by the fences, and merely bowing in response to her remarks.

"When I thought him a selfish man, I was mistaken," she began. "How I could have known him all these years without understanding him better, is curious. Selfish—why, selfishness isn't in him. He is going to send that child away from him,—send her back to her mother,—because he thinks it is better for Gladys to be with her mother."

The goldenrods maintained silence, though the wind whispered a word of sympathy.
"I'd like to tell that woman what I think of her, but it isn't probable I'll ever get a chance.

"Gladys, poor young one, doesn't want to leave her father. I wish he hadn't told her he was going to send her away, while I was there to see her cry. She acted just about as Mary Ellen did when she drove away from home. Maybe Richard is right; maybe Gladys needs better schooling than she could get here, but plenty of good men and women have grown up in the country schools.

"Dear me, I am sorry for that man, and he's my relation, too. How did that poor young one get it into her head that her mother ever intends to come back? She sobbed over and over that if her father would only let her stay, her mother would come home. Dear me, I'll never forget it. If I were Richard, I would keep that child, but he will insist that she is too young to know what is for her own good.

"That little one is his idol. I never saw such a change in a man as there has been in him this summer. He has come right out of his shell. I am ready to own up that it may not do any harm to get interested in things outdoors, and learn the ways of the wild creatures
INTERVIEWING THE GOLDENRODS

on one's farm, and it is my opinion that Richard would be glad to own up to some of his mistakes. Human beings were made to love each other, that is sure."

Aunt Rebecca paused a moment to watch a yellowbird feasting upon goldenrod seeds.

"Every child in the Bennet family has learned to look upon that man as a friend," she went on, "and it is more than I can understand. Possibly he has just discovered that the human family is worth studying.

"And I promised to pack Gladys's trunk just as soon as Richard hears from her mother. School begins earlier here than it does in town, it seems, and he has put off speaking to the child about going back.

"She ought to be a good child with such a father."

The goldenrods stood with bowed heads on either side of the gate, allowing Aunt Rebecca to pass between them, when she reached home.

If Mary Ellen had been there, she would have invited them in.

Aunt Rebecca left the goldenrod, standing like soldiers on guard.
CHAPTER XXXVII

GLADYS Writes to her Grandfather

"My dearest Grandpa: If I had known you wanted me to write to you, I would have written you a letter long ago. I do love you and grandma—how could I help it?—but don’t you see, I love my father, too; and he ought to have somebody of his own with him. I didn’t know it would make you and grandma feel badly because I want to stay here. You have mamma, now, and papa has me.

"The country isn’t lonesome, grandpa. It is a beautiful place,—much nicer than the city.

"Papa was surprised when mamma wrote and told him to keep me here; and for a little while I didn’t know whether I was surely glad or sorry, because it makes me have a lump in my throat when I think how long it is since I have seen my mother and you and grandma."
"Tell grandma that I am remembering my manners, and I am learning some new ones. I am even polite to the horses and cows.

"The school out here is the best one I ever went to. The teacher is pretty and kind to all the children. She never was in the country before, and likes it most as well as I do. Tommie Bennet made every one laugh in school one day by telling what his Band of Mercy button meant. He couldn't tell it straight, but told the teacher to ask me about it. That is how we happen to have a Band of Mercy in our school now. The teacher got interested in it and started one. We don't have any recess Friday afternoons, but we sing Band of Mercy songs and have exercises. The first Friday the subject was cats. The teacher gave different ones in the school something to read about cats— their history and all sorts of interesting things we never heard of. She says she spent hours and hours hunting up the information, and that we mustn't think we are the only ones who studied. She told me that she has studied more since she left school than she ever did in school.

"The girls all think that Ted Bennet is just
about right now, because he whistles bird songs and answers questions that the rest of us can't. Queer, nobody used to like him.

"Nora goes to school for the first time in her life. She is a great deal stronger than she ever was before. Ted bought her a little wheeled chair with money he earned picking berries. He had saved money for three years to get her a wonderful cart, and one night after school he told the new teacher about it; and she sent for a book with wheeled chairs in it, and they picked one out and sent for it. Nora looked so happy and contented. When the cold weather comes, her father is going to bring her to school.

"We are going to have a birds' restaurant beside of the schoolhouse this winter. The boys are going to make the table, and all the children will save the crumbs from their dinner pails to feed the winter birds with. Papa has given me a list of the ones we may expect, and he is going to hunt up colored pictures of them for me to take to school for the children to study, so when we see birds, we will know their names. He thinks it is too early now to begin to study about them, but I told him if
he would give me the list of birds that come in
the winter, I wouldn't say anything to the
children about it yet, so here they are: Junco,
Tree Sparrow, Redpoll, Snowflake, Winter
Wren, Red-breasted Nuthatch and Golden
Crowned Kinglet. I don't know one of them,
and papa says we may see a great many others.
A good many birds that are here now will
stay all winter. The dear little yellowbirds
put on different suits and stay. Then there
are Bob White, Hawks, Owls, and Woodpeckers,
the Crow, the Blue Jay, Song Sparrow, the
darling Chickadee, and I don't know how
many others.

"You see, grandpa, it can't be lonesome
here.

"Late in the autumn the teacher is going to
take the children out to hunt for birds' nests
some Saturday. She says it is all right to
take the nests when the birds are through with
them. Papa is going to examine the collection
and write the name of each bird's nest on a
slip of paper to be pinned to the specimen.

"The Friday afternoon following, we are
going to pull the birds' nests all to pieces to
find out what they are made of. We have got
to write down the different kinds of material different birds use. The teacher says maybe we will have to study birds’ nests this way two or three Friday afternoons before we will know about all the nests we get.

“Then in the spring every child in school is going to bring things for the birds to build with. I guess we will begin saving strings in the winter, and just as soon as the buds come out on the trees, we are going to hang all sorts of attractions on the bushes, fences, and everywhere there is a place to put a bit of cotton or yarn, or anything we happen to have. Papa says he guesses the schoolyard will look like a dry-goods store on bargain day.

“My father was elected school director this fall,—they always wanted him to be one, but he wouldn’t,—and he has promised the teacher that this winter he will talk to the school about trees half an hour every week. I don’t know the names of half the trees I see, but he can tell, by looking at a piece of bark, to what tree it belongs.

“There will be sleigh-ride parties this winter, and all kinds of fun. I am going to learn to skate, too.
"Oh, I almost forgot to answer what you asked me about in your letter—if I had got at the bottom of any more mysteries. I am thankful to say that I have. My father went out to walk last Sunday, and before he got back to the house, he had answered a good many questions.

"I have found out something I always wanted to know—what makes the soapsuds on the grass stems. Ted said it was snake spit, but I didn't believe it, because I have seen it up high on the willow trees. Uncle Reuben told me it was cow spit; but I knew it couldn't be, because it was all over the meadow weeds, where our cows never went. Anyway, our cows don't spit, if his do. I have watched them to find out.

"All the soapsuds you ever saw on stems is made by a little green, speckled insect. It sucks the juices out of the plant on which it lives, so fast that the juice comes right through its body, all over, in the form of little bubbles. My father told me so. Besides that, I saw the little insects; we poked away the soapsuds and found them at work.

"They were hatched in the summer from
eggs that were laid the autumn before. Papa called them frog-hoppers. They don’t live underneath the bubbles when they are full grown and have changed their clothes for the last time.

“One evening we left the outside door open to see if any of them would be attracted by the light and fly in. Sure enough one did, and I had a chance to see it, though I couldn’t catch it because it was such a jumper. The little things are bright green; I have often seen them before, only I didn’t know their names nor where they came from.

“All my life I have wondered about the oak balls we have seen at home in the parks, and here the willows by the river are decorated with all sorts of bright trimming that look like berries. Now I understand what causes these things.

“Insects, known as gall flies, live in these lovely places, when they are babies. The mother gall fly finds a leaf or a stem that suits her, and in which she stings a little hole. In this little hole she lays her eggs. Something she drops into the punctured leaf or stem causes the curious growth about the egg. So
inside of every oak ball we see, there are gall fly's eggs, in which the little gall fly folks are waiting to hatch. After they are out of their shells they cut little holes through the ball and fly away. I am not going to bring any more decorated oak branches into the house. I am like Aunt Rebecca about that. No insects in the house for me, thank you, except our cricket, and Aunt Rebecca says if he ever gets a taste of my clothes, I will be sorry he is alive.

"If I try to tell you all the wonders of this farm, I will never get this letter finished, grandpa, and I have been writing on it three days now, all the time I can spare.

"It is hard to tell which month is the pleasantest here. It is lucky I am beginning to love Aunt Rebecca a great deal, and Jane and the school-teacher, or I don't know what I would do without mamma.

"The robin has gone away from the orchard, and the empty nest outside my window seems lonesomer than ever.

"Before I came home mamma promised me that if papa or I should be taken sick, she would come quick as she could get here; but I
am sorry to say we are both all right. It is discouraging, but we can't help it; so I guess we will have to get along without her.

"Gladys Birney.

"P.S. Write soon. — G. B."
CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE RED SQUIRREL ON SATURDAY

"Perhaps, Mr. Squirrel, you think I don't know anything, but, you see, we took you in school this week, and I thought I would come out here and hunt you up."

The squirrel looked anxiously at Gladys for a few moments, then scampered up the trunk of a tree, and seating himself upon a limb, laughed at her; worse than that, he snickered. The more he thought of it, the more ridiculous it seemed that any squirrel should fear her.

"Now I would like to know, mister, if you are the same red squirrel I have seen in the orchard lately."

The squirrel held his sides as though unable to contain his mirth as he listened.

"You are such a pretty dear, I am sure it must have been you I saw only yesterday on the fence, eating apple seeds. My father says
you come to the barn in the winter time and help yourself to anything you want.”

This accusation was too much for the red squirrel; he talked back, chattered, scolded, said anything he pleased. And it was Gladys’s turn to laugh.

“Why don’t your folks learn a lesson from the chipmunks? Think how much more comfortable you would be all winter long in a nice, snug burrow in the ground, that was stored with nuts and all kinds of food.”

The red squirrel plainly said to Gladys, “Mind your business,” but he seemed good natured, even as he made the remark.

“Now don’t be saucy, Mr. Red Squirrel. You ought to be willing to let me give you a little advice, for it was my idea to have your folks the subject for the Band of Mercy meeting yesterday afternoon. The teacher got the boys so interested in you that they won’t throw stones at you any more, the way they used to.”

The squirrel looked anxiously about. There wasn’t a boy in sight. He was so thankful he danced a jig then and there to strange music of his own.

“If you would store food away in regular
fashion, you wouldn’t have to scurry out in cold weather, and be glad to get the seeds of frozen apples to keep yourself from starving. Honestly, Mr. Squirrel, I think you ought to let the sugar-apples alone. The boys say you strip the bark in order to eat the part of the tree between the bark and the wood. I should think that you would spoil the trees. I don’t blame you a bit for getting a taste of maple syrup in the spring. I would try the same trick if my teeth were sharp enough, but we can’t all be squirrels.”

Gayly the little fellow darted from branch to branch as though purposely displaying his nimble feet and that wonderful tail, his crowning glory.

“Maybe, Mr. Squirrel, you know what is best for your own family, and if you like to hide a few nuts on the ground in different places and tuck them away in the trees, perhaps it is just as well. You never have to worry for fear your storehouses will be robbed, and you have something to think about, too.

“How I wish I knew as much as you do about some things! How can you always tell on which side of the butternut to find the
meat? I smash butternuts all to pieces because I don't know where to crack them. There isn't any sign on the outside the way there is on hickory nuts, and yet they say you never make a mistake.

"Then, too, how do you know toad-stools from the kind of mushrooms we are to eat?"

The squirrel answered Gladys, but she couldn't understand his chatter.

"You have to carry everything in your teeth, don't you?" she continued. "If you only had pockets in your cheeks the way some folks do, how much easier it would be for you to collect nuts.

"Where is your nest, Mr. Squirrel? I would so like to see just your front door. I wouldn't think of going in your house."

The mere suggestion of such a thing was too much for the red squirrel; he scampered into the deep woods, where he scolded from afar.

"I would like to see a gray squirrel," Gladys remarked to the air. "They are said to be so graceful and daring. Maybe if I come out here every Saturday, I will catch a glimpse of one. I read in a book that their home is way up in the trunk of a tree, and that they make
a summer home in the branches, something like a bird's nest. I wish I had coaxed papa to come out here with me.

"Oh, I guess this will be a good place to study my new thinking-corner quotation. What a queer man my father is, anyway. He has made me commit something to memory every week since I came home. I am sure I put that paper in my pocket.

"Oh, it's copied from the Bible."

Seated upon a log, Gladys slowly read the quotation:

"'There be four things which are little upon the earth,
   But they are exceeding wise:

' The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

' The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks;

' The locusts have no king, yet go they forth, all of them, by bands;

' The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.'"

The beauty of the lesson impressed Gladys. She sat thinking of it, forgetful of the woods,
until she suddenly observed the red squirrel gazing intently upon her from his old perch.

The late afternoon sunshine touched the trees with a magic glow, causing a mellow, soft light through the changing foliage. The forest seemed holding its breath.

"Something is going to happen," said Gladys, solemnly. "Surely the summer is ended. Next Saturday when I come out here, everything will be changed."

A feeling of utter loneliness stole over the child; she leaned her face on the log and cried — cried for the mother she missed.

A bright red leaf from a maple fluttered downward and touched the golden head. When Gladys finally noticed it, lying among the twigs, she accepted it as a gift from the tree. That made the squirrel laugh; and who can resist the influence of a mocking red squirrel when he tries to be funny. Gladys smiled through her tears.

The next moment the red squirrel left without ceremony; he saw Ted Bennet coming and didn't want to stay any longer. That squirrel was troubled either with memory or imagination. He was gone before Gladys could say "good-by" to him.
CHAPTER XXXIX

THE WAY HOME

GLADYS marvelled at Ted Bennet’s smile.

“Don’t look at the violets, Ted,” she called, “or they’ll think it’s spring and begin to blossom.”

“You’d smile, too, if you knew,” retorted the boy, approaching by leaps and bounds.

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Oh, nothin’, I’m just happy.”

“What’s happened?”

“Nothin’.”

“Well, don’t stand there grinning like that if you don’t want me to laugh at you.”

“I don’t care how much you laugh; come on home.”

“Oh, I am not in any hurry. I never saw the woods look so beautiful, and I like to stay here. It seems a little like being in a great, still church with the light shining through stained glass windows.”

313
“Come on, Gladys.”
“What for?”
“Your father sent me after you.”
“Why didn’t you say so before? That’s different.”
“Walk lively.”
“Ted Bennet, what ails you?”
“The faster you walk, the sooner you’ll know.”

The two children laughed at each other, then walked a short distance in silence.
“Why don’t you talk, Ted?”
“Why don’t you?”
“Well, what other animals live on our farm besides the squirrels?”
“Oh, skunks.”
“Who else?”
“Rabbits.”
“Any others?”
“Foxes and weasels.”
“Do we own any porcupines?”
“Yes, bushels of them.”
“Tell me some more.”
“Oh, muskrats and mink. I can show you all kinds of animal tracks in the winter. You can see them everywhere in the snow.”
"Do you know what animal makes every track you see?"

"Well, I guess I ought to; I've followed up enough of them."

"Who goes with you?"

"Nobody."

"You'll take me this winter, won't you?"

Ted shook his head without endangering his smile in the least; that seemed permanent—grew deeper and broader, if anything.

"Why not, Ted Bennet?"

"You won't want to go."

"I will, too; you know I will."

"Say, Gladys Birney, if you don't stop picking flowers and come along, you'll be sorry."

"Oh, Ted, it doesn't take but a minute to pick a bunch of wild asters. Do you know," she continued, "that I have been wondering what is going to become of us all when we are grown up?"

Ted laughed aloud.

"I can tell you something that's sure to come true before you grow up."

"Tell me, then."

"Give a guess."

"Can't. What's it about?"
“Oh, Thanksgiving Day, maybe.”
“Are we all going somewhere?”
“Nope; guess again.”
“Can’t.”
“Well, I’ll help you. Your folks are goin’ to have company.”
“Oh, mamma! Will it be mamma, Ted?”
“Nope; she won’t be company. It will be impossible for her to come.”
“Then I don’t care what your old secret is.”

Ted rejoiced, boy fashion, when he saw Gladys wink back the tears.
“You couldn’t guess in a month of Sundays,” he went on, “so I’ll tell you. Your brothers are coming.”
“How do you know?”
“Your father told me.”
“Why didn’t he tell me?”
“Didn’t know it himself when he saw you last. Your grandfather and grandmother are coming too.”
“And isn’t my mother coming with them?” cried Gladys, beginning to walk fast.
“Nope; she can’t do it.”
“I think that’s a queer thing!” The tears
would come; all the winking in the world wouldn’t keep them back.

“Queer, but true,” mocked Ted, who divided honors with the Blue Jay in love of teasing.

Gladys flew over the ground. Not another word did she say to Ted for five minutes.

The way home seemed so long.

Ted ran by her side, still smiling, knowing full well that the question Gladys had in her mind would never be asked. Yet he did love to tease.

How little Ted dreamed of the changes the years would bring — when Gladys had taken her place in the world, and he, a noted naturalist, would hold vast audiences spellbound, by his wonderful imitation of birds’ songs.

There was nothing to whisper of Nora’s fame as an artist and no visible promise of the ultimate destiny of the four little Bennets, who one and all lived up to their names, Jacob, Samuel, James, and Thomas, becoming useful citizens, every one.

The sunlight rested like a benediction upon the old farm-house.

The apple tree with its empty nest seemed transfigured by the golden glory of its last rays.
Gladys checked her headlong speed, and a look of awe stole over the face of Ted.

"Reminds me of the end of the world," whispered Gladys, "look—the river is changed to gold."

Then did Ted make the first intentionally sentimental remark of his life.

"It ought to make you think of the beginning of Heaven," he said.

At that moment, the door was thrown open, and Gladys understood. Another instant and she was clasped in her mother's arms.

Ted went home, whistling the robin's song of cheer.