

Just David & Pollyanna

SUNSHINE SERIES

ELEANOR H. PORTER

Just David
and
Pollyanna

Eleanor H. Porter

Libraries of Hope

Just David
and Pollyanna

Sunshine Series

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JUST DAVID

By Eleanor H. Porter



Just David

CHAPTER I
The Mountain Home

Far up on the mountainside the little shack stood alone in the clearing. It was roughly yet warmly built. Behind it jagged cliffs broke the north wind, and towered gray-white in the sunshine. Before it a tiny expanse of green sloped gently away to a point where the mountain dropped in another sharp descent, wooded with scrubby firs and pines. At the left a footpath led into the cool depths of the forest. But at the right the mountain fell away again and disclosed to view the picture David loved the best of all: the far reaching valley; the silver pool of the lake with its ribbon of a river flung far out; and above it the grays and greens and purples of the mountains that climbed one upon another's shoulders until the topmost thrust their heads into the wide dome of the sky itself.

There was no road, apparently, leading away from the cabin. There was only the footpath that disappeared into the forest. Neither, anywhere, was there a house in sight nearer than the white specks far down in the valley by the river.

Within the shack a wide fireplace dominated one side of the main room. It was June now, and the ashes lay cold on the hearth; but from the tiny lean-to in the rear came the smell and the sputter of bacon sizzling over a blaze. The furnishings of the room were simple, yet, in a way, out of the common. There were two bunks, a few rude but comfortable chairs, a table, two music racks, two violins with their cases, and everywhere books, and scattered sheets of music. Nowhere was there cushion, curtain, or knickknack that told of a woman's taste or touch. On the other hand, neither was there anywhere gun, pelt, or antlered head that spoke of a man's

strength and skill. For decoration there were a beautiful copy of the Sistine Madonna, several photographs signed with names well known out in the great world beyond the mountains, and a festoon of pine cones such as a child might gather and hang.

From the little lean-to kitchen the sound of the sputtering suddenly ceased, and at the door appeared a pair of dark, wistful eyes.

"Daddy!" called the owner of the eyes.

There was no answer.

"Father, are you there?" called the voice, more insistently.

From one of the bunks came a slight stir and a murmured word. At the sound the boy at the door leaped softly into the room and hurried to the bunk in the corner. He was a slender lad with short, crisp curls at his ears, and the red of perfect health in his cheeks. His hands, slim, long, and with tapering fingers like a girl's, reached forward eagerly.

"Daddy, come! I've done the bacon all myself, and the potatoes and the coffee, too. Quick, it's all getting cold!"

Slowly, with the aid of the boy's firm hands, the man pulled himself half to a sitting posture. His cheeks, like the boy's, were red—but not with health. His eyes were a little wild, but his voice was low and very tender, like a caress.

"David—it's my little son David!"

"Of course it's David! Who else should it be?" laughed the boy. "Come!" And he tugged at the man's hands.

The man rose then, unsteadily, and by sheer will forced himself to stand upright. The wild look left his eyes, and the flush his cheeks. His face looked suddenly old and haggard. Yet with fairly sure steps he crossed the room and entered the little kitchen.

Half of the bacon was black; the other half was transparent and like tough jelly. The potatoes were soggy, and had the unmistakable taste that comes from a dish that has boiled dry. The coffee was lukewarm and muddy. Even the milk was



“Daddy, come! I’ve done the bacon all myself”

sour.

David laughed a little ruefully.

"Things aren't so nice as yours, father," he apologized. "I'm afraid I'm nothing but a discord in that orchestra today! Somehow, some of the stove was hotter than the rest, and burnt up the bacon in spots; and all the water got out of the potatoes, too—though *that* didn't matter, for I just put more cold in. I forgot and left the milk in the sun, and it tastes bad now; but I'm sure next time it'll be better—all of it."

The man smiled, but he shook his head sadly.

"But there ought not to be any 'next time,' David."

"Why not? What do you mean? Aren't you ever going to let me try again, father?" There was real distress in the boy's voice.

The man hesitated. His lips parted with an indrawn breath, as if behind them lay a rush of words. But they closed abruptly, the words still unsaid. Then, very lightly, came these others:—

"Well, son, this isn't a very nice way to treat your supper, is it? Now, if you please, I'll take some of that bacon. I think I feel my appetite coming back."

If the truant appetite "came back," however, it could not have stayed; for the man ate but little. He frowned, too, as he saw how little the boy ate. He sat silent while his son cleared the food and dishes away, and he was still silent when, with the boy, he passed out of the house and walked to the little bench facing the west.

Unless it stormed very hard, David never went to bed without this last look at his "Silver Lake," as he called the little sheet of water far down in the valley.

"Daddy, it's gold tonight—all gold with the sun!" he cried rapturously, as his eyes fell upon his treasure. "Oh, daddy!"

It was a long-drawn cry of ecstasy, and hearing it, the man winced, as with sudden pain.

"Daddy, I'm going to play it—I've got to play it!" cried the

boy, bounding toward the cabin. In a moment he had returned, violin at his chin.

The man watched and listened; and as he watched and listened, his face became a battleground whereon pride and fear, hope and despair, joy and sorrow, fought for the mastery.

It was no new thing for David to "play" the sunset. Always, when he was moved, David turned to his violin. Always in its quivering strings he found the means to say that which his tongue could not express.

Across the valley the grays and blues of the mountains had become all purples now. Above, the sky in one vast flame of crimson and gold, was a molten sea on which floated rose-pink cloud boats. Below, the valley with its lake and river picked out in rose and gold against the shadowy greens of field and forest, seemed like some enchanted fairyland of loveliness.

And all this was in David's violin, and all this, too, was on David's uplifted, rapturous face.

As the last rose-glow turned to gray and the last strain quivered into silence, the man spoke. His voice was almost harsh with self-control.

"David, the time has come. We'll have to give it up—you and I."

The boy turned wonderingly, his face still softly luminous.

"Give what up?"

"This—all this."

"This! Why, father, what do you mean? This is home!"

The man nodded wearily.

"I know. It has been home; but, David, you didn't think we could always live here, like this, did you?"

David laughed softly, and turned his eyes once more to the distant skyline.

"Why not?" he asked dreamily. "What better place could there be? I like it, daddy."

The man drew a troubled breath, and stirred restlessly.

The teasing pain in his side was very bad tonight, and no change of position eased it. He was ill, very ill; and he knew it. Yet he also knew that, to David, sickness, pain, and death meant nothing—or, at most, words that had always been lightly, almost unconsciously passed over. For the first time he wondered if, after all, his training—some of it—had been wise.

For six years he had had the boy under his exclusive care and guidance. For six years the boy had eaten the food, worn the clothing, and studied the books of his father's choosing. For six years that father had thought, planned, breathed, moved, lived for his son. There had been no others in the little cabin. There had been only the occasional trips through the woods to the little town on the mountainside for food and clothing, to break the days of close companionship.

All this the man had planned carefully. He had meant that only the good and beautiful should have place in David's youth. It was not that he intended that evil, unhappiness, and death should lack definition, only definiteness, in the boy's mind. It should be a case where the good and the beautiful should so fill the thoughts that there would be no room for anything else. This had been his plan. And thus far he had succeeded—succeeded so wonderfully that he began now, in the face of his own illness, and of what he feared would come of it, to doubt the wisdom of that planning.

As he looked at the boy's rapt face, he remembered David's surprised questioning at the first dead squirrel he had found in the woods. David was six then.

"Why, Daddy, he's asleep, and he won't wake up!" he had cried. Then, after a gentle touch: "And he's cold—oh, so cold!"

The father had hurried his son away at the time, and had evaded his questions; and David had seemed content. But the next day the boy had gone back to the subject. His eyes were wide then, and a little frightened.

"Father, what is it to be—dead?"

"What do you mean, David?"

"The boy who brings the milk—he had the squirrel this morning. He said it was not asleep. It was—dead."

"It means that the squirrel, the real squirrel under the fur, has gone away, David."

"Where?"

"To a far country, perhaps."

"Will he come back?"

"No."

"Did he want to go?"

"We'll hope so."

"But he left his—his fur coat behind him. Didn't he need—that?"

"No, or he'd have taken it with him."

David had fallen silent at this. He had remained strangely silent indeed for some days; then, out in the woods with his father one morning, he gave a joyous shout. He was standing by the ice covered brook, and looking at a little black hole through which the hurrying water could be plainly seen.

"Daddy, oh, Daddy, I know now how it is, about being—dead."

"Why—David!"

"It's like the water in the brook, you know; *that's* going to a far country, and it isn't coming back. And it leaves its little cold ice coat behind it just as the squirrel did, too. It doesn't need it. It can go without it. Don't you see? And it's singing—listen!—it's singing as it goes. It *wants* to go!"

"Yes, David." And David's father had sighed with relief that his son had found his own explanation of the mystery, and one that satisfied.

Later, in his books, David found death again. It was a man, this time. The boy had looked up with startled eyes.

"Do people, real people, like you and me, be dead, father? Do they go to a far country?"

"Yes, son in time—to a far country ruled over by a great and good King they tell us."

David's father had trembled as he said it, and had waited fearfully for the result. But David had only smiled happily as he answered:

"But they go singing, father, like the little brook. You know I heard it!"

And there the matter had ended. David was ten now, and not yet for him did death spell terror. Because of this David's father was relieved; and yet—still because of this—he was afraid.

"David," he said gently. "Listen to me."

The boy turned with a long sigh.

"Yes, father."

"We must go away. Out in the great world there are men and women and children waiting for you. You've a beautiful work to do; and one can't do one's work on a mountaintop."

"Why not? I like it here, and I've always been here."

"Not always, David; six years. You were four when I brought you here. You don't remember, perhaps."

David shook his head. His eyes were again dreamily fixed on the sky.

"I think I'd like it—to go—if I could sail away on that little cloud boat up there," he murmured.

The man sighed and shook his head.

"We can't go on cloud boats. We must walk, David, for a way—and we must go soon—soon," he added feverishly. "I must get you back—back among friends, before—"

He rose unsteadily, and tried to walk erect. His limbs shook, and the blood throbbed at his temples. He was appalled at his weakness. With a fierceness born of his terror he turned sharply to the boy at his side.

"David, we've got to go! We've got to go—*tomorrow!*"

"Father!"

"Yes, yes, come!" He stumbled blindly, yet in some way he

reached the cabin door.

Behind him David still sat, inert, staring. The next minute the boy had sprung to his feet and was hurrying after his father.

CHAPTER II
The Trail

A curious strength seemed to have come to the man. With almost steady hands he took down the photographs and the Sistine Madonna, packing them neatly away in a box to be left. From beneath his bunk he dragged a large, dusty traveling bag, and in this he stowed a little food, a few garments, and a great deal of the music scattered about the room.

David, in the doorway, stared in dazed wonder. Gradually into his eyes crept a look never seen there before.

"Father, where are we going?" he asked at last in a shaking voice, as he came slowly into the room.

"Back, son; we're going back."

"To the village, where we get our eggs and bacon?"

"No, no, lad, not there. The other way. We go down into the valley this time."

"The valley—*my* valley, with the Silver Lake?"

"Yes, my son; and beyond—far beyond." The man spoke dreamily. He was looking at a photograph in his hand. It had slipped in among the loose sheets of music, and had not been put away with the others. It was the likeness of a beautiful woman.

For a moment David eyed him uncertainly; then he spoke.

"Daddy, who is that? Who are all these people in the pictures? You've never told me about any of them except the little round one that you wear in your pocket. Who are they?"

Instead of answering, the man turned faraway eyes on the boy and smiled wistfully.

"Ah, David, lad, how they'll love you! How they will love

you! But you mustn't let them spoil you, son. You must remember—remember all I've told you."

Once again David asked his question, but this time the man only turned back to the photograph, muttering something the boy could not understand.

After that David did not question any more. He was too amazed, too distressed. He had never before seen his father like this. With nervous haste the man was setting the little room to rights, crowding things into the bag, and packing other things away in an old trunk. His cheeks were very red, and his eyes very bright. He talked, too, almost constantly, though David could understand scarcely a word of what was said. Later, the man caught up his violin and played; and never before had David heard his father play like that. The boy's eyes filled, and his heart ached with a pain that choked and numbed—though why, David could not have told. Still later, the man dropped his violin and sank exhausted into a chair; and then David, worn and frightened with it all, crept to his bunk and fell asleep.

In the gray dawn of the morning David awoke to a different world. His father, white-faced and gentle, was calling him to get ready for breakfast. The little room, dismantled of its decorations, was bare and cold. The bag, closed and strapped, rested on the floor by the door, together with the two violins in their cases, ready to carry.

"We must hurry, son. It's a long tramp before we take the cars."

"The cars—the real cars? Do we go in those?" David was fully awake now.

"Yes."

"And is that all we're to carry?"

"Yes. Hurry, son."

"But we come back—sometime?"

There was no answer.

"Father, we're coming back—sometime?" David's voice

was insistent now.

The man stooped and tightened a strap that was already quite tight enough. Then he laughed lightly.

"Why, of course you're coming back sometime, David. Only think of all these things we're leaving!"

When the last dish was put away, the last garment adjusted, and the last look given to the little room, the travelers picked up the bag and the violins, and went out into the sweet freshness of the morning. As he fastened the door the man sighed profoundly; but David did not notice this. His face was turned toward the east—always David looked toward the sun.

"Daddy, let's not go, after all! Let's stay here," he cried ardently, drinking in the beauty of the morning.

"We must go, David. Come, son." And the man led the way across the green slope to the west.

It was a scarcely perceptible trail, but the man found it, and followed it with evident confidence. There was only the pause now and then to steady his none-too-sure step, or to ease the burden of the bag. Very soon the forest lay all about them, with the birds singing over their heads, and with numberless tiny feet scurrying through the underbrush on all sides. Just out of sight a brook babbled noisily of its delight in being alive; and away up in the treetops the morning sun played hide-and-seek among the dancing leaves.

And David leaped, and laughed, and loved it all, nor was any of it strange to him. The birds, the trees, the sun, the brook, the scurrying little creatures of the forest, all were friends of his. But the man—the man did not leap or laugh, though he, too, loved it all. The man was afraid.

He knew now that he had undertaken more than he could carry out. Step by step the bag had grown heavier, and hour by hour the insistent, teasing pain in his side had increased until now it was a torture. He had forgotten that the way to the valley was so long; he had not realized how nearly spent was his strength before he even started down the trail.

Throbbing through his brain was the question, what if, after all, he could not—but even to himself he would not say the words.

At noon they paused for luncheon, and at night they camped where the chattering brook had stopped to rest in a still, black pool. The next morning the man and the boy picked up the trail again, but without the bag. Under some leaves in a little hollow, the man had hidden the bag, and had then said, as if casually:—

"I believe, after all, I won't carry this along. There's nothing in it that we really need, you know, now that I've taken out the luncheon box, and by night we'll be down in the valley."

"Of course!" laughed David. "We don't need that." And he laughed again, for pure joy. Little use had David for bags or baggage!

They were more than halfway down the mountain now, and soon they reached a grass-grown road, little traveled, but yet a road. Still later they came to where four ways crossed, and two of them bore the marks of many wheels. By sundown the little brook at their side murmured softly of quiet fields and meadows, and David knew that the valley was reached.

David was not laughing now. He was watching his father with startled eyes. David had not known what anxiety was. He was finding out now—though he but vaguely realized that something was not right. For some time his father had said but little, and that little had been in a voice that was thick and unnatural sounding. He was walking fast, yet David noticed that every step seemed an effort, and that every breath came in short gasps. His eyes were very bright, and were fixedly bent on the road ahead, as if even the haste he was making was not haste enough. Twice David spoke to him, but he did not answer; and the boy could only trudge along on his weary little feet and sigh for the dear home on the mountain-top which they had left behind them the morning before.

They met few fellow travelers, and those they did meet paid scant attention to the man and the boy carrying the violins. As it chanced, there was no one in sight when the man, walking in the grass at the side of the road, stumbled and fell heavily to the ground.

David sprang quickly forward.

"Father, what is it? *What is it?*"

There was no answer.

"Daddy, why don't you speak to me? See, it's David!"

With a painful effort the man roused himself and sat up. For a moment he gazed dully into the boy's face; then a half-forgotten something seemed to stir him into feverish action. With shaking fingers he handed David his watch and a small ivory miniature. Then he searched his pockets until on the ground before him lay a shining pile of gold pieces—to David there seemed to be a hundred of them.

"Take them—hide them—keep them. David, until you—need them," panted the man. "Then go—go on. I can't."

"Alone? Without you?" demurred the boy, aghast. "Why, father, I couldn't! I don't know the way. Besides, I'd rather stay with you," he added soothingly, as he slipped the watch and the miniature into his pocket; "then we can both go." And he dropped himself down at his father's side.

The man shook his head feebly, and pointed again to the gold pieces.

"Take them, David—hide them," he chattered with pale lips.

Almost impatiently the boy began picking up the money and tucking it into his pockets.

"But, father, I'm not going without you," he declared stoutly, as the last bit of gold slipped out of sight, and a horse and wagon rattled around the turn of the road above.

The driver of the horse glanced disapprovingly at the man and the boy by the roadside; but he did not stop. After he had passed, the boy turned again to his father. The man was

fumbling once more in his pockets. This time from his coat he produced a pencil and a small notebook from which he tore a page, and began to write, laboriously, painfully.

David sighed and looked about him. He was tired and hungry, and he did not understand things at all. Something very wrong, very terrible, must be the matter with his father. Here it was almost dark, yet they had no place to go, no supper to eat, while far, far up on the mountainside was their own dear home sad and lonely without them. Up there, too, the sun still shone, doubtless—at least there were the rose-glow and the Silver Lake to look at, while down here there was nothing, nothing but gray shadows, a long dreary road, and a straggling house or two in sight. From above, the valley might look to be a fairyland of loveliness, but in reality it was nothing but a dismal waste of gloom, decided David.

David's father had torn a second page from his book and was beginning another note, when the boy suddenly jumped to his feet. One of the straggling houses was near the road where they sat, and its presence had given David an idea. With swift steps he hurried to the front door and knocked upon it. In answer a tall, unsmiling woman appeared, and said, "Well?"

David removed his cap as his father had taught him to do when one of the mountain women spoke to him.

"Good evening, lady; I'm David," he began frankly. "My father is so tired he fell down back there, and we should like very much to stay with you all night, if you don't mind."

The woman in the doorway stared. For a moment she was dumb with amazement. Her eyes swept the plain, rather rough garments of the boy, then sought the half-recumbent figure of the man by the roadside. Her chin came up angrily.

"Oh, would you, indeed! Well, upon my word!" she scouted. "Humph! We don't accommodate tramps, little boy." And she shut the door hard.

It was David's turn to stare. Just what a tramp might be,

he did not know; but never before had a request of his been so angrily refused. He knew that. A fierce something rose within him—a fierce new something that sent the swift red to his neck and brow. He raised a determined hand to the door-knob—he had something to say to that woman!—when the door suddenly opened again from the inside.

"See here, boy," began the woman, looking out at him a little less unkindly, "if you're hungry I'll give you some milk and bread. Go around to the back porch and I'll get it for you." And she shut the door again.

David's hand dropped to his side. The red still stayed on his face and neck, however, and that fierce new something within him bade him refuse to take food from this woman.... But there was his father—his poor father, who was so tired; and there was his own stomach clamoring to be fed. No, he could not refuse. And with slow steps and hanging head David went around the corner of the house to the rear.

As the half loaf of bread and the pail of milk were placed in his hands, David remembered suddenly that in the village store on the mountain, his father paid money for his food. David was glad, now, that he had those gold pieces in his pocket, for he could pay money. Instantly his head came up. Once more erect with self-respect, he shifted his burdens to one hand and thrust the other into his pocket. A moment later he presented on his outstretched palm a shining disk of gold.

"Will you take this, to pay, please, for the bread and milk?" he asked proudly.

The woman began to shake her head; but, as her eyes fell on the money, she started, and bent closer to examine it. The next instant she jerked herself upright with an angry exclamation.

"It's gold! A ten-dollar gold piece! So you're a thief, too, are you, as well as a tramp? Humph! Well, I guess you don't need this then," she finished sharply, snatching the bread and

the pail of milk from the boy's hand.

The next moment David stood alone on the doorstep, with the sound of a quickly thrown bolt in his ears.

A thief! David knew little of thieves, but he knew what they were. Only a month before a man had tried to steal the violins from the cabin; and he was a thief, the milk boy said. David flushed now again, angrily, as he faced the closed door. But he did not tarry. He turned and ran to his father.

"Father, come away, quick! You must come away," he choked.

So urgent was the boy's voice that almost unconsciously the sick man got to his feet. With shaking hands he thrust the notes he had been writing into his pocket. The little book, from which he had torn the leaves for this purpose, had already dropped unheeded into the grass at his feet.

"Yes, son, yes, we'll go," muttered the man. "I feel better now. I can—walk."

And he did walk, though very slowly, ten, a dozen, twenty steps. From behind came the sound of wheels that stopped close beside them.

"Hullo, there! Going to the village?" called a voice.

"Yes, sir." David's answer was unhesitating. Where "the village" was, he did not know; he knew only that it must be somewhere away from the woman who had called him a thief. And that was all he cared to know.

"I'm going 'most there myself. Want a lift?" asked the man, still kindly.

"Yes, sir. Thank you!" cried the boy joyfully. And together they aided his father to climb into the roomy wagon body.

There were few words said. The man at the reins drove rapidly, and paid little attention to anything but his horses. The sick man dozed and rested. The boy sat, wistful eyed and silent, watching the trees and houses flit by. The sun had long ago set, but it was not dark, for the moon was round and bright, and the sky was cloudless. Where the road forked

sharply the man drew his horses to a stop.

"Well, I'm sorry, but I guess I'll have to drop you here, friends. I turn off to the right; but 't ain't more 'n a quarter of a mile for you, now," he finished cheerily, pointing with his whip to a cluster of twinkling lights.

"Thank you, sir, thank you," breathed David gratefully, steadying his father's steps. "You've helped us lots. Thank you!"

In David's heart was a wild desire to lay at his good man's feet all of his shining gold pieces as payment for this timely aid. But caution held him back: it seemed that only in stores did money pay; outside it branded one as a thief!

Alone with his father, David faced once more his problem. Where should they go for the night? Plainly his father could not walk far. He had begun to talk again, too—low, half-finished sentences that David could not understand, and that vaguely troubled him. There was a house nearby, and several others down the road toward the village; but David had had all the experience he wanted that night with strange houses, and strange women. There was a barn, a big one, which was nearest of all; and it was toward this barn that David finally turned his father's steps.

"We'll go there, Daddy, if we can get in," he proposed softly. "And we'll stay all night and rest."

CHAPTER III
The Valley

The long twilight of the June day had changed into a night that was scarcely darker, so bright was the moonlight. Seen from the house, the barn and the low buildings beyond loomed shadowy and unreal, yet very beautiful. On the side porch of the house sat Simeon Holly and his wife, content to rest mind and body only because a full day's work lay well done behind them.

It was just as Simeon rose to his feet to go indoors that a long note from a violin reached their ears.

"Simeon!" cried the woman. "What was that?"

The man did not answer. His eyes were fixed on the barn.

"Simeon, it's a fiddle!" exclaimed Mrs. Holly, as a second tone quivered on the air "And it's in our barn!"

Simeon's jaw set. With a stern ejaculation he crossed the porch and entered the kitchen.

In another minute he had returned, a lighted lantern in his hand.

"Simeon, d—don't go," begged the woman, tremulously. "You—you don't know what's there."

"Fiddles are not played without hands, Ellen," retorted the man severely. "Would you have me go to bed and leave a half-drunken, ungodly minstrel fellow in possession of our barn? Tonight, on my way home, I passed a pretty pair of them lying by the roadside—a man and a boy with two violins. They're the culprits, likely—though how they got this far, I don't see. Do you think I want to leave my barn to tramps like them?"

"N—no, I suppose not," faltered the woman, as she rose

tremblingly to her feet, and followed her husband's shadow across the yard.

Once inside the barn Simeon Holly and his wife paused involuntarily. The music was all about them now, filling the air with runs and trills and rollicking bits of melody. Giving an angry exclamation, the man turned then to the narrow stairway and climbed to the hayloft above. At his heels came his wife, and so her eyes, almost as soon as his fell upon the man lying back on the hay with the moonlight full upon his face. Instantly the music dropped to a whisper, and a low voice came out of the gloom beyond the square of moonlight which came from the window in the roof.

"If you'll please be as still as you can, sir. You see he's asleep and he's so tired," said the voice.

For a moment the man and the woman on the stairway paused in amazement, then the man lifted his lantern and strode toward the voice.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" he demanded sharply.

A boy's face, round, tanned, and just now a bit anxious, flashed out of the dark.

"Oh, please, sir, if you would speak lower," pleaded the boy. "He's so tired! I'm David, sir, and that's father. We came in here to rest and sleep."

Simeon Holly's unrelenting gaze left the boy's face and swept that of the man lying back on the hay. The next instant he lowered the lantern and leaned nearer, putting forth a cautious hand. At once he straightened himself, muttering a brusque word under his breath. Then he turned with the angry question:—

"Boy, what do you mean by playing a jig on your fiddle at such a time as this?"

"Why, father asked me to play" returned the boy cheerily. "He said he could walk through green forests then, with the ripple of brooks in his ears, and that the birds and the

squirrels—"

"See here, boy, who are you?" cut in Simeon Holly sternly. "Where did you come from?"

"From home, sir."

"Where is that?"

"Why, home, sir, where I live. In the mountains, 'way up, up, up—oh, so far up! And there's such a big, big sky, so much nicer than down here." The boy's voice quivered, and almost broke, and his eyes constantly sought the white face on the hay.

It was then that Simeon Holly awoke to the sudden realization that it was time for action. He turned to his wife.

"Take the boy to the house," he directed incisively. "We'll have to keep him tonight, I suppose. I'll go for Higgins. Of course the whole thing will have to be put in his hands at once. You can't do anything here," he added, as he caught her questioning glance. "Leave everything just as it is. The man is dead."

"Dead?" It was a sharp cry from the boy, yet there was more of wonder than of terror in it. "Do you mean that he has gone—like the water in the brook—to the far country?" he faltered.

Simeon Holly stared. Then he said more distinctly:—

"Your father is dead, boy."

"And he won't come back any more?" David's voice broke now.

There was no answer. Mrs. Holly caught her breath convulsively and looked away. Even Simeon Holly refused to meet the boy's pleading eyes.

With a quick cry David sprang to his father's side.

"But he's here—right here," he challenged shrilly. "Daddy, Daddy, speak to me! It's David!" Reaching out his hand, he gently touched his father's face. He drew back then, at once, his eyes distended with terror. "He isn't! He is—gone," he chattered frenziedly. "This isn't the father-part that

knows. It's the other—that they leave. He's left it behind him—like the squirrel, and the water in the brook."

Suddenly the boy's face changed. It grew rapt and luminous as he leaped to his feet, crying joyously: "But he asked me to play, so he went singing—singing just as he said that they did. And I made him walk through green forests with the ripple of the brooks in his ears! Listen—like this!" And once more the boy raised the violin to his chin, and once more the music trilled and rippled about the shocked, amazed ears of Simeon Holly and his wife.

For a time neither the man nor the woman could speak. There was nothing in their humdrum, habit-smoothed tilling of the soil and washing of pots and pans to prepare them for a scene like this—a moonlit barn, a strange dead man, and that dead man's son babbling of brooks and squirrels, and playing jigs on a fiddle for a dirge. At last, however, Simeon found his voice.

"Boy, boy, stop that!" he thundered. "Are you mad—clean mad? Go into the house, I say!" And the boy, dazed but obedient, put up his violin, and followed the woman, who, with tear-blinded eyes, was leading the way down the stairs.

Mrs. Holly was frightened, but she was also strangely moved. From the long ago the sound of another violin had come to her—a violin, too, played by a boy's hands. But of this, all this, Mrs. Holly did not like to think.

In the kitchen now she turned and faced her young guest.

"Are you hungry, little boy?"

David hesitated; he had not forgotten the woman, the milk, and the gold piece.

"Are you hungry—dear?" stammered Mrs. Holly again; and this time David's clamorous stomach forced a "yes" from his unwilling lips; which sent Mrs. Holly at once into the pantry for bread and milk and a heaped-up plate of doughnuts such as David had never seen before.

Like any hungry boy David ate his supper; and Mrs. Holly,

in the face of this very ordinary sight of hunger being appeased at her table, breathed more freely, and ventured to think that perhaps this strange little boy was not so very strange, after all.

"What is your name?" she found courage to ask then.

"David."

"David what?"

"Just David."

"But your father's name?" Mrs. Holly had almost asked, but stopped in time. She did not want to speak of him. "Where do you live?" she asked instead.

"On the mountain, 'way up, up on the mountain where I can see my Silver Lake every day, you know."

"But you didn't live there alone?"

"Oh, no; with father—before he—went away," faltered the boy.

The woman flushed red and bit her lip.

"No, no, I mean—were there no other houses but yours?" she stammered.

"No, ma'am."

"But, wasn't your mother—anywhere?"

"Oh, yes, in father's pocket."

"Your *mother*—in your father's *pocket!*"

So plainly aghast was the questioner that David looked not a little surprised as he explained.

"You don't understand. She is an angel-mother, and angel-mothers don't have anything only their pictures down here with us. And that's what we have, and father always carried it in his pocket."

"Oh—h," murmured Mrs. Holly, a quick mist in her eyes. Then, gently: "And did you always live there—on the mountain?"

"Six years, father said."

"But what did you do all day? Weren't you ever—lonesome?"

"Lonesome?" The boy's eyes were puzzled.

"Yes. Didn't you miss things—people, other houses, boys of your own age, and—and such things?"

David's eyes widened.

"Why, how could I?" he cried. "When I had Daddy, and my violin, and my Silver Lake, and the whole of the great big woods with everything in them to talk to, and to talk to me?"

"Woods, and things in them to—to *talk* to you!"

"Why, yes. It was the little brook, you know, after the squirrel, that told me about being dead, and—"

"Yes, yes; but never mind, dear, now," stammered the woman, rising hurriedly to her feet—the boy was a little wild, after all, she thought. "You—you should go to bed. Haven't you a—a bag, or—or anything?"

"No, ma'am; we left it," smiled David apologetically. "You see, we had so much in it that it got too heavy to carry. So we didn't bring it."

"So much in it you didn't bring it, indeed!" repeated Mrs. Holly, under her breath, throwing up her hands with a gesture of despair. "Boy, what are you, anyway?"

It was not meant for a question, but, to the woman's surprise, the boy answered, frankly, simply:—

"Father says that I'm one little instrument in the great Orchestra of Life, and that I must see to it that I'm always in tune, and don't drag or hit false notes."

"My land!" breathed the woman, dropping back in her chair, her eyes fixed on the boy. Then, with an effort, she got to her feet.

"Come, you must go to bed," she stammered. "I'm sure bed is—is the best place you. I think I can find what—what you need," she finished feebly.

In a snug little room over the kitchen some minutes later, David found himself at last alone. The room, though it had once belonged to a boy of his own age, looked very strange to David. On the floor was a rag-carpet rug, the first he had ever

seen. On the walls were a fishing rod, a toy shotgun, and a case full of bugs and moths, each little body impaled on a pin, to David's shuddering horror. The bed had four tall posts at the corners, and a very puffy top that filled David with wonder as to how he was to reach it, or stay there if he did gain it. Across a chair lay a boy's long yellow-white nightshirt that the kind lady had left, after hurriedly wiping her eyes with the edge of its hem. In all the circle of the candlelight there was just one familiar object to David's homesick eyes—the long black violin case which he had brought in himself, and which held his beloved violin.

With his back carefully turned toward the impaled bugs and moths on the wall, David undressed himself and slipped into the yellow-white nightshirt, which he sniffed at gratefully, so like pine woods was the perfume that hung about its folds. Then he blew out the candle and groped his way to the one window the little room contained.

The moon still shone, but little could be seen through the thick green branches of the tree outside. From the yard below came the sound of wheels, and of men's excited voices. There came also the twinkle of lanterns borne by hurrying hands, and the tramp of shuffling feet. In the window David shivered. There were no wide sweep of mountain, hill, and valley, no Silver Lake, no restful hush, no Daddy—no beautiful Things that Were. There was only the dreary, hollow mockery of the Things they had Become.

Long minutes later, David, with the violin in his arms, lay down upon the rug, and, for the first time since babyhood, sobbed himself to sleep—but it was a sleep that brought no rest; for in it he dreamed that he was a big, white-winged moth pinned with a star to an ink-black sky.

CHAPTER IV
Two Letters

In the early gray dawn David awoke. His first sensation was the physical numbness and stiffness that came from his hard bed on the floor.

"Why, Daddy," he began, pulling himself half-erect, "I slept all night on—" He stopped suddenly, brushing his eyes with the backs of his hands. "Why, Daddy, where—" Then full consciousness came to him.

With a low cry he sprang to his feet and ran to the window. Through the trees he could see the sunrise glow of the eastern sky. Down in the yard no one was in sight; but the barn door was open, and, with a quick indrawing of his breath, David turned back into the room and began to thrust himself into his clothing.

The gold in his sagging pockets clinked and jingled musically; and once half a dozen pieces rolled out upon the floor. For a moment the boy looked as if he were going to let them remain where they were. But the next minute, with an impatient gesture, he had picked them up and thrust them deep into one of his pockets, silencing their jingling with his handkerchief.

Once dressed, David picked up his violin and stepped softly into the hall. At first no sound reached his ears; then from the kitchen below came the clatter of brisk feet and the rattle of tins and crockery. Tightening his clasp on the violin, David slipped quietly down the back stairs and out to the yard. It was only a few seconds then before he was hurrying through the open doorway of the barn and up the narrow stairway to the loft above.

At the top, however, he came to a sharp pause, with a low cry. The next moment he turned to see a kindly faced man looking up at him from the foot of the stairs.

"Oh, sir, please—please, where is he? What have you done with him?" appealed the boy, almost plunging headlong down the stairs in his haste to reach the bottom.

Into the man's weather-beaten face came a look of sincere but awkward sympathy.

"Oh, hullo, sonny! So you're the boy, are ye?" he began diffidently.

"Yes, yes, I'm David. But where is he—my father, you know? I mean the—the part he—he left behind him?" choked the boy. "The part like—the ice-coat?"

The man stared. Then, involuntarily, he began to back away.

"Well, ye see, I—I—"

"But, maybe you don't know," interrupted David feverishly. "You aren't the man I saw last night. Who are you? Where is he—the other one, please?"

"No, I—I wasn't there—that is, not at the first," spoke up the man quickly, still unconsciously backing away. "Me—I'm only Larson, Perry Larson, ye know. 'T was Mr. Holly you see last night—him that I works for."

"Then, where is Mr. Holly, please?" faltered the boy, hurrying toward the barn door. "Maybe he would know—about father. Oh, there he is!" And David ran out of the barn and across the yard to the kitchen porch.

It was an unhappy ten minutes that David spent then. Besides Mr. Holly, there were Mrs. Holly, and the man, Perry Larson. And they all talked. But little of what they said could David understand. To none of his questions could he obtain an answer that satisfied.

Neither, on his part, could he seem to reply to their questions in a way that pleased them.

They went in to breakfast then, Mr. and Mrs. Holly, and

the man, Perry Larson. They asked David to go—at least, Mrs. Holly asked him. But David shook his head and said "No, no, thank you very much; I'd rather not, if you please—not now." Then he dropped himself down on the steps to think. As if he could *eat*—with that great choking lump in his throat that refused to be swallowed!

David was thoroughly dazed, frightened, and dismayed. He knew now that never again in this world would he see his dear father, or hear him speak. This much had been made very clear to him during the last ten minutes. Why this should be so, or what his father would want him to do, he could not seem to find out. Not until now had he realized at all what this going away of his father was to mean to him. And he told himself frantically that he could not have it so. *He could not have it so!* But even as he said the words, he knew that it was so—irrevocably so.

David began then to long for his mountain home. There at least he would have his dear forest all about him, with the birds and the squirrels and the friendly little brooks. There he would have his Silver Lake to look at, too, and all of them would speak to him of his father. He believed, indeed, that up there it would almost seem as if his father were really with him. And, anyway, if his father ever should come back, it would be there that he would be sure to seek him—up there in the little mountain home so dear to them both. Back to the cabin he would go now, then. Yes; indeed he would!

With a low word and a passionately intent expression, David got to his feet, picked up his violin, and hurried, firm footed, down the driveway and out upon the main highway, turning in the direction from whence he had come with his father the night before.

The Hollys had just finished breakfast when Higgins, the coroner, drove into the yard accompanied by William Streeter, the town's most prominent farmer—and the most miserly one, if report was to be credited.

"Well, could you get anything out of the boy?" demanded Higgins, without ceremony, as Simeon Holly and Larson appeared on the kitchen porch.

"Very little. Really nothing of importance," answered Simeon Holly.

"Where is he now?"

"Why, he was here on the steps a few minutes ago." Simeon Holly looked about him a bit impatiently.

"Well, I want to see him. I've got a letter for him."

"A letter!" exclaimed Simeon Holly and Larson in amazed unison.

"Yes. Found it in his father's pocket," nodded the coroner, with all the tantalizing brevity of a man who knows he has a choice morsel of information that is eagerly awaited. "It's addressed to 'My boy David,' so I calculated we'd better give it to him first without reading it, seeing it's his. After he reads it, though, I want to see it. I want to see if what it says is any nearer being horse-sense than the other one is."

"The other one!" exclaimed the amazed chorus again.

"Oh, yes, there's another one," spoke up William Streeter tersely. "And I've read it—all but the scrawl at the end. There couldn't anybody read that!" Higgins laughed.

"Well, I'm free to confess 't is a sticker—that name," he admitted. "And it's the name we want, of course, to tell us who they are—since it seems the boy don't know, from what you said last night. I was in hopes, by this morning, you'd have found out more from him."

Simeon Holly shook his head.

"'T was impossible."

"Gosh! I should say 't was," cut in Perry Larson, with emphasis. "An' queer ain't no name for it. One minute he'd be talkin' good common sense like anybody: an' the next he'd be chatterin' of coats made o' ice, an' birds an' squirrels an' babbling brooks. He sure is dippy! Listen. He actually don't seem ter know the diff'rence between himself an' his fiddle. We was

tryin' ter find out this mornin' what he could do, an' what he wanted ter do, when if he didn't up an' say that his father told him it didn't make so much diff'rence *what* he did so long as he kept hisself in tune an' didn't strike false notes. Now, what do yer think o' that?"

"Yes, I, know" nodded Higgins musingly. "There WAS something queer about them, and they weren't just ordinary tramps. Did I tell you? I overtook them last night away up on the Fairbanks road by the Taylor place, and I gave 'em a lift. I particularly noticed what a decent sort they were. They were clean and quiet-spoken, and their clothes were good, even if they were rough. Yet they didn't have any baggage but them fiddles."

"But what was that second letter you mentioned?" asked Simeon Holly.

Higgins smiled oddly, and reached into his pocket.

"The letter? Oh, you're welcome to read the letter," he said, as he handed over a bit of folded paper.

Simeon took it gingerly and examined it.

It was a leaf torn apparently from a note book. It was folded three times, and bore on the outside the superscription "To whom it may concern." The handwriting was peculiar, irregular, and not very legible. But as near as it could be deciphered, the note ran thus:—

Now that the time has come when I must give David back to the world, I have set out for that purpose.

But I am ill—very ill, and should Death have swifter feet than I, I must leave my task for others to complete. Deal gently with him. He knows only that which is good and beautiful. He knows nothing of sin nor evil.

Then followed the signature—a thing of scrawls and flourishes that conveyed no sort of meaning to Simeon Holly's puzzled eyes.

"Well?" prompted Higgins expectantly.

Simeon Holly shook his head.

"I can make little of it. It certainly is a most remarkable note."

"Could you read the name?"

"No."

"Well, I couldn't. Neither could half a dozen others that's seen it. But where's the boy? Mebbe his note'll talk sense."

"I'll go find him," volunteered Larson. "He must be somewheres 'round."

But David was very evidently not "somewheres 'round." At least he was not in the barn, the shed, the kitchen bedroom, nor anywhere else that Larson looked; and the man was just coming back with a crestfallen, perplexed frown, when Mrs. Holly hurried out onto the porch.

"Mr. Higgins," she cried, in obvious excitement, "your wife has just telephoned that her sister Mollie has just telephoned HER that that little tramp boy with the violin is at her house."

"At Mollie's!" exclaimed Higgins. "Why, that's a mile or more from here."

"So that's where he is!" interposed Larson, hurrying forward. "Doggone the little rascal! He must 'a' slipped away while we was eatin' breakfast."

"Yes. But, Simeon,—Mr. Higgins,—we hadn't ought to let him go like that," appealed Mrs. Holly tremulously. "Your wife said Mollie said she found him crying at the crossroads, because he didn't know which way to take. He said he was going back home. He means to that wretched cabin on the mountain, you know; and we can't let him do that alone—a child like that!"

"Where is he now?" demanded Higgins.

"In Mollie's kitchen eating bread and milk; but she said she had an awful time getting him to eat. And she wants to know what to do with him. That's why she telephoned your

wife. She thought you ought to know he was there."

"Yes, of course. Well, tell her to tell him to come back."

"Mollie said she tried to have him come back, but that he said, no, thank you, he'd rather not. He was going home where his father could find him if he should ever want him. Mr. Higgins, we—we *can't* let him go off like that. Why, the child would die up there alone in those dreadful woods, even if he could get there in the first place—which I very much doubt."

"Yes, of course, of course," muttered Higgins, with a thoughtful frown. "There's his letter, too. Say!" he added, brightening, "what'll you bet that letter won't fetch him? He seems to think the world and all of his daddy. Here," he directed, turning to Mrs. Holly, "you tell my wife to tell—better yet, you telephone Mollie yourself, please, and tell her to tell the boy we've got a letter here for him from his father, and he can have it if he'll come back."

"I will, I will," called Mrs. Holly, over her shoulder, as she hurried into the house. In an unbelievably short time she was back, her face beaming.

"He's started, so soon," she nodded. "He's crazy with joy, Mollie said. He even left part of his breakfast, he was in such a hurry. So I guess we'll see him all right."

"Oh, yes, we'll see him all right," echoed Simeon Holly grimly. "But that isn't telling what we'll do with him when we do see him."

"Oh, well, maybe this letter of his will help us out on that," suggested Higgins soothingly. "Anyhow, even if it doesn't, I'm not worrying any. I guess someone will want him—a good healthy boy like that."

"Did you find any money on the body?" asked Streeter.

"A little change—a few cents. Nothing to count. If the boy's letter doesn't tell us where any of their folks are, it'll be up to the town to bury him all right."

"He had a fiddle, didn't he? And the boy had one, too.

Wouldn't they bring anything?" Streeter's round blue eyes gleamed shrewdly.

Higgins gave a slow shake of his head.

"Maybe—if there was a market for 'em. But who'd buy 'em? There ain't a soul in town plays but Jack Gurnsey; and he's got one. Besides, he's sick, and got all he can do to buy bread and butter for him and his sister without taking in more fiddles, I guess. HE wouldn't buy 'em."

"Hm—m; maybe not, maybe not," grunted Streeter. "An', as you say, he's the only one that's got any use for 'em here; an' like enough they ain't worth much, anyway. So I guess 't is up to the town all right."

"Yes; but—if yer'll take it from me,"—interrupted Larson— "you'll be wise if ye keep still before the boy. It's no use *askin'* him anythin'. We've proved that fast enough. An' if he once turns 'round an' begins ter ask YOU questions, yer done for!"

"I guess you're right," nodded Higgins, with a quizzical smile. "And as long as questioning CAN'T do any good, why, we'll just keep whist before the boy. Meanwhile I wish the little rascal would hurry up and get here. I want to see the inside of that letter to HIM. I'm relying on that being some help to unsnarl this tangle of telling who they are."

"Well, he's started," reiterated Mrs. Holly, as she turned back into the house; "so I guess he'll get here if you wait long enough."

"Oh, yes, he'll get here if we wait long enough," echoed Simeon Holly again, crustily.

The two men in the wagon settled themselves more comfortably in their seats, and Perry Larson, after a half uneasy, half apologetic glance at his employer, dropped himself onto the bottom step. Simeon Holly had already sat down stiffly in one of the porch chairs. Simeon Holly never "dropped himself" anywhere. Indeed, according to Perry Larson, if there were a hard way to do a thing, Simeon Holly found it—

and did it. The fact that, this morning, he had allowed, and was still allowing, the sacred routine of the day's work to be thus interrupted, for nothing more important than the expected arrival of a strolling urchin, was something Larson would not have believed had he not seen it. Even now he was conscious once or twice of an involuntary desire to rub his eyes to make sure they were not deceiving him.

Impatient as the waiting men were for the arrival of David, they were yet almost surprised, so soon did he appear, running up the driveway.

"Oh, where is it, please?" he panted. "They said you had a letter for me from Daddy!"

"You're right, sonny; we have. And here it is," answered Higgins promptly, holding out the folded paper.

Plainly eager as he was, David did not open the note till he had first carefully set down the case holding his violin; then he devoured it with eager eyes.

As he read, the four men watched his face. They saw first the quick tears that had to be blinked away. Then they saw the radiant glow that grew and deepened until the whole boyish face was aflame with the splendor of it. They saw the shining wonder of his eyes, too, as he looked up from the letter.

"And Daddy wrote this to me from the far country?" he breathed.

Simeon Holly scowled. Larson choked over a stifled chuckle. William Streeter stared and shrugged his shoulders; but Higgins flushed a dull red.

"No, sonny," he stammered. "We found it on the—er—I mean, it—er—your father left it in his pocket for you," finished the man, a little explosively.

A swift shadow crossed the boy's face.

"Oh, I hoped I'd heard—" he began. Then suddenly he stopped, his face once more alight. "But it's 'most the same as if he wrote it from there, isn't it? He left it for me, and he told

me what to do."

"What's that, what's that?" cried Higgins, instantly alert. "*Did* he tell you what to do? Then, let's have it, so *we'll* know. You will let us read it, won't you, boy?"

"Why, y—yes," stammered David, holding it out politely, but with evident reluctance.

"Thank you," nodded Higgins, as he reached for the note.

David's letter was very different from the other one. It was longer, but it did not help much, though it was easily read. In his letter, in spite of the wavering lines, each word was formed with a care that told of a father's thought for the young eyes that would read it. It was written on two of the notebook's leaves, and at the end came the single word "Daddy."

David, my boy [read Higgins aloud], in the far country I am waiting for you. Do not grieve, for that will grieve me. I shall not return, but some day you will come to me, your violin at your chin, and the bow drawn across the strings to greet me. See that it tells me of the beautiful world you have left—for it is a beautiful world, David; never forget that. And if sometime you are tempted to think it is not a beautiful world, just remember that you yourself can make it beautiful if you will.

You are among new faces, surrounded by things and people that are strange to you. Some of them you will not understand; some of them you may not like. But do not fear, David, and do not plead to go back to the hills. Remember this, my boy—in your violin lie all the things you long for. You have only to play, and the broad skies of your mountain home will be over you, and the dear friends and comrades of your mountain forests will be about you.

Daddy.

"Gorry! that's worse than the other," groaned Higgins, when he had finished the note. "There's actually nothing in

it! Wouldn't you think—if a man wrote anything at such a time—that he'd 'a' wrote something that had some sense to it—something that one could get hold of, and find out who the boy is?"

There was no answering this. The assembled men could only grunt and nod in agreement, which, after all, was no real help.

CHAPTER V
Discords

The dead man found in Farmer Holly's barn created a decided stir in the village of Hinsdale. The case was a peculiar one for many reasons. First, because of the boy—Hinsdale supposed it knew boys, but it felt inclined to change its mind after seeing this one. Second, because of the circumstances. The boy and his father had entered the town like tramps, yet Higgins, who talked freely of his having given the pair a "lift" on that very evening, did not hesitate to declare that he did not believe them to be ordinary tramps at all.

As there had been little found in the dead man's pockets, save the two notes, and as nobody could be found who wanted the violins, there seemed to be nothing to do but to turn the body over to the town for burial. Nothing was said of this to David; indeed, as little as possible was said to David about anything after that morning when Higgins had given him his father's letter. At that time the men had made one more effort to "get track of *something*," as Higgins had despairingly put it. But the boy's answers to their questions were anything but satisfying, anything but helpful, and were often most disconcerting. The boy was, in fact, regarded by most of the men, after that morning, as being "a little off"; and was hence let severely alone.

Who the man was the town authorities certainly did not know, neither could they apparently find out. His name, as written by himself, was unreadable. His notes told nothing; his son could tell little more—of consequence. A report, to be sure, did come from the village, far up the mountain, that such a man and boy had lived in a hut that was almost

inaccessible; but even this did not help solve the mystery.

David was left at the Holly farmhouse, though Simeon Holly mentally declared that he should lose no time in looking about for someone to take the boy away.

On that first day Higgins, picking up the reins preparatory to driving from the yard, had said, with a nod of his head toward David:—

"Well, how about it, Holly? Shall we leave him here till we find somebody that wants him?"

"Why, y—yes, I suppose so," hesitated Simeon Holly, with uncordial accent.

But his wife, hovering in the background, hastened forward at once.

"Oh, yes; yes, indeed," she urged. "I'm sure he—he won't be a mite of trouble, Simeon."

"Perhaps not," conceded Simeon Holly darkly. "Neither, it is safe to say, will he be anything else—worth anything."

"That's it exactly," spoke up Streeter, from his seat in the wagon. "If I thought he'd be worth his salt, now, I'd take him myself; but—well, look at him this minute," he finished, with a disdainful shrug.

David, on the lowest step, was very evidently not hearing a word of what was being said. With his sensitive face illumined, he was again pouring over his father's letter.

Something in the sudden quiet cut through his absorption as the noisy hum of voices had not been able to do, and he raised his head. His eyes were starlike.

"I'm so glad Father told me what to do," he breathed. "It'll be easier now."

Receiving no answer from the somewhat awkwardly silent men, he went on, as if in explanation:—

"You know he's waiting for me—in the far country, I mean. He said he was. And when you've got somebody waiting, you don't mind staying behind yourself for a little while. Besides, I've *got* to stay to find out about the beautiful world,

you know, so I can tell him, when I go. That's the way I used to do back home on the mountain, you see—tell him about things. Lots of days we'd go to walk; then, when we got home, he'd have me tell him, with my violin, what I'd seen. And now he says I'm to stay here."

"Here!" It was the quick, stern voice of Simeon Holly.

"Yes," nodded David earnestly; "to learn about the beautiful world. Don't you remember? And he said I was not to want to go back to my mountains; that I would not need to, anyway, because the mountains, and the sky, and the birds and squirrels and brooks are really in my violin, you know. And—" But with an angry frown Simeon Holly stalked away, motioning Larson to follow him; and with a merry glance and a low chuckle Higgins turned his horse about and drove from the yard. A moment later David found himself alone with Mrs. Holly, who was looking at him with wistful, though slightly fearful eyes.

"Did you have all the breakfast you wanted?" she asked timidly, resorting, as she had resorted the night before, to the everyday things of her world in the hope that they might make this strange little boy seem less wild, and more nearly human.

"Oh, yes, thank you." David's eyes had strayed back to the note in his hand. Suddenly he looked up, a new something in his eyes. "What is it to be a—a tramp?" he asked. "Those men said daddy and I were tramps."

"A tramp? Oh—er—why, just a—a tramp," stammered Mrs. Holly. "But never mind that, David. I—I wouldn't think any more about it."

"But what is a tramp?" persisted David, a smoldering fire beginning to show in his eyes. "Because if they meant *thieves*—"

"No, no, David," interrupted Mrs. Holly soothingly. "They never meant thieves at all."

"Then, what is it to be a tramp?"

"Why, it's just to—to tramp," explained Mrs. Holly

desperately;—"walk along the road from one town to another, and—and not live in a house at all."

"Oh!" David's face cleared. "That's all right, then. I'd love to be a tramp, and so'd father. And we were tramps, sometimes, too, 'cause lots of times, in the summer, we didn't stay in the cabin hardly any—just lived out of doors all day and all night. Why, I never knew really what the pine trees were saying till I heard them at night, lying under them. You know what I mean. You've heard them, haven't you?"

"At night? Pine trees?" stammered Mrs. Holly helplessly.

"Yes. Oh, haven't you ever heard them at night?" cried the boy, in his voice a very genuine sympathy as for a grievous loss. "Why, then, if you've only heard them daytimes, you don't know a bit what pine trees really are. But I can tell you. Listen! This is what they say," finished the boy, whipping his violin from its case, and, after a swift testing of the strings, plunging into a weird, haunting little melody.

In the doorway, Mrs. Holly, bewildered, yet bewitched, stood motionless, her eyes half-fearfully, half-longingly fixed on David's glorified face. She was still in the same position when Simeon Holly came around the corner of the house.

"Well, Ellen," he began, with quiet scorn, after a moment's stern watching of the scene before him, "have you nothing better to do this morning than to listen to this minstrel fellow?"

"Oh, Simeon! Why, yes, of course. I—I forgot—what I was doing," faltered Mrs. Holly, flushing guiltily from neck to brow as she turned and hurried into the house.

David, on the porch steps, seemed to have heard nothing. He was still playing, his rapt gaze on the distant skyline, when Simeon Holly turned upon him with disapproving eyes.

"See here, boy, can't you do anything but fiddle?" he demanded. Then, as David still continued to play, he added sharply: "Didn't you hear me, boy?"

The music stopped abruptly. David looked up with the

slightly dazed air of one who has been summoned as from another world.

"Did you speak to me, sir?" he asked.

"I did—twice. I asked if you never did anything but play that fiddle."

"You mean at home?" David's face expressed mild wonder without a trace of anger or resentment. "Why, yes, of course. I couldn't play *all* the time, you know. I had to eat and sleep and study my books; and every day we went to walk—like tramps, as you call them," he elucidated, his face brightening with obvious delight at being able, for once, to explain matters in terms that he felt sure would be understood.

"Tramps, indeed!" muttered Simeon Holly, under his breath. Then, sharply: "Did you never perform any useful labor, boy? Were your days always spent in this ungodly idleness?"

Again David frowned in mild wonder.

"Oh, I wasn't idle, sir. Father said I must never be that. He said every instrument was needed in the great Orchestra of Life; and that I was one, you know, even if I was only a little boy. And he said if I kept still and didn't do my part, the harmony wouldn't be complete, and—"

"Yes, yes, but never mind that now, boy," interrupted Simeon Holly, with harsh impatience. "I mean, did he never set you to work—real work?"

"Work?" David meditated again. Then suddenly his face cleared. "Oh, yes, sir, he said I had a beautiful work to do, and that it was waiting for me out in the world. That's why we came down from the mountain, you know, to find it. Is that what you mean?"

"Well, no," retorted the man, "I can't say that it was. I was referring to work—real work about the house. Did you never do any of that?"

David gave a relieved laugh.

"Oh, you mean getting the meals and tidying up the

house," he replied. "Oh, yes, I did that with father, only"—his face grew wistful—"I'm afraid I didn't do it very well. My bacon was never as nice and crisp as father's, and the fire was always spoiling my potatoes."

"Humph! bacon and potatoes, indeed!" scorned Simeon Holly. "Well, boy, we call that women's work down here. We set men to something else. Do you see that woodpile by the shed door?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good. In the kitchen you'll find an empty woodbox. Do you think you could fill it with wood from that woodpile? You'll find plenty of short, small sticks already chopped."

"Oh, yes, sir, I'd like to," nodded David, hastily but carefully tucking his violin into its case. A minute later he had attacked the woodpile with a will; and Simeon Holly, after a sharply watchful glance, had turned away.

But the woodbox, after all, was not filled. At least, it was not filled immediately, for at the very beginning of gathering the second armful of wood, David picked up a stick that had long lain in one position on the ground, thereby disclosing sundry and diverse crawling things of many legs, which filled David's soul with delight, and drove away every thought of the empty woodbox.

It was only a matter of some strength and more patience, and still more time, to overturn other and bigger sticks, to find other and bigger of the many-legged, many-jointed creatures. One, indeed, was so very wonderful that David, with a whoop of glee, summoned Mrs. Holly from the shed doorway to come and see.

So urgent was his plea that Mrs. Holly came with hurried steps—but she went away with steps even more hurried; and David, sitting back on his woodpile seat, was left to wonder why she should scream and shudder and say "Ugh-h-h!" at such a beautiful, interesting thing as was this little creature who lived in her woodpile.

Even then David did not think of that empty woodbox waiting behind the kitchen stove. This time it was a butterfly, a big black butterfly banded with gold; and it danced and fluttered all through the backyard and out into the garden, David delightedly following with soft-treading steps, and movements that would not startle. From the garden to the orchard, and from the orchard back to the garden danced the butterfly—and David; and in the garden, near the house, David came upon Mrs. Holly's pansy bed. Even the butterfly was forgotten then, for down in the path by the pansy bed David dropped to his knees in veritable worship.

"Why, you're just like little people," he cried softly. "You've got faces; and some of you are happy, and some of you are sad. And you—you big spotted yellow one—you're laughing at me. Oh, I'm going to play you—all of you. You'll make such a pretty song, you're so different from each other!" And David leaped lightly to his feet and ran around to the side porch for his violin.

Five minutes later, Simeon Holly, coming into the kitchen, heard the sound of a violin through the open window. At the same moment his eyes fell on the woodbox, empty save for a few small sticks at the bottom. With an angry frown he strode through the outer door and around the corner of the house to the garden. At once then he came upon David, sitting Turk fashion in the middle of the path before the pansy bed, his violin at his chin, and his whole face aglow.

"Well, boy, is this the way you fill the woodbox?" demanded the man crisply.

David shook his head.

"Oh, no, sir, this isn't filling the woodbox," he laughed, softening his music, but not stopping it. "Did you think that was what I was playing? It's the flowers here that I'm playing—the little faces, like people, you know. See, this is that big yellow one over there that's laughing," he finished, letting the music under his fingers burst into a gay little melody.

Simeon Holly raised an imperious hand; and at the gesture David stopped his melody in the middle of a run, his eyes flying wide open in plain wonderment.

"You mean—I'm not playing—right?" he asked.

"I'm not talking of your playing," retorted Simeon Holly severely. "I'm talking of that woodbox I asked you to fill."

David's face cleared.

"Oh, yes, sir. I'll go and do it," he nodded, getting cheerfully to his feet.

"But I told you to do it before."

David's eyes grew puzzled again.

"I know, sir, and I started to," he answered, with the obvious patience of one who finds himself obliged to explain what should be a self-evident fact; "but I saw so many beautiful things, one after another, and when I found these funny little flower-people I just had to play them. Don't you see?"

"No, I can't say that I do, when I'd already told you to fill the woodbox," rejoined the man, with uncompromising coldness.

"You mean—even then that I ought to have filled the woodbox first?"

"I certainly do."

David's eyes flew wide open again.

"But my song—I'd have lost it!" he exclaimed. "And father said always when a song came to me to play it at once. Songs are like the mists of the morning and the rainbows, you know, and they don't stay with you long. You just have to catch them quick, before they go. Now, don't you see?"

But Simeon Holly, with a despairingly scornful gesture, had turned away; and David, after a moment's following him with wistful eyes, soberly walked toward the kitchen door. Two minutes later he was industriously working at his task of filling the woodbox.

That for David the affair was not satisfactorily settled was evidenced by his thoughtful countenance and preoccupied



“But my song—I’d have lost it!”

air, however; nor were matters helped any by the question David put to Mr. Holly just before dinner.

"Do you mean," he asked, "that because I didn't fill the woodbox right away, I was being a discord?"

"You were what?" demanded the amazed Simeon Holly.

"Being a discord—playing out of tune, you know," explained David, with patient earnestness. "Father said—" But again Simeon Holly had turned irritably away; and David was left with his perplexed questions still unanswered.

CHAPTER VI
Nuisances, Necessary and Otherwise

For some time after dinner, that first day, David watched Mrs. Holly in silence while she cleared the table and began to wash the dishes.

"Do you want me to—help?" he asked at last, a little wistfully.

Mrs. Holly, with a dubious glance at the boy's brown little hands, shook her head.

"No, I don't. No, thank you," she amended her answer.

For another sixty seconds David was silent; then, still more wistfully, he asked:—

"Are all these things you've been doing all day 'useful labor'?"

Mrs. Holly lifted dripping hands from the dishpan and held them suspended for an amazed instant.

"Are they—Why, of course they are! What a silly question! What put that idea into your head, child?"

"Mr. Holly; and you see it's so different from what father used to call them."

"Different?"

"Yes. He said they were a necessary nuisance—dishes, and getting meals, and clearing up—and he didn't do half as many of them as you do, either."

"Nuisance, indeed!" Mrs. Holly resumed her dishwashing with some asperity. "Well, I should think that might have been just about like him."

"Yes, it was. He was always that way," nodded David pleasantly. Then, after a moment, he queried: "But aren't you going to walk at all today?"

"To walk? Where?"

"Why, through the woods and fields—anywhere."

"Walking in the woods, *now—just walking?* Land's sake, boy, I've got something else to do!"

"Oh, that's too bad, isn't it?" David's face expressed sympathetic regret. "And it's such a nice day! Maybe it'll rain by tomorrow."

"Maybe it will," retorted Mrs. Holly, with slightly uplifted eyebrows and an expressive glance. "But whether it does or doesn't won't make any difference in my going to walk, I guess."

"Oh, won't it?" beamed David, his face changing. "I'm so glad! I don't mind the rain, either. Father and I used to go in the rain lots of times, only, of course, we couldn't take our violins then, so we used to like the pleasant days better. But there are some things you find on rainy days that you couldn't find any other time, aren't there? The dance of the drops on the leaves, and the rush of the rain when the wind gets behind it. Don't you love to feel it, out in the open spaces, where the wind just gets a good chance to push?"

Mrs. Holly stared. Then she shivered and threw up her hands with a gesture of hopeless abandonment.

"Land's sake, boy!" she ejaculated feebly, as she turned back to her work.

From dishes to sweeping, and from sweeping to dusting, hurried Mrs. Holly, going at last into the somber parlor, always carefully guarded from sun and air. Watching her, mutely, David trailed behind, his eyes staring a little as they fell upon the multitude of objects that parlor contained: the haircloth chairs, the long sofa, the marble-topped table, the curtains, cushions, spreads, and "throws," the innumerable mats and tidies, the hair-wreath, the wax flowers under their glass dome, the dried grasses, the marvelous bouquets of scarlet, green, and purple everlastings, the stones and shells and many-sized, many-shaped vases arranged as if in line of

battle along the corner shelves.

"Y—yes, you may come in," called Mrs. Holly, glancing back at the hesitating boy in the doorway. "But you mustn't touch anything. I'm going to dust."

"But I haven't seen this room before," ruminated David.

"Well, no," deigned Mrs. Holly, with just a touch of superiority. "We don't use this room common, little boy, nor the bedroom there, either. This is the company room, for ministers and funerals, and—" She stopped hastily, with a quick look at David; but the boy did not seem to have heard.

"And doesn't anybody live here in this house, but just you and Mr. Holly, and Mr. Perry Larson?" he asked, still looking wonderingly about him.

"No, not—now." Mrs. Holly drew in her breath with a little catch, and glanced at the framed portrait of a little boy on the wall.

"But you've got such a lot of rooms and—and things," remarked David. "Why, Daddy and I only had two rooms, and not hardly any *things*. It was so—different, you know, in my home."

"I should say it might have been!" Mrs. Holly began to dust hurriedly, but carefully. Her voice still carried its hint of superiority.

"Oh, yes," smiled David. "But you say you don't use this room much, so that helps."

"Helps!" In her stupefaction Mrs. Holly stopped her work and stared.

"Why, yes. I mean, you've got so many other rooms you can live in those. You don't *have* to live in here."

"'Have to live in here!" ejaculated the woman, still too uncomprehending to be anything but amazed.

"Yes. But do you have to *keep* all these things, and clean them and clean them, like this, every day? Couldn't you give them to somebody, or throw them away?"

"Throw—these—things—away!" With a wild sweep of



"Throw—these—things—away!"

her arms, the horrified woman seemed to be trying to encompass in a protective embrace each last endangered treasure of mat and tidy. "Boy, are you crazy? These things are—are valuable. They cost money, and time and—and labor. Don't you know beautiful things when you see them?"

"Oh, yes, I love *beautiful* things," smiled David, with unconsciously rude emphasis. "And up on the mountain I had them always. There was the sunrise, and the sunset, and the moon and the stars, and my Silver Lake, and the cloud boats that sailed—"

But Mrs. Holly, with a vexed gesture, stopped him.

"Never mind, little boy. I might have known—brought up as you have been. Of course you could not appreciate such things as these. Throw them away, indeed!" And she fell to work again; but this time her fingers carried a something in their touch that was almost like the caress a mother might bestow upon an aggrieved child.

David, vaguely disturbed and uncomfortable, watched her with troubled eyes; then, apologetically, he explained:—

"It was only that I thought if you didn't have to clean so many of these things, you could maybe go to walk more—today, and other days, you know. You said—you didn't have time," he reminded her.

But Mrs. Holly only shook her head and sighed:—

"Well, well, never mind, little boy. I dare say you meant all right. You couldn't understand, of course."

And David, after another moment's wistful eyeing of the caressing fingers, turned about and wandered out onto the side porch. A minute later, having seated himself on the porch steps, he had taken from his pocket two small pieces of folded paper. And then, through tear-dimmed eyes, he read once more his father's letter.

"He said I mustn't grieve, for that would grieve him," murmured the boy, after a time, his eyes on the far-away hills. "And he said if I'd play, my mountains would come to me

here, and I'd really be at home up there. He said in my violin were all those things I'm wanting—so bad!"

With a little choking breath, David tucked the note back into his pocket and reached for his violin.

Some time later, Mrs. Holly, dusting the chairs in the parlor, stopped her work, tiptoed to the door, and listened breathlessly. When she turned back, still later, to her work, her eyes were wet.

"I wonder why, when he plays, I always get to thinking of—John," she sighed to herself, as she picked up her dusting cloth.

After supper that night, Simeon Holly and his wife again sat on the kitchen porch, resting from the labor of the day. Simeon's eyes were closed. His wife's were on the dim outlines of the shed, the barn, the road, or a passing horse and wagon. David, sitting on the steps, was watching the moon climb higher and higher above the treetops. After a time he slipped into the house and came out with his violin.

At the first long-drawn note of sweetness, Simeon Holly opened his eyes and sat up, stern-lipped. But his wife laid a timid hand on his arm.

"Don't say anything, please," she entreated softly. "Let him play, just for tonight. He's lonesome—poor little fellow." And Simeon Holly, with a frowning shrug of his shoulders, sat back in his chair.

Later, it was Mrs. Holly herself who stopped the music by saying: "Come, David, it's bedtime for little boys. I'll go upstairs with you." And she led the way into the house and lighted the candle for him.

Upstairs, in the little room over the kitchen, David found himself once more alone. As before, the little yellow-white nightshirt lay over the chair back; and as before, Mrs. Holly had brushed away a tear as she had placed it there. As before, too, the big four-posted bed loomed tall and formidable in the corner. But this time the coverlet and sheet were turned back

invitingly—Mrs. Holly had been much disturbed to find that David had slept on the floor the night before.

Once more, with his back carefully turned toward the impaled bugs and moths on the wall, David undressed himself. Then, before blowing out the candle, he went to the window kneeled down, and looked up at the moon through the trees.

David was sorely puzzled. He was beginning to wonder just what was to become of himself.

His father had said that out in the world there was a beautiful work for him to do; but what was it? How was he to find it? Or how was he to do it if he did find it? And another thing; where was he to live? Could he stay where he was? It was not home, to be sure; but there was the little room over the kitchen where he might sleep, and there was the kind woman who smiled at him sometimes with the sad, faraway look in her eyes that somehow hurt. He would not like, now, to leave her—with Daddy gone.

There were the gold pieces, too; and concerning these David was equally puzzled. What should he do with them? He did not need them—the kind woman was giving him plenty of food, so that he did not have to go to the store and buy; and there was nothing else, apparently, that he could use them for. They were heavy, and disagreeable to carry; yet he did not like to throw them away, nor to let anybody know that he had them: he had been called a thief just for one little piece, and what would they say if they knew he had all those others?

David remembered now, suddenly, that his father had said to hide them—to hide them until he needed them. David was relieved at once. Why had he not thought of it before? He knew just the place, too—the little cupboard behind the chimney there in this very room! And with a satisfied sigh, David got to his feet, gathered all the little yellow disks from his pockets, and tucked them well out of sight behind the piles

of books on the cupboard shelves. There, too, he hid the watch; but the little miniature of the angel-mother he slipped back into one of his pockets.

David's second morning at the farmhouse was not unlike the first, except that this time, when Simeon Holly asked him to fill the woodbox, David resolutely ignored every enticing bug and butterfly, and kept rigorously to the task before him until it was done.

He was in the kitchen when, just before dinner, Perry Larson came into the room with a worried frown on his face.

"Mis' Holly, would ye mind just steppin' to the side door? There's a woman an' a little boy there, an' somethin' ails 'em. She can't talk English, an' I'm blest if I can make head nor tail out of the lingo she *does* talk. But maybe you can."

"Why, Perry, I don't know—" began Mrs. Holly. But she turned at once toward the door.

On the porch steps stood a very pretty, but frightened-looking young woman with a boy perhaps ten years old at her side. Upon catching sight of Mrs. Holly she burst into a torrent of unintelligible words, supplemented by numerous and vehement gestures.

Mrs. Holly shrank back, and cast appealing eyes toward her husband who at that moment had come across the yard from the barn.

"Simeon, can you tell what she wants?"

At sight of the newcomer on the scene, the strange woman began again, with even more volubility.

"No," said Simeon Holly, after a moment's scowling scrutiny of the gesticulating woman. "She's talking French, I think. And she wants—something."

"Gosh! I should say she did," muttered Perry Larson. "An' whatever 't is, she wants it powerful bad."

"Are you hungry?" questioned Mrs. Holly timidly.

"Can't you speak English at all?" demanded Simeon Holly.

The woman looked from one to the other with the piteous, pleading eyes of the stranger in the strange land who cannot understand or make others understand. She had turned away with a despairing shake of her head, when suddenly she gave a wild cry of joy and wheeled about, her whole face alight.

The Hollys and Perry Larson saw then that David had come out onto the porch and was speaking to the woman—and his words were just as unintelligible as the woman's had been.

Mrs. Holly and Perry Larson stared. Simeon Holly interrupted David with a sharp:—

"Do you, then, understand this woman, boy?"

"Why, yes! Didn't you? She's lost her way, and—" But the woman had hurried forward and was pouring her story into David's ears.

At its conclusion David turned to find the look of stupefaction still on the others' faces.

"Well, what does she want?" asked Simeon Holly crisply.

"She wants to find the way to Francois Lavelle's house. He's her husband's brother. She came in on the train this morning. Her husband stopped off a minute somewhere, she says, and got left behind. He could talk English, but she can't. She's only been in this country a week. She came from France."

"Gorry! Won't ye listen ter that, now?" cried Perry Larson admiringly. "Reads her just like a book, don't he? There's a French family over in West Hinsdale—two of 'em, I think. What'll ye bet 't ain't one o' them?"

"Very likely," acceded Simeon Holly, his eyes bent disapprovingly on David's face. It was plain to be seen that Simeon Holly's attention was occupied by David, not the woman.

"An', say, Mr. Holly," resumed Perry Larson, a little excitedly, "you know I was goin' over ter West Hinsdale in a day

or two ter see Harlow about them steers. Why can't I go this afternoon an' tote her an' the kid along?"

"Very well," nodded Simeon Holly curtly, his eyes still on David's face.

Perry Larson turned to the woman, and by a flourish of his arms and a jumble of broken English attempted to make her understand that he was to take her where she undoubtedly wished to go. The woman still looked uncomprehending, however, and David promptly came to the rescue, saying a few rapid words that quickly brought a flood of delighted understanding to the woman's face.

"Can't you ask her if she's hungry?" ventured Mrs. Holly, then.

"She says no, thank you," translated David, with a smile, when he had received his answer. "But the boy says he is, if you please."

"Then, tell them to come into the kitchen," directed Mrs. Holly, hurrying into the house.

"So you're French, are you?" said Simeon Holly to David.

"French? Oh, no, sir," smiled David, proudly. "I'm an American. Father said I was. He said I was born in this country."

"But how comes it you can speak French like that?"

"Why, I learned it." Then, divining that his words were still unconvincing, he added: "Same as I learned German and other things with father, out of books, you know. Didn't you learn French when you were a little boy?"

"Humph!" vouchsafed Simeon Holly, stalking away without answering the question.

Immediately after dinner Perry Larson drove away with the woman and the little boy. The woman's face was wreathed with smiles, and her last adoring glance was for David, waving his hand to her from the porch steps.

In the afternoon David took his violin and went off toward the hill behind the house for a walk. He had asked

Mrs. Holly to accompany him, but she had refused, though she was not sweeping or dusting at the time. She was doing nothing more important, apparently, than making holes in a piece of white cloth, and sewing them up again with a needle and thread.

David had then asked Mr. Holly to go; but his refusal was even more strangely impatient than his wife's had been.

"And why, pray, should I go for a useless walk now—or any time, for that matter?" he demanded sharply.

David had shrunk back unconsciously, though he had still smiled.

"Oh, but it wouldn't be a useless walk, sir. Father said nothing was useless that helped to keep us in tune, you know."

"In tune!"

"I mean, you looked as father used to look sometimes, when he felt out of tune. And he always said there was nothing like a walk to put him back again. I—I was feeling a little out of tune myself today, and I thought, by the way you looked, that you were, too. So I asked you to go to walk."

"Humph! Well, I—That will do, boy. No impertinence, you understand!" And he had turned away in very obvious anger.

David, with a puzzled sorrow in his heart had started alone then, on his walk.

CHAPTER VII
"You're Wanted—You're Wanted!"

It was Saturday night, and the end of David's third day at the farmhouse. Upstairs, in the hot little room over the kitchen, the boy knelt at the window and tried to find a breath of cool air from the hills. Downstairs on the porch Simeon Holly and his wife discussed the events of the past few days, and talked of what should be done with David.

"But what shall we do with him?" moaned Mrs. Holly at last, breaking a long silence that had fallen between them. "What can we do with him? Doesn't anybody want him?"

"No, of course, nobody wants him," retorted her husband relentlessly.

And at the words a small figure in a yellow-white nightshirt stopped short. David, violin in hand, had fled from the little hot room, and stood now just inside the kitchen door.

"Who can want a child that has been brought up in that heathenish fashion?" continued Simeon Holly. "According to his own story, even his father did nothing but play the fiddle and tramp through the woods day in and day out, with an occasional trip to the mountain village to get food and clothing when they had absolutely nothing to eat and wear. Of course nobody wants him!"

David, at the kitchen door, caught his breath chokingly. Then he sped across the floor to the back hall, and on through the long sheds to the hayloft in the barn—the place where his father seemed always nearest.

David was frightened and heartsick. *Nobody wanted him.* He had heard it with his own ears, so there was no mistake. What now about all those long days and nights ahead before

he might go, violin in hand, to meet his father in that far-away country? How was he to live those days and nights if nobody wanted him? How was his violin to speak in a voice that was true and pure and full, and tell of the beautiful world, as his father had said that it must do? David quite cried aloud at the thought. Then he thought of something else that his father had said: "Remember this, my boy—in your violin lie all the things you long for. You have only to play, and the broad skies of your mountain home will be over you, and the dear friends and comrades of your mountain forests will be all about you." With a quick cry David raised his violin and drew the bow across the strings.

Back on the porch at that moment Mrs. Holly was saying:—

"Of course there's the orphan asylum, or maybe the poor-house—if they'd take him; but—Simeon," she broke off sharply, "where's that child playing now?"

Simeon listened with intent ears.

"In the barn, I should say."

"But he'd gone to bed!"

"And he'll go to bed again," asserted Simeon Holly grimly, as he rose to his feet and stalked across the moonlit yard to the barn.

As before, Mrs. Holly followed him, and as before, both involuntarily paused just inside the barn door to listen. No runs and trills and rollicking bits of melody floated down the stairway tonight. The notes were long-drawn, and plaintively sweet; and they rose and swelled and died almost into silence while the man and the woman by the door stood listening.

They were back in the long ago—Simeon Holly and his wife—back with a boy of their own who had made those same rafters ring with shouts of laughter, and who, also, had played the violin—though not like this; and the same thought had come to each: "What if, after all, it were John playing all alone in the moonlight!"

It had not been the violin, in the end, that had driven John Holly from home. It had been the possibilities in a piece of crayon. All through childhood the boy had drawn his beloved "pictures" on every inviting space that offered—whether it were the "best-room" wallpaper, or the fly leaf of the big plush album—and at eighteen he had announced his determination to be an artist. For a year after that Simeon Holly fought with all the strength of a stubborn will, banished chalk and crayon from the house, and set the boy to homely tasks that left no time for anything but food and sleep—then John ran away.

That was fifteen years ago, and they had not seen him since; though two unanswered letters in Simeon Holly's desk testified that perhaps this, at least, was not the boy's fault.

It was not of the grown-up John, the willful boy and runaway son, however, that Simeon Holly and his wife were thinking, as they stood just inside the barn door; it was of Baby John, the little curly headed fellow that had played at their knees, frolicked in this very barn, and nestled in their arms when the day was done.

Mrs. Holly spoke first—and it was not as she had spoken on the porch.

"Simeon," she began tremulously, "that dear child must go to bed!" And she hurried across the floor and up the stairs, followed by her husband. "Come, David," she said, as she reached the top; "it's time little boys were asleep! Come!"

Her voice was low, and not quite steady. To David her voice sounded as her eyes looked when there was in them the far away something that hurt. Very slowly he came forward into the moonlight, his gaze searching the woman's face long and earnestly.

"And do you—want me?" he faltered.

The woman drew in her breath with a little sob. Before her stood the slender figure in the yellow-white gown—John's gown. Into her eyes looked those other eyes, dark and

wistful—like John's eyes. And her arms ached with emptiness.

"Yes, yes, for my very own—and for always!" she cried with sudden passion, clasping the little form close. "For always!"

And David sighed his content.

Simeon Holly's lips parted, but they closed again with no words said. The man turned then, with a curiously baffled look, and stalked down the stairs.

On the porch long minutes later, when once more David had gone to bed, Simeon Holly said coldly to his wife:—

"I suppose you realize, Ellen, just what you've pledged yourself to, by that absurd outburst of yours in the barn tonight—and all because that ungodly music and the moonshine had gone to your head!"

"But I want the boy, Simeon. He—he makes me think of—John."

Harsh lines came to the man's mouth, but there was a perceptible shake in his voice as he answered:—

"We're not talking of John, Ellen. We're talking of this irresponsible, hardly sane boy upstairs. He can work, I suppose, if he's taught, and in that way he won't perhaps be a dead loss. Still, he's another mouth to feed, and that counts now. There's the note, you know—it's due in August."

"But you say there's money—almost enough for it—in the bank." Mrs. Holly's voice was anxiously apologetic.

"Yes, I know," vouchsafed the man. "But almost enough is not quite enough."

"But there's time—more than two months. It isn't due till the last of August, Simeon."

"I know, I know. Meanwhile, there's the boy. What are you going to do with him?"

"Why, can't you use him—on the farm—a little?"

"Perhaps. I doubt it, though," gloomed the man. "One can't hoe corn nor pull weeds with a fiddle-bow—and that's

all he seems to know how to handle."

"But he can learn—and he does play beautifully," murmured the woman; whenever before had Ellen Holly ventured to use words of argument with her husband, and in extenuation, too, of an act of her own!

There was no reply except a muttered "Humph!" under the breath. Then Simeon Holly rose and stalked into the house.

The next day was Sunday, and Sunday at the farmhouse was a thing of stern repression and solemn silence. In Simeon Holly's veins ran the blood of the Puritans, and he was more than strict as to what he considered right and wrong. When half-trained for the ministry, ill-health had forced him to resort to a less confining life, though never had it taken from him the uncompromising rigor of his views. It was a distinct shock to him, therefore, on this Sunday morning to be awakened by a peal of music such as the little house had never known before. All the while that he was thrusting his indignant self into his clothing, the runs and turns and crashing chords whirled about him until it seemed that a whole orchestra must be imprisoned in the little room over the kitchen, so skillful was the boy's double stopping. Simeon Holly was white with anger when he finally hurried down the hall and threw open David's bedroom door.

"Boy, what do you mean by this?" he demanded.

David laughed gleefully.

"And didn't you know?" he asked. "Why, I thought my music would tell you. I was so happy, so glad! The birds in the trees woke me up singing, 'You're wanted—you're wanted;' and the sun came over the hill there and said, 'You're wanted—you're wanted;' and the little tree branch tapped on my window pane and said 'You're wanted—you're wanted!' And I just had to take up my violin and tell you about it!"

"But it's Sunday—the Lord's Day," remonstrated the man sternly.



"You're wanted—You're wanted!"

David stood motionless, his eyes questioning.

"Are you quite a heathen, then?" catechized the man sharply. "Have they never told you anything about God, boy?"

"Oh, 'God'?—of course," smiled David, in open relief. "God wraps up the buds in their little brown blankets, and covers the roots with—"

"I am not talking about brown blankets nor roots," interrupted the man severely. "This is God's day, and as such should be kept holy."

"'Holy'?"

"Yes. You should not fiddle nor laugh nor sing."

"But those are good things, and beautiful things," defended David, his eyes wide and puzzled.

"In their place, perhaps," conceded the man, stiffly, "but not on God's day."

"You mean—He wouldn't like them?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"—and David's face cleared. "That's all right, then. Your God isn't the same one, sir, for mine loves all beautiful things every day in the year."

There was a moment's silence. For the first time in his life Simeon Holly found himself without words.

"We won't talk of this anymore, David," he said at last; "but we'll put it another way—I don't wish you to play your fiddle on Sunday. Now, put it up till tomorrow." And he turned and went down the hall.

Breakfast was a very quiet meal that morning. Meals were never things of hilarious joy at the Holly farmhouse, as David had already found out; but he had not seen one before quite so somber as this. It was followed immediately by a half-hour of Scripture reading and prayer, with Mrs. Holly and Perry Larson sitting very stiff and solemn in their chairs, while Mr. Holly read. David tried to sit very stiff and solemn in his chair, also; but the roses at the window were nodding their heads and beckoning; and the birds in the bushes beyond were

sending to him coaxing little chirps of "Come out, come out!" And how could one expect to sit stiff and solemn in the face of all that, particularly when one's fingers were tingling to take up the interrupted song of the morning and tell the whole world how beautiful it was to be wanted!

Yet David sat very still—or as still as he could sit—and only the tapping of his foot, and the roving of his wistful eyes told that his mind was not with Farmer Holly and the Children of Israel in their wanderings in the wilderness.

After the devotions came an hour of subdued haste and confusion while the family prepared for church. David had never been to church. He asked Perry Larson what it was like; but Perry only shrugged his shoulders and said, to nobody, apparently:—

"Sugar! Won't ye hear that, now?"—which to David was certainly no answer at all.

That one must be spick and span to go to church, David soon found out—never before had he been so scrubbed and brushed and combed. There was, too, brought out for him to wear a little clean white blouse and a red tie, over which Mrs. Holly cried a little as she had over the nightshirt that first evening.

The church was in the village only a quarter of a mile away; and in due time David, open-eyed and interested, was following Mr. and Mrs. Holly down its long center aisle. The Hollys were early as usual, and service had not begun. Even the organist had not taken his seat beneath the great pipes of blue and gold that towered to the ceiling.

It was the pride of the town—that organ. It had been given by a great man (out in the world) whose birthplace the town was. More than that, a yearly donation from this same great man paid for the skilled organist who came every Sunday from the city to play it. Today, as the organist took his seat, he noticed a new face in the Holly pew, and he almost gave a friendly smile as he met the wondering gaze of

the small boy there; then he lost himself, as usual, in the music before him.

Down in the Holly pew the small boy held his breath. A score of violins were singing in his ears; and a score of other instruments that he could not name, crashed over his head, and brought him to his feet in ecstasy. Before a detaining hand could stop him, he was out in the aisle, his eyes on the blue-and-gold pipes from which seemed to come those wondrous sounds. Then his gaze fell on the man and on the banks of keys; and with soft steps he crept along the aisle and up the stairs to the organ-loft.

For long minutes he stood motionless, listening; then the music died into silence and the minister rose for the invocation. It was a boy's voice, and not a man's, however, that broke the pause.

"Oh, sir, please," it said, "would you—could you teach *me* to do that?"

The organist choked over a cough, and the soprano reached out and drew David to her side, whispering something in his ear. The minister, after a dazed silence, bowed his head; while down in the Holly pew an angry man and a sorely mortified woman vowed that, before David came to church again, he should have learned some things.

CHAPTER VIII
The Puzzling "Dos" and "Don'ts"

With the coming of Monday arrived a new life for David—a curious life full of "don'ts" and "dos." David wondered sometimes why all the pleasant things were "don'ts" and all the unpleasant ones "dos." Corn to be hoed, weeds to be pulled, woodboxes to be filled; with all these it was "do this, do this, do this." But when it came to lying under the apple trees, exploring the brook that ran by the field, or even watching the bugs and worms that one found in the earth—all these were "don'ts."

As to Farmer Holly—Farmer Holly himself awoke to some new experiences that Monday morning. One of them was the difficulty in successfully combating the cheerfully expressed opinion that weeds were so pretty growing that it was a pity to pull them up and let them all wither and die. Another was the equally great difficulty of keeping a small boy at useful labor of any sort in the face of the attractions displayed by a passing cloud, a blossoming shrub, or a bird singing on a tree branch.

In spite of all this, however, David so evidently did his best to carry out the "dos" and avoid the "don'ts," that at four o'clock that first Monday he won from the stern but would-be-just Farmer Holly his freedom for the rest of the day; and very gayly he set off for a walk. He went without his violin, as there was the smell of rain in the air; but his face and his step and the very swing of his arms were singing (to David) the joyous song of the morning before. Even yet, in spite of the vicissitudes of the day's work, the whole world, to David's homesick, lonely little heart, was still caroling that blessed

"You're wanted, you're wanted, you're wanted!"

And then he saw the crow.

David knew crows. In his home on the mountain he had had several of them for friends. He had learned to know and answer their calls. He had learned to admire their wisdom and to respect their moods and tempers. He loved to watch them. Especially he loved to see the great birds cut through the air with a wide sweep of wings, so alive, so gloriously free!

But this crow—

This crow was not cutting through the air with a wide sweep of wing. It was in the middle of a cornfield, and it was rising and falling and flopping about in a most extraordinary fashion. Very soon David, running toward it, saw why. By a long leather strip it was fastened securely to a stake in the ground.

"Oh, oh, oh!" exclaimed David, in sympathetic consternation. "Here, you just wait a minute. I'll fix it."

With confident celerity David whipped out his jackknife to cut the thong; but he found then that to "fix it" and to say he would "fix it" were two different matters.

The crow did not seem to recognize in David a friend. He saw in him, apparently, but another of the stone-throwing, gun-shooting, torturing humans who were responsible for his present hateful captivity. With beak and claw and wing, therefore, he fought this new evil that had come presumedly to torment; and not until David had hit upon the expedient of taking off his blouse, and throwing it over the angry bird, could the boy get near enough to accomplish his purpose. Even then David had to leave upon the slender leg a twist of leather.

A moment later, with a whir of wings and a frightened squawk that quickly turned into a surprised caw of triumphant rejoicing, the crow soared into the air and made straight for a distant treetop. David, after a minute's glad surveying of his work, donned his blouse again and resumed his walk.



With a caw of triumphant rejoicing

It was almost six o'clock when David got back to the Holly farmhouse. In the barn doorway sat Perry Larson.

"Well, sonny," the man greeted him cheerily, "did ye get yer weedin' done?"

"Y—yes," hesitated David. "I got it done; but I didn't like it."

"'T is kinder hot work."

"Oh, I didn't mind that part," returned David. "What I didn't like was pulling up all those pretty little plants and letting them die."

"Weeds—'pretty little plants'!" ejaculated the man. "Well, I'll be jiggered!"

"But they *were* pretty," defended David, reading aright the scorn in Perry Larson's voice. "The very prettiest and biggest there were, always. Mr. Holly showed me, you know—and I had to pull them up."

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" muttered Perry Larson again.

"But I've been to walk since. I feel better now."

"Oh, ye do!"

"Oh, yes. I had a splendid walk. I went 'way up in the woods on the hill there. I was singing all the time—inside, you know. I was so glad Mrs. Holly—wanted me. You know what it is, when you sing inside."

Perry Larson scratched his head.

"Well, no, sonny, I can't really say I do," he retorted. "I ain't much on singin'."

"Oh, but I don't mean aloud. I mean inside. When you're happy, you know."

"When I'm—oh!" The man stopped and stared, his mouth falling open. Suddenly his face changed, and he grinned appreciatively. "Well, if you ain't the beat 'em, boy! 'T is kinder like singin'—the way ye feel inside, when yer 'specially happy, ain't it? But I never thought of it before."

"Oh, yes. Why, that's where I get my songs—inside of me, you know—that I play on my violin. And I made a crow sing,

too. Only *he* sang outside."

"*Sing—a crow!*" scoffed the man. "Shucks! It'll take more 'n you ter make me think a crow can sing, my lad."

"But they do, when they're happy," maintained the boy. "Anyhow, it doesn't sound the same as it does when they're cross, or plagued over something. You ought to have heard this one today. He sang. He was so glad to get away. I let him loose, you see."

"You mean, you *caught* a crow up there in them woods?" The man's voice was skeptical.

"Oh, no, I didn't catch it. But somebody had, and tied him up. And he was so unhappy!"

"A crow tied up in the woods!"

"Oh, I didn't find *that* in the woods. It was before I went up the hill at all."

"A crow tied up—Look a-here, boy, what are you talkin' about? Where was that crow?" Perry Larson's whole self had become suddenly alert.

"In the field 'way over there. And somebody—"

"The cornfield! Jingo! Boy, you don't mean you touched *that* crow?"

"Well, he wouldn't let me *touch* him," half-apologized David. "He was so afraid, you see. Why, I had to put my blouse over his head before he'd let me cut him loose at all."

"Cut him loose!" Perry Larson sprang to his feet. "You didn't—you *did*n't let that crow go!"

David shrank back.

"Why, yes; he *wanted* to go. He—" But the man before him had fallen back despairingly to his old position.

"Well, sir, you've done it now. What the boss'll say, I don't know; but I know what I'd like ter say to ye. I was a whole week, off an' on, gettin' hold of that crow, an' I wouldn't have got him at all if I hadn't hid half the night an' all the mornin' in that clump o' bushes, watchin' a chance ter wing him, jest enough an' not too much. An' even then the job wa'n't done.

Let me tell yer, 't wa'n't no small thing ter get him hitched. I'm wearin' the marks of the rascal's beak yet. An' now you've gone an' let him go—just like that," he finished, snapping his fingers angrily.

In David's face there was no contrition. There was only incredulous horror.

"You mean, YOU tied him there, on purpose?"

"Sure I did!"

"But he didn't like it. Couldn't you see he didn't like it?" cried David.

"Like it! What if he didn't? I didn't like ter have my corn pulled up, either. See here, sonny, you no need ter look at me in that tone o' voice. I didn't hurt the varmint none ter speak of—ye see he could fly, didn't ye?—an' he wa'n't starvin'. I saw to it that he had enough ter eat an' a dish o' water handy. An' if he didn't flop an' pull an' try ter get away he needn't 'a' hurt hisself never. I ain't ter blame for what pullin' he done."

"But wouldn't you pull if you had two big wings that could carry you to the top of that big tree there, and away up, up in the sky, where you could talk to the stars?—wouldn't you pull if somebody a hundred times bigger'n you came along and tied your leg to that post there?"

The man, Perry, flushed an angry red.

"See here, sonny, I wa'n't askin' you ter do no preachin'. What I did ain't no more'n any man 'round here does—if he's smart enough ter catch one. Rigged-up broomsticks ain't in it with a live bird when it comes ter drivin' away them pesky, thievin' crows. There ain't a farmer 'round here that hain't been green with envy, ever since I caught the critter. An' now ter have you come along an' with one flip o'yer knife spile it all, I—Well, it jest makes me mad, clean through! That's all."

"You mean, you tied him there to frighten away the other crows?"

"Sure! There ain't nothin' like it."

"Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Well, you'd better be. But that won't bring back my crow!"

David's face brightened.

"No, that's so, isn't it? I'm glad of that. I was thinking of the crows, you see. I'm so sorry for them! Only think how we'd hate to be tied like that—" But Perry Larson, with a stare and an indignant snort, had got to his feet, and was rapidly walking toward the house.

Very plainly, that evening, David was in disgrace, and it took all of Mrs. Holly's tact and patience, and some private pleading, to keep a general explosion from wrecking all chances of his staying longer at the farmhouse. Even as it was, David was sorrowfully aware that he was proving to be a great disappointment so soon, and his violin playing that evening carried a moaning plaintiveness that would have been very significant to one who knew David well.

Very faithfully, the next day, the boy tried to carry out all the "dos," and though he did not always succeed, yet his efforts were so obvious, that even the indignant owner of the liberated crow was somewhat mollified; and again Simeon Holly released David from work at four o'clock.

Alas, for David's peace of mind, however; for on his walk today, though he found no captive crow to demand his sympathy, he found something else quite as heartrending, and as incomprehensible.

It was on the edge of the woods that he came upon two boys, each carrying a rifle, a dead squirrel, and a dead rabbit. The threatened rain of the day before had not materialized, and David had his violin. He had been playing softly when he came upon the boys where the path entered the woods.

"Oh!" At sight of the boys and their burden David gave an involuntary cry, and stopped playing.

The boys, scarcely less surprised at sight of David and his violin, paused and stared frankly.

"It's the tramp kid with his fiddle," whispered one to the

other huskily.

David, his grieved eyes on the motionless little bodies in the boys' hands, shuddered.

"Are they—dead, too?"

The bigger boy nodded self-importantly.

"Sure. We just shot 'em—the squirrels. Ben here trapped the rabbits." He paused, manifestly waiting for the proper awed admiration to come into David's face.

But in David's startled eyes there was no awed admiration, there was only disbelieving horror.

"You mean, you *sent* them to the far country?"

"We—what?"

"Sent them. Made them go yourselves—to the far country?"

The younger boy still stared. The older one grinned disagreeably.

"Sure," he answered with laconic indifference. "We sent 'em to the far country, all right."

"But—how did you know they *wanted* to go?"

"Wanted—Eh?" exploded the big boy. Then he grinned again, still more disagreeably. "Well, you see, my dear, we didn't ask 'em," he gibed.

Real distress came into David's face.

"Then you don't know at all. And maybe they *did*n't want to go. And if they didn't, how *could* they go singing, as Father said? Father wasn't sent. He *went*. And he went singing. He said he did. But these—How would *you* like to have somebody come along and send *you* to the far country, without even knowing if you wanted to go?"

There was no answer. The boys, with a growing fear in their eyes, as at sight of something inexplicable and uncanny, were sidling away; and in a moment they were hurrying down the hill, not, however, without a backward glance or two, of something very like terror.

David, left alone, went on his way with troubled eyes and

a thoughtful frown.

David often wore, during those first few days at the Holly farmhouse, a thoughtful face and a troubled frown. There were so many, many things that were different from his mountain home. Over and over, as those first long days passed, he read his letter until he knew it by heart—and he had need to. Was he not already surrounded by things and people that were strange to him?

And they were so very strange—these people! There were the boys and men who rose at dawn—yet never paused to watch the sun flood the world with light; who stayed in the fields all day—yet never raised their eyes to the big fleecy clouds overhead; who knew birds only as thieves after fruit and grain, and squirrels and rabbits only as creatures to be trapped or shot. The women—they were even more incomprehensible. They spent the long hours behind screened doors and windows, washing the same dishes and sweeping the same floors day after day. They, too, never raised their eyes to the blue sky outside, nor even to the crimson roses that peeped in at the window. They seemed rather to be looking always for dirt, yet not pleased when they found it—especially if it had been tracked in on the heel of a small boy's shoe!

More extraordinary than all this to David, however, was the fact that these people regarded HIM, not themselves, as being strange. As if it were not the most natural thing in the world to live with one's father in one's home on the mountaintop, and spend one's days trailing through the forest paths, or lying with a book beside some babbling little stream! As if it were not equally natural to take one's violin with one at times, and learn to catch upon the quivering strings the whisper of the winds through the trees! Even in winter, when the clouds themselves came down from the sky and covered the earth with their soft whiteness,—even then the forest was beautiful; and the song of the brook under its icy coat carried a charm and mystery that were quite wanting in the

chattering freedom of summer. Surely there was nothing strange in all this, and yet these people seemed to think there was!

CHAPTER IX
Joe

Day by day, however, as time passed, David diligently tried to perform the "dos" and avoid the "don'ts"; and day by day he came to realize how important weeds and woodboxes were, if he were to conform to what was evidently Farmer Holly's idea of "playing in, tune" in this strange new Orchestra of Life in which he found himself.

But, try as he would, there was yet an unreality about it all, a persistent feeling of uselessness and waste, that would not be set aside. So that, after all, the only part of this strange new life of his that seemed real to him was the time that came after four o'clock each day, when he was released from work.

And how full he filled those hours! There was so much to see, so much to do. For sunny days there were field and stream and pasture land and the whole wide town to explore. For rainy days, if he did not care to go to walk, there was his room with the books in the chimney cupboard. Some of them David had read before, but many of them he had not. One or two were old friends; but not so "Dare Devil Dick," and "The Pirates of Pigeon Cove" (which he found hidden in an obscure corner behind a loose board). Side by side stood "The Lady of the Lake," "Treasure Island," and "David Copperfield"; and coverless and dogeared lay "Robinson Crusoe," "The Arabian Nights," and "Grimm's Fairy Tales." There were more, many more, and David devoured them all with eager eyes. The good in them he absorbed as he absorbed the sunshine; the evil he cast aside unconsciously—it rolled off, indeed, like the proverbial water from the duck's back.

David hardly knew sometimes which he liked the better, his imaginative adventures between the covers of his books or

his real adventures in his daily strolls. True, it was not his mountain home—this place in which he found himself; neither was there anywhere his Silver Lake with its far, far-reaching sky above. More deplorable yet, nowhere was there the dear father he loved so well. But the sun still set in rose and gold, and the sky, though small, still carried the snowy sails of its cloud boats; while as to his father—his father had told him not to grieve, and David was trying very hard to obey.

With his violin for company David started out each day, unless he elected to stay indoors with his books. Sometimes it was toward the village that he turned his steps; sometimes it was toward the hills back of the town. Whichever way it was, there was always sure to be something waiting at the end for him and his violin to discover, if it was nothing more than a big white rose in bloom, or a squirrel sitting by the roadside.

Very soon, however, David discovered that there was something to be found in his wanderings besides squirrels and roses; and that was—people. In spite of the strangeness of these people, they were wonderfully interesting, David thought. And after that he turned his steps more and more frequently toward the village when four o'clock released him from the day's work.

At first David did not talk much to these people. He shrank sensitively from their bold stares and unpleasantly audible comments. He watched them with round eyes of wonder and interest, however—when he did not think they were watching him. And in time he came to know not a little about them and about the strange ways in which they passed their time.

There was the greenhouse man. It would be pleasant to spend one's day growing plants and flowers—but not under that hot, stifling glass roof, decided David. Besides, he would not want always to pick and send away the very prettiest ones to the city every morning, as the greenhouse man did.

There was the doctor who rode all day long behind the gray mare, making sick folks well. David liked him, and mentally vowed that he himself would be a doctor sometime. Still, there was the stage-driver—David was not sure but he would prefer to follow this man's profession for a life-work; for in his, one could still have the freedom of long days in the open, and yet not be saddened by the sight of the sick before they had been made well—which was where the stage-driver had the better of the doctor, in David's opinion. There were the blacksmith and the storekeepers, too, but to these David gave little thought or attention.

Though he might not know what he did want to do, he knew very well what he did not. All of which merely goes to prove that David was still on the lookout for that great work which his father had said was waiting for him out in the world.

Meanwhile David played his violin. If he found a crimson rambler in bloom in a dooryard, he put it into a little melody of pure delight—that a woman in the house behind the rambler heard the music and was cheered at her task, David did not know. If he found a kitten at play in the sunshine, he put it into a riotous abandonment of tumbling turns and trills—that a fretful baby heard and stopped its wailing, David also did not know. And once, just because the sky was blue and the air was sweet, and it was so good to be alive, David lifted his bow and put it all into a rapturous paean of ringing exultation—that a sick man in a darkened chamber above the street lifted his head, drew in his breath, and took suddenly a new lease of life, David still again did not know. All of which merely goes to prove that David had perhaps found his work and was doing it—although yet still again David did not know.

It was in the cemetery one afternoon that David came upon the Lady in Black. She was on her knees putting flowers on a little mound before her. She looked up as David approached. For a moment she gazed wistfully at him; then as if

impelled by a hidden force, she spoke.

"Little boy, who are you?"

"I'm David."

"David! David who? Do you live here? I've seen you here before."

"Oh, yes, I've been here quite a lot of times." Purposely the boy evaded the questions. David was getting tired of questions—especially these questions.

"And have you—lost one dear to you, little boy?"

"Lost someone?"

"I mean—is your father or mother—here?"

"Here? Oh, no, they aren't here. My mother is an angel-mother, and my father has gone to the far country. He is waiting for me there, you know."

"But, that's the same—that is—" She stopped helplessly, bewildered eyes on David's serene face. Then suddenly a great light came to her own. "Oh, little boy, I wish I could understand that—just that," she breathed. "It would make it so much easier—if I could just remember that they aren't here—that they're *waiting*—over there!"

But David apparently did not hear. He had turned and was playing softly as he walked away. Silently the Lady in Black knelt, listening, looking after him. When she rose some time later and left the cemetery, the light on her face was still there, deeper, more glorified.

Toward boys and girls—especially boys—of his own age, David frequently turned wistful eyes. David wanted a friend, a friend who would know and understand; a friend who would see things as he saw them, who would understand what he was saying when he played. It seemed to David that in some boy of his own age he ought to find such a friend. He had seen many boys—but he had not yet found the friend. David had begun to think, indeed, that of all these strange beings in this new life of his, boys were the strangest.

They stared and nudged each other unpleasantly when

they came upon him playing. They jeered when he tried to tell them what he had been playing. They had never heard of the great Orchestra of Life, and they fell into most disconcerting fits of laughter, or else backed away as if afraid, when he told them that they themselves were instruments in it, and that if they did not keep themselves in tune, there was sure to be a discord somewhere.

Then there were their games and frolics. Such as were played with balls, bats, and bags of beans, David thought he would like very much. But the boys only scoffed when he asked them to teach him how to play. They laughed when a dog chased a cat, and they thought it very, very funny when Tony, the old black man, tripped on the string they drew across his path. They liked to throw stones and shoot guns, and the more creeping, crawling, or flying creatures that they could send to the far country, the happier they were, apparently. Nor did they like it at all when he asked them if they were sure all these creeping, crawling, flying creatures wanted to leave this beautiful world and to be made dead. They sneered and called him a sissy. David did not know what a sissy was; but from the way they said it, he judged it must be even worse to be a sissy than to be a thief.

And then he discovered Joe.

David had found himself in a very strange, very unlovely neighborhood that afternoon. The street was full of papers and tin cans, the houses were unspeakably forlorn with sagging blinds and lack of paint. Untidy women and blear-eyed men leaned over the dilapidated fences, or lolled on mud-tracked doorsteps. David, his shrinking eyes turning from one side to the other, passed slowly through the street, his violin under his arm. Nowhere could David find here the tiniest spot of beauty to "play." He had reached quite the most forlorn little shanty on the street when the promise in his father's letter occurred to him. With a suddenly illumined face, he raised his violin to position and plunged into a veritable whirl

of trills and runs and tripping melodies.

"If I didn't just entirely forget that I didn't *need* to *see* anything beautiful to play," laughed David softly to himself. "Why, it's already right here in my violin!"

David had passed the tumble down shanty, and was hesitating where two streets crossed, when he felt a light touch on his arm. He turned to confront a small girl in a patched and faded calico dress, obviously outgrown. Her eyes were wide and frightened. In the middle of her outstretched dirty little palm was a copper cent.

"If you please, Joe sent this—to you," she faltered.

"To me? What for?" David stopped playing and lowered his violin.

The little girl backed away perceptibly, though she still held out the coin.

"He wanted you to stay and play some more. He said to tell you he'd 'a' sent more money if he could. But he didn't have it. He just had this cent."

David's eyes flew wide open.

"You mean he *wants* me to play? He likes it?" he asked joyfully.

"Yes. He said he knew 't wa'n't much—the cent. But he thought maybe you'd play a *little* for it."

"Play? Of course I'll play" cried David. "Oh, no, I don't want the money," he added, waving the again-proffered coin aside. "I don't need money where I'm living now. Where is he—the one that wanted me to play?" he finished eagerly.

"In there by the window. It's Joe. He's my brother." The little girl, in spite of her evident satisfaction at the accomplishment of her purpose, yet kept quite aloof from the boy. Nor did the fact that he refused the money appear to bring her anything but uneasy surprise.

In the window David saw a boy apparently about his own age, a boy with sandy hair, pale cheeks, and wide-open, curiously intent blue eyes.

"Is he coming? Did you get him? Will he play?" called the boy at the window eagerly.

"Yes, I'm right here. I'm the one. Can't you see the violin? Shall I play here or come in?" answered David, not one whit less eagerly.

The small girl opened her lips as if to explain something; but the boy in the window did not wait.

"Oh, come in. *Will* you come in?" he cried unbelievingly. "And will you just let me touch it—the fiddle? Come! You *will* come? See, there isn't anybody home, only just Betty and me."

"Of course I will!" David fairly stumbled up the broken steps in his impatience to reach the wide-open door. "Did you like it—what I played? And did you know what I was playing? Did you understand? Could you see the cloud boats up in the sky, and my Silver Lake down in the valley? And could you hear the birds, and the winds in the trees, and the little brooks? Could you? Oh, did you understand? I've so wanted to find someone that could! But I wouldn't think that *you—here*—" With a gesture, and an expression on his face that were unmistakable, David came to a helpless pause.

"There, Joe, what'd I tell you," cried the little girl, in a husky whisper, darting to her brother's side. "Oh, why did you make me get him here? Everybody says he's crazy as a loon, and—"

But the boy reached out a quickly silencing hand. His face was curiously alight, as if from an inward glow. His eyes, still widely intent, were staring straight ahead.

"Stop, Betty, wait," he hushed her. "Maybe—I think I *do* understand. Boy, you mean—*inside* of you, you see those things, and then you try to make your fiddle tell what you are seeing. Is that it?"

"Yes, yes," cried David. "Oh, you *do* understand. And I never thought you could. I never thought that anybody could that didn't have anything to look at but him—but these

things."

"'Anything but these to look at'!" echoed the boy, with a sudden anguish in his voice. "Anything but these! I guess if I could see *anything*, I wouldn't mind *what* I see! An' you wouldn't, neither, if you was—blind, like me."

"Blind!" David fell back. Face and voice were full of horror. "You mean you can't see—anything, with your eyes?"

"Nothin'."

"Oh! I never saw any one blind before. There was one in a book—but father took it away. Since then, in books down here, I've found others—but—"

"Yes, yes. Well, never mind that," cut in the blind boy, growing restive under the pity in the other's voice. "Play. Won't you?"

"But how are you *ever* going to know what a beautiful world it is?" shuddered David. "How can you know? And how can you ever play in tune? You're one of the instruments. Father said everybody was. And he said everybody was playing *something* all the time; and if you didn't play in tune—"

"Joe, Joe, please," begged the little girl "Won't you let him go? I'm afraid. I told you—"

"Shucks, Betty! He won't hurt ye," laughed Joe, a little irritably. Then to David he turned again with some sharpness.

"Play, won't ye? You *said* you'd play!"

"Yes, oh, yes, I'll play," faltered David, bringing his violin hastily to position, and testing the strings with fingers that shook a little.

"There!" breathed Joe, settling back in his chair with a contented sigh. "Now, play it again—what you did before."

But David did not play what he did before—at first. There were no airy cloud boats, no far reaching sky, no birds, or murmuring forest brooks in his music this time. There were only the poverty stricken room, the dirty street, the boy alone at the window, with his sightless eyes—the boy who never, never would know what a beautiful world he lived in.

Then suddenly to David came a new thought. This boy, Joe, had said before that he understood. He had seemed to know that he was being told of the sunny skies and the forest winds, the singing birds and the babbling brooks. Perhaps again now he would understand.

What if, for those sightless eyes, one could create a world?

Possibly never before had David played as he played then. It was as if upon those four quivering strings, he was laying the purple and gold of a thousand sunsets, the rose and amber of a thousand sunrises, the green of a boundless earth, the blue of a sky that reached to heaven itself—to make Joe understand.

"Gee!" breathed Joe, when the music came to an end with a crashing chord. "Say, wa'n't that just great? Won't you let me, please, just touch that fiddle?" And David, looking into the blind boy's exalted face, knew that Joe had indeed—understood.

CHAPTER X
The Lady of the Roses

It was a new world, indeed, that David created for Joe after that—a world that had to do with entrancing music where once was silence; delightful companionship where once was loneliness; and toothsome cookies and doughnuts where once was hunger.

The Widow Glaspell, Joe's mother, worked out by the day, scrubbing and washing; and Joe, perforce, was left to the somewhat erratic and decidedly unskillful ministrations of Betty. Betty was no worse, and no better, than any other untaught, irresponsible twelve-year-old girl, and it was not to be expected, perhaps, that she would care to spend all the bright sunny hours shut up with her sorely afflicted and somewhat fretful brother. True, at noon she never failed to appear and prepare something that passed for a dinner for herself and Joe. But the Glaspell larder was frequently almost as empty as were the hungry stomachs that looked to it for refreshment; and it would have taken a far more skillful cook than was the fly-away Betty to evolve anything from it that was either palatable or satisfying.

With the coming of David into Joe's life all this was changed. First, there were the music and the companionship. Joe's father had "played in the band" in his youth, and (according to the Widow Glaspell) had been a "powerful hand for music." It was from him, presumably, that Joe had inherited his passion for melody and harmony; and it was no wonder that David recognized so soon in the blind boy the spirit that made them kin. At the first stroke of David's bow, indeed, the dingy walls about them would crumble into

nothingness, and together the two boys were off in a fairy world of loveliness and joy.

Nor was listening always Joe's part. From "just touching" the violin—his first longing plea—he came to drawing a timid bow across the strings. In an incredibly short time, then, he was picking out bits of melody; and by the end of a fortnight David had brought his father's violin for Joe to practice on.

"I can't *give* it to you—not for keeps," David had explained, a bit tremulously, "because it was Daddy's, you know; and when I see it, it seems almost as if I was seeing him. But you may take it. Then you can have it here to play on whenever you like."

After that, in Joe's own hands lay the power to transport himself into another world, for with the violin for company he knew no loneliness.

Nor was the violin all that David brought to the house. There were the doughnuts and the cookies. Very early in his visits David had discovered, much to his surprise, that Joe and Betty were often hungry.

"But why don't you go down to the store and buy something?" he had queried at once.

Upon being told that there was no money to buy with, David's first impulse had been to bring several of the gold pieces the next time he came; but upon second thoughts David decided that he did not dare. He was not wishing to be called a thief a second time. It would be better, he concluded, to bring some food from the house instead.

In his mountain home everything the house afforded in the way of food had always been freely given to the few strangers that found their way to the cabin door. So now David had no hesitation in going to Mrs. Holly's pantry for supplies, upon the occasion of his next visit to Joe Glaspell's.

Mrs. Holly, coming into the kitchen, found him merging from the pantry with both hands full of cookies and doughnuts.

"Why, David, what in the world does this mean?" she demanded.

"They're for Joe and Betty," smiled David happily.

"For Joe and—But those doughnuts and cookies don't belong to you. They're mine!"

"Yes, I know they are. I told them you had plenty," nodded David.

"Plenty! What if I have?" remonstrated Mrs. Holly, in growing indignation. "That doesn't mean that you can take—" Something in David's face stopped the words half-spoken.

"You don't mean that I *can't* take them to Joe and Betty, do you? Why, Mrs. Holly, they're hungry! Joe and Betty are. They don't have half enough to eat. Betty said so. And we've got more than we want. There's food left on the table every day. Why, if *you* were hungry, wouldn't you want somebody to bring—"

But Mrs. Holly stopped him with a despairing gesture.

"There, there, never mind. Run along. Of course you can take them. I'm—I'm *glad* to have you," she finished, in a desperate attempt to drive from David's face that look of shocked incredulity with which he was still regarding her.

Never again did Mrs. Holly attempt to thwart David's generosity to the Glaspells; but she did try to regulate it. She saw to it that thereafter, upon his visits to the house, he took only certain things and a certain amount, and invariably things of her own choosing.

But not always toward the Glaspell shanty did David turn his steps. Very frequently it was in quite another direction. He had been at the Holly farmhouse three weeks when he found his Lady of the Roses.

He had passed quite through the village that day, and had come to a road that was new to him. It was a beautiful road, smooth, white, and firm. Two huge granite posts topped with flaming nasturtiums marked the point where it turned off

from the main highway. Beyond these, as David soon found, it ran between wide spreading lawns and flowering shrubs, leading up the gentle slope of a hill. Where it led to, David did not know, but he proceeded unhesitatingly to try to find out. For some time he climbed the slope in silence, his violin, mute, under his arm; but the white road still lay in tantalizing mystery before him when a by-path offered the greater temptation, and lured him to explore its cool shadowy depths instead.

Had David but known it, he was at Sunnycrest, Hinsdale's one "show place," the country home of its one really rich resident, Miss Barbara Holbrook. Had he also but known it, Miss Holbrook was not celebrated for her graciousness to any visitors, certainly not to those who ventured to approach her otherwise than by a conventional ring at her front doorbell. But David did not know all this; and he therefore very happily followed the shady path until he came to the Wonder at the end of it.

The Wonder, in Hinsdale parlance, was only Miss Holbrook's garden, but in David's eyes it was fairyland come true. For one whole minute he could only stand like a very ordinary little boy and stare. At the end of the minute he became himself once more; and being himself, he expressed his delight at once in the only way he knew how to do—by raising his violin and beginning to play.

He had meant to tell of the limpid pool and of the arch of the bridge it reflected; of the terraced lawns and marble steps, and of the gleaming white of the sculptured nymphs and fauns; of the splashes of glorious crimson, yellow, blush-pink, and snowy white against the green, where the roses rioted in luxurious bloom. He had meant, also, to tell of the Queen Rose of them all—the beauteous lady with hair like the gold of sunrise, and a gown like the shimmer of the moon on water—of all this he had meant to tell; but he had scarcely begun to tell it at all when the Beauteous Lady of the Roses

sprang to her feet and became so very much like an angry young woman who is seriously displeased that David could only lower his violin in dismay.

"Why, boy, what does this mean?" she demanded.

David sighed a little impatiently as he came forward into the sunlight.

"But I was just telling you," he remonstrated, "and you would not let me finish."

"Telling me!"

"Yes, with my violin. *Could*n't you understand?" appealed the boy wistfully. "You looked as if you could!"

"Looked as if I could!"

"Yes. Joe understood, you see, and I was surprised when *he* did. But I was just sure you could—with all this to look at."

The lady frowned. Half unconsciously she glanced about her as if contemplating flight. Then she turned back to the boy.

"But how came you here? Who are you?" she cried.

"I'm David. I walked here through the little path back there. I didn't know where it went to, but I'm so glad now I found out!"

"Oh, are you!" murmured the lady, with slightly uplifted brows.

She was about to tell him very coldly that now that he had found his way there he might occupy himself in finding it home again, when the boy interposed rapturously, his eyes sweeping the scene before him:—

"Yes. I didn't suppose, anywhere, down here, there was a place one half so beautiful!"

An odd feeling of uncanniness sent a swift exclamation to the lady's lips.

"'Down here'! What do you mean by that? You speak as if you came from—above," she almost laughed.

"I did," returned David simply. "But even up there I never found anything quite like this,"—with a sweep of his hands—

"nor like you, O Lady of the Roses," he finished with an admiration that was as open as it was ardent.

This time the lady laughed outright. She even blushed a little.

"Very prettily put, Sir Flatterer," she retorted; "but when you are older, young man, you won't make your compliments quite so broad. I am no Lady of the Roses. I am Miss Holbrook; and—and I am not in the habit of receiving gentlemen callers who are uninvited and—unannounced," she concluded, a little sharply.

Pointless the shaft fell at David's feet. He had turned again to the beauties about him, and at that moment he spied the sundial—something he had never seen before.

"What is it?" he cried eagerly, hurrying forward. "It isn't exactly pretty, and yet it looks as if 't were meant for—something."

"It is. It is a sundial. It marks the time by the sun."

Even as she spoke, Miss Holbrook wondered why she answered the question at all; why she did not send this small piece of nonchalant impertinence about his business, as he so richly deserved. The next instant she found herself staring at the boy in amazement. With unmistakable ease, and with the trained accent of the scholar, he was reading aloud the Latin inscription on the dial: "'Horas non numero nisi serenas,' 'I count—no—hours but—unclouded ones,'" he translated then, slowly, though with confidence. "That's pretty; but what does it mean—about 'counting'?"

Miss Holbrook rose to her feet.

"For Heaven's sake, boy, who, and what are you?" she demanded. "Can *you* read Latin?"

"Why, of course! Can't you?" With a disdainful gesture Miss Holbrook swept this aside.

"Boy, who are you?" she demanded again imperatively.

"I'm David. I told you."

"But David who? Where do you live?"

The boy's face clouded.

"I'm David—just David. I live at Farmer Holly's now; but I did live on the mountain with—Father, you know."

A great light of understanding broke over Miss Holbrook's face. She dropped back into her seat.

"Oh, I remember," she murmured. "You're the little—er—boy whom he took. I have heard the story. So *that* is who you are," she added, the old look of aversion coming back to her eyes. She had almost said "the little tramp boy"—but she had stopped in time.

"Yes. And now what do they mean, please—those words—'I count no hours but unclouded ones'?"

Miss Holbrook stirred in her seat and frowned.

"Why, it means what it says, of course, boy. A sundial counts its hours by the shadow the sun throws, and when there is no sun there is no shadow; hence it's only the sunny hours that are counted by the dial," she explained a little fretfully.

David's face radiated delight.

"Oh, but I like that!" he exclaimed.

"You like it!"

"Yes. I should like to be one myself, you know."

"Well, really! And how, pray?" In spite of herself a faint gleam of interest came into Miss Holbrook's eyes.

David laughed and dropped himself easily to the ground at her feet. He was holding his violin on his knees now.

"Why, it would be such fun," he chuckled, "to just forget all about the hours when the sun didn't shine, and remember only the nice, pleasant ones. Now for me, there wouldn't be any hours, really, until after four o'clock, except little specks of minutes that I'd get in between when I *did* see something interesting."

Miss Holbrook stared frankly.

"What an extraordinary boy you are, to be sure," she murmured. "And what, may I ask, is it that you do every day

until four o'clock, that you wish to forget?"

David sighed.

"Well, there are lots of things. I hoed potatoes and corn, first, but they're too big now, mostly; and I pulled up weeds, too, till they were gone. I've been picking up stones, lately, and clearing up the yard. Then, of course, there's always the woodbox to fill, and the eggs to hunt, besides the chickens to feed—though I don't mind *them* so much; but I do the other things, 'specially the weeds. They were so much prettier than the things I had to let grow, 'most always."

Miss Holbrook laughed.

"Well, they were; and really," persisted the boy, in answer to the merriment in her eyes; "now wouldn't it be nice to be like the sundial, and forget everything the sun didn't shine on? Wouldn't you like it? Isn't there anything *you* want to forget?"

Miss Holbrook sobered instantly. The change in her face was so very marked, indeed, that involuntarily David looked about for something that might have cast upon it so great a shadow. For a long minute she did not speak; then very slowly, very bitterly, she said aloud—yet as if to herself:—

"Yes. If I had my way I'd forget them every one—these hours; every single one!"

"Oh, Lady of the Roses!" expostulated David in a voice quivering with shocked dismay. "You don't mean—you can't mean that you don't have *any*—sun!"

"I mean just that," bowed Miss Holbrook wearily, her eyes on the somber shadows of the pool; "just that!"

David at stunned, confounded. Across the marble steps and the terraces the shadows lengthened, and David watched them as the sun dipped behind the treetops. They seemed to make more vivid the chill and the gloom of the lady's words—more real the day that had no sun. After a time the boy picked up his violin and began to play, softly, and at first with evident hesitation. Even when his touch became more confident,



"If I had my way I'd forget them"

there was still in the music a questioning appeal that seemed to find no answer—an appeal that even the player himself could not have explained.

For long minutes the young woman and the boy sat thus in the twilight. Then suddenly the woman got to her feet.

"Come, come, boy, what can I be thinking of?" she cried sharply. "I must go in and you must go home. Goodnight." And she swept across the grass to the path that led toward the house.

CHAPTER XI
Jack and Jill

David was tempted to go for a second visit to his Lady of the Roses, but something he could not define held him back. The lady was in his mind almost constantly, however; and very vivid to him was the picture of the garden, though always it was as he had seen it last with the hush and shadow of twilight, and with the lady's face gloomily turned toward the sunless pool. David could not forget that for her there were no hours to count; she had said it herself. He could not understand how this could be so; and the thought filled him with vague unrest and pain.

Perhaps it was this restlessness that drove David to explore even more persistently the village itself, sending him into new streets in search of something strange and interesting. One day the sound of shouts and laughter drew him to an open lot back of the church where some boys were at play.

David still knew very little of boys. In his mountain home he had never had them for playmates, and he had not seen much of them when he went with his father to the mountain village for supplies. There had been, it is true, the boy who frequently brought milk and eggs to the cabin; but he had been very quiet and shy, appearing always afraid and anxious to get away, as if he had been told not to stay. More recently, since David had been at the Holly farmhouse, his experience with boys had been even less satisfying. The boys—with the exception of blind Joe—had very clearly let it be understood that they had little use for a youth who could find nothing better to do than to tramp through the woods and the streets with a fiddle under his arm.

Today, however, there came a change. Perhaps they were more used to him; or perhaps they had decided suddenly that it might be good fun to satisfy their curiosity, anyway, regardless of consequences. Whatever it was, the lads hailed his appearance with wild shouts of glee.

"Golly, boys, look! Here's the fiddlin' kid," yelled one; and the others joined in the "Hurrah!" he gave.

David smiled delightedly; once more he had found someone who wanted him—and it was so nice to be wanted! Truth to tell, David had felt not a little hurt at the persistent avoidance of all those boys and girls of his own age.

"How—how do you do?" he said diffidently, but still with that beaming smile.

Again the boys shouted gleefully as they hurried forward. Several had short sticks in their hands. One had an old tomato can with a string tied to it. The tallest boy had something that he was trying to hold beneath his coat.

"'H—how do you do?'" they mimicked. "How do you do, fiddlin' kid?"

"I'm David; my name is David." The reminder was graciously given, with a smile.

"David! David! His name is David," chanted the boys, as if they were a comic-opera chorus.

David laughed outright.

"Oh, sing it again, sing it again!" he crowed. "That sounded fine!"

The boys stared, then sniffed disdainfully, and cast derisive glances into each other's eyes—it appeared that this little sissy tramp boy did not even know enough to discover when he was being laughed at!

"David! David! His name is David," they jeered into his face again. "Come on, tune her up! We want ter dance."

"Play? Of course I'll play," cried David joyously, raising his violin and testing a string for its tone.

"Here, hold on," yelled the tallest boy. "The Queen o' the

Ballet ain't ready." And he cautiously pulled from beneath his coat a struggling kitten with a perforated bag tied over its head.

"Sure! We want her in the middle," grinned the boy with the tin can. "Hold on till I get her train tied to her," he finished, trying to capture the swishing, fluffy tail of the frightened little cat.

David had begun to play, but he stopped his music with a discordant stroke of the bow.

"What are you doing? What is the matter with that cat?" he demanded.

"'Matter'!" called a derisive voice. "Sure, nothin' 's the matter with her. She's the Queen o' the Ballet—she is!"

"What do you mean?" cried David. At that moment the string bit hard into the captured tail, and the kitten cried out with the pain. "Look out! You're hurting her," cautioned David sharply.

Only a laugh and a jeering word answered. Then the kitten, with the bag on its head and the tin can tied to its tail, was let warily to the ground, the tall boy still holding its back with both hands.

"Ready, now! Come on, play," he ordered; "then we'll set her dancing."

David's eyes flashed.

"I will not play—for that."

The boys stopped laughing suddenly.

"Eh? What?" They could scarcely have been more surprised if the kitten itself had said the words.

"I say I won't play—I can't play—unless you let that cat go."

"Hoity-toity! Won't ye hear that now?" laughed a mocking voice. "And what if we say we won't let her go, eh?"

"Then I'll make you," vowed David, aflame with a newborn something that seemed to have sprung full-grown into being.

"Yow!" hooted the tallest boy, removing both hands from the captive kitten.

The kitten, released, began to back frantically. The can, dangling at its heels, rattled and banged and thumped, until the frightened little creature, crazed with terror, became nothing but a whirling mass of misery. The boys, formed now into a crowing circle of delight, kept the kitten within bounds, and flouted David mercilessly.

"Ah, ha!—stop us, will ye? Why don't ye stop us?" they gibed.

For a moment David stood without movement, his eyes staring. The next instant he turned and ran. The jeers became a chorus of triumphant shouts then—but not for long. David had only hurried to the woodpile to lay down his violin. He came back then, on the run—and before the tallest boy could catch his breath he was felled by a stinging blow on the jaw.

Over by the church a small girl, red-haired and red-eyed, clambered hastily over the fence behind which for long minutes she had been crying and wringing her hands.

"He'll be killed, he'll be killed," she moaned. "And it's my fault, 'cause it's my kitty—it's my kitty," she sobbed, straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of the kitten's protector in the squirming mass of legs and arms.

The kitten, unheeded now by the boys, was pursuing its backward whirl to destruction some distance away, and very soon the little girl discovered her. With a bound and a choking cry she reached the kitten, removed the bag and unbound the cruel string. Then, sitting on the ground, a safe distance away, she soothed the palpitating little bunch of gray fur, and watched with fearful eyes the fight.

And what a fight it was! There was no question, of course, as to its final outcome, with six against one; but meanwhile the one was giving the six the surprise of their lives in the shape of well dealt blows and skillful twists and turns that caused their own strength and weight to react upon

themselves in a most astonishing fashion. The one unmistakably was getting the worst of it, however, when the little girl, after a hurried dash to the street, brought back with her to the rescue a tall, smooth-shaven young man whom she had hailed from afar as "Jack."

Jack put a stop to things at once. With vigorous jerks and pulls he unsnarled the writhing mass, boy by boy, each one of whom, upon catching sight of his face, slunk hurriedly away, as if glad to escape so lightly. There was left finally upon the ground only David alone. But when David did at last appear, the little girl burst into tears anew.

"Oh, Jack, he's killed—I know he's killed," she wailed. "And he was so nice and—and pretty. And now—look at him! Ain't he a sight?"

David was not killed, but he was—a sight. His blouse was torn, his tie was gone, and his face and hands were covered with dirt and blood. Above one eye was an ugly looking lump, and below the other was a red bruise. Somewhat dazedly he responded to the man's helpful hand, pulled himself upright, and looked about him. He did not see the little girl behind him.

"Where's the cat?" he asked anxiously.

The unexpected happened then. With a sobbing cry the little girl flung herself upon him, cat and all.

"Here, right here," she choked. "And it was you who saved her—my Juliette! And I'll love you, love you, love you always for it!"

"There, there, Jill," interposed the man a little hurriedly. "Suppose we first show our gratitude by seeing if we can't do something to make our young warrior here more comfortable." And he began to brush off with his handkerchief some of the accumulated dirt.

"Why can't we take him home, Jack, and clean him up 'fore other folks see him?" suggested the girl.

The boy turned quickly.

"Did you call him 'Jack'?"

"Yes."

"And he called you, Jill'?"

"Yes."

"The real 'Jack and Jill' that 'went up the hill'?" The man and the girl laughed; but the girl shook her head as she answered—

"Not really—though we do go up a hill, all right, every day. But those aren't even our own names. We just call each other that for fun. Don't YOU ever call things—for fun?"

David's face lighted up in spite of the dirt, the lump, and the bruise.

"Oh, do you do that?" he breathed. "Say, I just know I'd like to play to you! You'd understand!"

"Oh, yes, and he plays, too," explained the little girl, turning to the man rapturously. "On a fiddle, you know, like you."

She had not finished her sentence before David was away, hurrying a little unsteadily across the lot for his violin. When he came back the man was looking at him with an anxious frown.

"Suppose you come home with us, boy," he said. "It isn't far—through the hill pasture, 'cross lots—and we'll look you over a bit. That lump over your eye needs attention."

"Thank you," beamed David. "I'd like to go, and—I'm glad you want me!" He spoke to the man, but he looked at the little red-headed girl, who still held the gray kitten in her arms.

CHAPTER XII
Answers That Did Not Answer

"Jack and Jill," it appeared, were a brother and sister who lived in a tiny house on a hill directly across the creek from Sunnycrest. Beyond this David learned little until after bumps and bruises and dirt had been carefully attended to. He had then, too, some questions to answer concerning himself.

"And now, if you please," began the man smilingly, as he surveyed the boy with an eye that could see no further service to be rendered, "do you mind telling me who you are, and how you came to be the center of attraction for the blows and cuffs of six boys?"

"I'm David, and I wanted the cat," returned the boy simply.

"Well, that's direct and to the point, to say the least," laughed the man. "Evidently, however, you're in the habit of being that. But, David, there were six of them—those boys—and some of them were larger than you."

"Yes, sir."

"And they were so bad and cruel," chimed in the little girl.

The man hesitated, then questioned slowly.

"And may I ask you where you—er—learned to—fight like that?"

"I used to box with father. He said I must first be well and strong. He taught me jiujitsu, too, a little; but I couldn't make it work very well—with so many."

"I should say not," adjudged the man grimly. "But you gave them a surprise or two, I'll warrant," he added, his eyes on the cause of the trouble, now curled in a little gray bunch of content on the window sill. "But I don't know yet who you

are. Who is your father? Where does he live?"

David shook his head. As was always the case when his father was mentioned, his face grew wistful and his eyes dreamy.

"He doesn't live here anywhere," murmured the boy. "In the far country he is waiting for me to come to him and tell him of the beautiful world I have found, you know."

"Eh? What?" stammered the man, not knowing whether to believe his eyes, or his ears. This boy who fought like a demon and talked like a saint, and who, though battered and bruised, prattled of the "beautiful world" he had found, was most disconcerting.

"Why, Jack, don't you know?" whispered the little girl agitatedly. "He's the boy at Mr. Holly's that they took." Then, still more softly: "He's the little tramp boy. His father died in the barn."

"Oh," said the man, his face clearing, and his eyes showing a quick sympathy. "You're the boy at the Holly farmhouse, are you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And he plays the fiddle everywhere," volunteered the little girl, with ardent admiration. "If you hadn't been shut up sick just now, you'd have heard him yourself. He plays everywhere—everywhere he goes."

"Is that so?" murmured Jack politely, shuddering a little at what he fancied would come from a violin played by a boy like the one before him. (Jack could play the violin himself a little—enough to know it some, and love it more.) "Hm-m; well, and what else do you do?"

"Nothing, except to go for walks and read."

"Nothing!—a big boy like you—and on Simeon Holly's farm?" Voice and manner showed that Jack was not unacquainted with Simeon Holly and his methods and opinions.

David laughed gleefully.

"Oh, of course, *really* I do lots of things, only I don't count

those any more. 'Horas non numero nisi serenas,' you know," he quoted pleasantly, smiling into the man's astonished eyes.

"Jack, what was that—what he said?" whispered the little girl. "It sounded foreign. *Is* he foreign?"

"You've got me, Jill," retorted the man, with a laughing grimace. "Heaven only knows what he is—I don't. What he *said* was Latin; I do happen to know that. Still"—he turned to the boy ironically—"of course you know the translation of that," he said.

"Oh, yes. 'I count no hours but unclouded ones'—and I liked that. 'T was on a sundial, you know; and *I'm* going to be a sundial, and not count, the hours I don't like—while I'm pulling up weeds, and hoeing potatoes, and picking up stones, and all that. Don't you see?"

For a moment the man stared dumbly. Then he threw back his head and laughed.

"Well, by George!" he muttered. "By George!" And he laughed again. Then: "And did your father teach you that, too?" he asked.

"Oh, no—well, he taught me Latin, and so of course I could read it when I found it. But those 'special words I got off the sundial where my Lady of the Roses lives."

"Your—Lady of the Roses! And who is she?"

"Why, don't you know? You live right in sight of her house," cried David, pointing to the towers of Sunnycrest that showed above the trees. "It's over there she lives. I know those towers now, and I look for them wherever I go. I love them. It makes me see all over again the roses—and her."

"You mean—Miss Holbrook?"

The voice was so different from the genial tones that he had heard before that David looked up in surprise.

"Yes; she said that was her name," he answered, wondering at the indefinable change that had come to the man's face.

There was a moment's pause, then the man rose to his

feet.

"How's your head? Does it ache?" he asked briskly.

"Not much—some. I—I think I'll be going," replied David, a little awkwardly, reaching for his violin, and unconsciously showing by his manner the sudden chill in the atmosphere.

The little girl spoke then. She overwhelmed him again with thanks, and pointed to the contented kitten on the window sill. True, she did not tell him this time that she would love, love, love him always; but she beamed upon him gratefully and she urged him to come soon again, and often.

David bowed himself off, with many a backward wave of the hand, and many a promise to come again. Not until he had quite reached the bottom of the hill did he remember that the man, "Jack," had said almost nothing at the last. As David recollected him, indeed, he had last been seen standing beside one of the veranda posts, with gloomy eyes fixed on the towers of Sunnycrest that showed red-gold above the treetops in the last rays of the setting sun.

It was a bad half-hour that David spent at the Holly farmhouse in explanation of his torn blouse and bruised face. Farmer Holly did not approve of fights, and he said so, very sternly indeed. Even Mrs. Holly, who was usually so kind to him, let David understand that he was in deep disgrace, though she was very tender to his wounds.

David did venture to ask her, however, before he went upstairs to bed:—

"Mrs. Holly, who are those people—Jack and Jill—that were so good to me this afternoon?"

"They are John Gurnsey and his sister, Julia; but the whole town knows them by the names they long ago gave themselves, 'Jack' and 'Jill.'"

"And do they live all alone in the little house?"

"Yes except for the Widow Glaspell, who comes in several times a week, I believe, to cook and wash and sweep. They



Eyes fixed on the towers of Sunnycrest

aren't very happy, I'm afraid, David, and I'm glad you could rescue the little girl's kitten for her—but you mustn't fight. No good can come of fighting!"

"I got the cat—by fighting."

"Yes, yes, I know; but—" She did not finish her sentence, and David was only waiting for a pause to ask another question.

"Why aren't they happy, Mrs. Holly?"

"Tut, tut, David, it's a long story, and you wouldn't understand it if I told it. It's only that they're all alone in the world, and Jack Gurnsey isn't well. He must be thirty years old now. He had bright hopes not so long ago studying law, or something of the sort, in the city. Then his father died, and his mother, and he lost his health. Something ails his lungs, and the doctors sent him here to be out of doors. He even sleeps out of doors, they say. Anyway, he's here, and he's making a home for his sister; but, of course, with his hopes and ambitions—But there, David, you don't understand, of course!"

"Oh, yes, I do," breathed David, his eyes pensively turned toward a shadowy corner. "He found his work out in the world, and then he had to stop and couldn't do it. Poor Mr. Jack!"

CHAPTER XIII
A Surprise for Mr. Jack

Life at the Holly farmhouse was not what it had been. The coming of David had introduced new elements that promised complications. Not because he was another mouth to feed—Simeon Holly was not worrying about that part any longer. Crops showed good promise, and already in the bank even now was the necessary money to cover the dreaded note, due the last of August. The complicating elements in regard to David were of quite another nature.

To Simeon Holly the boy was a riddle to be sternly solved. To Ellen Holly he was an ever present reminder of the little boy of long ago, and as such was to be loved and trained into a semblance of what that boy might have become. To Perry Larson, David was the "derndest checkerboard of sense an' nonsense goin'"—a game over which to chuckle.

At the Holly farmhouse they could not understand a boy who would leave a supper for a sunset, or who preferred a book to a toy pistol—as Perry Larson found out was the case on the Fourth of July; who picked flowers, like a girl, for the table, yet who unhesitatingly struck the first blow in a fight with six antagonists: who would not go fishing because the fishes would not like it, nor hunting for any sort of wild thing that had life; who hung entranced for an hour over the "millions of lovely striped bugs" in a field of early potatoes, and who promptly and stubbornly refused to sprinkle those same "lovely bugs" with Paris green when discovered at his worship. All this was most perplexing, to say the least.

Yet David worked, and worked well, and in most cases he obeyed orders willingly. He learned much, too, that was

interesting and profitable; nor was he the only one that made strange discoveries during those July days. The Hollys themselves learned much. They learned that the rose of sunset and the gold of sunrise were worth looking at; and that the massing of the thunderheads in the west meant more than just a shower. They learned, too, that the green of the hilltop and of the far-reaching meadow was more than grass, and that the purple haze along the horizon was more than the mountains that lay between them and the next state. They were beginning to see the world with David's eyes.

There were, too, the long twilights and evenings when David, on the wings of his violin, would speed away to his mountain home, leaving behind him a man and a woman who seemed to themselves to be listening to the voice of a curly-headed, rosy-cheeked lad who once played at their knees and nestled in their arms when the day was done. And here, too, the Hollys were learning; though the thing thus learned was hidden deep in their hearts.

It was not long after David's first visit that the boy went again to "The House that Jack Built," as the Gurnseys called their tiny home. (Though in reality it had been Jack's father who had built the house. Jack and Jill, however, did not always deal with realities.) It was not a pleasant afternoon. There was a light mist in the air, and David was without his violin.

"I came to—to inquire for the cat—Juliette," he began, a little bashfully. "I thought I'd rather do that than read today," he explained to Jill in the doorway.

"Good! I'm so glad! I hoped you'd come," the little girl welcomed him. "Come in and—and see Juliette," she added hastily, remembering at the last moment that her brother had not looked with entire favor on her avowed admiration for this strange little boy.

Juliette, roused from her nap, was at first inclined to resent her visitor's presence. In five minutes, however, she was

purring in his lap.

The conquest of the kitten once accomplished, David looked about him a little restlessly. He began to wonder why he had come. He wished he had gone to see Joe Glaspell instead. He wished that Jill would not sit and stare at him like that. He wished that she would say something—anything. But Jill, apparently struck dumb with embarrassment, was nervously twisting the corner of her apron into a little knot. David tried to recollect what he had talked about a few days before, and he wondered why he had so enjoyed himself then. He wished that something would happen—anything!—and then from an inner room came the sound of a violin.

David raised his head.

"It's Jack," stammered the little girl—who also had been wishing something would happen. "He plays, same as you do, on the violin."

"Does he?" beamed David. "But—" He paused, listening, a quick frown on his face.

Over and over the violin was playing a single phrase—and the variations in the phrase showed the indecision of the fingers and of the mind that controlled them. Again and again with irritating sameness, yet with a still more irritating difference, came the succession of notes. And then David sprang to his feet, placing Juliette somewhat unceremoniously on the floor, much to that petted young autocrat's disgust.

"Here, where is he? Let me show him," cried the boy, and at the note of command in his voice, Jill involuntarily rose and opened the door to Jack's den.

"Oh, please, Mr. Jack," burst out David, hurrying into the room. "Don't you see? You don't go at that thing right. If you'll just let me show you a minute, we'll have it fixed in no time!"

The man with the violin stared, and lowered his bow. A slow red came to his face. The phrase was peculiarly a difficult one, and beyond him, as he knew; but that did not make the

present intrusion into his privacy any the more welcome.

"Oh, will we, indeed!" he retorted, a little sharply. "Don't trouble yourself, I beg of you, boy."

"But it isn't a mite of trouble, truly," urged David, with an ardor that ignored the sarcasm in the other's words. "I WANT to do it."

Despite his annoyance, the man gave a short laugh. "Well, David, I believe you. And I'll warrant you'd tackle this Brahms concerto as nonchalantly as you did those six hoodlums with the cat the other day—and expect to win out, too!"

"But, truly, this is easy, when you know how," laughed the boy. "See!"

To his surprise, the man found himself relinquishing the violin and bow into the slim, eager hands that reached for them. The next moment he fell back in amazement. Clear, distinct, yet connected like a string of rounded pearls fell the troublesome notes from David's bow. "You see," smiled the boy again, and played the phrase a second time, more slowly, and with deliberate emphasis at the difficult part. Then, as if in answer to some irresistible summons within him, he dashed into the next phrase and, with marvelous technique, played quite through the rippling cadenza that completed the movement.

"Well, by George!" breathed the man dazedly, as he took the offered violin. The next moment he had demanded vehemently: "For Heaven's sake, who ARE you, boy?"

David's face wrinkled in grieved surprise.

"Why, I'm David. Don't you remember? I was here just the other day!"

"Yes, yes; but who taught you to play like that?"

"Father."

"'Father'!" The man echoed the word with a gesture of comic despair. "First Latin, then jiujitsu, and now the violin! Boy, who was your father?"

David lifted his head and frowned a little. He had been

questioned so often, and so unsympathetically, about his father that he was beginning to resent it.

"He was Daddy—just Daddy; and I loved him dearly."

"But what was his name?"

"I don't know. We didn't seem to have a name like—like yours down here. Anyway, if we did, I didn't know what it was."

"But, David,"—the man was speaking very gently now. He had motioned the boy to a low seat by his side. The little girl was standing near, her eyes alight with wondering interest. "He must have had a name, you know, just the same. Didn't you ever hear anyone call him anything? Think, now."

"No." David said the single word, and turned his eyes away. It had occurred to him, since he had come to live in the valley, that perhaps his father did not want to have his name known. He remembered that once the milk-and-eggs boy had asked what to call him; and his father had laughed and answered: "I don't see but you'll have to call me 'The Old Man of the Mountain,' as they do down in the village." That was the only time David could recollect hearing his father say anything about his name. At the time David had not thought much about it. But since then, down here where they appeared to think a name was so important, he had wondered if possibly his father had not preferred to keep his to himself. If such were the case, he was glad now that he did not know this name, so that he might not have to tell all these inquisitive people who asked so many questions about it. He was glad, too, that those men had not been able to read his father's name at the end of his other note that first morning—if his father really did not wish his name to be known.

"But, David, think. Where you lived, wasn't there ever anybody who called him by name?"

David shook his head.

"I told you. We were all alone, Father and I, in the little house far up on the mountain."



“He must have had a name”

"And—your mother?" Again David shook his head.

"She is an angel-mother, and angel-mothers don't live in houses, you know."

There was a moment's pause; then gently the man asked:—

"And you always lived there?"

"Six years, father said."

"And before that?"

"I don't remember." There was a touch of injured reserve in the boy's voice which the man was quick to perceive. He took the hint at once.

"He must have been a wonderful man—your father!" he exclaimed.

The boy turned, his eyes luminous with feeling.

"He was—he was perfect! But they—down here—don't seem to know—or care," he choked.

"Oh, but that's because they don't understand," soothed the man. "Now, tell me—you must have practiced a lot to play like that."

"I did—but I liked it."

"And what else did you do? and how did you happen to come—down here?"

Once again David told his story, more fully, perhaps, this time than ever before, because of the sympathetic ears that were listening.

"But now," he finished wistfully, "it's all, so different, and I'm down here alone. Daddy went, you know, to the far country; and he can't come back from there."

"Who told you—that?"

"Daddy himself. He wrote it to me."

"Wrote it to you!" cried the man, sitting suddenly erect.

"Yes. It was in his pocket, you see. They—found it." David's voice was very low, and not quite steady.

"David, may I see—that letter?"

The boy hesitated; then slowly he drew it from his pocket.

"Yes, Mr. Jack. I'll let *you* see it."

Reverently, tenderly, but very eagerly the man took the note and read it through, hoping somewhere to find a name that would help solve the mystery. With a sigh he handed it back. His eyes were wet.

"Thank you, David. That is a beautiful letter," he said softly. "And I believe you'll do it someday, too. You'll go to him with your violin at your chin and the bow drawn across the strings to tell him of the beautiful world you have found."

"Yes, sir," said David simply. Then, with a suddenly radiant smile: "And *now* I can't help finding it a beautiful world, you know, 'cause I don't count the hours I don't like."

"You don't what?—oh, I remember," returned Mr. Jack, a quick change coming to his face.

"Yes, the sundial, you know, where my Lady of the Roses lives."

"Jack, what is a sundial?" broke in Jill eagerly.

Jack turned, as if in relief.

"Hullo, girlie, you there?—and so still all this time? Ask David. He'll tell you what a sundial is. Suppose, anyhow, that you two go out on the piazza now. I've got—er—some work to do. And the sun itself is out; see?—through the trees there. It came out just to say 'goodnight,' I'm sure. Run along, quick!" And he playfully drove them from the room.

Alone, he turned and sat down at his desk. His work was before him, but he did not do it. His eyes were out of the window on the golden tops of the towers of Sunnycrest. Motionless, he watched them until they turned gray-white in the twilight. Then he picked up his pencil and began to write feverishly. He went to the window, however, as David stepped off the veranda, and called merrily:—

"Remember, boy, that when there's another note that baffles me, I'm going to send for you."

"He's coming anyhow. I asked him," announced Jill.

And David laughed back a happy, "Of course I am!"

CHAPTER XIV
The Tower Window

It is not to be expected that when one's thoughts lead so persistently to a certain place, one's feet will not follow, if they can; and David's could—so he went to seek his Lady of the Roses.

At four o'clock one afternoon, with his violin under his arm, he traveled the firm white road until he came to the shadowed path that led to the garden. He had decided that he would go exactly as he went before. He expected, in consequence, to find his Lady exactly as he had found her before, sitting reading under the roses. Great was his surprise and disappointment, therefore, to find the garden with no one in it.

He had told himself that it was the sundial, the roses, the shimmering pool, the garden itself that he wanted to see; but he knew now that it was the lady—his Lady of the Roses. He did not even care to play, though all around him was the beauty that had at first so charmed his eye. Very slowly he walked across the sunlit, empty space, and entered the path that led to the house. In his mind was no definite plan; yet he walked on and on, until he came to the wide lawns surrounding the house itself. He stopped then, entranced.

Stone upon stone the majestic pile raised itself until it was etched, clean-cut, against the deep blue of the sky. The towers—his towers—brought to David's lips a cry of delight. They were even more enchanting here than when seen from afar over the treetops, and David gazed up at them in awed wonder. From somewhere came the sound of music—a curious sort of music that David had never heard before. He

listened intently, trying to place it; then slowly he crossed the lawn, ascended the imposing stone steps, and softly opened one of the narrow screen doors before the wide open French window.

Once within the room David drew a long breath of ecstasy. Beneath his feet he felt the velvet softness of the green moss of the woods. Above his head he saw a sky-like canopy of blue carrying fleecy clouds on which floated little pink-and-white children with wings, just as David himself had so often wished that he could float. On all sides silken hangings, like the green of swaying vines, half-hid other hangings of feathery, snowflake lace. Everywhere mirrored walls caught the light and reflected the potted ferns and palms so that David looked down endless vistas of loveliness that seemed for all the world like the long sun-flecked aisles beneath the tall pines of his mountain home.

The music that David had heard at first had long since stopped; but David had not noticed that. He stood now in the center of the room, awed, and trembling, but enraptured. Then from somewhere came a voice—a voice so cold that it sounded as if it had swept across a field of ice.

"Well, boy, when you have quite finished your inspection, perhaps you will tell me to what I am indebted for *this* visit," it said.

David turned abruptly.

"O Lady of the Roses, why didn't you tell me it was like this—in here?" he breathed.

"Well, really," murmured the lady in the doorway, stiffly, "it had not occurred to me that that was hardly—necessary."

"But it was!—don't you see? This is new, all new. I never saw anything like it before; and I do so love new things. It gives me something new to play; don't you understand?"

"New—to play?"

"Yes—on my violin," explained David, a little breathlessly, softly testing his violin. "There's always something new

in this, you know," he hurried on, as he tightened one of the strings, "when there's anything new outside. Now, listen! You see I don't know myself just how it's going to sound, and I'm always so anxious to find out." And with a joyously rapt face he began to play.

"But, see here, boy—you mustn't! You—" The words died on her lips; and, to her unbounded amazement, Miss Barbara Holbrook, who had intended peremptorily to send this persistent little tramp boy about his business, found herself listening to a melody so compelling in its sonorous beauty that she was left almost speechless at its close. It was the boy who spoke.

"There, I told you my violin would know what to say!"

"'What to say'!—well, that's more than I do," laughed Miss Holbrook, a little hysterically. "Boy, come here and tell me who you are." And she led the way to a low divan that stood near a harp at the far end of the room.

It was the same story, told as David had told it to Jack and Jill a few days before, only this time David's eyes were roving admiringly all about the room, resting oftenest on the harp so near him.

"Did that make the music that I heard?" he asked eagerly, as soon as Miss Holbrook's questions gave him opportunity. "It's got strings."

"Yes. I was playing when you came in. I saw you enter the window. Really, David, are you in the habit of walking into people's houses like this? It is most disconcerting—to their owners."

"Yes—no—well, sometimes." David's eyes were still on the harp. "Lady of the Roses, won't you please play again—on that?"

"David, you are incorrigible! Why did you come into my house like this?"

"The music said 'come'; and the towers, too. You see, I *know* the towers."

"You *know* them!"

"Yes. I can see them from so many places, and I always watch for them. They show best of anywhere, though, from Jack and Jill's. And now won't you play?"

Miss Holbrook had almost risen to her feet when she turned abruptly.

"From—where?" she asked.

"From Jack and Jill's—the House that Jack Built, you know."

"You mean—Mr. John Gurnsey's house?" A deeper color had come into Miss Holbrook's cheeks.

"Yes. Over there at the top of the little hill across the brook, you know. You can't see *their* house from here, but from over there we can see the towers finely, and the little window—Oh, Lady of the Roses," he broke off excitedly, at the new thought that had come to him, "if we, now, were in that little window, we *could* see their house. Let's go up. Can't we?"

Explicit as this was, Miss Holbrook evidently did not hear, or at least did not understand, this request. She settled back on the divan, indeed, almost determinedly. Her cheeks were very red now.

"And do you know—this Mr. Jack?" she asked lightly.

"Yes, and Jill, too. Don't you? I like them, too. *Do* you know them?"

Again Miss Holbrook ignored the question put to her. "And did you walk into their house, unannounced and uninvited, like this?" she queried.

"No. He asked me. You see he wanted to get off some of the dirt and blood before other folks saw me."

"The dirt and—and—why, David, what do you mean? What was it—an accident?"

David frowned and reflected a moment.

"No. I did it on purpose. I *had* to, you see," he finally elucidated. "But there were six of them, and I got the worst of it."

"David!" Miss Holbrook's voice was horrified. "You don't mean—a fight!"

"Yes'm. I wanted the cat—and I got it, but I wouldn't have if Mr. Jack hadn't come to help me."

"Oh! So Mr. Jack—fought, too?"

"Well, he pulled the others off, and of course that helped me," explained David truthfully. "And then he took me home—he and Jill."

"Jill! Was she in it?"

"No, only her cat. They had tied a bag over its head and a tin can to its tail, and of course I couldn't let them do that. They were hurting her. And now, Lady of the Roses, won't you please play?"

For a moment Miss Holbrook did not speak. She was gazing at David with an odd look in her eyes. At last she drew a long sigh.

"David, you are the—the *limit*!" she breathed, as she rose and seated herself at the harp.

David was manifestly delighted with her playing, and begged for more when she had finished; but Miss Holbrook shook her head. She seemed to have grown suddenly restless, and she moved about the room calling David's attention to something new each moment. Then, very abruptly, she suggested that they go upstairs. From room to room she hurried the boy, scarcely listening to his ardent comments, or answering his still more ardent questions. Not until they reached the highest tower room, indeed, did she sink wearily into a chair, and seem for a moment at rest.

David looked about him in surprise. Even his untrained eye could see that he had entered a different world. There were no sumptuous rugs, no silken hangings; no mirrors, no snowflake curtains. There were books, to be sure, but besides those there were only a plain low table, a work-basket, and three or four wooden-seated though comfortable chairs. With increasing wonder he looked into Miss Holbrook's eyes.

"Is it here that you stay—all day?" he asked diffidently.

Miss Holbrook's face turned a vivid scarlet.

"Why, David, what a question! Of course not! Why should you think I did?"

"Nothing; only I've been wondering all the time I've been here how you could—with all those beautiful things around you downstairs—say what you did."

"Say what?—when?"

"That other day in the garden—about ALL your hours being cloudy ones. So I didn't know today but what you LIVED up here, same as Mrs. Holly doesn't use her best rooms; and that was why your hours were all cloudy ones."

With a sudden movement Miss Holbrook rose to her feet.

"Nonsense, David! You shouldn't always remember everything that people say to you. Come, you haven't seen one of the views from the windows yet. We are in the larger tower, you know. You can see Hinsdale village on this side, and there's a fine view of the mountains over there. Oh yes, and from the other side there's your friend's house—Mr. Jack's. By the way, how is Mr. Jack these days?" Miss Holbrook stooped as she asked the question and picked up a bit of thread from the rug.

David ran at once to the window that looked toward the House that Jack Built. From the tower the little house appeared to be smaller than ever. It was in the shadow, too, and looked strangely alone and forlorn. Unconsciously, as he gazed at it, David compared it with the magnificence he had just seen. His voice choked as he answered.

"He isn't well, Lady of the Roses, and he's unhappy. He's awfully unhappy."

Miss Holbrook's slender figure came up with a jerk.

"What do you mean, boy? How do you know he's unhappy? Has he said so?"

"No; but Mrs. Holly told me about him. He's sick; and he'd just found his work to do out in the world when he had

to stop and come home. But—oh, quick, there he is! See?"

Instead of coming nearer Miss Holbrook fell back to the center of the room; but her eyes were still turned toward the little house.

"Yes, I see," she murmured. The next instant she had snatched a handkerchief from David's outstretched hand. "No—no—I wouldn't wave," she remonstrated hurriedly. "Come—come downstairs with me."

"But I thought—I was sure he was looking this way," asserted David, turning reluctantly from the window. "And if he HAD seen me wave to him, he'd have been so glad; now, wouldn't he?"

There was no answer. The Lady of the Roses did not apparently hear. She had gone on down the stairway.

CHAPTER XV
Secrets

David had so much to tell Jack and Jill that he went to see them the very next day after his second visit to Sunnycrest. He carried his violin with him. He found, however, only Jill at home. She was sitting on the veranda steps.

There was not so much embarrassment between them this time, perhaps because they were in the freedom of the wide out-of-doors, and David felt more at ease. He was plainly disappointed, however, that Mr. Jack was not there.

"But I wanted to see him! I wanted to see him 'specially," he lamented.

"You'd better stay, then. He'll be home by and by," comforted Jill. "He's gone pot-boiling."

"Pot-boiling! What's that?"

Jill chuckled.

"Well, you see, really it's this way: he sells something to boil in other people's pots so he can have something to boil in ours, he says. It's stuff from the garden, you know. We raise it to sell. Poor Jack—and he does hate it so!"

David nodded sympathetically.

"I know—and it must be awful, just hoeing and weeding all the time."

"Still, of course he knows he's got to do it, because it's out of doors, and he just has to be out of doors all he can," rejoined the girl. "He's sick, you know, and sometimes he's so unhappy! He doesn't say much. Jack never says much—only with his face. But I know, and it—it just makes me want to cry."

At David's dismayed exclamation Jill jumped to her feet.

It owned to her suddenly that she was telling this unknown boy altogether too many of the family secrets. She proposed at once a race to the foot of the hill; and then, to drive David's mind still farther away from the subject under recent consideration, she deliberately lost, and proclaimed him the victor.

Very soon, however, there arose new complications in the shape of a little gate that led to a path which, in its turn, led to a footbridge across the narrow span of the little stream.

Above the trees on the other side peeped the top of Sunnycrest's highest tower.

"To the Lady of the Roses!" cried David eagerly. "I know it goes there. Come, let's see!"

The little girl shook her head.

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"Jack won't let me."

"But it goes to a beautiful place; I was there yesterday," argued David. "And I was up in the tower and almost waved to Mr. Jack on the piazza back there. I saw him. And maybe she'd let you and me go up there again today."

"But I can't, I say," repeated Jill, a little impatiently. "Jack won't let me even start."

"Why not? Maybe he doesn't know where it goes to."

Jill hung her head. Then she raised it defiantly.

"Oh, yes, he does, 'cause I told him. I used to go when I was littler and he wasn't here. I went once, after he came—halfway—and he saw me and called to me. I had got halfway across the bridge, but I had to come back. He was very angry, yet sort of—queer, too. His face was all stern and white, and his lips snapped tight shut after every word. He said never, never, never to let him find me the other side of that gate."

David frowned as they turned to go up the hill. Unhesitatingly he determined to instruct Mr. Jack in this little matter. He would tell him what a beautiful place Sunnycrest

was, and he would try to convince him how very desirable it was that he and Jill, and even Mr. Jack himself, should go across the bridge at the very first opportunity that offered.

Mr. Jack came home before long, but David quite forgot to speak of the footbridge just then, chiefly because Mr. Jack got out his violin and asked David to come in and play a duet with him. The duet, however, soon became a solo, for so great was Mr. Jack's delight in David's playing that he placed before the boy one sheet of music after another, begging and still begging for more.

David, nothing loath, played on and on. Most of the music he knew, having already learned it in his mountain home. Like old friends the melodies seemed, and so glad was David to see their notes again that he finished each production with a little improvised cadenza of ecstatic welcome—to Mr. Jack's increasing surprise and delight.

"Great Scott! you're a wonder, David," he exclaimed, at last.

"Pooh! as if that was anything wonderful," laughed the boy. "Why, I knew those ages ago, Mr. Jack. It's only that I'm so glad to see them again—the notes, you know. You see, I haven't any music now. It was all in the bag (what we brought), and we left that on the way."

"You left it!"

"Yes, 't was so, heavy," murmured David abstractedly, his fingers busy with the pile of music before him. "Oh, and here's another one," he cried exultingly. "This is where the wind sighs, 'oou—*oou*—*oou*' through the pines. Listen!" And he was away again on the wings of his violin. When he had returned Mr. Jack drew a long breath.

"David, you are a wonder," he declared again. "And that violin of yours is a wonder, too, if I'm not mistaken—though I don't know enough to tell whether it's really a rare one or not. Was it your father's?"

"Oh, no. He had one, too, and they both are good ones.

Father said so. Joe's got father's now."

"Joe?"

"Joe Glaspell."

"You don't mean Widow Glaspell's Joe, the blind boy? I didn't know he could play."

"He couldn't till I showed him. But he likes to hear me play. And he understood—right away, I mean."

"Understood!"

"What I was playing, you know. And he was almost the first one that did—since father went away. And now I play every time I go there. Joe says he never knew before how trees and grass and sunsets and sunrises and birds and little brooks did look, till I told him with my violin. Now he says he thinks he can see them better than I can, because as long as his *outside* eyes can't see anything, they can't see those ugly things all around him, and so he can just make his *inside* eyes see only the beautiful things that he'd *like* to see. And that's the kind he does see when I play. That's why I said he understood."

For a moment there was silence. In Mr. Jack's eyes there was an odd look as they rested on David's face. Then, abruptly, he spoke.

"David, I wish I had money. I'd put you then where you belonged," he sighed.

"Do you mean—where I'd find my work to do?" asked the boy softly.

"Well—yes; you might say it that way," smiled the man, after a moment's hesitation—not yet was Mr. Jack quite used to this boy who was at times so very un-boylike.

"Father told me 't was waiting for me—somewhere."

Mr. Jack frowned thoughtfully.

"And he was right, David. The only trouble is, we like to pick it out for ourselves, pretty well—too well, as we find out sometimes, when we're called off—for another job."

"I know, Mr. Jack, I know," breathed David. And the

man, looking into the glowing dark eyes, wondered at what he found there. It was almost as if the boy really understood about his own life's disappointment—and cared; though that, of course, could not be!

"And it's all the harder to keep ourselves in tune then, too, isn't it?" went on David, a little wistfully.

"In tune?"

"With the rest of the Orchestra."

"Oh!" And Mr. Jack, who had already heard about the "Orchestra of Life," smiled a bit sadly. "That's just it, my boy. And if we're handed another instrument to play on than the one we *want* to play on, we're apt to—to let fly a discord. Anyhow, I am. But,"—he went on more lightly—"now, in your case, David, little as I know about the violin, I know enough to understand that you ought to be where you can take up your study of it again; where you can hear good music, and where you can be among those who know enough to appreciate what you do."

David's eyes sparkled.

"And where there wouldn't be any pulling weeds or hoeing dirt?"

"Well, I hadn't thought of including either of those pastimes."

"My, but I would like that, Mr. Jack!—but *that* wouldn't be *work*, so that couldn't be what Father meant." David's face fell.

"Hm-m; well, I wouldn't worry about the 'work' part," laughed Mr. Jack, "particularly as you aren't going to do it just now. There's the money, you know—and we haven't got that."

"And it takes money?"

"Well—yes. You can't get those things here in Hinsdale, you know; and it takes money, to get away, and to live away after you get there."

A sudden light transfigured David's face.

"Mr. Jack, would gold do it?—lots of little round gold pieces?"

"I think it would, David, if there were enough of them."

"Many as a hundred?"

"Sure—if they were big enough. Anyway, David, they'd start you, and I'm thinking you wouldn't need but a start before you'd be coining gold pieces of your own out of that violin of yours. But why? Anybody you know got as 'many as a hundred' gold pieces he wants to get rid of?"

For a moment David, his delighted thoughts flying to the gold pieces in the chimney cupboard of his room, was tempted to tell his secret. Then he remembered the woman with the bread and the pail of milk, and decided not to. He would wait. When he knew Mr. Jack better—perhaps then he would tell; but not now. NOW Mr. Jack might think he was a thief, and that he could not bear. So he took up his violin and began to play; and in the charm of the music Mr. Jack seemed to forget the gold pieces—which was exactly what David had intended should happen.

Not until David had said goodbye some time later, did he remember the purpose—the special purpose—for which he had come. He turned back with a radiant face.

"Oh, and Mr. Jack, I 'most forgot," he cried. "I was going to tell you. I saw you yesterday—I did, and I almost waved to you."

"Did you? Where were you?"

"Over there in the window—the tower window," he crowed jubilantly.

"Oh, you went again, then, I suppose, to see Miss Holbrook."

The man's voice sounded so oddly cold and distant that David noticed it at once. He was reminded suddenly of the gate and the footbridge which Jill was forbidden to cross; but he dared not speak of it then—not when Mr. Jack looked like that. He did say, however:—

"Oh, but, Mr. Jack, it's such a beautiful place! You don't know what a beautiful place it is."

"Is it? Then, you like it so much?"

"Oh, so much! But—didn't you ever—see it?"

"Why, yes, I believe I did, David, long ago," murmured Mr. Jack with what seemed to David amazing indifference.

"And did you see *her*—my Lady of the Roses?"

"Why, y—yes—I believe so."

"And is *that* all you remember about it?" resented David, highly offended.

The man gave a laugh—a little short, hard laugh that David did not like.

"But, let me see; you said you almost waved, didn't you? Why didn't you, quite?" asked the man.

David drew himself suddenly erect. Instinctively he felt that his Lady of the Roses needed defense.

"Because *she* didn't want me to; so I didn't, of course," he rejoined with dignity. "She took away my handkerchief."

"I'll warrant she did," muttered the man, behind his teeth. Aloud he only laughed again, as he turned away.

David went on down the steps, dissatisfied vaguely with himself, with Mr. Jack, and even with the Lady of the Roses.

CHAPTER XVI
David's Castle in Spain

On his return from the House that Jack Built, David decided to count his gold pieces. He got them out at once from behind the books, and stacked them up in little shining rows. As he had surmised, there were a hundred of them. There were, indeed, a hundred and six. He was pleased at that. One hundred and six were surely enough to give him a "start."

A start! David closed his eyes and pictured it. To go on with his violin, to hear good music, to be with people who understood what he said when he played! That was what Mr. Jack had said a "start" was. And this gold—these round shining bits of gold—could bring him this! David swept the little piles into a jingling heap, and sprang to his feet with both fists full of his suddenly beloved wealth. With boyish glee he capered about the room, jingling the coins in his hands. Then, very soberly, he sat down again, and began to gather the gold to put away.

He would be wise—he would be sensible. He would watch his chance, and when it came he would go away. First, however, he would tell Mr. Jack and Joe, and the Lady of the Roses; yes, and the Hollys, too. Just now there seemed to be work, real work that he could do to help Mr. Holly. But later, possibly when September came and school—they had said he must go to school—he would tell them then, and go away instead. He would see. By that time they would believe him, perhaps, when he showed the gold pieces. They would not think he had—*stolen* them. It was August now; he would wait. But meanwhile he could think—he could always be thinking of the wonderful thing that this gold was one day to bring to

him.

Even work, to David, did not seem work now. In the morning he was to rake hay behind the men with the cart. Yesterday he had not liked it very well; but now—nothing mattered now. And with a satisfied sigh David put his precious gold away again behind the books in the cupboard.

David found a new song in his violin the next morning. To be sure, he could not play it—much of it—until four o'clock in the afternoon came; for Mr. Holly did not like violins to be played in the morning, even on days that were not especially the Lord's. There was too much work to do. So David could only snatch a strain or two very, very softly, while he was dressing; but that was enough to show him what a beautiful song it was going to be. He knew what it was, at once, too. It was the gold pieces, and what they would bring. All through the day it tripped through his consciousness, and danced tantalizingly just out of reach. Yet he was wonderfully happy, and the day seemed short in spite of the heat and the weariness.

At four o'clock he hurried home and put his violin quickly in tune. It came then—that dancing sprite of tantalization—and joyously abandoned itself to the strings of the violin, so that David knew, of a surety, what a beautiful song it was.

It was this song that sent him the next afternoon to see his Lady of the Roses. He found her this time out of doors in her garden. Unceremoniously, as usual, he rushed headlong into her presence.

"Oh, Lady—Lady of the Roses," he panted. "I've found out, and I came quickly to tell you."

"Why, David, what—what do you mean?" Miss Holbrook looked unmistakably startled.

"About the hours, you know—the unclouded ones," explained David eagerly. "You know you said they were *all* cloudy to you."

Miss Holbrook's face grew very white.

"You mean—you've found out *why* my hours are—are all cloudy ones?" she stammered.

"No, oh, no. I can't imagine why they are," returned David, with an emphatic shake of his head. "It's just that I've found a way to make all my hours sunny ones, and you can do it, too. So I came to tell you. You know you said yours were all cloudy."

"Oh," ejaculated Miss Holbrook, falling back into her old listless attitude. Then, with some asperity: "Dear me, David! Didn't I tell you not to be remembering that all the time?"

"Yes, I know, but I've *learned* something," urged the boy; "something that you ought to know. You see, I did think, once, that because you had all these beautiful things around you, the hours ought to be all sunny ones. But now I know it isn't what's around you; it's what is *in* you!"

"Oh, David, David, you curious boy!"

"No, but really! Let me tell you," pleaded David. "You know I haven't liked them—all those hours till four o'clock came—and I was so glad, after I saw the sundial, to find out that they didn't count, anyhow. But today they *have* counted—they've all counted, Lady of the Roses; and it's just because there was something inside of me that shone and shone, and made them all sunny—those hours."

"Dear me! And what was this wonderful thing?"

David smiled, but he shook his head.

"I can't tell you that yet—in words; but I'll play it. You see, I can't always play them twice alike—those little songs that I find—but this one I can. It sang so long in my head, before my violin had a chance to tell me what it really was, that I sort of learned it. Now, listen!" And he began to play.

It was, indeed, a beautiful song, and Miss Holbrook said so with promptness and enthusiasm; yet still David frowned.

"Yes, yes," he answered, "but don't you see? That was telling you about something inside of me that made all my hours sunshiny ones. Now, what you want is something inside

of you to make yours sunshiny, too. Don't you see?"

An odd look came into Miss Holbrook's eyes.

"That's all very well for you to say, David, but you haven't told me yet, you know, just what it is that's made all this brightness for you."

The boy changed his position, and puckered his forehead into a deeper frown.

"I don't seem to explain so you can understand," he sighed. "It isn't the *special* thing. It's only that it's *something*. And it's thinking about it that does it. Now, mine wouldn't make yours shine, but—still,"—he broke off, a happy relief in his eyes—"yours could be *like* mine, in one way. Mine is something that is going to happen to me—something just beautiful; and you could have that, you know—something that was going to happen to you, to think about."

Miss Holbrook smiled, but only with her lips, Her eyes had grown somber.

"But there isn't anything 'just beautiful' going to happen to me, David," she demurred.

"There could, couldn't there?"

Miss Holbrook bit, her lip; then she gave an odd little laugh that seemed, in some way, to go with the swift red that had come to her cheeks.

"I used to think there could—once," she admitted; "but I've given that up long ago. It—it didn't happen."

"But couldn't you just *think* it was going to?" persisted the boy. "You see I found out yesterday that it's the *thinking* that does it. All day long I was thinking—only thinking. I wasn't *doing* it, at all. I was really raking behind the cart; but the hours all were sunny."

Miss Holbrook laughed now outright.

"What a persistent little mental-science preacher you are!" she exclaimed. "And there's truth—more truth than you know—in it all, too. But I can't do it, David—not that—not that. 'T would take more than *thinking*—to bring that,"

she added, under her breath, as if to herself.

"But thinking does bring things," maintained David earnestly. "There's Joe—Joe Glaspell. His mother works out all day; and he's blind."

"Blind? Oh-h!" shuddered Miss Holbrook.

"Yes; and he has to stay all alone, except for Betty, and she isn't there much. He *thinks all* his things. He has to. He can't *see* anything with his outside eyes. But he sees everything with his inside eyes—everything that I play. Why, Lady of the Roses, he's even seen this—all this here. I told him about it, you know, right away after I'd found you that first day: the big trees and the long shadows across the grass, and the roses, and the shining water, and the lovely marble people peeping through the green leaves; and the sundial, and you so beautiful sitting here in the middle of it all. Then I played it for him; and he said he could see it all just as plain! And *that* was with his inside eyes! And so, if Joe, shut up there in his dark little room, can make his *think* bring him all that, I should think that *you*, here in this beautiful, beautiful place, could make your think bring you anything you wanted it to."

But Miss Holbrook sighed again and shook her head.

"Not that, David, not that," she murmured. "It would take more than thinking to bring—that." Then, with a quick change of manner, she cried: "Come, come, suppose we don't worry any more about *my* hours. Let's think of yours. Tell me, what have you been doing since I saw you last? Perhaps you have been again to—to see Mr. Jack, for instance."

"I have; but I saw Jill mostly, till the last." David hesitated, then he blurted it out: "Lady of the Roses, do you know about the gate and the footbridge?"

Miss Holbrook looked up quickly.

"Know—what, David?"

"Know about them—that they're there?"

"Why—yes, of course; at least, I suppose you mean the footbridge that crosses the little stream at the foot of the hill

over there."

"That's the one." Again David hesitated, and again he blurted out the burden of his thoughts. "Lady of the Roses, did you ever—cross that bridge?"

Miss Holbrook stirred uneasily.

"Not—recently."

"But you don't *mind* folks crossing it?"

"Certainly not—if they wish to."

"There! I knew 't wasn't your blame," triumphed David.

"MY blame!"

"Yes; that Mr. Jack wouldn't let Jill come across, you know. He called her back when she'd got halfway over once." Miss Holbrook's face changed color.

"But I do object," she cried sharply, "to their crossing it when they *don't* want to! Don't forget that, please."

"But Jill did want to."

"How about her brother—did he want her to?"

"N—no."

"Very well, then. I didn't, either."

David frowned. Never had he seen his beloved Lady of the Roses look like this before. He was reminded of what Jill had said about Jack: "His face was all stern and white, and his lips snapped tight shut after every word." So, too, looked Miss Holbrook's face; so, too, had her lips snapped tight shut after her last words. David could not understand it. He said nothing more, however; but, as was usually the case when he was perplexed, he picked up his violin and began to play. And as he played, there gradually came to Miss Holbrook's eyes a softer light, and to her lips lines less tightly drawn. Neither the footbridge nor Mr. Jack, however, was mentioned again that afternoon.

CHAPTER XVII
"The Princess and the Pauper"

It was in the early twilight that Mr. Jack told the story. He, Jill, and David were on the veranda, as usual watching the towers of Sunnycrest turn from gold to silver as the sun dropped behind the hills. It was Jill who had asked for the story.

"About fairies and princesses, you know," she had ordered.

"But how will David like that?" Mr. Jack had demurred. "Maybe he doesn't care for fairies and princesses."

"I read one once about a prince—'t was 'The Prince and the Pauper,' and I liked that," averred David stoutly.

Mr. Jack smiled; then his brows drew together in a frown. His eyes were moodily fixed on the towers.

"Hm-m; well," he said, "I might, I suppose, tell you a story about a *princess* and—a Pauper. I—know one well enough."

"Good!—then tell it," cried both Jill and David. And Mr. Jack began his story.

"She was not always a Princess, and he was not always a Pauper—and that's where the story came in, I suppose," sighed the man. "She was just a girl, once, and he was a boy; and they played together and—liked each other. He lived in a little house on a hill."

"Like this?" demanded Jill.

"Eh? Oh—er—yes, *something* like this," returned Mr. Jack, with an odd half-smile. "And she lived in another bit of a house in a town far away from the boy."

"Then how could they play together?" questioned David.

"They couldn't, *always*. It was only summers when she

came to visit in the boy's town. She was very near him then, for the old aunt whom she visited lived in a big stone house with towers, on another hill, in plain sight from the boy's home."

"Towers like those—where the Lady of the Roses lives?" asked David.

"Eh? What? Oh—er—yes," murmured Mr. Jack. "We'll say the towers were something like those over there." He paused, then went on musingly: "The girl used to signal, sometimes, from one of the tower windows. One wave of the handkerchief meant, 'I'm coming, over'; two waves, with a little pause between, meant, 'You are to come over here.' So the boy used to wait always, after that first wave to see if another followed; so that he might know whether he were to be host or guest that day. The waves always came at eight o'clock in the morning, and very eagerly the boy used to watch for them all through the summer when the girl was there."

"Did they always come, every morning?" Asked Jill.

"No; sometimes the girl had other things to do. Her aunt would want her to go somewhere with her, or other cousins were expected whom the girl must entertain; and she knew the boy did not like other guests to be there when he was, so she never asked him to come over at such times. On such occasions she did sometimes run up to the tower at eight o'clock and wave three times, and that meant, 'Dead Day.' So the boy, after all, never drew a real breath of relief until he made sure that no dreaded third wave was to follow the one or the two."

"Seems to me," observed David, "that all this was sort of one-sided. Didn't the boy say anything?"

"Oh, yes," smiled Mr. Jack. "But the boy did not have any tower to wave from, you must remember. He had only the little piazza on his tiny bit of a house. But he rigged up a pole, and he asked his mother to make him two little flags, a red and a blue one. The red meant 'All right'; and the blue meant

'Got to work'; and these he used to run up on his pole in answer to her waving 'I'm coming over,' or 'You are to come over here.' So, you see, occasionally it was the boy who had to bring the 'Dead Day,' as there were times when he had to work. And, by the way, perhaps you would be interested to know that after a while he thought up a third flag to answer her three waves. He found an old black silk handkerchief of his father's, and he made that into a flag. He told the girl it meant 'I'm heartbroken,' and he said it was a sign of the deepest mourning. The girl laughed and tipped her head saucily to one side, and said, 'Pooh! as if you really cared!' But the boy stoutly maintained his position, and it was that, perhaps, which made her play the little joke one day.

"The boy was fourteen that summer, and the girl thirteen. They had begun their signals years before, but they had not had the black one so long. On this day that I tell you of, the girl waved three waves, which meant, 'Dead Day,' you remember, and watched until the boy had hoisted his black flag which said, 'I'm heart-broken,' in response. Then, as fast as her mischievous little feet could carry her, she raced down one hill and across to the other. Very stealthily she advanced till she found the boy bent over a puzzle on the back stoop, and—and he was whistling merrily.

"How she teased him then! How she taunted him with 'Heart-broken, indeed—and whistling like that!' In vain he blushed and stammered, and protested that his whistling was only to keep up his spirits. The girl only laughed and tossed her yellow curls; then she hunted till she found some little jingling bells, and these she tied to the black badge of mourning and pulled it high up on the flagpole. The next instant she was off with a run and a skip, and a saucy wave of her hand; and the boy was left all alone with an hour's work ahead of him to untie the knots from his desecrated badge of mourning.

"And yet they were wonderfully good friends—this boy

and girl. From the very first, when they were seven and eight, they had said that they would marry each other when they grew up, and always they spoke of it as the expected thing, and laid many happy plans for the time when it should come. To be sure, as they grew older, it was not mentioned quite so often, perhaps; but the boy at least thought—if he thought of it all—that that was only because it was already so well understood."

"What did the girl think?" It was Jill who asked the question.

"Eh? The girl? Oh," answered Mr. Jack, a little bitterly, "I'm afraid I don't know exactly what the girl did think, but—it wasn't that, anyhow—that is, judging from what followed."

"What did follow?"

"Well, to begin with, the old aunt died. The girl was sixteen then. It was in the winter that this happened, and the girl was far away at school. She came to the funeral, however, but the boy did not see her, save in the distance; and then he hardly knew her, so strange did she look in her black dress and hat. She was there only two days, and though he gazed wistfully up at the gray tower, he knew well enough that of course she could not wave to him at such a time as that. Yet he had hoped—almost believed that she would wave two waves that last day, and let him go over to see her.

"But she didn't wave, and he didn't go over. She went away. And then the town learned a wonderful thing. The old lady, her aunt, who had been considered just fairly rich, turned out to be the possessor of almost fabulous wealth, owing to her great holdings of stock in a Western gold mine which had suddenly struck it rich. And to the girl she willed it all. It was then, of course, that the girl became the Princess, but the boy did not realize that—just then. To him she was still 'the girl.'

"For three years he did not see her. She was at school, or traveling abroad, he heard. He, too, had been away to school,

and was, indeed, just ready to enter college. Then, that summer, he heard that she was coming to the old home, and his heart sang within him. Remember, to him she was still the girl. He knew, of course, that she was not the *little* girl who had promised to marry him. But he was sure she was the merry comrade, the true-hearted young girl who used to smile frankly into his eyes, and whom he was now to win for his wife. You see he had forgotten—quite forgotten about the Princess and the money. Such a foolish, foolish boy as he was!

"So he got out his flags gleefully, and one day, when his mother wasn't in the kitchen, he ironed out the wrinkles and smoothed them all ready to be raised on the pole. He would be ready when the girl waved—for of course she would wave; he would show her that he had not forgotten. He could see just how the sparkle would come to her eyes, and just how the little fine lines of mischief would crinkle around her nose when she was ready to give that first wave. He could imagine that she would like to find him napping; that she would like to take him by surprise, and make him scurry around for his flags to answer her.

"But he would show her! As if she, a girl, were to beat him at their old game! He wondered which it would be: 'I'm coming over,' or, 'You are to come over here.' Whichever it was, he would answer, of course, with the red 'All right.' Still, it *would* be a joke to run up the blue 'Got to work,' and then slip across to see her, just as she, so long ago, had played the joke on him! On the whole, however, he thought the red flag would be better. And it was that one which he laid uppermost ready to his hand, when he arranged them.

"At last she came. He heard of it at once. It was already past four o'clock, but he could not forbear, even then, to look toward the tower. It would be like her, after all, to wave then, that very night, just so as to catch him napping, he thought. She did not wave, however. The boy was sure of that, for he watched the tower till dark.

"In the morning, long before eight o'clock, the boy was ready. He debated for some time whether to stand out of doors on the piazza, or to hide behind the screened window, where he could still watch the tower. He decided at last that it would be better not to let her see him when she looked toward the house; then his triumph would be all the more complete when he dashed out to run up his answer.

"Eight o'clock came and passed. The boy waited until nine, but there was no sign of life from the tower. The boy was angry then, at himself. He called himself, indeed, a fool, to hide as he did. Of course she wouldn't wave when he was nowhere in sight—when he had apparently forgotten! And here was a whole precious day wasted!

"The next morning, long before eight, the boy stood in plain sight on the piazza. As before he waited until nine; and as before there was no sign of life at the tower window. The next morning he was there again, and the next, and the next. It took just five days, indeed, to convince the boy—as he was convinced at last—that the girl did not intend to wave at all."

"But how unkind of her!" exclaimed David.

"She couldn't have been nice one bit!" decided Jill.

"You forget," said Mr. Jack. "She was the Princess."

"Huh!" grunted Jill and David in unison.

"The boy remembered it then," went on Mr. Jack, after a pause—"about the money, and that she was a Princess. And of course he knew—when he thought of it—that he could not expect that a Princess would wave like a girl—just a girl. Besides, very likely she did not care particularly about seeing him. Princesses did forget, he fancied—they had so much, so very much to fill their lives. It was this thought that kept him from going to see her—this, and the recollection that, after all, if she really *had* wanted to see him, she could have waved.

"There came a day, however, when another youth, who did not dare to go alone, persuaded him, and together they paid her a call. The boy understood, then, many things. He

found the Princess; there was no sign of the girl. The Princess was tall and dignified, with a cold little hand and a smooth, sweet voice. There was no frank smile in her eyes, neither were there any mischievous crinkles about her nose and lips. There was no mention of towers or flags; no reference to wavings or to childhood's days. There was only a stiffly polite little conversation about colleges and travels, with a word or two about books and plays. Then the callers went home. On the way the boy smiled scornfully to himself. He was trying to picture the beauteous vision he had seen, this unapproachable Princess in her filmy lace gown—standing in the tower window and waving—waving to a bit of a house on the opposite hill. As if that could happen!

"The boy, during those last three years, had known only books. He knew little of girls—only one girl—and he knew still less of Princesses. So when, three days after the call, there came a chance to join a summer camp with a man who loved books even better than did the boy himself, he went gladly. Once he had refused to go on this very trip; but then there had been the girl. Now there was only the Princess—and the Princess didn't count."

"Like the hours that aren't sunshiny," interpreted David.

"Yes," corroborated Mr. Jack. "Like the hours when the sun doesn't shine."

"And then?" prompted Jill.

"Well, then—there wasn't much worth telling," rejoined Mr. Jack gloomily. "Two more years passed, and the Princess grew to be twenty-one. She came into full control of her property then, and after a while she came back to the old stone house with the towers and turned it into a fairyland of beauty. She spent money like water. All manner of artists, from the man who painted her ceilings to the man who planted her seeds, came and bowed to her will. From the four corners of the earth she brought her treasures and lavished them through the house and grounds. Then, every summer, she

came herself, and lived among them, a very Princess indeed."

"And the boy?—what became of the boy?" demanded David. "Didn't he see her—ever?"

Mr. Jack shook his head.

"Not often, David; and when he did, it did not make him any—happier. You see, the boy had become the Pauper; you mustn't forget that."

"But he wasn't a Pauper when you left him last."

"Wasn't he? Well, then, I'll tell you about that. You see, the boy, even though he did go away, soon found out that in his heart the Princess was still the girl, just the same. He loved her, and he wanted her to be his wife; so for a little—for a very little—he was wild enough to think that he might work and study and do great things in the world until he was even a Prince himself, and then he could marry the Princess."

"Well, couldn't he?"

"No. To begin with, he lost his health. Then, away back in the little house on the hill something happened—a something that left a very precious charge for him to keep; and he had to go back and keep it, and to try to see if he couldn't find that lost health, as well. And that is all."

"All! You don't mean that that is the end!" exclaimed Jill.

"That's the end."

"But that isn't a mite of a nice end," complained David. "They always get married and live happy ever after—in stories."

"Do they?" Mr. Jack smiled a little sadly. "Perhaps they do, David—in stories."

"Well, can't they in this one?"

"I don't see how."

"Why can't he go to her and ask her to marry him?"

Mr. Jack drew himself up proudly.

"The Pauper and the Princess? Never! Paupers don't go to Princesses, David, and say, 'I love you.'"

David frowned.

"Why not? I don't see why—if they want to do it. Seems as if somehow it might be fixed."

"It can't be," returned Mr. Jack, his gaze on the towers that crowned the opposite hill; "not so long as always before the Pauper's eyes there are those gray walls behind which he pictures the Princess in the midst of her golden luxury."

To neither David nor Jill did the change to the present tense seem strange. The story was much too real to them for that.

"Well, anyhow, I think it ought to be fixed," declared David, as he rose to his feet.

"So do I—but we can't fix it," laughed Jill. "And I'm hungry. Let's see what there is to eat!"

CHAPTER XVIII
David to the Rescue

It was a beautiful moonlight night, but for once David was not thinking of the moon. All the way to the Holly farmhouse he was thinking of Mr. Jack's story, "The Princess and the Pauper." It held him strangely. He felt that he never could forget it. For some reason that he could not have explained, it made him sad, too, and his step was very quiet as he went up the walk toward the kitchen door.

It was after eight o'clock. David had taken supper with Mr. Jack and Jill, and not for some hours had he been at the farmhouse. In the doorway now he stopped short; then instinctively he stepped back into the shadow. In the kitchen a kerosene light was burning. It showed Mrs. Holly crying at the table, and Mr. Holly, white-faced and stern-lipped, staring at nothing. Then Mrs. Holly raised her face, drawn and tear-stained, and asked a trembling question.

"Simeon, have you thought? We might go—to John—for—help."

David was frightened then, so angry was the look that came into Simeon Holly's face.

"Ellen, we'll have no more of this," said the man harshly. "Understand, I'd rather lose the whole thing and—and starve, than go to—John."

David fled then. Up the back stairs he crept to his room and left his violin. A moment later he stole down again and sought Perry Larson whom he had seen smoking in the barn doorway.

"Perry, what is it?" he asked in a trembling voice. "What has happened—in there?" He pointed toward the house.

The man puffed for a moment in silence before he took his pipe from his mouth.

"Well, sonny, I s'pose I may as well tell ye. You'll have ter know it sometime, seein' as 't won't be no secret long. They've had a stroke o' bad luck—Mr. an' Mis' Holly has."

"What is it?"

The man hitched in his seat.

"By sugar, boy, I s'pose if I tell ye, there ain't no sartinty that you'll sense it at all. I reckon it ain't in your class."

"But what is it?"

"Well, it's money—and one might as well talk moonshine to you as money, I s'pose; but here goes it. It's a thousand dollars, boy, that they owed. Here, like this," he explained, rummaging his pockets until he had found a silver dollar to lay on his open palm. "Now, jest imagine a thousand of them; that's heaps an' heaps—more 'n I ever see in my life."

"Like the stars?" guessed David.

The man nodded.

"Ex-*actly!* Well, they owed this—Mr. an' Mis' Holly did—and they had agreed ter pay it next Sat'day. And they was all right, too. They had it plum saved in the bank, an' was goin' ter draw it Thursday, ter make sure. An' they was feelin' mighty pert over it, too, when ter-day along comes the news that somethin's broke kersmash in that bank, an' they've shet it up. An' nary a cent can the Hollys git now—an' maybe never. Anyhow, not 'fore it's too late for this job."

"But won't he wait?—that man they owe it to? I should think he'd have to, if they didn't have it to pay."

"Not much he will, when it's old Streeter that's got the mortgage on a good fat farm like this!"

David drew his brows together perplexedly.

"What is a—a mortgage?" he asked. "Is it anything like a porte-cochere? I KNOW what that is, 'cause my Lady of the Roses has one; but we haven't got that—down here."

Perry Larson sighed in exasperation.

"Gosh, if that ain't 'bout what I expected of ye! No, it ain't even second cousin to a—a— that thing you're a-talkin' of. In plain wordin', it's jest this: Mr. Holly, he says ter Streeter: 'You give me a thousand dollars and I'll pay ye back on a sartin day; if I don't pay, you can sell my farm fur what it'll bring, an' *take* yer pay. Well, now here 't is. Mr. Holly can't pay, an' so Streeter will put up the farm fur sale."

"What, with Mr. and Mrs. Holly *living* here?"

"Sure! Only they'll have ter git out, ye know."

"Where'll they go?"

"The Lord knows; I don't."

"And is *that* what they're crying for—in there?—because they've got to go?"

"Sure!"

"But isn't there anything, anywhere, that can be done to—stop it?"

"I don't see how, kid,—not unless someone ponies up with the money 'fore next Sat'day—an' a thousand o' them things don't grow on ev'ry bush," he finished, gently patting the coin in his hand.

At the words a swift change came to David's face. His cheeks paled and his eyes dilated in terror. It was as if ahead of him he saw a yawning abyss, eager to engulf him.

"And you say—*money* would—fix it?" he asked thickly.

"Ex-*act*-ly!—a thousand o' them, though, 't would take."

A dawning relief came into David's eyes—it was as if he saw a bridge across the abyss.

"You mean—that there wouldn't *anything* do, only silver pieces—like those?" he questioned hopefully.

"Sugar, kid, 'course there would! Gosh, but you BE a checkerboard o' sense an' nonsense, an' no mistake! Any money would do the job—any money! Don't ye see? Anything that's money."

"Would g-gold do it?" David's voice was very faint now.

"Sure!—gold, or silver, or greenbacks, or—or a check, if

it had the dough behind it."

David did not appear to hear the last. With an oddly strained look he had hung upon the man's first words; but at the end of the sentence he only murmured, "Oh, thank you," and turned away. He was walking slowly now toward the house. His head was bowed. His step lagged.

"Now, ain't that jest like that chap," muttered the man, "ter slink off like that as if he was a whipped cur. I'll bet two cents an' a doughnut, too, that in five minutes he'll be what he calls 'playin' it' on that 'ere fiddle o' his. An' I'll be derned, too, if I ain't curious ter see what he WILL make of it. It strikes me this ought ter fetch somethin' first cousin to a dirge!"

On the porch steps David paused a breathless instant. From the kitchen came the sound of Mrs. Holly's sobs and of a stern voice praying. With a shudder and a little choking cry the boy turned then and crept softly upstairs to his room.

He played, too, as Perry Larson had wagered. But it was not the tragedy of the closed bank, nor the honor of the threatened farm selling that fell from his violin. It was, instead, the swan song of a little pile of gold—gold which lay now in a chimney cupboard, but which was soon to be placed at the feet of the mourning man and woman downstairs. And in the song was the sob of a boy who sees his house of dreams burn to ashes; who sees his wonderful life and work out in the wide world turn to endless days of weed-pulling and dirt-digging in a narrow valley. There was in the song, too, something of the struggle, the fierce yea and nay of the conflict. But, at the end, there was the wild burst of exaltation of renunciation, so that the man in the barn door below fairly sprang to his feet with an angry:—

"Gosh! if he hain't turned the thing into a jig—durn him! Don't he know more'n that at such a time as this?"

Later, a very little later, the shadowy figure of the boy stood before him.

"I've been thinking," stammered David, "that maybe I—could help, about that money, you know."

"Now, look a-here, boy," exploded Perry, in open exasperation, "as I said in the first place, this ain't in your class. 'T ain't no pink cloud sailin' in the sky, nor a bluebird singin' in a blackb'rry bush. An' you might 'play it'—as you call it—till doomsday, an' 't wouldn't do no good—though I'm free ter confess that your playin' of them 'ere other things sounds real pert an' chirky at times; but 't won't do no good here."

David stepped forward, bringing his small, anxious face full into the moonlight.

"But 't was the money, Perry; I meant about, the money," he explained. "They were good to me and wanted me when there wasn't anyone else that did; and now I'd like to do something for them. There aren't so MANY pieces, and they aren't silver. There's only one hundred and six of them; I counted. But maybe they'd help some. It—it would be a—start." His voice broke over the once beloved word, then went on with renewed strength. "There, see! Would these do?" And with both hands he held up to view his cap sagging under its weight of gold.

Perry Larson's jaw fell open. His eyes bulged. Dazedly he reached out and touched with trembling fingers the heap of shining disks that seemed in the mellow light like little earth-born children of the moon itself. The next instant he recoiled sharply.

"Great snakes, boy, where'd you git that money?" he demanded.

"Of father. He went to the far country, you know."

Perry Larson snorted angrily.

"See here, boy, for once, if ye can, talk horse-sense! Surely, even YOU don't expect me ter believe that he's sent you that money from—from where he's gone to!"

"Oh, no. He left it."

"Left it! Why, boy, you know better! There wa'n't a

cent—hardly—found on him."

"He gave it to me before—by the roadside."

"Gave it to you! Where in the name of goodness has it been since?"

"In the little cupboard in my room, behind the books."

"Great snakes!" muttered Perry Larson, reaching out his hand and gingerly picking up one of the gold pieces.

David eyed him anxiously.

"Won't they—do?" he faltered. "There aren't a thousand; there's only a hundred and six; but—"

"Do!" cut in the man, excitedly. He had been examining the gold piece at close range. "Do! Well, I reckon they'll do. By Jiminy!—and ter think you've had this up yer sleeve all this time! Well, I'll believe anythin' of yer now—anythin'! You can't stump me with nuthin'! Come on." And he hurriedly led the way toward the house.

"But they weren't up my sleeve," corrected David, as he tried to keep up with the long strides of the man. "I *said* they were in the cupboard in my room."

There was no answer. Larson had reached the porch steps, and had paused there hesitatingly. From the kitchen still came the sound of sobs. Aside from that there was silence. The boy, however, did not hesitate. He went straight up the steps and through the open kitchen door. At the table sat the man and the woman, their eyes covered with their hands.

With a swift overturning of his cap, David dumped his burden onto the table, and stepped back respectfully.

"If you please, sir, would this—help any?" he asked.

At the jingle of the coins Simeon Holly and his wife lifted their heads abruptly. A half-uttered sob died on the woman's lips. A quick cry came from the man's. He reached forth an eager hand and had almost clutched the gold when a sudden change came to his face. With a stern ejaculation he drew back.

"Boy, where did that money come from?" he challenged.

David sighed in a discouraged way. It seemed that, always, the showing of this gold mean't questioning—eternal questioning.

"Surely," continued Simeon Holly, "you did not—" With the boy's frank gaze upturned to his, the man could not finish his sentence.

Before David could answer came the voice of Perry Larson from the kitchen doorway.

"No, sir, he didn't, Mr. Holly; an' it's all straight, I'm thinkin'—though I'm free ter confess it does sound nutty. His dad give it to him."

"His—father! But where—where has it been ever since?"

"In the chimney cupboard in his room, he says, sir."

Simeon Holly turned in frowning amazement.

"David, what does this mean? Why have you kept this gold in a place like that?"

"Why, there wasn't anything else to do with it," answered the boy perplexedly. "I hadn't any use for it, you know, and father said to keep it till I needed it."

"'Hadn't any use for it!" blustered Larson from the doorway. "Jiminy! Now, ain't that jest like that boy?"

But David hurried on with his explanation.

"We never used to use them—Father and I—except to buy things to eat and wear; and down here *you* give me those, you know."

"Gorry!" interjected Perry Larson. "Do you reckon, boy, that Mr. Holly himself was give them things he gives ter you?"

The boy turned sharply, a startled question in his eyes.

"What do you mean? Do you mean that—" His face changed suddenly. His cheeks turned a shamed red. "Why, he did—he did have to buy them, of course, just as father did. And I never even thought of it before! Then, it's yours, anyway—it belongs to you," he argued, turning to Farmer Holly, and shoving the gold nearer to his hands. "There isn't enough, maybe—but 't will help!"

"They're ten-dollar gold pieces, sir," spoke up Larson importantly; "an' there's a hundred an' six of them. That's jest one thousand an' sixty dollars, as I make it."

Simeon Holly, self-controlled man that he was, almost leaped from his chair.

"One thousand and sixty dollars!" he gasped. Then, to David: "Boy, in Heaven's name, who are you?"

"I don't know—only David." The boy spoke wearily, with a grieved sob in his voice. He was very tired, a good deal perplexed, and a little angry. He wished, if no one wanted this gold, that he could take it upstairs again to the chimney cupboard; or, if they objected to that, that they would at least give it to him, and let him go away now to that beautiful music he was to hear, and to those kind people who were always to understand what he said when he played.

"Of course," ventured Perry Larson diffidently, "I ain't professin' ter know any great shakes about the hand of the Lord, Mr. Holly, but it do strike me that this 'ere gold comes mighty near bein' proverdential—fur you."

Simeon Holly fell back in his seat. His eyes clung to the gold, but his lips set into rigid lines.

"That money is the boy's, Larson. It isn't mine," he said.

"He's give it to ye."

Simeon Holly shook his head.

"David is nothing but a child, Perry. He doesn't realize at all what he is doing, nor how valuable his gift is."

"I know, sir, but you *did* take him in, when there wouldn't nobody else do it," argued Larson. "An', anyhow, couldn't you make a kind of an I O U of it, even if he is a kid? Then, some day you could pay him back. Meanwhile you'd be a-keepin' him, an' a-schoolin' him; an' that's somethin'."

"I know, I know," nodded Simeon Holly thoughtfully, his eyes going from the gold to David's face. Then, aloud, yet as if to himself, he breathed: "Boy, boy, who was your father?"

How came he by all that god—and he—a tramp!"



"You're my boy, David—my boy!"

David drew himself suddenly erect. His eyes flashed.

"I don't know, sir. But I do know this: he didn't *steal* it!"

Across the table Mrs. Holly drew a quick breath, but she did not speak—save with her pleading eyes. Mrs. Holly seldom spoke—save with her eyes—when her husband was solving a knotty problem. She was dumfounded now that he should listen so patiently to the man, Larson—though she was not more surprised than was Larson himself. For both of them, however, there came at this moment a still greater surprise. Simeon Holly leaned forward suddenly, the stern lines quite gone from his lips, and his face working with emotion as he drew David toward him.

"You're a good son, boy—a good loyal son; and—and I wish you were mine! I believe you. He didn't steal it, and I won't steal it, either. But I will use it, since you are so good as to offer it. But it shall be a loan, David, and some day, God helping me, you shall have it back. Meanwhile, you're my boy, David—my boy!"

"Oh, thank you, sir," rejoiced David. "And, really, you know, being wanted like that is better than the start would be, isn't it?"

"Better than—what?"

David shifted his position. He had not meant to say just that.

"N—nothing," he stammered, looking about for a means of quick escape. "I—I was just talking," he finished. And he was immeasurably relieved to find that Mr. Holly did not press the matter further.

CHAPTER XIX
The Unbeautiful World

In spite of the exaltation of renunciation, and in spite of the joy of being newly and especially "wanted," those early September days were sometimes hard for David. Not until he had relinquished all hope of his "start" did he fully realize what that hope had meant to him.

There were times, to be sure, when there was nothing but rejoicing within him that he was able thus to aid the Hollys. There were other times when there was nothing but the sore heartache because of the great work out in the beautiful world that could now never be done; and because of the unlovely work at hand that must be done. To tell the truth, indeed, David's entire conception of life had become suddenly a chaos of puzzling contradictions.

To Mr. Jack, one day, David went with his perplexities. Not that he told him of the gold pieces and of the unexpected use to which they had been put—indeed, no. David had made up his mind never, if he could help himself, to mention those gold pieces to anyone who did not already know of them. They meant questions, and the questions, explanations. And he had had enough of both on that particular subject. But to Mr. Jack he said one day, when they were alone together:—

"Mr. Jack, how many folks have you got inside of your head?"

"Eh—what, David?"

David repeated his question and attached an explanation.

"I mean, the folks that—that make you do things."

Mr. Jack laughed.

"Well," he said, "I believe some people make claims to

quite a number, and perhaps almost everyone owns to a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde."

"Who are they?"

"Never mind, David. I don't think you know the gentlemen, anyhow. They're only something like the little girl with a curl. One is very, very good, indeed, and the other is horrid."

"Oh, yes, I know them; they're the ones that come to me," returned David, with a sigh. "I've had them a lot, lately."

Mr. Jack stared.

"Oh, have you?"

"Yes; and that's what's the trouble. How can you drive them off—the one that is bad, I mean?"

"Well, really," confessed Mr. Jack, "I'm not sure I can tell. You see—the gentlemen visit me sometimes."

"Oh, do they?"

"Yes."

"I'm so glad—that is, I mean," amended David, in answer to Mr. Jack's uplifted eyebrows, "I'm glad that you understand what I'm talking about. You see, I tried Perry Larson last night on it, to get him to tell me what to do. But he only stared and laughed. He didn't know the names of 'em, anyhow, as you do, and at last he got really almost angry and said I made him feel so 'buggy' and 'creepy' that he wouldn't dare look at himself in the glass if I kept on, for fear someone he'd never known was there should jump out at him."

Mr. Jack chuckled.

"Well, I suspect, David, that Perry knew one of your gentlemen by the name of 'conscience,' perhaps; and I also suspect that maybe conscience does pretty nearly fill the bill, and that you've been having a bout with that. Eh? Now, what is the trouble? Tell me about it."

David stirred uneasily. Instead of answering, he asked another question.

"Mr. Jack, it is a beautiful world, isn't it?"

For a moment there was no, answer; then a low voice

replied:—

"Your father said it was, David."

Again David moved restlessly.

"Yes; but Father was on the mountain. And down here—well, down here there are lots of things that I don't believe he knew about."

"What, for instance?"

"Why, lots of things—too many to tell. Of course there are things like catching fish, and killing birds and squirrels and other things to eat, and plaguing cats and dogs. Father never would have called those beautiful. Then there are others like little Jimmy Clark who can't walk, and the man at the Marstons' who's sick, and Joe Glaspell who is blind. Then there are still different ones like Mr. Holly's little boy. Perry says he ran away years and years ago, and made his people very unhappy. Father wouldn't call that a beautiful world, would he? And how can people like that always play in tune? And there are the Princess and the Pauper that you told about."

"Oh, the story?"

"Yes; and people like them can't be happy and think the world is beautiful, of course."

"Why not?"

"Because they didn't end right. They didn't get married and live happy ever after, you know."

"Well, I don't think I'd worry about that, David—at least, not about the Princess. I fancy the world was very beautiful to her, all right. The Pauper—well, perhaps he wasn't very happy. But, after all, David, you know happiness is something inside of yourself. Perhaps half of these people are happy, in their way."

"There! and that's another thing," sighed David. "You see, I found that out—that it was inside of yourself—quite a while ago, and I told the Lady of the Roses. But now I—can't make it work myself."

"What's the matter?"

"Well, you see then something was going to happen—something that I liked; and I found that just thinking of it made it so that I didn't mind raking or hoeing, or anything like that; and I told the Lady of the Roses. And I told her that even if it wasn't going to happen she could *think* it was going to, and that that would be just the same, because 't was the thinking that made my hours sunny ones. It wasn't the *doing* at all. I said I knew because I hadn't *done* it yet. See?"

"I—think so, David."

"Well, I've found out that it isn't the same at all; for now that I *know* that this beautiful thing isn't ever going to happen to me, I can think and think all day, and it doesn't do a mite of good. The sun is just as hot, and my back aches just as hard, and the field is just as big and endless as it used to be when I had to call it that those hours didn't count. Now, what is the matter?"

Mr. Jack laughed, but he shook his head a little sadly.

"You're getting into too deep waters for me, David. I suspect you're floundering in a sea that has upset the boats of sages since the world began. But what is it that was so nice, and that isn't going to happen? Perhaps I *might* help on that."

"No, you couldn't," frowned David; "and there couldn't anybody, either, you see, because I wouldn't go back now and *let* it happen, anyhow, as long as I know what I do. Why, if I did, there wouldn't be *any* hours that were sunny then—not even the ones after four o'clock; I—I'd feel so mean! But what I don't see is just how I can fix it up with the Lady of the Roses."

"What has she to do with it?"

"Why, at the very first, when she said she didn't have ANY sunshiny hours, I told her—"

"When she said what?" interposed Mr. Jack, coming suddenly erect in his chair.

"That she didn't have any hours to count, you know."

"To—COUNT?"

"Yes; it was the sundial. Didn't I tell you? Yes, I know I did—about the words on it—not counting any hours that weren't sunny, you know. And she said she wouldn't have ANY hours to count; that the sun never shone for her."

"Why, David," demurred Mr. Jack in a voice that shook a little, "are you sure? Did she say just that? You—you must be mistaken—when she has—has everything to make her happy."

"I wasn't, because I said that same thing to her myself—afterwards. And then I told her—when I found out myself, you know—about its being what was inside of you, after all, that counted; and then is when I asked her if she couldn't think of something nice that was going to happen to her sometime."

"Well, what did she say?"

"She shook her head, and said 'No.' Then she looked away, and her eyes got soft and dark like little pools in the brook where the water stops to rest. And she said she had hoped once that this something would happen; but that it hadn't, and that it would take something more than thinking to bring it. And I know now what she meant, because thinking isn't all that counts, is it?"

Mr. Jack did not answer. He had risen to his feet, and was pacing restlessly up and down the veranda. Once or twice he turned his eyes toward the towers of Sunnycrest, and David noticed that there was a new look on his face.

Very soon, however, the old tiredness came back to his eyes, and he dropped into his seat again, muttering "Fool! of course it couldn't be—that!"

"Be what?" asked David.

Mr. Jack started.

"Er—nothing; nothing that you would understand, David. Go on—with what you were saying."

"There isn't any more. It's all done. It's only that I'm

wondering how I'm going to learn here that it's a beautiful world, so that I can—tell father."

Mr. Jack roused himself. He had the air of a man who determinedly throws to one side a heavy burden.

"Well, David," he smiled, "as I said before, you are still out on that sea where there are so many little upturned boats. There might be a good many ways of answering that question."

"Mr. Holly says," mused the boy, aloud, a little gloomily, "that it doesn't make any difference whether we find things beautiful or not; that we're here to do something serious in the world."

"That is about what I should have expected of Mr. Holly," retorted Mr. Jack grimly. "He acts it—and looks it. But—I don't believe you are going to tell your father just that."

"No, sir, I don't believe I am," accorded David soberly.

"I have an idea that you're going to find that answer just where your father said you would—in your violin. See if you don't. Things that aren't beautiful you'll make beautiful—because we find what we are looking for, and you're looking for beautiful things. After all, boy, if we march straight ahead, chin up, and sing our own little song with all our might and main, we shan't come so far amiss from the goal, I'm thinking. There! that's preaching, and I didn't mean to preach; but—well, to tell the truth, that was meant for myself, for—I'm hunting for the beautiful world, too."

"Yes, sir, I know," returned David fervently. And again Mr. Jack, looking into the sympathetic, glowing dark eyes, wondered if, after all, David really could—know.

Even yet Mr. Jack was not used to David; there were "so many of him," he told himself. There were the boy, the artist, and a third personality so evanescent that it defied being named. The boy was jolly, impetuous, confidential, and delightful—plainly reveling in all manner of fun and frolic. The artist was nothing but a bunch of nervous alertness, ready to

find melody and rhythm in every passing thought or flying cloud. The third—that baffling third that defied the naming—was a dreamy, visionary, untouchable creature who floated so far above one's head that one's hand could never pull him down to get a good square chance to see what he did look like. All this thought Mr. Jack as he gazed into David's luminous eyes.

CHAPTER XX
The Unfamiliar Way

In September David entered the village school. School and David did not assimilate at once. Very confidently the teacher set to work to grade her new pupil; but she was not so confident when she found that while in Latin he was perilously near herself (and in French—which she was not required to teach—disastrously beyond her!), in United States history he knew only the barest outlines of certain portions, and could not name a single battle in any of its wars. In most studies he was far beyond boys of his own age, yet at every turn she encountered these puzzling spots of discrepancy, which rendered grading in the ordinary way out of the question.

David's methods of recitation, too, were peculiar, and somewhat disconcerting. He also did not hesitate to speak aloud when he chose, nor to rise from his seat and move to any part of the room as the whim seized him. In time, of course, all this was changed; but it was several days before the boy learned so to conduct himself that he did not shatter to atoms the peace and propriety of the schoolroom.

Outside of school David had little work to do now, though there were still left a few light tasks about the house. Home life at the Holly farmhouse was the same for David, yet with a difference—the difference that comes from being really wanted instead of being merely dutifully kept. There were other differences, too, subtle differences that did not show, perhaps, but that still were there.

Mr. and Mrs. Holly, more than ever now, were learning to look at the world through David's eyes. One day—one

wonderful day—they even went to walk in the woods with the boy; and whenever before had Simeon Holly left his work for so frivolous a thing as a walk in the woods!

It was not accomplished, however, without a struggle, as David could have told. The day was a Saturday, clear, crisp, and beautiful, with a promise of October in the air; and David fairly tingled to be free and away. Mrs. Holly was baking—and the birds sang unheard outside her pantry window. Mr. Holly was digging potatoes—and the clouds sailed unnoticed above his head.

All the morning David urged and begged. If for once, just this once, they would leave everything and come, they would not regret it, he was sure. But they shook their heads and said, "No, no, impossible!" In the afternoon the pies were done and the potatoes dug, and David urged and pleaded again. If once, only this once, they would go to walk with him in the woods, he would be so happy, so very happy! And to please the boy—they went.

It was a curious walk. Ellen Holly trod softly, with timid feet. She threw hurried, frightened glances from side to side. It was plain that Ellen Holly did not know how to play. Simeon Holly stalked at her elbow, stern, silent, and preoccupied. It was plain that Simeon Holly not only did not know how to play, but did not even care to find out.

The boy tripped ahead and talked. He had the air of a mon-arch displaying his kingdom. On one side was a bit of moss worthy of the closest attention; on another, a vine that carried allurement in every tendril. Here was a flower that was like a story for interest, and there was a bush that bore a secret worth the telling. Even Simeon Holly glowed into a semblance of life when David had unerringly picked out and called by name the spruce, and fir, and pine, and larch, and then, in answer to Mrs. Holly's murmured: "But, David, where's the difference? They look so much alike!" he had said:—

"Oh, but they aren't, you know. Just see how much more pointed at the top that fir is than that spruce back there; and the branches grow straight out, too, like arms, and they're all smooth and tapering at the ends like a pussy-cat's tail. But the spruce back there—ITS branches turned down and out—didn't you notice?—and they're all bushy at the ends like a squirrel's tail. Oh, they're lots different! That's a larch 'way ahead—that one with the branches all scraggly and close down to the ground. I could start to climb that easy; but I couldn't that pine over there. See, it's 'way up, up, before there's a place for your foot! But I love pines. Up there on the mountains where I lived, the pines were so tall that it seemed as if God used them sometimes to hold up the sky."

And Simeon Holly heard, and said nothing; and that he did say nothing—especially nothing in answer to David's confident assertions concerning celestial and terrestrial architecture—only goes to show how well, indeed, the man was learning to look at the world through David's eyes.

Nor were these all of David's friends to whom Mr. and Mrs. Holly were introduced on that memorable walk. There were the birds, and the squirrels, and, in fact, everything that had life. And each one he greeted joyously by name, as he would greet a friend whose home and habits he knew. Here was a wonderful woodpecker, there was a beautiful bluejay. Ahead, that brilliant bit of color that flashed across their path was a tanager. Once, far up in the sky, as they crossed an open space, David spied a long black streak moving southward.

"Oh, see!" he exclaimed. "The crows! See them?—'way up there? Wouldn't it be fun if we could do that, and fly hundreds and hundreds of miles, maybe a thousand?"

"Oh, David," remonstrated Mrs. Holly, unbelievingly.

"But they do! These look as if they'd started on their winter journey South, too; but if they have, they're early. Most of them don't go till October. They come back in March, you know. Though I've had them, on the mountain,

that stayed all the year with me."

"My! but I love to watch them go," murmured David, his eyes following the rapidly disappearing blackline. "Lots of birds you can't see, you know, when they start for the South. They fly at night—the woodpeckers and orioles and cuckoos, and lots of others. They're afraid, I guess, don't you? But I've seen them. I've watched them. They tell each other when they're going to start."

"Oh, David," remonstrated Mrs. Holly, again, her eyes reproving, but plainly enthralled.

"But they do tell each other," claimed the boy, with sparkling eyes. "They must! For, all of a sudden, some night, you'll hear the signal, and then they'll begin to gather from all directions. I've seen them. Then, suddenly, they're all up and off to the South—not in one big flock, but broken up into little flocks, following one after another, with such a beautiful whir of wings. Oof—*oof*—*oof!*—and they're gone! And I don't see them again till next year. But you've seen the swallows, haven't you? They go in the daytime, and they're the easiest to tell of any of them. They fly so swift and straight. Haven't you seen the swallows go?"

"Why, I—I don't know, David," murmured Mrs. Holly, with a helpless glance at her husband stalking on ahead. "I—I didn't know there were such things to—to know."

There was more, much more, that David said before the walk came to an end. And though, when it did end, neither Simeon Holly nor his wife said a word of its having been a pleasure or a profit, there was yet on their faces something of the peace and rest and quietness that belonged to the woods they had left.

It was a beautiful month—that September, and David made the most of it. Out of school meant out of doors for him. He saw Mr. Jack and Jill often. He spent much time, too, with the Lady of the Roses. She was still the Lady of the *Roses* to David, though in the garden now were the purple and scarlet

and yellow of the asters, salvia, and golden glow, instead of the blush and perfume of the roses.

David was very much at home at Sunnycrest. He was welcome, he knew, to go where he pleased. Even the servants were kind to him, as well as was the elderly cousin whom he seldom saw, but who, he knew, lived there as company for his Lady of the Roses.

Perhaps best, next to the garden, David loved the tower room; possibly because Miss Holbrook herself so often suggested that they go there. And it was there that they were when he said, dreamily, one day:—

"I like this place—up here so high, only sometimes it does make me think of that Princess, because it was in a tower like this that she was, you know."

"Fairy stories, David?" asked Miss Holbrook lightly.

"No, not exactly, though there was a Princess in it. Mr. Jack told it." David's eyes were still out of the window.

"Oh, Mr. Jack! And does Mr. Jack often tell you stories?"

"No. He never told only this one—and maybe that's why I remember it so."

"Well, and what did the Princess do?" Miss Holbrook's voice was still light, still carelessly preoccupied. Her attention, plainly, was given to the sewing in her hand.

"She didn't do and that's what was the trouble," sighed I David. "She didn't wave, you know."

The needle in Miss Holbrook's fingers stopped short in midair, the thread half-drawn.

"Didn't—wave!" she stammered. "What do you—mean?"

"Nothing," laughed the boy, turning away from the window. "I forgot that you didn't know the story."

"But maybe I do—that is—what was the story?" asked Miss Holbrook, wetting her lips as if they had grown suddenly very dry.

"Oh, do you? I wonder now! It wasn't 'The *Prince* and the Pauper,' but the *Princess* and the Pauper," cited David; "and

they used to wave signals, and answer with flags. Do you know the story?"

There was no answer. Miss Holbrook was putting away her work, hurriedly, and with hands that shook. David noticed that she even pricked herself in her anxiety to get the needle tucked away. Then she drew him to a low stool at her side.

"David, I want you to tell me that story, please," she said, "just as Mr. Jack told it to you. Now, be careful and put it all in, because I—I want to hear it," she finished, with an odd little laugh that seemed to bring two bright red spots to her cheeks.

"Oh, do you want to hear it? Then I will tell it," cried David joyfully. To David, almost as delightful as to hear a story was to tell one himself. "You see, first—" And he plunged headlong into the introduction.

David knew it well—that story: and there was, perhaps, little that he forgot. It might not have been always told in Mr. Jack's language; but his meaning was there, and very intently Miss Holbrook listened while David told of the boy and the girl, the wavings, and the flags that were blue, black, and red. She laughed once—that was at the little joke with the bells that the girl played—but she did not speak until sometime later when David was telling of the first homecoming of the Princess, and of the time when the boy on his tiny piazza watched and watched in vain for a waving white signal from the tower.

"Do you mean to say," interposed Miss Holbrook then, almost starting to her feet, "that that boy expected—" She stopped suddenly, and fell back in her chair. The two red spots on her cheeks had become a rosy glow now, all over her face.

"Expected what?" asked David.

"N—Nothing. Go on. I was so—so interested," explained Miss Holbrook faintly. "Go on."



“Then why didn’t he go to her and—and—tell her?”

And David did go on; nor did the story lose by his telling. It gained, indeed, something, for now it had woven through it the very strong sympathy of a boy who loved the Pauper for his sorrow and hated the Princess for causing that sorrow.

"And so," he concluded mournfully, "you see it isn't a very nice story, after all, for it didn't end well a bit. They ought to have got married and lived happy ever after. But they didn't."

Miss Holbrook drew in her breath a little uncertainly, and put her hand to her throat. Her face now, instead of being red, was very white.

"But, David," she faltered, after a moment, "perhaps he—the—Pauper—did not—not love the Princess any longer."

"Mr. Jack said that he did."

The white face went suddenly pink again.

"Then, why didn't he go to her and—and—tell her?"

David lifted his chin. With all his dignity he answered, and his words and accent were Mr. Jack's.

"Paupers don't go to Princesses, and say 'I love you.'"

"But perhaps if they did—that is—if—" Miss Holbrook bit her lips and did not finish her sentence. She did not, indeed, say anything more for a long time. But she had not forgotten the story. David knew that, because later she began to question him carefully about many little points—points that he was very sure he had already made quite plain. She talked about it, indeed, until he wondered if perhaps she were going to tell it to someone else sometime. He asked her if she were; but she only shook her head. And after that she did not question him anymore. And a little later David went home.

CHAPTER XXI
Heavy Hearts

For a week David had not been near the House that Jack Built, and that, too, when Jill had been confined within doors for several days with a cold. Jill, indeed, was inclined to be grieved at this apparent lack of interest on the part of her favorite playfellow; but upon her return from her first day of school, after her recovery, she met her brother with startled eyes.

"Jack, it hasn't been David's fault at all," she cried remorsefully. "He's sick."

"Sick!"

"Yes; awfully sick. They've had to send away for doctors and everything."

"Why, Jill, are you sure? Where did you hear this?"

"At school today. Everyone was talking about it."

"But what is the matter?"

"Fever—some sort. Some say it's typhoid, and some scarlet, and some say another kind that I can't remember; but everybody says he's awfully sick. He got it down to Glaspell's, some say—and some say he didn't. But, anyhow, Betty Glaspell has been sick with something, and they haven't let folks in there this week," finished Jill, her eyes big with terror.

"The Glaspells? But what was David doing down there?"

"Why, you know—he told us once—teaching Joe to play. He's been there lots. Joe is blind, you know, and can't see, but he just loves music, and was crazy over David's violin; so David took down his other one—the one that was his father's, you know—and showed him how to pick out little tunes, just to take up his time so he wouldn't mind so much that he

couldn't see. Now, Jack, wasn't that just like David? Jack, I can't have anything happen to David!"

"No, dear, no; of course not! I'm afraid we can't any of us, for that matter," sighed Jack, his forehead drawn into anxious lines. "I'll go down to the Hollys', Jill, the first thing tomorrow morning, and see how he is and if there's anything we can do. Meanwhile, don't take it too much to heart, dear. It may not be half so bad as you think. School children always get things like that exaggerated, you must remember," he finished, speaking with a lightness that he did not feel.

To himself the man owned that he was troubled, seriously troubled. He had to admit that Jill's story bore the earmarks of truth; and overwhelmingly he realized now just how big a place this somewhat puzzling small boy had come to fill in his own heart. He did not need Jill's anxious "Now, hurry, Jack," the next morning to start him off in all haste for the Holly farmhouse. A dozen rods from the driveway he met Perry Larson and stopped him abruptly.

"Good morning, Larson; I hope this isn't true—what I hear—that David is very ill."

Larson pulled off his hat and with his free hand sought the one particular spot on his head to which he always appealed when he was very much troubled.

"Well, yes, sir, I'm afraid 't is, Mr. Jack—er—Mr. Gurnsey, I mean. He is turrible sick, poor little chap, an' it's too bad—that's what it is—too bad!"

"Oh, I'm sorry! I hoped the report was exaggerated. I came down to see if—if there wasn't something I could do."

"Well, 'course you can ask—there ain't no law ag'in' that; an' ye needn't be afraid, neither. The report has got 'round that it's ketchin'—what he's got, and that he got it down to the Glaspells'; but 't ain't so. The doctor says he didn't ketch nothin', an' he can't give nothin'. It's his head an' brain that ain't right, an' he's got a mighty bad fever. He's been kind of flighty an' nervous, anyhow, lately.

"As I was sayin', 'course you can ask, but I'm thinkin' there won't be nothin' you can do ter help. Ev'rythin' that can be done is bein' done. In fact, there ain't much of anythin' else that is bein' done down there jest now but, tendin' ter him. They've got one o' them 'ere edyercated nurses from the Junction—what wears caps, ye know, an' makes yer feel as if they knew it all, an' you didn't know nothin'. An' then there's Mr. an' Mis' Holly besides. If they had *their* way, there wouldn't neither of 'em let him out o' their sight fur a minute, they're that cut up about it."

"I fancy they think a good deal of the boy—as we all do," murmured the younger man, a little unsteadily.

Larson winkled his forehead in deep thought.

"Yes; an' that's what beats me," he answered slowly; "'bout *him*—Mr. Holly, I mean. 'Course we'd 'a' expected it of *her*—losin' her own boy as she did, an' bein' jest naturally so sweet an' lovin'-hearted. But HIM—that's diff'rent. Now, you know jest as well as I do what Mr. Holly is—everyone does, so I ain't sayin' nothin' sland'rous. He's a good man—a powerful good man; an' there ain't a squarer man goin' ter work fur. But the fact is, he was made up wrong side out, an' the seams has always showed bad—turrible bad, with ravelin's all stickin' out every which way ter ketch an' pull. But, gosh! I'm blamed if that, ere boy ain't got him so smoothed down, you wouldn't know, scursely, that he had a seam on him, sometimes; though how he's done it beats me. Now, there's Mis' Holly—she's tried ter smooth 'em, I'll warrant, lots of times. But I'm free ter say she hain't never so much as clipped a ravelin' in all them forty years they've lived tergether. Fact is, it's worked the other way with her. All that *her* rubbin' up ag'in' them seams has amounted to is ter git herself so smoothed down that she don't never dare ter say her soul's her own, most generally—anyhow, not if he happens ter intermate it belongs ter anybody else!"

Jack Gurnsey suddenly choked over a cough.

"I wish I could—do something," he murmured uncertainly.

"'T ain't likely ye can—not so long as Mr. an' Mis' Holly is on their two feet. Why, there ain't nothin' they won't do, an' you'll believe it, maybe, when I tell you that yesterday Mr. Holly, he tramped all through Sawyer's woods in the rain, jest ter find a little bit of moss that the boy was callin' for. Think o' that, will ye? Simeon Holly huntin' moss! An' he got it, too, an' brung it home, an' they say it cut him up somethin' turrible when the boy jest turned away, and didn't take no notice. You understand, 'course, sir, the little chap ain't right in his head, an' so half the time he don't know what he says."

"Oh, I'm sorry, sorry!" exclaimed Gurnsey, as he turned away, and hurried toward the farmhouse.

Mrs. Holly herself answered his low knock. She looked worn and pale.

"Thank you, sir," she said gratefully, in reply to his offer of assistance, "but there isn't anything you can do, Mr. Gurnsey. We're having everything done that can be, and everyone is very kind. We have a very good nurse, and Dr. Kennedy has had consultation with Dr. Benson from the Junction. They are doing all in their power, of course, but they say that—that it's going to be the nursing that will count now."

"Then I don't fear for him, surely," declared the man, with fervor.

"I know, but—well, he shall have the very best possible—of that."

"I know he will; but isn't there anything—anything that I can do?"

She shook her head.

"No. Of course, if he gets better—" She hesitated; then lifted her chin a little higher; "*when* he gets better," she corrected with courageous emphasis, "he will want to see you."

"And he shall see me," asserted Gurnsey. "And he will be

better, Mrs. Holly—I'm sure he will."

"Yes, yes, of course, only—oh, Mr. Jack, he's so sick—so very sick! The doctor says he's a peculiarly sensitive nature, and that he thinks something's been troubling him lately." Her voice broke.

"Poor little chap!" Mr. Jack's voice, too, was husky.

She looked up with swift gratefulness for his sympathy.

"And you loved him, too, I know," she choked. "He talks of you often—very often."

"Indeed I love him! Who could help it?"

"There couldn't anybody, Mr. Jack,—and that's just it. Now, since he's been sick, we've wondered more than ever who he is. You see, I can't help thinking that somewhere he's got friends who ought to know about him—now."

"Yes, I see," nodded the man.

"He isn't an ordinary boy, Mr. Jack. He's been trained in lots of ways—about his manners, and at the table, and all that. And lots of things his father has told him are beautiful, just beautiful! He isn't a tramp. He never was one. And there's his playing. *You* know how he can play."

"Indeed I do! You must miss his playing, too."

"I do; he talks of that, also," she hurried on, working her fingers nervously together; "but oftenest he—he speaks of singing, and I can't quite understand that, for he didn't ever sing, you know."

"Singing? What does he say?" The man asked the question because he saw that it was affording the overwrought little woman real relief to free her mind; but at the first words of her reply he became suddenly alert.

"It's 'his song,' as he calls it, that he talks about, always. It isn't much—what he says—but I noticed it because he always says the same thing, like this: I'll just hold up my chin and march straight on and on, and I'll sing it with all my might and main.' And when I ask him what he's going to sing, he always says, 'My song—my song,' just like that. Do you think,

Mr. Jack, he did have—a song?"

For a moment the man did not answer. Something in his throat tightened, and held the words. Then, in a low voice he managed to stammer:—

"I think he did, Mrs. Holly, and—I think he sang it, too." The next moment, with a quick lifting of his hat and a murmured, "I'll call again soon," he turned and walked swiftly down the driveway.

So very swiftly, indeed, was Mr. Jack walking, and so self-absorbed was he, that he did not see the carriage until it was almost upon him; then he stepped aside to let it pass. What he saw as he gravely raised his hat was a handsome span of black horses, a liveried coachman, and a pair of startled eyes looking straight into his. What he did not see was the quick gesture with which Miss Holbrook almost ordered her carriage stopped the minute it had passed him by.

CHAPTER XXII
As Perry Saw It

One by one the days passed, and there came from the anxious watchers at David's bedside only the words, "There's very little change." Often Jack Gurnsey went to the farmhouse to inquire for the boy. Often, too, he saw Perry Larson; and Perry was never loath to talk of David. It was from Perry, indeed, that Gurnsey began to learn some things of David that he had never known before.

"It does beat all," Perry Larson said to him one day, "how many folks asks me how that boy is—folks that you'd never think knew him, anyhow, ter say nothin' of carin' whether he lived or died. Now, there's old Mis' Somers, fur instance. YOU know what she is—sour as a lemon an' puckery as a chokecherry. Well, if she didn't give me yesterday a great bokay o' posies she'd growed herself, an' said they was fur him—that they berlonged ter him, anyhow.

"'Course, I didn't exactly sense what she meant by that, so I asked her straight out; an' it seems that somehow, when the boy first come, he struck her place one day an' spied a great big red rose on one of her bushes. It seems he had his fiddle, an' he, played it—that rose a-growin' (you know his way!), an' she heard an' spoke up pretty sharp an' asked him what in time he was doin'. Well, most kids would 'a' run—knowin' her temper as they does—but not much David. He stands up as pert as ye please, an' tells her how happy that red rose must be ter make all that dreary garden look so pretty; an' then he goes on, merry as a lark, a-playin' down the hill.

"Well, Mis' Somers owned up ter me that she was pretty mad at the time, 'cause her garden did look like tunket, an' she knew it. She said she hadn't cared ter do a thing with it

since her Bessie died that thought so much of it. But after what David had said, even mad as she was, the thing kind o' got on her nerves, an' she couldn't see a thing, day or night, but that red rose a-growin' there so pert an' courageous-like, until at last, jest ter quiet herself, she fairly had ter set to an' slick that garden up! She said she raked an' weeded, an' fixed up all the plants there was, in good shape, an' then she sent down to the Junction fur some all growed in pots, 'cause 't was too late ter plant seeds. An, now it's doin' beautiful, so she jest couldn't help sendin' them posies ter David. When I told Mis' Holly, she said she was glad it happened, 'cause what Mis' Somers needed was somethin' ter git her out of herself—an' I'm free ter say she did look better-natured, an' no mistake—kind o' like a chokecherry in blossom, ye might say.

"An' then there's the Widder Glaspell," continued Perry, after a pause. "'Course, any one would expect she'd feel bad, seein' as how good David was ter her boy—teachin' him ter play, ye know. But Mis' Glaspell says Joe jest does take on somethin' turrible, an' he won't tech the fiddle, though he was plum carried away with it when David was well an' teachin' of him. An' there's the Clark kid. He's lame, ye know, an' he thought the world an' all of David's playin'.

"'Course, there's you an' Miss Holbrook, always askin' an' sendin' things—but that ain't so strange, 'cause you was 'specially his friends. But it's them others what beats me. Why, some days it's 'most ev'ry soul I meet, jest askin' how he is, an' sayin' they hopes he'll git well. Sometimes it's kids that he's played to, an' I'll be triggered if one of 'em one day didn't have no excuse to offer except that David had fit him—'bout a cat, or somethin'—an' that ever since then he'd thought a heap of him—though he guessed David didn't know it. Listen ter that, will ye!

"An' once a woman held me up, an' took on turrible, but all I could git from her was that he'd sat on her doorstep an' played ter her baby once or twice;—as if that was anythin'!

But one of the derndest funny ones was the woman who said she could wash her dishes a sight easier after she'd a-seen him go by playin'. There was Bill Dowd, too. You know he really *has* got a screw loose in his head somewheres, an' there ain't anyone but what says he's the town fool, all right. Well, what do ye think *he* said?"

Mr. Jack shook his head.

"Well, he said he did hope as how nothin' would happen ter that boy cause he did so like ter see him smile, an' that he always did smile every time he met him! There, what do ye think o' that?"

"Well, I think, Perry," returned Mr. Jack soberly, "that Bill Dowd wasn't playing the fool, when he said that, quite so much as he sometimes is, perhaps."

"Hm-m, maybe not," murmured Perry Larson perplexedly. "Still, I'm free ter say I do think 't was kind o' queer." He paused, then slapped his knee suddenly. "Say, did I tell ye about Streeter—Old Bill Streeter an' the pear tree?"

Again Mr. Jack shook his head.

"Well, then, I'm goin' to," declared the other, with gleeful emphasis. "An', say, I don't believe even *you* can explain this—I don't! Well, you know Streeter—ev'ry one does, so I ain't sayin' nothin' sland'rous. He was cut on a bias, an' that bias runs ter money every time. You know as well as I do that he won't lift his finger unless there's a dollar stickin' to it, an' that he hain't no use fur anythin' nor anybody unless there's money in it for him. I'm blamed if I don't think that if he ever gits ter heaven, he'll pluck his own wings an' sell the feathers fur what they'll bring."

"Oh, Perry!" remonstrated Mr. Jack, in a half-stifled voice.

Perry Larson only grinned and went on imperturbably.

"Well, seein' as we both understand what he is, I'll tell ye what he *done*. He called me up ter his fence one day, big as life, an' says he, 'How's the boy?' An' you could 'a' knocked

me down with a feather. Streeter—a-askin' how a boy was that was sick! An' he seemed ter care, too. I hain't seen him look so longfaced since—since he was paid up on a sartin note I knows of, jest as he was smackin' his lips over a nice fat farm that was comin' to him!

"Well, I was that plum puzzled that I meant ter find out why Streeter was takin' sech notice, if I hung fur it. So I set to on a little detective work of my own, knowin', of course, that 't wa'n't no use askin' of him himself. Well, an' what do you s'pose I found out? If that little scamp of a boy hadn't even got round him—Streeter, the skinflint! He had—an' he went there often, the neighbors said; an' Streeter doted on him. They declared that actually he give him a cent once—though *that* part I ain't swallerin' yet.

"They said—the neighbors did—that it all started from the pear tree—that big one ter the left of his house. Maybe you remember it. Well, anyhow, it seems that it's old, an' through bearin' any fruit, though it still blossoms fit ter kill, every year, only a little late 'most always, an' the blossoms stay on longer'n common, as if they knew there wa'n't nothin' doin' later. Well, old Streeter said it had got ter come down. I reckon he suspected it of swipin' some of the sunshine, or maybe a little rain that belonged ter the tree t'other side of the road what did bear fruit an' was worth somethin'! Anyhow, he got his man an' his axe, an' was plum ready ter start in when he sees David an' David sees him.

"'T was when the boy first come. He'd gone ter walk an' had struck this pear tree, all in bloom—an' 'course, *you* know how the boy would act—a pear tree, bloomin', is a likely sight, I'll own. He danced and laughed and clapped his hands—he didn't have his fiddle with him—an' carried on like all possessed. Then he sees the man with the axe, an' Streeter an' Streeter sees him.

"They said it was rich then—Bill Warner heard it all from t'other side of the fence. He said that David, when he found

out what was goin' ter happen, went clean crazy, an' rampaged on at such a rate that old Streeter couldn't do nothin' but stand an' stare, until he finally managed ter growl out: 'But I tell ye, boy, the tree ain't no use no more!'

"Bill says the boy flew all to pieces then. 'No use—no use!' he cries; 'such a perfectly beautiful thing as that no use! Why, it don't have ter be any use when it's so pretty. It's jest ter look at an' love, an' be happy with!' Fancy sayin' that ter old Streeter! I'd like ter seen his face. But Bill says that wa'n't half what the boy said. He declared that 't was God's present, anyhow, that trees was; an' that the things He give us ter look at was jest as much use as the things He give us ter eat; an' that the stars an' the sunsets an' the snowflakes an' the little white cloud boats, an' I don't know what-all, was jest as important in the Orchestra of Life as turnips an' squashes. An' then, Billy says, he ended by jest flingin' himself on ter Streeter an' beggin' him ter wait till he could go back an' git his fiddle so he could tell him what a beautiful thing that tree was.

"Well, if you'll believe it, old Streeter was so plum befuzzled he sent the man an' the axe away—an' that tree's alivin' ter-day—'t is!" he finished; then, with a sudden gloom on his face, Larson added, huskily: "An' I only hope I'll be sayin' the same thing of that boy—come next month at this time!"

"We'll hope you will," sighed the other fervently.

And so one by one the days passed, while the whole town waited and while in the great airy "parlor bedroom" of the Holly farmhouse one small boy fought his battle for life. Then came the blackest day and night of all when the town could only wait and watch—it had lost its hope; when the doctors shook their heads and refused to meet Mrs. Holly's eyes; when the pulse in the slim wrist outside the coverlet played hide-and-seek with the cool, persistent fingers that sought so earnestly for it; when Perry Larson sat for uncounted sleepless hours by the kitchen stove, and fearfully listened for a step

crossing the hallway; when Mr. Jack on his porch, and Miss Holbrook in her tower window, went with David down into the dark valley, and came so near the rushing river that life, with its petty prides and prejudices, could never seem quite the same to them again.

Then, after that blackest day and night, came the dawn—as the dawns do come after the blackest of days and nights. In the slender wrist outside the coverlet the pulse gained and steadied. On the forehead beneath the nurse's fingers, a moisture came. The doctors nodded their heads now, and looked everyone straight in the eye. "He will live," they said. "The crisis is passed." Out by the kitchen stove Perry Larson heard the step cross the hall and sprang upright; but at the first glimpse of Mrs. Holly's tear-wet, yet radiant face, he collapsed limply.

"Gosh!" he muttered. "Say, do you know, I didn't s'pose I did care so much! I reckon I'll go an' tell Mr. Jack. He'll want ter hear."

CHAPTER XXIII
Puzzles

David's convalescence was picturesque, in a way. As soon as he was able, like a king he sat upon his throne and received his subjects; and a very gracious king he was, indeed. His room overflowed with flowers and fruit, and his bed quite groaned with the toys and books and games brought for his diversion, each one of which he hailed with delight, from Miss Holbrook's sumptuously bound "Waverley Novels" to little crippled Jimmy Clark's bag of marbles.

Only two things puzzled David: one was why everybody was so good to him; and the other was why he never could have the pleasure of both Mr. Jack's and Miss Holbrook's company at the same time.

David discovered this last curious circumstance concerning Mr. Jack and Miss Holbrook very early in his convalescence. It was on the second afternoon that Mr. Jack had been admitted to the sick-room. David had been hearing all the latest news of Jill and Joe, when suddenly he noticed an odd change come to his visitor's face.

The windows of the Holly "parlor bedroom" commanded a fine view of the road, and it was toward one of these windows that Mr. Jack's eyes were directed. David, sitting up in bed, saw then that down the road was approaching very swiftly a handsome span of black horses and an open carriage which he had come to recognize as belonging to Miss Holbrook. He watched it eagerly now till he saw the horses turn in at the Holly driveway. Then he gave a low cry of delight.

"It's my Lady of the Roses! She's coming to see me. Look!

Oh, I'm so glad! Now you'll see her, and just *know* how lovely she is. Why, Mr. Jack, you aren't going *now*!" he broke off in manifest disappointment, as Mr. Jack leaped to his feet.

"I think I'll have to, if you don't mind, David," returned the man, an oddly nervous haste in his manner. "And *you* won't mind, now that you'll have Miss Holbrook. I want to speak to Larson. I saw him in the field out there a minute ago. And I guess I'll slip right through this window here, too, David. I don't want to lose him; and I can catch him quicker this way than any other," he finished, throwing up the sash.

"Oh, but Mr. Jack, please just wait a minute," begged David. "I wanted you to see my Lady of the Roses, and—" But Mr. Jack was already on the ground outside the low window, and the next minute, with a merry nod and smile, he had pulled the sash down after him and was hurrying away.

Almost at once, then, Miss Holbrook appeared at the bedroom door.

"Mrs. Holly said I was to walk right in, David, so here I am," she began, in a cheery voice. "Oh, you're looking lots better than when I saw you Monday, young man!"

"I am better," caroled David; "and today I'm 'specially better, because Mr. Jack has been here."

"Oh, has Mr. Jack been to see you today?" There was an indefinable change in Miss Holbrook's voice.

"Yes, right now. Why, he was here when you were driving into the yard."

Miss Holbrook gave a perceptible start and looked about her a little wildly.

"Here when—But I didn't meet him anywhere—in the hall."

"He didn't go through the hall," laughed David gleefully. "He went right through that window there."

"The window!" An angry flush mounted to Miss Holbrook's forehead. "Indeed, did he have to resort to that to escape—" She bit her lip and stopped abruptly.

David's eyes widened a little.

"Escape? Oh, *he* wasn't the one that was escaping. It was Perry. Mr. Jack was afraid he'd lose him. He saw him out the window there, right after he'd seen you, and he said he wanted to speak to him and he was afraid he'd get away. So he jumped right through that window there. See?"

"Oh, yes, I—see," murmured Miss Holbrook, in a voice David thought was a little queer.

"I wanted him to stay," frowned David uncertainly. "I wanted him to see you."

"Dear me, David, I hope you didn't tell him so."

"Oh, yes, I did. But he couldn't stay, even then. You see, he wanted to catch Perry Larson."

"I've no doubt of it," retorted Miss Holbrook, with so much emphasis that David again looked at her with a slightly disturbed frown.

"But he'll come again soon, I'm sure, and then maybe you'll be here, too. I do so want him to see you, Lady of the Roses!"

"Nonsense, David!" laughed Miss Holbrook a little nervously. "Mr.—Mr. Gurnsey doesn't want to see me. He's seen me dozens of times."

"Oh, yes, he told me he'd seen you long ago," nodded David gravely; "but he didn't act as if he remembered it much."

"Didn't he, indeed!" laughed Miss Holbrook, again flushing a little. "Well, I'm sure, dear, we wouldn't want to tax the poor gentleman's memory too much, you know. Come, suppose you see what I've brought you," she finished gayly.

"Oh, what is it?" cried David, as, under Miss Holbrook's swift fingers, the wrappings fell away and disclosed a box which, upon being opened, was found to be filled with quantities of oddly shaped bits of pictured wood—a jumble of confusion.

"It's a jig-saw puzzle, David. All these little pieces fitted

together make a picture, you see. I tried last night and I couldn't do it. I brought it down to see if you could."

"Oh, thank you! I'd love to," rejoiced the boy. And in the fascination of the marvel of finding one fantastic bit that fitted another, David apparently forgot all about Mr. Jack—which seemed not unpleasing to his Lady of the Roses.

It was not until nearly a week later that David had his wish of seeing his Mr. Jack and his Lady of the Roses meet at his bedside. It was the day Miss Holbrook brought to him the wonderful set of handsomely bound "Waverley Novels." He was still glorying in his new possession, in fact, when Mr. Jack appeared suddenly in the doorway.

"Hullo my boy, I just—Oh, I beg your pardon. I supposed you were—alone," he stammered, looking very red indeed.

"He is—that is, he will be, soon—except for you, Mr. Gurnsey," smiled Miss Holbrook, very brightly. She was already on her feet.

"No, no, I beg of you," stammered Mr. Jack, growing still more red. "Don't let me drive—that is, I mean, don't go, please. I didn't know. I had no warning—I didn't see—Your carriage was not at the door today."

Miss Holbrook's eyebrows rose the fraction of an inch.

"I sent it home. I am planning to walk back. I have several calls to make on the way; and it's high time I was starting. Goodbye, David."

"But, Lady, of the Roses, please, please, don't go," besought David, who had been looking from one to the other in worried dismay. "Why, you've just come!"

But neither coaxing nor argument availed; and before David really knew just what had happened, he found himself alone with Mr. Jack.

Even then disappointment was piled on disappointment, for Mr. Jack's visit was not the unalloyed happiness it usually was. Mr. Jack himself was almost cross at first, and then he was silent and restless, moving jerkily about the room in a way

that disturbed David very much.

Mr. Jack had brought with him a book; but even that only made matters worse, for when he saw the beautifully bound volumes that Miss Holbrook had just left, he frowned, and told David that he guessed he did not need his gift at all, with all those other fine books. And David could not seem to make him understand that the one book from him was just exactly as dear as were the whole set of books that his Lady of the Roses brought.

Certainly it was not a satisfactory visit at all, and for the first time David was almost glad to have Mr. Jack go and leave him with his books. The BOOKS, David told himself, he could understand; Mr. Jack he could not—today.

Several times after this David's Lady of the Roses and Mr. Jack happened to call at the same hour; but never could David persuade these two friends of his to stay together. Always, if one came and the other was there, the other went away, in spite of David's protestations that two people did not tire him at all and his assertions that he often entertained as many as that at once. Tractable as they were in all other ways, anxious as they seemed to please him, on this one point they were obdurate: never would they stay together.

They were not angry with each other—David was sure of that, for they were always very especially polite, and rose, and stood, and bowed in a most delightful fashion. Still, he sometimes thought that they did not quite like each other, for always, after the one went away, the other, left behind, was silent and almost stern—if it was Mr. Jack; and flushed-faced and nervous—if it was Miss Holbrook. But why this was so David could not understand.

The span of handsome black horses came very frequently to the Holly farmhouse now, and as time passed they often bore away behind them a white-faced but happy-eyed boy on the seat beside Miss Holbrook.

"My, but I don't see how everyone can be so good to me!"

exclaimed the boy, one day, to his Lady of the Roses.

"Oh, that's easy, David," she smiled. "The only trouble is to find out what you want—you ask for so little."

"But I don't need to ask—you do it all beforehand," asserted the boy, "you and Mr. Jack, and everybody."

"Really? That's good." For a brief moment Miss Holbrook hesitated; then, as if casually, she asked: "And he tells you stories, too, I suppose—this Mr. Jack—just as he used to, doesn't he?"

"Well, he never did tell me but one, you know, before; but he's told me more now, since I've been sick."

"Oh, yes, I remember, and that one was 'The Princess and the Pauper,' wasn't it? Well, has he told you any more—like—that?"

The boy shook his head with decision.

"No, he doesn't tell me any more like that, and—and I don't want him to, either."

Miss Holbrook laughed a little oddly.

"Why, David, what is the matter with that?" she queried.

"The ending; it wasn't nice, you know."

"Oh, yes, I—I remember."

"I've asked him to change it," went on David, in a grieved voice. "I asked him just the other day, but he wouldn't."

"Perhaps he—he didn't want to." Miss Holbrook spoke very quickly, but so low that David barely heard the words.

"Didn't want to? Oh, yes, he did! He looked awful sober, and as if he really cared, you know. And he said he'd give all he had in the world if he really could change it, but he couldn't."

"Did he say—just that?" Miss Holbrook was leaning forward a little breathlessly now.

"Yes—just that; and that's the part I couldn't understand," commented David. "For I don't see why a story—just a story made up out of somebody's head—can't be changed any way you want it. And I told him so."

"Well, and what did he say to that?"

"He didn't say anything for a minute, and I had to ask him again. Then he sat up suddenly, just as if he'd been asleep, you know, and said, 'Eh, what, David?' And then I told him again what I'd said. This time he shook his head, and smiled that kind of a smile that isn't really a smile, you know, and said something about a real, true-to-life story's never having but one ending, and that was a logical ending. Lady of the Roses, what is a logical ending?"

The Lady of the Roses laughed unexpectedly. The two little red spots, that David always loved to see, flamed into her cheeks, and her eyes showed a sudden sparkle. When she answered, her words came disconnectedly, with little laughing breaths between.

"Well, David, I—I'm not sure I can—tell you. But perhaps I—can find out. This much, however, I am sure of: Mr. Jack's logical ending wouldn't be—mine!"

What she meant David did not know; nor would she tell him when he asked; but a few days later she sent for him, and very gladly David—able now to go where he pleased—obeyed the summons.

It was November, and the garden was bleak and cold; but in the library a bright fire danced on the hearth, and before this Miss Holbrook drew up two low chairs.

She looked particularly pretty, David thought. The rich red of her dress had apparently brought out an answering red in her cheeks. Her eyes were very bright and her lips smiled; yet she seemed oddly nervous and restless. She sewed a little, with a bit of yellow silk on white—but not for long. She knitted with two long ivory needles flashing in and out of a silky mesh of blue—but this, too, she soon ceased doing. On a low stand at David's side she had placed books and pictures, and for a time she talked of those. Then very abruptly she asked:—

"David, when will you see—Mr. Jack again—do you sup-

pose?"

"Tomorrow. I'm going up to the House that Jack Built to tea, and I'm to stay all night. It's Halloween—that is, it isn't really Halloween, because it's too late. I lost that, being sick, you know. So we're going to pretend, and Mr. Jack is going to show me what it is like. That is what Mr. Jack and Jill always do; when something ails the real thing, they just pretend with the make-believe one. He's planned lots of things for Jill and me to do; with nuts and apples and candles, you know. It's tomorrow night, so I'll see him then."

"Tomorrow? So—so soon?" faltered Miss Holbrook. And to David, gazing at her with wondering eyes, it seemed for a moment almost as if she were looking about for a place to which she might run and hide. Then determinedly, as if she were taking hold of something with both hands, she leaned forward, looked David squarely in the eyes, and began to talk hurriedly, yet very distinctly.

"David, listen. I've something I want you to say to Mr. Jack, and I want you to be sure and get it just right. It's about the—the story, 'The Princess and the Pauper,' you know. You can remember, I think, for you remembered that so well. Will you say it to him—what I'm going to tell you—just as I say it?"

"Why, of course I will!" David's promise was unhesitating, though his eyes were still puzzled.

"It's about the—the ending," stammered Miss Holbrook. "That is, it may—it may have something to do with the ending—perhaps," she finished lamely. And again David noticed that odd shifting of Miss Holbrook's gaze as if she were searching for some means of escape. Then, as before, he saw her chin lift determinedly, as she began to talk faster than ever.

"Now, listen," she admonished him, earnestly.

And David listened.

CHAPTER XXIV
A Story Remodeled

The pretended Halloween was a great success. So very excited, indeed, did David become over the swinging apples and popping nuts that he quite forgot to tell Mr. Jack what the Lady of the Roses had said until Jill had gone up to bed and he himself was about to take from Mr. Jack's hand the little lighted lamp.

"Oh, Mr. Jack, I forgot," he cried then. "There was something I was going to tell you."

"Never mind tonight, David; it's so late. Suppose we leave it until tomorrow," suggested Mr. Jack, still with the lamp extended in his hand.

"But I promised the Lady of the Roses that I'd say it tonight," demurred the boy, in a troubled voice.

The man drew his lamp halfway back suddenly.

"The Lady of the Roses! Do you mean—she sent a message—to *me*?" he demanded.

"Yes; about the story, 'The Princess and the Pauper,' you know."

With an abrupt exclamation Mr. Jack set the lamp on the table and turned to a chair. He had apparently lost his haste to go to bed.

"See here, David, suppose you come and sit down, and tell me just what you're talking about. And first—just what does the Lady of the Roses know about that—that 'Princess and the Pauper'?"

"Why, she knows it all, of course," returned the boy in surprise. "I told it to her."

"You—told—it—to her!" Mr. Jack relaxed in his chair.

"David!"

"Yes. And she was just as interested as could be."

"I don't doubt it!" Mr. Jack's lips snapped together a little grimly.

"Only she didn't like the ending, either."

Mr. Jack sat up suddenly.

"She didn't like—David, are you sure? Did she *say* that?"

David frowned in thought.

"Well, I don't know as I can tell, exactly, but I'm sure she didn't like it, because just before she told me *what* to say to you, she said that—that what she was going to say would probably have something to do with the ending, anyway. Still—" David paused in yet deeper thought. "Come to think of it, there really isn't anything—not in what she said—that *changed* that ending, as I can see. They didn't get married and live happy ever after, anyhow."

"Yes, but what did she say?" asked Mr. Jack in a voice that was not quite steady. "Now, be careful, David, and tell it just as she said it."

"Oh, I will," nodded David. "*She* said to do that, too."

"Did she?" Mr. Jack leaned farther forward in his chair. "But tell me, how did she happen to—to say anything about it? Suppose you begin at the beginning—away back, David. I want to hear it all—all!"

David gave a contented sigh, and settled himself more comfortably.

"Well, to begin with, you see, I told her the story long ago, before I was sick, and she was ever so interested then, and asked lots of questions. Then the other day something came up—I've forgotten how—about the ending, and I told her how hard I'd tried to have you change it, but you wouldn't. And she spoke right up quick and said probably you didn't want to change it, anyhow. But of course I settled *that* question without any trouble," went on David confidently, "by just telling her how you said you'd give anything in the world to

change it."

"And you told her that—just that, David?" cried the man.

"Why, yes, I had to," answered David, in surprise, "else she wouldn't have known that you *did* want to change it. Don't you see?"

"Oh, yes! I—see—a good deal that I'm thinking you don't," muttered Mr. Jack, falling back in his chair.

"Well, then is when I told her about the logical ending—what you said, you know—oh, yes! and that was when I found out she didn't like the ending, because she laughed such a funny little laugh and colored up, and said that she wasn't sure she could tell me what a logical ending was, but that she would try to find out, and that, anyhow, *your* ending wouldn't be hers—she was sure of that."

"David, did she say that—really?" Mr. Jack was on his feet now.

"She did; and then yesterday she asked me to come over, and she said some more things—about the story, I mean—but she didn't say another thing about the ending. She didn't ever say anything about that except that little bit I told you of a minute ago."

"Yes, yes, but what did she say?" demanded Mr. Jack, stopping short in his walk up and down the room.

"She said: 'You tell Mr. Jack that I know something about that story of his that perhaps he doesn't. In the first place, I know the Princess a lot better than he does, and she isn't a bit the kind of girl he's pictured her.'"

"Yes! Go on—go on!"

"'Now, for instance,' she says, 'when the boy made that call, after the girl first came back, and when the boy didn't like it because they talked of colleges and travels, and such things, you tell him that I happen to know that that girl was just hoping and hoping he'd speak of the old days and games; but that she couldn't speak, of course, when he hadn't been even once to see her during all those weeks, and when he'd

acted in every way just as if he'd forgotten.'"

"But she hadn't waved—that Princess hadn't waved—once!" argued Mr. Jack; "and he looked and looked for it."

"Yes, SHE spoke of that," returned David. "But *she* said she shouldn't think the Princess would have waved, when she'd got to be such a great big girl as that—*waving* to a *boy!* She said that for her part she should have been ashamed of her if she had!"

"Oh, did she!" murmured Mr. Jack blankly, dropping suddenly into his chair.

"Yes, she did," repeated David, with a little virtuous uplifting of his chin.

It was plain to be seen that David's sympathies had unaccountably met with a change of heart.

"But—the Pauper—"

"Oh, yes, and that's another thing," interrupted David. "The Lady of the Roses said that she didn't like that name one bit; that it wasn't true, anyway, because he wasn't a pauper. And she said, too, that as for his picturing the Princess as being perfectly happy in all that magnificence, he didn't get it right at all. For *she* knew that the Princess wasn't one bit happy, because she was so lonesome for things and people she had known when she was just the girl."

Again Mr. Jack sprang to his feet. For a minute he strode up and down the room in silence; then in a shaking voice he asked:—

"David, you—you aren't making all this up, are you? You're saying just what—what Miss Holbrook told you to?"

"Why, of course, I'm not making it up," protested the boy aggrievedly. "This is the Lady of the Roses' story—*she* made it up—only she talked it as if 't was real, of course, just as you did. She said another thing, too. She said that she happened to know that the Princess had got all that magnificence around her in the first place just to see if it wouldn't make her happy, but that it hadn't, and that now she had one place—a

little room—that was left just as it used to be when she was the girl, and that she went there and sat very often. And she said it was right in sight of where the boy lived, too, where he could see it every day; and that if he hadn't been so blind he could have looked right through those gray walls and seen that, and seen lots of other things. And what did she mean by that, Mr. Jack?"

"I don't know—I don't know, David," half-groaned Mr. Jack. "Sometimes I think she means—and then I think that can't be—true."

"But do you think it's helped it any—the story?" persisted the boy. "She's only talked a little about the Princess. She didn't really change things any—not the ending."

"But she said it might, David—she said it might! Don't you remember?" cried the man eagerly. And to David, his eagerness did not seem at all strange. Mr. Jack had said before—long ago—that he would be very glad indeed to have a happier ending to this tale. "Think now," continued the man. "Perhaps she said something else, too. Did she say anything else, David?"

David shook his head slowly.

"No, only—yes, there was a little something, but it doesn't *change* things any, for it was only a 'supposing.' She said: 'Just supposing, after long years, that the Princess found out about how the boy felt long ago, and suppose he should look up at the tower someday, at the old time, and see a *one—two* wave, which meant, "Come over to see me." Just what do you suppose he would do?' But of course, *that* can't do any good," finished David gloomily, as he rose to go to bed, "for that was only a 'supposing.'"

"Of course," agreed Mr. Jack steadily; and David did not know that only stern self-control had forced the steadiness into that voice, nor that, for Mr. Jack, the whole world had burst suddenly into song.

Neither did David, the next morning, know that long

before eight o'clock Mr. Jack stood at a certain window, his eyes unswervingly fixed on the gray towers of Sunnycrest. What David did know, however, was that just after eight, Mr. Jack strode through the room where he and Jill were playing checkers, flung himself into his hat and coat, and then fairly leaped down the steps toward the path that led to the foot-bridge at the bottom of the hill.

"Why, whatever in the world ails Jack?" gasped Jill. Then, after a startled pause, she asked. "David, do folks ever go crazy for joy? Yesterday, you see, Jack got two splendid pieces of news. One was from his doctor. He was examined, and he's fine, the doctor says; all well, so he can go back, now any time, to the city and work. I shall go to school then, you know—a young ladies' school," she finished, a little importantly.

"He's well? How splendid! But what was the other news? You said there were two; only it couldn't have been nicer than that was; to be well—all well!"

"The other? Well, that was only that his old place in the city was waiting for him. He was with a firm of big lawyers, you know, and of course it is nice to have a place all waiting. But I can't see anything in those things to make him act like this, now. Can you?"

"Why, yes, maybe," declared David. "He's found his work—don't you see?—out in the world, and he's going to do it. I know how I'd feel if I had found mine that father told me of! Only what I can't understand is, if Mr. Jack knew all this yesterday, why didn't he act like this then, instead of waiting till today?"

"I wonder," said Jill.

CHAPTER XXV
The Beautiful World

David found many new songs in his violin those early winter days, and they were very beautiful ones. To begin with, there were all the kindly looks and deeds that were showered upon him from every side. There was the first snowstorm, too, with the feathery flakes turning all the world to fairy whiteness. This song David played to Mr. Streeter, one day, and great was his disappointment that the man could not seem to understand what the song said.

"But don't you see?" pleaded David. "I'm telling you that it's your pear tree blossoms come back to say how glad they are that you didn't kill them that day."

"Pear tree blossoms—come back!" ejaculated the old man. "Well, no, I can't see. Where's yer pear tree blossoms?"

"Why, there—out of the window—everywhere," urged the boy.

"*There!* By ginger! boy—ye don't mean—ye *can't* mean the *snow!*"

"Of course I do! Now, can't you see it? Why, the whole tree was just a great big cloud of snowflakes. Don't you remember? Well, now it's gone away and got a whole lot more trees, and all the little white petals have come dancing down to celebrate, and to tell you they sure are coming back next year."

"Well, by ginger!" exclaimed the man again. Then, suddenly, he threw back his head with a hearty laugh. David did not quite like the laugh, neither did he care for the five-cent piece that the man thrust into his fingers a little later; though—had David but known it—both the laugh and the

five-cent piece gift were—for the uncomprehending man who gave them—white milestones along an unfamiliar way.

It was soon after this that there came to David the great surprise—his beloved Lady of the Roses and his no less beloved Mr. Jack were to be married at the beginning of the New Year. So very surprised, indeed, was David at this, that even his violin was mute, and had nothing, at first, to say about it. But to Mr. Jack, as man to man, David said one day:—

"I thought men, when they married women, went courting. In story books they do. And you—you hardly ever said a word to my beautiful Lady of the Roses; and you spoke once—long ago—as if you scarcely remembered her at all. Now, what do you mean by that?"

And Mr. Jack laughed, but he grew red, too—and then he told it all,—that it was just the story of "The Princess and the Pauper," and that he, David, had been the one, as it happened, to do part of their courting for them.

And how David had laughed then, and how he had fairly hugged himself for joy! And when next he had picked up his violin, what a beautiful, beautiful song he had found about it in the vibrant strings!

It was this same song, as it chanced, that he was playing in his room that Saturday afternoon when the letter from Simeon Holly's long-lost son John came to the Holly farmhouse.

Downstairs in the kitchen, Simeon Holly stood, with the letter in his hand.

"Ellen, we've got a letter from—John," he said. That Simeon Holly spoke of it at all showed how very far along HIS unfamiliar way he had come since the last letter from John had arrived.

"From—John? Oh, Simeon! From John?"

"Yes."

Simeon sat down and tried to hide the shaking of his hand as he ran the point of his knife under the flap of the envelope.

"We'll see what—he says." And to hear him, one might have thought that letters from John were everyday occurrences.

DEAR FATHER: Twice before I have written [ran the letter], and received no answer. But I'm going to make one more effort for forgiveness. May I not come to you this Christmas? I have a little boy of my own now, and my heart aches for you. I know how I should feel, should he, in years to come, do as I did.

I'll not deceive you—I have not given up my art. You told me once to choose between you and it—and I chose, I suppose; at least, I ran away. Yet in the face of all that, I ask you again, may I not come to you at Christmas? I want you, father, and I want mother. And I want you to see my boy.

"Well?" said Simeon Holly, trying to speak with a steady coldness that would not show how deeply moved he was. "Well, Ellen?"

"Yes, Simeon, yes!" choked his wife, a world of mother-love and longing in her pleading eyes and voice. "Yes—you'll let it be—'Yes'!"

"Uncle Simeon, Aunt Ellen," called David, clattering down the stairs from his room, "I've found such a beautiful song in my violin, and I'm going to play it over and over so as to be sure and remember it for father—for it is a beautiful world, Uncle Simeon, isn't it? Now, listen!"

And Simeon Holly listened—but it was not the violin that he heard. It was the voice of a little curly-headed boy out of the past.

When David stopped playing some time later, only the woman sat watching him—the man was over at his desk, pen in hand.

John, John's wife, and John's boy came the day before Christmas, and great was the excitement in the Holly farm-house. John was found to be big, strong, and bronzed with the

outdoor life of many a sketching trip—a son to be proud of, and to be leaned upon in one's old age. Mrs. John, according to Perry Larson, was "the slickest little woman goin'." According to John's mother, she was an almost unbelievable incarnation of a long-dreamed-of, long-despaired-of daughter—sweet, lovable, and charmingly beautiful. Little John—little John was himself; and he could not have been more had he been an angel cherub straight from heaven—which, in fact, he was, in his doting grandparents' eyes.

John Holly had been at his old home less than four hours when he chanced upon David's violin. He was with his father and mother at the time. There was no one else in the room. With a sidelong glance at his parents, he picked up the instrument—John Holly had not forgotten his own youth. His violin playing in the old days had not been welcome, he remembered.

"A fiddle! Who plays?" he asked.

"David."

"Oh, the boy. You say you—took him in? By the way, what an odd little shaver he is! Never did I see a *boy* like *him*." Simeon Holly's head came up almost aggressively.

"David is a good boy—a very good boy, indeed, John. We think a great deal of him."

John Holly laughed lightly, yet his brow carried a puzzled frown. Two things John Holly had not been able thus far to understand: an indefinable change in his father, and the position of the boy David, in the household—John Holly was still remembering his own repressed youth.

"Hm-m," he murmured, softly picking the strings, then drawing across them a tentative bow. "I've a fiddle at home that I play sometimes. Do you mind if I—tune her up?"

A flicker of something that was very near to humor flashed from his father's eyes.

"Oh, no. We are used to that—now." And again John Holly remembered his youth.

"Jove! but he's got the dandy instrument here," cried the player, dropping his bow after the first half-dozen superbly vibrant tones, and carrying the violin to the window. A moment later he gave an amazed ejaculation and turned on his father a dumfounded face.

"Great Scott, father! Where did that boy get this instrument? I *know* something of violins, if I can't play them much; and this—! Where *did* he get it?"

"Of his father, I suppose. He had it when he came here, anyway."

"'Had it when he came! But, father, you said he was a tramp, and—oh, come, tell me, what is the secret behind this? Here I come home and find calmly reposing on my father's sitting room table a violin that's priceless, for all I know. Anyhow, I do know that its value is reckoned in the thousands, not hundreds: and yet you, with equal calmness, tell me it's owned by this boy who, it's safe to say, doesn't know how to play sixteen notes on it correctly, to say nothing of appreciating those he does play; and who, by your own account, is nothing but—" A swiftly uplifted hand of warning stayed the words on his lips. He turned to see David himself in the doorway.

"Come in, David," said Simeon Holly quietly. "My son wants to hear you play. I don't think he has heard you." And again there flashed from Simeon Holly's eyes a something very much like humor.

With obvious hesitation John Holly relinquished the violin. From the expression on his face it was plain to be seen the sort of torture he deemed was before him. But, as if constrained to ask the question, he did say:—

"Where did you get this violin, boy?"

"I don't know. We've always had it, ever since I could remember—this and the other one."

"The *other* one!"

"Father's."

"Oh!" He hesitated; then, a little severely, he observed: "This is a fine instrument, boy—a very fine instrument."

"Yes," nodded David, with a cheerful smile. "Father said it was. I like it, too. This is an Amati, but the other is a Stradivarius. I don't know which I do like best, sometimes, only this is mine."

With a half-smothered ejaculation John Holly fell back limply.

"Then you—do—know?" he challenged.

"Know—what?"

"The value of that violin in your hands."

There was no answer. The boy's eyes were questioning.

"The worth, I mean—what it's worth."

"Why, no—yes—that is, it's worth everything—to me," answered David, in a puzzled voice.

With an impatient gesture John Holly brushed this aside.

"But the other one—where is that?"

"At Joe Glaspell's. I gave it to him to play on, because he hadn't any, and he liked to play so well."

"You *gave* it to him—a Stradivarius!"

"I loaned it to him," corrected David, in a troubled voice. "Being Father's, I couldn't bear to give it away. But Joe—Joe had to have something to play on."

"'Something to play on! Father, he doesn't mean the River Street Glaspells?" cried John Holly.

"I think he does. Joe is old Peleg Glaspell's grandson." John Holly threw up both his hands.

"A Stradivarius—to old Peleg's grandson! Oh, ye gods!" he muttered. "Well, I'll be—" He did not finish his sentence. At another word from Simeon Holly, David had begun to play.

From his seat by the stove Simeon Holly watched his son's face—and smiled. He saw amazement, unbelief, and delight struggle for the mastery; but before the playing had ceased, he was summoned by Perry Larson to the kitchen on a matter of

business. So it was into the kitchen that John Holly burst a little later, eyes and cheek aflame.

"Father, where in Heaven's name *did* you get that boy?" he demanded. "Who taught him to play like that? I've been trying to find out from him, but I'd defy Sherlock Holmes himself to make head or tail of the sort of lingo he talks, about mountain homes and the Orchestra of Life! Father, what *does* it mean?"

Obediently Simeon Holly told the story then, more fully than he had told it before. He brought forward the letter, too, with its mysterious signature.

"Perhaps you can make it out, son," he laughed. "None of the rest of us can, though I haven't shown it to anybody now for a long time. I got discouraged long ago of anybody's ever making it out."

"Make it out—make it out!" cried John Holly excitedly; "I should say I could! It's a name known the world over. It's the name of one of the greatest violinists that ever lived."

"But how—what—how came he in my barn?" demanded Simeon Holly.

"Easily guessed, from the letter, and from what the world knows," returned John, his voice still shaking with excitement. "He was always a queer chap, they say, and full of his notions. Six or eight years ago his wife died. They say he worshiped her, and for weeks refused even to touch his violin. Then, very suddenly, he, with his four-year-old son, disappeared—dropped quite out of sight. Some people guessed the reason. I knew a man who was well acquainted with him, and at the time of the disappearance he told me quite a lot about him. He said he wasn't a bit surprised at what had happened. That already half a dozen relatives were interfering with the way he wanted to bring the boy up, and that David was in a fair way to be spoiled, even then, with so much attention and flattery. The father had determined to make a wonderful artist of his son, and he was known to have said

that he believed—as do so many others—that the first dozen years of a child's life are the making of the man, and that if he could have the boy to himself that long he would risk the rest. So it seems he carried out his notion until he was taken sick, and had to quit—poor chap!"

"But why didn't he tell us plainly in that note who he was, then?" fumed Simeon Holly, in manifest irritation.

"He did, he thought," laughed the other. "He signed his name, and he supposed that was so well known that just to mention it would be enough. That's why he kept it so secret while he was living on the mountain, you see, and that's why even David himself didn't know it. Of course, if anybody found out who he was, that ended his scheme, and he knew it. So he supposed all he had to do at the last was to sign his name to that note, and everybody would know who he was, and David would at once be sent to his own people. (There's an aunt and some cousins, I believe.) You see he didn't reckon on nobody's being able to *read* his name! Besides, being so ill, he probably wasn't quite sane, anyway."

"I see, I see," nodded Simeon Holly, frowning a little. "And of course if we had made it out, some of us here would have known it, probably. Now that you call it to mind I think I have heard it myself in days gone by—though such names mean little to me. But doubtless somebody would have known. However, that is all past and gone now."

"Oh, yes, and no harm done. He fell into good hands, luckily. You'll soon see the last of him now, of course."

"Last of him? Oh, no, I shall keep David," said Simeon Holly, with decision.

"Keep him! Why, father, you forget who he is! There are friends, relatives, an adoring public, and a mint of money awaiting that boy. You can't keep him. You could never have kept him this long if this little town of yours hadn't been buried in this forgotten valley up among these hills. You'll have the whole world at your doors the minute they find out

he is here—hills or no hills! Besides, there are his people; they have some claim."

There was no answer. With a suddenly old, drawn look on his face, the elder man had turned away.

Half an hour later Simeon Holly climbed the stairs to David's room, and as gently and plainly as he could told the boy of this great, good thing that had come to him.

David was amazed, but overjoyed. That he was found to be the son of a famous man affected him not at all, only so far as it seemed to set his father right in other eyes—in David's own, the man had always been supreme. But the going away—the marvelous going away—filled him with excited wonder.

"You mean, I shall go away and study—practice—learn more of my violin?"

"Yes, David."

"And hear beautiful music like the organ in church, only more—bigger—better?"

"I suppose so."

"And know people—dear people—who will understand what I say when I play?"

Simeon Holly's face paled a little; still, he knew David had not meant to make it so hard.

"Yes."

"Why, it's my 'start'—just what I was going to have with the gold pieces," cried David joyously. Then, uttering a sharp cry of consternation, he clapped his fingers to his lips.

"Your—what?" asked the man.

"N—nothing, really, Mr. Holly—Uncle Simeon—n—nothing."

Something, either the boy's agitation, or the luckless mention of the gold pieces sent a sudden dismayed suspicion into Simeon Holly's eyes.

"Your 'start'?—the 'gold pieces'? David, what do you mean?"



“It’s because I’m—going—that you care—so much?”

David shook his head. He did not intend to tell. But gently, persistently, Simeon Holly questioned until the whole piteous little tale lay bare before him: the hopes, the house of dreams, the sacrifice.

David saw then what it means when a strong man is shaken by an emotion that has mastered him; and the sight awed and frightened the boy.

"Mr. Holly, is it because I'm—going—that you care—so much? I never thought—or supposed—you'd—*care*," he faltered.

There was no answer. Simeon Holly's eyes were turned quite away.

"Uncle Simeon—*please!* I—I think I don't want to go, anyway. I—I'm sure I don't want to go—and leave *you!*"

Simeon Holly turned then, and spoke.

"Go? Of course you'll go, David. Do you think I'd tie you here to me—*now?*" he choked. "What don't I owe to you—home, son, happiness! Go?—of course you'll go. I wonder if you really think I'd let you stay! Come, we'll go down to mother and tell her. I suspect she'll want to start in tonight to get your socks all mended up!" And with head erect and a determined step, Simeon Holly faced the mighty sacrifice in his turn, and led the way downstairs.

The friends, the relatives, the adoring public, the mint of money—they are all David's now. But once each year, man grown though he is, he picks up his violin and journeys to a little village far up among the hills. There in a quiet kitchen he plays to an old man and an old woman; and always to himself he says that he is practicing against the time when, his violin at his chin and the bow drawn across the strings, he shall go to meet his father in the far-away land, and tell him of the beautiful world he has left.

POLLYANNA

By Eleanor H. Porter

CHAPTER I
Miss Polly

Miss Polly Harrington entered her kitchen a little hurriedly this June morning. Miss Polly did not usually make hurried movements; she specially prided herself on her repose of manner. But today she was hurrying—actually hurrying.

Nancy, washing dishes at the sink, looked up in surprise. Nancy had been working in Miss Polly's kitchen only two months, but already she knew that her mistress did not usually hurry.

"Nancy!"

"Yes, ma'am." Nancy answered cheerfully, but she still continued wiping the pitcher in her hand.

"Nancy,"—Miss Polly's voice was very stern now—"when I'm talking to you, I wish you to stop your work and listen to what I have to say."

Nancy flushed miserably. She set the pitcher down at once, with the cloth still about it, thereby nearly tipping it over—which did not add to her composure.

"Yes, ma'am; I will, ma'am," she stammered, righting the pitcher, and turning hastily. "I was only keepin' on with my work 'cause you specially told me this mornin' ter hurry with my dishes, ye know."

Her mistress frowned.

"That will do, Nancy. I did not ask for explanations. I asked for your attention."

"Yes, ma'am." Nancy stifled a sigh. She was wondering if ever in any way she could please this woman. Nancy had never "worked out" before; but a sick mother suddenly widowed and left with three younger children besides Nancy

herself, had forced the girl into doing something toward their support, and she had been so pleased when she found a place in the kitchen of the great house on the hill—Nancy had come from "The Corners," six miles away, and she knew Miss Polly Harrington only as the mistress of the old Harrington homestead, and one of the wealthiest residents of the town. That was two months before. She knew Miss Polly now as a stern, severe faced woman who frowned if a knife clattered to the floor, or if a door banged—but who never thought to smile even when knives and doors were still.

"When you've finished your morning work, Nancy," Miss Polly was saying now, "you may clear the little room at the head of the stairs in the attic, and make up the cot bed. Sweep the room and clean it, of course, after you clear out the trunks and boxes."

"Yes, ma'am. And where shall I put the things, please, that I take out?"

"In the front attic." Miss Polly hesitated, then went on: "I suppose I may as well tell you now, Nancy. My niece, Miss Pollyanna Whittier, is coming to live with me. She is eleven years old, and will sleep in that room."

"A little girl—coming here, Miss Harrington? Oh, won't that be nice!" cried Nancy, thinking of the sunshine her own little sisters made in the home at "The Corners."

"Nice? Well, that isn't exactly the word I should use," rejoined Miss Polly, stiffly. "However, I intend to make the best of it, of course. I am a good woman, I hope; and I know my duty."

Nancy colored hotly.

"Of course, ma'am; it was only that I thought a little girl here might—might brighten things up for you," she faltered.

"Thank you," rejoined the lady, dryly. "I can't say, however, that I see any immediate need for that."

"But, of course, you—you'd want her, your sister's child," ventured Nancy, vaguely feeling that somehow she must

prepare a welcome for this lonely little stranger.

Miss Polly lifted her chin haughtily.

"Well, really, Nancy, just because I happened to have a sister who was silly enough to marry and bring unnecessary children into a world that was already quite full enough, I can't see how I should particularly WANT to have the care of them myself. However, as I said before, I hope I know my duty. See that you clean the corners, Nancy," she finished sharply, as she left the room.

"Yes, ma'am," sighed Nancy, picking up the half-dried pitcher—now so cold it must be rinsed again.

In her own room, Miss Polly took out once more the letter which she had received two days before from the faraway western town, and which had been so unpleasant a surprise to her. The letter was addressed to Miss Polly Harrington, Beldingsville, Vermont; and it read as follows:

> Dear Madam:—I regret to inform you that the Rev. John Whittier died two weeks ago, leaving one child, a girl eleven years old. He left practically nothing else save a few books; for, as you doubtless know, he was the pastor of this small mission church, and had a very meagre salary.
>
> I believe he was your deceased sister's husband, but he gave me to understand the families were not on the best of terms. He thought, however, that for your sister's sake you might wish to take the child and bring her up among her own people in the east. Hence I am writing to you.
>
> The little girl will be all ready to start by the time you get this letter; and if you can take her, we would appreciate it very much if you would write that she might come at once, as there is a man and his wife here who are going east very soon, and they would take her with them to Boston, and put her on the

Beldingsville train. Of course you would be notified what day and train to expect Pollyanna on.

Hoping to hear favorably from you soon, I remain,

Respectfully yours,
Jeremiah O. White.

With a frown Miss Polly folded the letter and tucked it into its envelope. She had answered it the day before, and she had said she would take the child, of course. She HOPED she knew her duty well enough for that!—disagreeable as the task would be.

As she sat now, with the letter in her hands, her thoughts went back to her sister, Jennie, who had been this child's mother, and to the time when Jennie, as a girl of twenty, had insisted upon marrying the young minister, in spite of her family's remonstrances. There had been a man of wealth who had wanted her—and the family had much preferred him to the minister; but Jennie had not. The man of wealth had more years, as well as more money, to his credit, while the minister had only a young head full of youth's ideals and enthusiasm, and a heart full of love. Jennie had preferred these—quite naturally, perhaps; so she had married the minister, and had gone south with him as a home missionary's wife.

The break had come then. Miss Polly remembered it well, though she had been but a girl of fifteen, the youngest, at the time. The family had had little more to do with the missionary's wife. To be sure, Jennie herself had written, for a time, and had named her last baby "Pollyanna" for her two sisters, Polly and Anna—the other babies had all died. This had been the last time that Jennie had written; and in a few years there had come the news of her death, told in a short, but heart-broken little note from the minister himself, dated at a little town in the west.

Meanwhile, time had not stood still for the occupants of

the great house on the hill. Miss Polly, looking out at the far-reaching valley below, thought of the changes those twenty-five years had brought to her.

She was forty now, and quite alone in the world. Father, mother, sisters—all were dead. For years, now, she had been sole mistress of the house and of the thousands left her by her father. There were people who had openly pitied her lonely life, and who had urged her to have some friend or companion to live with her; but she had not welcomed either their sympathy or their advice. She was not lonely, she said. She liked being by herself. She preferred quiet. But now—

Miss Polly rose with frowning face and closely shut lips. She was glad, of course, that she was a good woman, and that she not only knew her duty, but had sufficient strength of character to perform it. But—POLLYANNA!—what a ridiculous name!

CHAPTER II
Old Tom and Nancy

In the little attic room Nancy swept and scrubbed vigorously, paying particular attention to the corners. There were times, indeed, when the vigor she put into her work was more of a relief to her feelings than it was an ardor to efface dirt—Nancy, in spite of her frightened submission to her mistress, was no saint.

"I—just—wish—I could—dig—out the corners—of—her—soul!" she muttered jerkily, punctuating her words with murderous jabs of her pointed cleaning-stick. "There's plenty of 'em needs cleanin' all right, all right! The idea of stickin' that blessed child 'way off up here in this hot little room—with no fire in the winter, too, and all this big house ter pick and choose from! Unnecessary children, indeed! Humph!" snapped Nancy, wringing her rag so hard her fingers ached from the strain; "I guess it ain't CHILDREN what is MOST unnecessary just now, just now!"

For some time she worked in silence; then, her task finished, she looked about the bare little room in plain disgust.

"Well, it's done—my part, anyhow," she sighed. "There ain't no dirt here—and there's mighty little else. Poor little soul!—a pretty place this is ter put a homesick, lonesome child into!" she finished, going out and closing the door with a bang, "Oh!" she ejaculated, biting her lip. Then, doggedly: "Well, I don't care. I hope she did hear the bang—I do, I do!"

In the garden that afternoon, Nancy found a few minutes in which to interview Old Tom, who had pulled the weeds and shoveled the paths about the place for uncounted years.

"Mr. Tom," began Nancy, throwing a quick glance over

her shoulder to make sure she was unobserved; "did you know a little girl was comin' here ter live with Miss Polly?"

"A—what?" demanded the old man, straightening his bent back with difficulty.

"A little girl—to live with Miss Polly."

"Go on with yer jokin'," scoffed unbelieving Tom. "Why don't ye tell me the sun is a-goin' ter set in the east ter-morrer?"

"But it's true. She told me so herself," maintained Nancy. "It's her niece; and she's eleven years old."

The man's jaw fell.

"Sho!—I wonder, now," he muttered; then a tender light came into his faded eyes. "It ain't—but it must be—Miss Jennie's little gal! There wasn't none of the rest of 'em married. Why, Nancy, it must be Miss Jennie's little gal. Glory be ter praise! ter think of my old eyes a-seein' this!"

"Who was Miss Jennie?"

"She was an angel straight out of Heaven," breathed the man, fervently; "but the old master and missus knew her as their oldest daughter. She was twenty when she married and went away from here long years ago. Her babies all died, I heard, except the last one; and that must be the one what's a-comin'."

"She's eleven years old."

"Yes, she might be," nodded the old man.

"And she's goin' ter sleep in the attic—more shame ter HER!" scolded Nancy, with another glance over her shoulder toward the house behind her.

Old Tom frowned. The next moment a curious smile curved his lips.

"I'm a-wonderin' what Miss Polly will do with a child in the house," he said.

"Humph! Well, I'm a-wonderin' what a child will do with Miss Polly in the house!" snapped Nancy.

The old man laughed.

"I'm afraid you ain't fond of Miss Polly," he grinned.

"As if ever anybody could be fond of her!" scorned Nancy.

Old Tom smiled oddly. He stooped and began to work again.

"I guess maybe you didn't know about Miss Polly's love affair," he said slowly.

"Love affair—HER! No!—and I guess nobody else didn't, neither."

"Oh, yes they did," nodded the old man. "And the feller's livin' ter-day—right in this town, too."

"Who is he?"

"I ain't a-tellin' that. It ain't fit that I should." The old man drew himself erect. In his dim blue eyes, as he faced the house, there was the loyal servant's honest pride in the family he has served and loved for long years.

"But it don't seem possible—her and a lover," still maintained Nancy.

Old Tom shook his head.

"You didn't know Miss Polly as I did," he argued. "She used ter be real handsome—and she would be now, if she'd let herself be."

"Handsome! Miss Polly!"

"Yes. If she'd just let that tight hair of hern all out loose and careless-like, as it used ter be, and wear the sort of bunnits with posies in 'em, and the kind o' dresses all lace and white things—you'd see she'd be handsome! Miss Polly ain't old, Nancy."

"Ain't she, though? Well, then she's got an awfully good imitation of it—she has, she has!" sniffed Nancy.

"Yes, I know. It begun then—at the time of the trouble with her lover," nodded Old Tom; "and it seems as if she'd been feedin' on wormwood an' thistles ever since—she's that bitter an' prickly ter deal with."

"I should say she was," declared Nancy, indignantly. "There's no pleasin' her, nohow, no matter how you try! I

wouldn't stay if 'twa'n't for the wages and the folks at home what's needin' 'em. But some day—someday I shall jest b'ile over; and when I do, of course it'll be goodbye Nancy for me. It will, it will."

Old Tom shook his head.

"I know. I've felt it. It's nart'ral—but 'tain't best, child; 'tain't best. Take my word for it, 'tain't best." And again he bent his old head to the work before him.

"Nancy!" called a sharp voice.

"Y-yes, ma'am," stammered Nancy; and hurried toward the house.

CHAPTER III
The Coming of Pollyanna

In due time came the telegram announcing that Pollyanna would arrive in Beldingsville the next day, the twenty-fifth of June, at four o'clock. Miss Polly read the telegram, frowned, then climbed the stairs to the attic room. She still frowned as she looked about her.

The room contained a small bed, neatly made, two straight-backed chairs, a washstand, a bureau—without any mirror—and a small table. There were no drapery curtains at the dormer windows, no pictures on the wall. All day the sun had been pouring down upon the roof, and the little room was like an oven for heat. As there were no screens, the windows had not been raised. A big fly was buzzing angrily at one of them now, up and down, up and down, trying to get out.

Miss Polly killed the fly, swept it through the window (raising the sash an inch for the purpose), straightened a chair, frowned again, and left the room.

"Nancy," she said a few minutes later, at the kitchen door, "I found a fly upstairs in Miss Pollyanna's room. The window must have been raised at some time. I have ordered screens, but until they come I shall expect you to see that the windows remain closed. My niece will arrive tomorrow at four o'clock. I desire you to meet her at the station. Timothy will take the open buggy and drive you over. The telegram says 'light hair, red-checked gingham dress, and straw hat.' That is all I know, but I think it is sufficient for your purpose."

"Yes, ma'am; but—you—"

Miss Polly evidently read the pause aright, for she frowned and said crisply:

"No, I shall not go. It is not necessary that I should, I think. That is all." And she turned away—Miss Polly's arrangements for the comfort of her niece, Pollyanna, were complete.

In the kitchen, Nancy sent her flatiron with a vicious dig across the dish towel she was ironing.

"'Light hair, red-checked gingham dress, and straw hat'—all she knows, indeed! Well, I'd be ashamed ter own it up, that I would, I would—and her my onliest niece what was a-comin' from 'way across the continent!"

Promptly at twenty minutes to four the next afternoon Timothy and Nancy drove off in the open buggy to meet the expected guest. Timothy was Old Tom's son. It was sometimes said in the town that if Old Tom was Miss Polly's right-hand man, Timothy was her left.

Timothy was a good-natured youth, and a good-looking one, as well. Short as had been Nancy's stay at the house, the two were already good friends. Today, however, Nancy was too full of her mission to be her usual talkative self; and almost in silence she took the drive to the station and alighted to wait for the train.

Over and over in her mind she was saying it "light hair, red-checked dress, straw hat." Over and over again she was wondering just what sort of child this Pollyanna was, anyway.

"I hope for her sake she's quiet and sensible, and don't drop knives nor bang doors," she sighed to Timothy, who had sauntered up to her.

"Well, if she ain't, nobody knows what'll become of the rest of us," grinned Timothy. "Imagine Miss Polly and a NOISY kid! Gorry! There goes the whistle now!"

"Oh, Timothy, I—I think it was mean ter send me," chattered the suddenly frightened Nancy, as she turned and hurried to a point where she could best watch the passengers alight at the little station.

It was not long before Nancy saw her—the slender little

girl in the red-checked gingham with two fat braids of flaxen hair hanging down her back. Beneath the straw hat, an eager, freckled little face turned to the right and to the left, plainly searching for someone.

Nancy knew the child at once, but not for some time could she control her shaking knees sufficiently to go to her. The little girl was standing quite by herself when Nancy finally did approach her.

"Are you Miss—Pollyanna?" she faltered. The next moment she found herself half smothered in the clasp of two gingham-clad arms.

"Oh, I'm so glad, GLAD, GLAD to see you," cried an eager voice in her ear. "Of course I'm Pollyanna, and I'm so glad you came to meet me! I hoped you would."

"You—you did?" stammered Nancy, vaguely wondering how Pollyanna could possibly have known her—and wanted her. "You—you did?" she repeated, trying to straighten her hat.

"Oh, yes; and I've been wondering all the way here what you looked like," cried the little girl, dancing on her toes, and sweeping the embarrassed Nancy from head to foot, with her eyes. "And now I know, and I'm glad you look just like you do look."

Nancy was relieved just then to have Timothy come up. Pollyanna's words had been most confusing.

"This is Timothy. Maybe you have a trunk," she stammered.

"Yes, I have," nodded Pollyanna, importantly. "I've got a brand new one. The Ladies' Aid bought it for me—and wasn't it lovely of them, when they wanted the carpet so? Of course I don't know how much red carpet a trunk could buy, but it ought to buy some, anyhow—much as half an aisle, don't you think? I've got a little thing here in my bag that Mr. Gray said was a check, and that I must give it to you before I could get my trunk. Mr. Gray is Mrs. Gray's husband. They're cousins

of Deacon Carr's wife. I came east with them, and they're lovely! And—there, here 'tis," she finished, producing the check after much fumbling in the bag she carried.

Nancy drew a long breath. Instinctively she felt that someone had to draw one—after that speech. Then she stole a glance at Timothy. Timothy's eyes were studiously turned away.

The three were off at last, with Pollyanna's trunk in behind, and Pollyanna herself snugly ensconced between Nancy and Timothy. During the whole process of getting started, the little girl had kept up an uninterrupted stream of comments and questions, until the somewhat dazed Nancy found herself quite out of breath trying to keep up with her.

"There! Isn't this lovely? Is it far? I hope 'tis—I love to ride," sighed Pollyanna, as the wheels began to turn. "Of course, if 'tisn't far, I sha'n't mind, though, 'cause I'll be glad to get there all the sooner, you know. What a pretty street! I knew 'twas going to be pretty; father told me—"

She stopped with a little choking breath. Nancy, looking at her apprehensively, saw that her small chin was quivering, and that her eyes were full of tears. In a moment, however, she hurried on, with a brave lifting of her head.

"Father told me all about it. He remembered. And—and I ought to have explained before. Mrs. Gray told me to, at once—about this red gingham dress, you know, and why I'm not in black. She said you'd think 'twas queer. But there weren't any black things in the last missionary barrel, only a lady's velvet basque which Deacon Carr's wife said wasn't suitable for me at all; besides, it had white spots—worn, you know—on both elbows, and some other places. Part of the Ladies' Aid wanted to buy me a black dress and hat, but the other part thought the money ought to go toward the red carpet they're trying to get—for the church, you know. Mrs. White said maybe it was just as well, anyway, for she didn't like children in black—that is, I mean, she liked the children,

of course, but not the black part."

Pollyanna paused for breath, and Nancy managed to stammer:

"Well, I'm sure it—it'll be all right."

"I'm glad you feel that way. I do, too," nodded Pollyanna, again with that choking little breath. "Of course, 'twould have been a good deal harder to be glad in black—"

"Glad!" gasped Nancy, surprised into an interruption.

"Yes—that father's gone to Heaven to be with mother and the rest of us, you know. He said I must be glad. But it's been pretty hard to—to do it, even in red gingham, because I—I wanted him, so; and I couldn't help feeling I OUGHT to have him, specially as mother and the rest have God and all the angels, while I didn't have anybody but the Ladies' Aid. But now I'm sure it'll be easier because I've got you, Aunt Polly. I'm so glad I've got you!"

Nancy's aching sympathy for the poor little forlornness beside her turned suddenly into shocked terror.

"Oh, but—but you've made an awful mistake, d-dear," she faltered. "I'm only Nancy. I ain't your Aunt Polly, at all!"

"You—you AREN'T?" stammered the little girl, in plain dismay.

"No. I'm only Nancy. I never thought of your takin' me for her. We—we ain't a bit alike we ain't, we ain't!"

Timothy chuckled softly; but Nancy was too disturbed to answer the merry flash from his eyes.

"But who ARE you?" questioned Pollyanna. "You don't look a bit like a Ladies' Aider!"

Timothy laughed outright this time.

"I'm Nancy, the hired girl. I do all the work except the washin' an' hard ironin'. Mis' Durgin does that."

"But there IS an Aunt Polly?" demanded the child, anxiously.

"You bet your life there is," cut in Timothy.

Pollyanna relaxed visibly.

"Oh, that's all right, then." There was a moment's silence, then she went on brightly: "And do you know? I'm glad, after all, that she didn't come to meet me; because now I've got HER still coming, and I've got you besides."

Nancy flushed. Timothy turned to her with a quizzical smile.

"I call that a pretty slick compliment," he said. "Why don't you thank the little lady?"

"I—I was thinkin' about—Miss Polly," faltered Nancy.

Pollyanna sighed contentedly.

"I was, too. I'm so interested in her. You know she's all the aunt I've got, and I didn't know I had her for ever so long. Then father told me. He said she lived in a lovely great big house 'way on top of a hill."

"She does. You can see it now," said Nancy.

"It's that big white one with the green blinds, 'way ahead."

"Oh, how pretty!—and what a lot of trees and grass all around it! I never saw such a lot of green grass, seems so, all at once. Is my Aunt Polly rich, Nancy?"

"Yes, Miss."

"I'm so glad. It must be perfectly lovely to have lots of money. I never knew anyone that did have, only the Whites—they're some rich. They have carpets in every room and ice cream Sundays. Does Aunt Polly have ice cream Sundays?"

Nancy shook her head. Her lips twitched. She threw a merry look into Timothy's eyes.

"No, Miss. Your aunt don't like ice cream, I guess; leastways I never saw it on her table."

Pollyanna's face fell.

"Oh, doesn't she? I'm so sorry! I don't see how she can help liking ice cream. But—anyhow, I can be kinder glad about that, 'cause the ice cream you don't eat can't make your stomach ache like Mrs. White's did—that is, I ate hers, you know, lots of it. Maybe Aunt Polly has got the carpets,

though."

"Yes, she's got the carpets."

"In every room?"

"Well, in almost every room," answered Nancy, frowning suddenly at the thought of that bare little attic room where there was no carpet.

"Oh, I'm so glad," exulted Pollyanna. "I love carpets. We didn't have any, only two little rugs that came in a missionary barrel, and one of those had ink spots on it. Mrs. White had pictures, too, perfectly beautiful ones of roses and little girls kneeling and a kitty and some lambs and a lion—not together, you know—the lambs and the lion. Oh, of course the Bible says they will sometime, but they haven't yet—that is, I mean Mrs. White's haven't. Don't you just love pictures?"

"I—I don't know," answered Nancy in a half-stifled voice.

"I do. We didn't have any pictures. They don't come in the barrels much, you know. There did two come once, though. But one was so good father sold it to get money to buy me some shoes with; and the other was so bad it fell to pieces just as soon as we hung it up. Glass—it broke, you know. And I cried. But I'm glad now we didn't have any of those nice things, 'cause I shall like Aunt Polly's all the better—not being used to 'em, you see. Just as it is when the PRETTY hair ribbons come in the barrels after a lot of faded-out brown ones. My! but isn't this a perfectly beautiful house?" she broke off fervently, as they turned into the wide driveway.

It was when Timothy was unloading the trunk that Nancy found an opportunity to mutter low in his ear:

"Don't you never say nothin' ter me again about leavin', Timothy Durgin. You couldn't HIRE me ter leave!"

"Leave! I should say not," grinned the youth.

"You couldn't drag me away. It'll be more fun here now, with that kid 'round, than movin'-picture shows, every day!"

"Fun!—fun!" repeated Nancy, indignantly, "I guess it'll be

somethin' more than fun for that blessed child—when them two tries ter live tergether; and I guess she'll be a-needin' some rock ter fly to for refuge. Well, I'm a-goin' ter be that rock, Timothy; I am, I am!" she vowed, as she turned and led Pollyanna up the broad steps.

CHAPTER IV
The Little Attic Room

Miss Polly Harrington did not rise to meet her niece. She looked up from her book, it is true, as Nancy and the little girl appeared in the sitting-room doorway, and she held out a hand with "duty" written large on every coldly extended finger.

"How do you do, Pollyanna? I—" She had no chance to say more. Pollyanna, had fairly flown across the room and flung herself into her aunt's scandalized, unyielding lap.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, I don't know how to be glad enough that you let me come to live with you," she was sobbing. "You don't know how perfectly lovely it is to have you and Nancy and all this after you've had just the Ladies' Aid!"

"Very likely—though I've not had the pleasure of the Ladies' Aid's acquaintance," rejoined Miss Polly, stiffly, trying to unclasp the small, clinging fingers, and turning frowning eyes on Nancy in the doorway. "Nancy, that will do. You may go. Pollyanna, be good enough, please, to stand erect in a proper manner. I don't know yet what you look like."

Pollyanna drew back at once, laughing a little hysterically.

"No, I suppose you don't; but you see I'm not very much to look at, anyway, on account of the freckles. Oh, and I ought to explain about the red gingham and the black velvet basque with white spots on the elbows. I told Nancy how father said—"

"Yes; well, never mind now what your father said," interrupted Miss Polly, crisply. "You had a trunk, I presume?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, Aunt Polly. I've got a beautiful trunk that the Ladies' Aid gave me. I haven't got so very much in

it—of my own, I mean. The barrels haven't had many clothes for little girls in them lately; but there were all father's books, and Mrs. White said she thought I ought to have those. You see, father—"

"Pollyanna," interrupted her aunt again, sharply, "there is one thing that might just as well be understood right away at once; and that is, I do not care to have you keep talking of your father to me."

The little girl drew in her breath tremulously.

"Why, Aunt Polly, you—you mean—" She hesitated, and her aunt filled the pause.

"We will go upstairs to your room. Your trunk is already there, I presume. I told Timothy to take it up—if you had one. You may follow me, Pollyanna."

Without speaking, Pollyanna turned and followed her aunt from the room. Her eyes were brimming with tears, but her chin was bravely high.

"After all, I—I reckon I'm glad she doesn't want me to talk about father," Pollyanna was thinking. "It'll be easier, maybe—if I don't talk about him. Probably, anyhow, that is why she told me not to talk about him." And Pollyanna, convinced anew of her aunt's "kindness," blinked off the tears and looked eagerly about her.

She was on the stairway now. Just ahead, her aunt's black silk skirt rustled luxuriously. Behind her an open door allowed a glimpse of soft-tinted rugs and satin-covered chairs. Beneath her feet a marvelous carpet was like green moss to the tread. On every side the gilt of picture frames or the glint of sunlight through the filmy mesh of lace curtains flashed in her eyes.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly," breathed the little girl, rapturously; "what a perfectly lovely, lovely house! How awfully glad you must be you're so rich!"

"PollyANNA!" ejaculated her aunt, turning sharply about as she reached the head of the stairs. "I'm surprised at you—

making a speech like that to me!"

"Why, Aunt Polly, AREN'T you?" queried Pollyanna, in frank wonder.

"Certainly not, Pollyanna. I hope I could not so far forget myself as to be sinfully proud of any gift the Lord has seen fit to bestow upon me," declared the lady; "certainly not, of RICHES!"

Miss Polly turned and walked down the hall toward the attic stairway door. She was glad, now, that she had put the child in the attic room. Her idea at first had been to get her niece as far away as possible from herself, and at the same time place her where her childish heedlessness would not destroy valuable furnishings. Now—with this evident strain of vanity showing thus early—it was all the more fortunate that the room planned for her was plain and sensible, thought Miss Polly.

Eagerly Pollyanna's small feet pattered behind her aunt. Still more eagerly her big blue eyes tried to look in all directions at once, that no thing of beauty or interest in this wonderful house might be passed unseen. Most eagerly of all her mind turned to the wondrously exciting problem about to be solved: behind which of all these fascinating doors was waiting now her room—the dear, beautiful room full of curtains, rugs, and pictures, that was to be her very own? Then, abruptly, her aunt opened a door and ascended another stairway.

There was little to be seen here. A bare wall rose on either side. At the top of the stairs, wide reaches of shadowy space led to far corners where the roof came almost down to the floor, and where were stacked innumerable trunks and boxes. It was hot and stifling, too. Unconsciously Pollyanna lifted her head higher—it seemed so hard to breathe. Then she saw that her aunt had thrown open a door at the right.

"There, Pollyanna, here is your room, and your trunk is here, I see. Have you your key?"

Pollyanna nodded dumbly. Her eyes were a little wide and frightened.

Her aunt frowned.

"When I ask a question, Pollyanna, I prefer that you should answer aloud not merely with your head."

"Yes, Aunt Polly."

"Thank you; that is better. I believe you have everything that you need here," she added, glancing at the well-filled towel rack and water pitcher. "I will send Nancy up to help you unpack. Supper is at six o'clock," she finished, as she left the room and swept downstairs.

For a moment after she had gone Pollyanna stood quite still, looking after her. Then she turned her wide eyes to the bare wall, the bare floor, the bare windows. She turned them last to the little trunk that had stood not so long before in her own little room in the faraway western home. The next moment she stumbled blindly toward it and fell on her knees at its side, covering her face with her hands.

Nancy found her there when she came up a few minutes later.

"There, there, you poor lamb," she crooned, dropping to the floor and drawing the little girl into her arms. "I was just a-fearin! I'd find you like this, like this."

Pollyanna shook her head.

"But I'm bad and wicked, Nancy—awful wicked," she sobbed. "I just can't make myself understand that God and the angels needed my father more than I did."

"No more they did, neither," declared Nancy, stoutly.

"Oh-h!—NANCY!" The burning horror in Pollyanna's eyes dried the tears.

Nancy gave a shamefaced smile and rubbed her own eyes vigorously.

"There, there, child, I didn't mean it, of course," she cried briskly. "Come, let's have your key and we'll get inside this trunk and take out your dresses in no time, no time."

Somewhat tearfully Pollyanna produced the key.

"There aren't very many there, anyway," she faltered.

"Then they're all the sooner unpacked," declared Nancy.

Pollyanna gave a sudden radiant smile.

"That's so! I can be glad of that, can't I?" she cried.

Nancy stared.

"Why, of—course," she answered a little uncertainly.

Nancy's capable hands made short work of unpacking the books, the patched undergarments, and the few pitifully unattractive dresses. Pollyanna, smiling bravely now, flew about, hanging the dresses in the closet, stacking the books on the table, and putting away the undergarments in the bureau drawers.

"I'm sure it—it's going to be a very nice room. Don't you think so?" she stammered, after a while.

There was no answer. Nancy was very busy, apparently, with her head in the trunk. Pollyanna, standing at the bureau, gazed a little wistfully at the bare wall above.

"And I can be glad there isn't any looking-glass here, too, 'cause where there ISN'T any glass I can't see my freckles."

Nancy made a sudden queer little sound with her mouth—but when Pollyanna turned, her head was in the trunk again. At one of the windows, a few minutes later, Pollyanna gave a glad cry and clapped her hands joyously.

"Oh, Nancy, I hadn't seen this before," she breathed. "Look—'way off there, with those trees and the houses and that lovely church spire, and the river shining just like silver. Why, Nancy, there doesn't anybody need any pictures with that to look at. Oh, I'm so glad now she let me have this room!"

To Pollyanna's surprise and dismay, Nancy burst into tears. Pollyanna hurriedly crossed to her side.

"Why, Nancy, Nancy—what is it?" she cried; then, fearfully: "This wasn't—YOUR room, was it?"

"My room!" stormed Nancy, hotly, choking back the

tears. "If you ain't a little angel straight from Heaven, and if some folks don't eat dirt before—Oh, land! there's her bell!" After which amazing speech, Nancy sprang to her feet, dashed out of the room, and went clattering down the stairs.

Left alone, Pollyanna went back to her "picture," as she mentally designated the beautiful view from the window. After a time she touched the sash tentatively. It seemed as if no longer could she endure the stifling heat. To her joy the sash moved under her fingers. The next moment the window was wide open, and Pollyanna was leaning far out, drinking in the fresh, sweet air.

She ran then to the other window. That, too, soon flew up under her eager hands. A big fly swept past her nose, and buzzed noisily about the room. Then another came, and another; but Pollyanna paid no heed. Pollyanna had made a wonderful discovery—against this window a huge tree flung great branches. To Pollyanna they looked like arms outstretched, inviting her. Suddenly she laughed aloud.

"I believe I can do it," she chuckled. The next moment she had climbed nimbly to the window ledge. From there it was an easy matter to step to the nearest tree branch. Then, clinging like a monkey, she swung herself from limb to limb until the lowest branch was reached. The drop to the ground was—even for Pollyanna, who was used to climbing trees—a little fearsome. She took it, however, with bated breath, swinging from her strong little arms, and landing on all fours in the soft grass. Then she picked herself up and looked eagerly about her.

She was at the back of the house. Before her lay a garden in which a bent old man was working. Beyond the garden a little path through an open field led up a steep hill, at the top of which a lone pine tree stood on guard beside the huge rock. To Pollyanna, at the moment, there seemed to be just one place in the world worth being in—the top of that big rock.

With a run and a skillful turn, Pollyanna skipped by the

bent old man, threaded her way between the orderly rows of green growing things, and—a little out of breath—reached the path that ran through the open field. Then, determinedly, she began to climb. Already, however, she was thinking what a long, long way off that rock must be, when back at the window it had looked so near!

Fifteen minutes later the great clock in the hallway of the Harrington homestead struck six. At precisely the last stroke Nancy sounded the bell for supper.

One, two, three minutes passed. Miss Polly frowned and tapped the floor with her slipper. A little jerkily she rose to her feet, went into the hall, and looked upstairs, plainly impatient. For a minute she listened intently; then she turned and swept into the dining room.

"Nancy," she said with decision, as soon as the little serving maid appeared; "my niece is late. No, you need not call her," she added severely, as Nancy made a move toward the hall door. "I told her what time supper was, and now she will have to suffer the consequences. She may as well begin at once to learn to be punctual. When she comes down she may have bread and milk in the kitchen."

"Yes, ma'am." It was well, perhaps, that Miss Polly did not happen to be looking at Nancy's face just then.

At the earliest possible moment after supper, Nancy crept up the back stairs and thence to the attic room.

"Bread and milk, indeed!—and when the poor lamb hain't only just cried herself to sleep," she was muttering fiercely, as she softly pushed open the door. The next moment she gave a frightened cry. "Where are you? Where've you gone? Where HAVE you gone?" she panted, looking in the closet, under the bed, and even in the trunk and down the water pitcher. Then she flew downstairs and out to Old Tom in the garden.

"Mr. Tom, Mr. Tom, that blessed child's gone," she wailed. "She's vanished right up into Heaven where she come

from, poor lamb—and me told ter give her bread and milk in the kitchen—her what's eatin' angel food this minute, I'll warrant, I'll warrant!"

The old man straightened up.

"Gone? Heaven?" he repeated stupidly, unconsciously sweeping the brilliant sunset sky with his gaze. He stopped, stared a moment intently, then turned with a slow grin. "Well, Nancy, it do look like as if she'd tried ter get as nigh Heaven as she could, and that's a fact," he agreed, pointing with a crooked finger to where, sharply outlined against the reddening sky, a slender, wind-blown figure was poised on top of a huge rock.

"Well, she ain't goin' ter Heaven that way ter-night—not if I has my say," declared Nancy, doggedly. "If the mistress asks, tell her I ain't furgettin' the dishes, but I gone on a stroll," she flung back over her shoulder, as she sped toward the path that led through the open field.

CHAPTER V
The Game

"For the land's sake, Miss Pollyanna, what a scare you did give me," panted Nancy, hurrying up to the big rock, down which Pollyanna had just regretfully slid.

"Scare? Oh, I'm so sorry; but you mustn't, really, ever get scared about me, Nancy. Father and the Ladies' Aid used to do it, too, till they found I always came back all right."

"But I didn't even know you'd went," cried Nancy, tucking the little girl's hand under her arm and hurrying her down the hill. "I didn't see you go, and nobody didn't. I guess you flew right up through the roof; I do, I do."

Pollyanna skipped gleefully.

"I did, 'most—only I flew down instead of up. I came down the tree."

Nancy stopped short.

"You did—what?"

"Came down the tree, outside my window."

"My stars and stockings!" gasped Nancy, hurrying on again. "I'd like ter know what yer aunt would say ter that!"

"Would you? Well, I'll tell her, then, so you can find out," promised the little girl, cheerfully.

"Mercy!" gasped Nancy. "No—no!"

"Why, you don't mean she'd CARE!" cried Pollyanna, plainly disturbed.

"No—er—yes—well, never mind. I—I ain't so very particular about knowin' what she'd say, truly," stammered Nancy, determined to keep one scolding from Pollyanna, if nothing more. "But, say, we better hurry. I've got ter get them dishes done, ye know."

"I'll help," promised Pollyanna, promptly.

"Oh, Miss Pollyanna!" demurred Nancy.

For a moment there was silence. The sky was darkening fast. Pollyanna took a firmer hold of her friend's arm.

"I reckon I'm glad, after all, that you DID get scared—a little, 'cause then you came after me," she shivered.

"Poor little lamb! And you must be hungry, too. I—I'm afraid you'll have ter have bread and milk in the kitchen with me. Yer aunt didn't like it—because you didn't come down ter supper, ye know."

"But I couldn't. I was up here."

"Yes; but—she didn't know that, you see!" observed Nancy, dryly, stifling a chuckle. "I'm sorry about the bread and milk; I am, I am."

"Oh, I'm not. I'm glad."

"Glad! Why?"

"Why, I like bread and milk, and I'd like to eat with you. I don't see any trouble about being glad about that."

"You don't seem ter see any trouble bein' glad about everythin'," retorted Nancy, choking a little over her remembrance of Pollyanna's brave attempts to like the bare little attic room.

Pollyanna laughed softly.

"Well, that's the game, you know, anyway."

"The—GAME?"

"Yes; the 'just being glad' game."

"Whatever in the world are you talkin' about?"

"Why, it's a game. Father told it to me, and it's lovely," rejoined Pollyanna. "We've played it always, ever since I was a little, little girl. I told the Ladies' Aid, and they played it—some of them."

"What is it? I ain't much on games, though."

Pollyanna laughed again, but she sighed, too; and in the gathering twilight her face looked thin and wistful.

"Why, we began it on some crutches that came in a

missionary barrel."

"CRUTCHES!"

"Yes. You see I'd wanted a doll, and father had written them so; but when the barrel came the lady wrote that there hadn't any dolls come in, but the little crutches had. So she sent 'em along as they might come in handy for some child, sometime. And that's when we began it."

"Well, I must say I can't see any game about that, about that," declared Nancy, almost irritably.

"Oh, yes; the game was to just find something about everything to be glad about—no matter what 'twas," rejoined Pollyanna, earnestly. "And we began right then—on the crutches."

"Well, goodness me! I can't see anythin' ter be glad about—gettin' a pair of crutches when you wanted a doll!"

Pollyanna clapped her hands.

"There is—there is," she crowed. "But I couldn't see it, either, Nancy, at first," she added, with quick honesty. "Father had to tell it to me."

"Well, then, suppose YOU tell ME," almost snapped Nancy.

"Goosey! Why, just be glad because you don't—NEED—'EM!" exulted Pollyanna, triumphantly. "You see it's just as easy—when you know how!"

"Well, of all the queer doin's!" breathed Nancy, regarding Pollyanna with almost fearful eyes.

"Oh, but it isn't queer—it's lovely," maintained Pollyanna enthusiastically. "And we've played it ever since. And the harder 'tis, the more fun 'tis to get 'em out; only—only sometimes it's almost too hard—like when your father goes to Heaven, and there isn't anybody but a Ladies' Aid left."

"Yes, or when you're put in a snippy little room 'way at the top of the house with nothin' in it," growled Nancy.

Pollyanna sighed.

"That was a hard one, at first," she admitted, "specially

when I was so kind of lonesome. I just didn't feel like playing the game, anyway, and I HAD been wanting pretty things, so! Then I happened to think how I hated to see my freckles in the looking-glass, and I saw that lovely picture out the window, too; so then I knew I'd found the things to be glad about. You see, when you're hunting for the glad things, you sort of forget the other kind—like the doll you wanted, you know."

"Humph!" choked Nancy, trying to swallow the lump in her throat.

"Most generally it doesn't take so long," sighed Pollyanna; "and lots of times now I just think of them WITHOUT thinking, you know. I've got so used to playing it. It's a lovely game. F-father and I used to like it so much," she faltered. "I suppose, though, it—it'll be a little harder now, as long as I haven't anybody to play it with. Maybe Aunt Polly will play it, though," she added, as an after-thought.

"My stars and stockings!—HER!" breathed Nancy, behind her teeth. Then, aloud, she said doggedly: "See here, Miss Pollyanna, I ain't sayin' that I'll play it very well, and I ain't sayin' that I know how, anyway; but I'll play it with ye, after a fashion—I just will, I will!"

"Oh, Nancy!" exulted Pollyanna, giving her a rapturous hug. "That'll be splendid! Won't we have fun?"

"Er—maybe," conceded Nancy, in open doubt. "But you mustn't count too much on me, ye know. I never was no case fur games, but I'm a-goin' ter make a most awful old try on this one. You're goin' ter have someone ter play it with, anyhow," she finished, as they entered the kitchen together.

Pollyanna ate her bread and milk with good appetite; then, at Nancy's suggestion, she went into the sitting room, where her aunt sat reading. Miss Polly looked up coldly.

"Have you had your supper, Pollyanna?"

"Yes, Aunt Polly."

"I'm very sorry, Pollyanna, to have been obliged so soon to send you into the kitchen to eat bread and milk."

"But I was real glad you did it, Aunt Polly. I like bread and milk, and Nancy, too. You mustn't feel bad about that one bit."

Aunt Polly sat suddenly a little more erect in her chair.

"Pollyanna, it's quite time you were in bed. You have had a hard day, and tomorrow we must plan your hours and go over your clothing to see what it is necessary to get for you. Nancy will give you a candle. Be careful how you handle it. Breakfast will be at half-past seven. See that you are down to that. Goodnight."

Quite as a matter of course, Pollyanna came straight to her aunt's side and gave her an affectionate hug.

"I've had such a beautiful time, so far," she sighed happily. "I know I'm going to just love living with you but then, I knew I should before I came. Goodnight," she called cheerfully, as she ran from the room.

"Well, upon my soul!" ejaculated Miss Polly, half aloud. "What a most extraordinary child!" Then she frowned. "She's 'glad' I punished her, and I 'mustn't feel bad one bit,' and she's going to 'love to live' with me! Well, upon my soul!" ejaculated Miss Polly again, as she took up her book.

Fifteen minutes later, in the attic room, a lonely little girl sobbed into the tightly clutched sheet:

"I know, father-among-the-angels, I'm not playing the game one bit now—not one bit; but I don't believe even you could find anything to be glad about sleeping all alone 'way off up here in the dark—like this. If only I was near Nancy or Aunt Polly, or even a Ladies' Aider, it would be easier!"

Downstairs in the kitchen, Nancy, hurrying with her belated work, jabbed her dish-mop into the milk pitcher, and muttered jerkily:

"If playin' a silly-fool game—about bein' glad you've got crutches when you want dolls—is got ter be—my way—o' bein' that rock o' refuge—why, I'm a-goin' ter play it—I am, I am!"

CHAPTER VI
A Question of Duty

It was nearly seven o'clock when Pollyanna awoke that first day after her arrival. Her windows faced the south and the west, so she could not see the sun yet; but she could see the hazy blue of the morning sky, and she knew that the day promised to be a fair one.

The little room was cooler now, and the air blew in fresh and sweet. Outside, the birds were twittering joyously, and Pollyanna flew to the window to talk to them. She saw then that down in the garden her aunt was already out among the rosebushes. With rapid fingers, therefore, she made herself ready to join her.

Down the attic stairs sped Pollyanna, leaving both doors wide open. Through the hall, down the next flight, then bang through the front screened door and around to the garden, she ran.

Aunt Polly, with the bent old man, was leaning over a rosebush when Pollyanna, gurgling with delight, flung herself upon her.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, I reckon I am glad this morning just to be alive!"

"PollyANNA!" remonstrated the lady, sternly, pulling herself as erect as she could with a dragging weight of ninety pounds hanging about her neck. "Is this the usual way you say good morning?"

The little girl dropped to her toes, and danced lightly up and down.

"No, only when I love folks so I just can't help it! I saw you from my window, Aunt Polly, and I got to thinking how

you WEREN'T a Ladies' Aider, and you were my really truly aunt; and you looked so good I just had to come down and hug you!"

The bent old man turned his back suddenly. Miss Polly attempted a frown—with not her usual success.

"Pollyanna, you—I Thomas, that will do for this morning. I think you understand—about those rosebushes," she said stiffly. Then she turned and walked rapidly away.

"Do you always work in the garden, Mr.—Man?" asked Pollyanna, interestedly.

The man turned. His lips were twitching, but his eyes looked blurred as if with tears.

"Yes, Miss. I'm Old Tom, the gardener," he answered. Timidly, but as if impelled by an irresistible force, he reached out a shaking hand and let it rest for a moment on her bright hair. "You are so like your mother, little Miss! I used ter know her when she was even littler than you be. You see, I used ter work in the garden—then."

Pollyanna caught her breath audibly.

"You did? And you knew my mother, really—when she was just a little earth angel, and not a Heaven one? Oh, please tell me about her!" And down plumped Pollyanna in the middle of the dirt path by the old man's side.

A bell sounded from the house. The next moment Nancy was seen flying out the backdoor.

"Miss Pollyanna, that bell means breakfast—mornin's," she panted, pulling the little girl to her feet and hurrying her back to the house; "and other times it means other meals. But it always means that you're ter run like time when ye hear it, no matter where ye be. If ye don't—well, it'll take somethin' smarter'n we be ter find ANYTHIN' ter be glad about in that!" she finished, shooing Pollyanna into the house as she would shoo an unruly chicken into a coop.

Breakfast, for the first five minutes, was a silent meal; then Miss Polly, her disapproving eyes following the airy wings of

two flies darting here and there over the table, said sternly:

"Nancy, where did those flies come from?"

"I don't know, ma'am. There wasn't one in the kitchen." Nancy had been too excited to notice Pollyanna's up-flung windows the afternoon before.

"I reckon maybe they're my flies, Aunt Polly," observed Pollyanna, amiably. "There were lots of them this morning having a beautiful time upstairs."

Nancy left the room precipitately, though to do so she had to carry out the hot muffins she had just brought in.

"Yours!" gasped Miss Polly. "What do you mean? Where did they come from?"

"Why, Aunt Polly, they came from out of doors of course, through the windows. I SAW some of them come in."

"You saw them! You mean you raised those windows without any screens?"

"Why, yes. There weren't any screens there, Aunt Polly."

Nancy, at this moment, came in again with the muffins. Her face was grave, but very red.

"Nancy," directed her mistress, sharply, "you may set the muffins down and go at once to Miss Pollyanna's room and shut the windows. Shut the doors, also. Later, when your morning work is done, go through every room with the spatter. See that you make a thorough search."

To her niece she said:

"Pollyanna, I have ordered screens for those windows. I knew, of course, that it was my duty to do that. But it seems to me that you have quite forgotten YOUR duty."

"My—duty?" Pollyanna's eyes were wide with wonder.

"Certainly. I know it is warm, but I consider it your duty to keep your windows closed till those screens come. Flies, Pollyanna, are not only unclean and annoying, but very dangerous to health. After breakfast I will give you a little pamphlet on this matter to read."

"To read? Oh, thank you, Aunt Polly. I love to read!"

Miss Polly drew in her breath audibly, then she shut her lips together hard. Pollyanna, seeing her stern face, frowned a little thoughtfully.

"Of course I'm sorry about the duty I forgot, Aunt Polly," she apologized timidly. "I won't raise the windows again."

Her aunt made no reply. She did not speak, indeed, until the meal was over. Then she rose, went to the bookcase in the sitting room, took out a small paper booklet, and crossed the room to her niece's side.

"This is the article I spoke of, Pollyanna. I desire you to go to your room at once and read it. I will be up in half an hour to look over your things."

Pollyanna, her eyes on the illustration of a fly's head, many times magnified, cried joyously:

"Oh, thank you, Aunt Polly!" The next moment she skipped merrily from the room, banging the door behind her.

Miss Polly frowned, hesitated, then crossed the room majestically and opened the door; but Pollyanna was already out of sight, clattering up the attic stairs.

Half an hour later when Miss Polly, her face expressing stern duty in every line, climbed those stairs and entered Pollyanna's room, she was greeted with a burst of eager enthusiasm.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, I never saw anything so perfectly lovely and interesting in my life. I'm so glad you gave me that book to read! Why, I didn't suppose flies could carry such a lot of things on their feet, and—"

"That will do," observed Aunt Polly, with dignity. "Pollyanna, you may bring out your clothes now, and I will look them over. What are not suitable for you I shall give to the Sullivans, of course."

With visible reluctance Pollyanna laid down the pamphlet and turned toward the closet.

"I'm afraid you'll think they're worse than the Ladies' Aid did—and THEY said they were shameful," she sighed. "But

there were mostly things for boys and older folks in the last two or three barrels; and—did you ever have a missionary barrel, Aunt Polly?"

At her aunt's look of shocked anger, Pollyanna corrected herself at once.

"Why, no, of course you didn't, Aunt Polly!" she hurried on, with a hot blush. "I forgot; rich folks never have to have them. But you see sometimes I kind of forget that you are rich—up here in this room, you know."

Miss Polly's lips parted indignantly, but no words came. Pollyanna, plainly unaware that she had said anything in the least unpleasant, was hurrying on.

"Well, as I was going to say, you can't tell a thing about missionary barrels—except that you won't find in 'em what you think you're going to—even when you think you won't. It was the barrels every time, too, that were hardest to play the game on, for father and—"

Just in time Pollyanna remembered that she was not to talk of her father to her aunt. She dived into her closet then, hurriedly, and brought out all the poor little dresses in both her arms.

"They aren't nice, at all," she choked, "and they'd been black if it hadn't been for the red carpet for the church; but they're all I've got."

With the tips of her fingers Miss Polly turned over the conglomerate garments, so obviously made for anybody but Pollyanna. Next she bestowed frowning attention on the patched undergarments in the bureau drawers.

"I've got the best ones on," confessed Pollyanna, anxiously. "The Ladies' Aid bought me one set straight through all whole. Mrs. Jones—she's the president—told 'em I should have that if they had to clatter down bare aisles themselves the rest of their days. But they won't. Mr. White doesn't like the noise. He's got nerves, his wife says; but he's got money, too, and they expect he'll give a lot toward the carpet—on

account of the nerves, you know. I should think he'd be glad that if he did have the nerves he'd got money, too; shouldn't you?"

Miss Polly did not seem to hear. Her scrutiny of the undergarments finished, she turned to Pollyanna somewhat abruptly.

"You have been to school, of course, Pollyanna?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Polly. Besides, fath—I mean, I was taught at home some, too."

Miss Polly frowned.

"Very good. In the fall you will enter school here, of course. Mr. Hall, the principal, will doubtless settle in which grade you belong. Meanwhile, I suppose I ought to hear you read aloud half an hour each day."

"I love to read; but if you don't want to hear me I'd be just glad to read to myself—truly, Aunt Polly. And I wouldn't have to half try to be glad, either, for I like best to read to myself—on account of the big words, you know."

"I don't doubt it," rejoined Miss Polly, grimly. "Have you studied music?"

"Not much. I don't like my music—I like other people's, though. I learned to play on the piano a little. Miss Gray—she plays for church—she taught me. But I'd just as soon let that go as not, Aunt Polly. I'd rather, truly."

"Very likely," observed Aunt Polly, with slightly uplifted eyebrows. "Nevertheless I think it is my duty to see that you are properly instructed in at least the rudiments of music. You sew, of course."

"Yes, ma'am." Pollyanna sighed. "The Ladies' Aid taught me that. But I had an awful time. Mrs. Jones didn't believe in holding your needle like the rest of 'em did on buttonholing, and Mrs. White thought backstitching ought to be taught you before hemming (or else the other way), and Mrs. Harriman didn't believe in putting you on patchwork ever, at all."

"Well, there will be no difficulty of that kind any longer,

Pollyanna. I shall teach you sewing myself, of course. You do not know how to cook, I presume."

Pollyanna laughed suddenly.

"They were just beginning to teach me that this summer, but I hadn't got far. They were more divided up on that than they were on the sewing. They were GOING to begin on bread; but there wasn't two of 'em that made it alike, so after arguing it all one sewing-meeting, they decided to take turns at me one forenoon a week—in their own kitchens, you know. I'd only learned chocolate fudge and fig cake, though, when—when I had to stop." Her voice broke.

"Chocolate fudge and fig cake, indeed!" scorned Miss Polly. "I think we can remedy that very soon." She paused in thought for a minute, then went on slowly: "At nine o'clock every morning you will read aloud one half-hour to me. Before that you will use the time to put this room in order. Wednesday and Saturday forenoons, after half-past nine, you will spend with Nancy in the kitchen, learning to cook. Other mornings you will sew with me. That will leave the afternoons for your music. I shall, of course, procure a teacher at once for you," she finished decisively, as she arose from her chair.

Pollyanna cried out in dismay.

"Oh, but Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, you haven't left me any time at all just to—to live."

"To live, child! What do you mean? As if you weren't living all the time!"

"Oh, of course I'd be BREATHING all the time I was doing those things, Aunt Polly, but I wouldn't be living. You breathe all the time you're asleep, but you aren't living. I mean living—doing the things you want to do: playing out-doors, reading (to myself, of course), climbing hills, talking to Mr. Tom in the garden, and Nancy, and finding out all about the houses and the people and everything everywhere all through the perfectly lovely streets I came through yesterday. That's what I call living, Aunt Polly. Just breathing isn't

living!"

Miss Polly lifted her head irritably.

"Pollyanna, you ARE the most extraordinary child! You will be allowed a proper amount of playtime, of course. But, surely, it seems to me if I am willing to do my duty in seeing that you have proper care and instruction, YOU ought to be willing to do yours by seeing that that care and instruction are not ungratefully wasted."

Pollyanna looked shocked.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, as if I ever could be ungrateful—to YOU! Why, I LOVE YOU—and you aren't even a Ladies' Aider; you're an aunt!"

"Very well; then see that you don't act ungrateful," vouchsafed Miss Polly, as she turned toward the door.

She had gone halfway down the stairs when a small, unsteady voice called after her:

"Please, Aunt Polly, you didn't tell me which of my things you wanted to—to give away."

Aunt Polly emitted a tired sigh—a sigh that ascended straight to Pollyanna's ears.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you, Pollyanna. Timothy will drive us into town at half-past one this afternoon. Not one of your garments is fit for my niece to wear. Certainly I should be very far from doing my duty by you if I should let you appear out in any one of them."

Pollyanna sighed now—she believed she was going to hate that word—duty.

"Aunt Polly, please," she called wistfully, "isn't there ANY way you can be glad about all that—duty business?"

"What?" Miss Polly looked up in dazed surprise; then, suddenly, with very red cheeks, she turned and swept angrily down the stairs. "Don't be impertinent, Pollyanna!"

In the hot little attic room Pollyanna dropped herself on to one of the straight-backed chairs. To her, existence loomed ahead one endless round of duty.

"I don't see, really, what there was impertinent about that," she sighed. "I was only asking her if she couldn't tell me something to be glad about in all that duty business."

For several minutes Pollyanna sat in silence, her rueful eyes fixed on the forlorn heap of garments on the bed. Then, slowly, she rose and began to put away the dresses.

"There just isn't anything to be glad about, that I can see," she said aloud; "unless—it's to be glad when the duty's done!" Whereupon she laughed suddenly.

CHAPTER VII
Pollyanna and Punishments

At half-past one o'clock Timothy drove Miss Polly and her niece to the four or five principal dry goods stores, which were about half a mile from the homestead.

Fitting Pollyanna with a new wardrobe proved to be more or less of an exciting experience for all concerned. Miss Polly came out of it with the feeling of limp relaxation that one might have at finding oneself at last on solid earth after a perilous walk across the very thin crust of a volcano. The various clerks who had waited upon the pair came out of it with very red faces, and enough amusing stories of Pollyanna to keep their friends in gales of laughter the rest of the week. Pollyanna herself came out of it with radiant smiles and a heart content; for, as she expressed it to one of the clerks: "When you haven't had anybody but missionary barrels and Ladies' Aiders to dress you, it IS perfectly lovely to just walk right in and buy clothes that are brand new, and that don't have to be tucked up or let down because they don't fit!"

The shopping expedition consumed the entire afternoon; then came supper and a delightful talk with Old Tom in the garden, and another with Nancy on the back porch, after the dishes were done, and while Aunt Polly paid a visit to a neighbor.

Old Tom told Pollyanna wonderful things of her mother, that made her very happy indeed; and Nancy told her all about the little farm six miles away at "The Corners," where lived her own dear mother, and her equally dear brother and sisters. She promised, too, that sometime, if Miss Polly were willing, Pollyanna should be taken to see them.

"And THEY'VE got lovely names, too. You'll like THEIR

names," sighed Nancy. "They're 'Algernon,' and 'Florabelle' and 'Estelle.' I—I just hate 'Nancy'!"

"Oh, Nancy, what a dreadful thing to say! Why?"

"Because it isn't pretty like the others. You see, I was the first baby, and mother hadn't begun ter read so many stories with the pretty names in 'em, then."

"But I love 'Nancy,' just because it's you," declared Pollyanna.

"Humph! Well, I guess you could love 'Clarissa Mabelle' just as well," retorted Nancy, "and it would be a heap happier for me. I think THAT name's just grand!"

Pollyanna laughed.

"Well, anyhow," she chuckled, "you can be glad it isn't 'Hephzibah.'"

"Hephzibah!"

"Yes. Mrs. White's name is that. Her husband calls her 'Hep,' and she doesn't like it. She says when he calls out 'Hep—Hep!' she feels just as if the next minute he was going to yell 'Hurrah!' And she doesn't like to be hurrahed at."

Nancy's gloomy face relaxed into a broad smile.

"Well, if you don't beat the Dutch! Say, do you know?—I sha'n't never hear 'Nancy' now that I don't think o' that 'Hep—Hep!' and giggle. My, I guess I AM glad—" She stopped short and turned amazed eyes on the little girl. "Say, Miss Pollyanna, do you mean—was you playin' that 'ere game THEN—about my bein' glad I wa'n't named Hephzibah'?"

Pollyanna frowned; then she laughed.

"Why, Nancy, that's so! I WAS playing the game—but that's one of the times I just did it without thinking, I reckon. You see, you DO, lots of times; you get so used to it—looking for something to be glad about, you know. And most generally there is something about everything that you can be glad about, if you keep hunting long enough to find it."

"Well, m-maybe," granted Nancy, with open doubt.

At half-past eight Pollyanna went up to bed. The screens

had not yet come, and the close little room was like an oven. With longing eyes Pollyanna looked at the two fast-closed windows—but she did not raise them. She undressed, folded her clothes neatly, said her prayers, blew out her candle and climbed into bed.

Just how long she lay in sleepless misery, tossing from side to side of the hot little cot, she did not know; but it seemed to her that it must have been hours before she finally slipped out of bed, felt her way across the room and opened her door.

Out in the main attic all was velvet blackness save where the moon flung a path of silver half-way across the floor from the east dormer window. With a resolute ignoring of that fearsome darkness to the right and to the left, Pollyanna drew a quick breath and pattered straight into that silvery path, and on to the window.

She had hoped, vaguely, that this window might have a screen, but it did not. Outside, however, there was a wide world of fairy-like beauty, and there was, too, she knew, fresh, sweet air that would feel so good to hot cheeks and hands!

As she stepped nearer and peered longingly out, she saw something else: she saw, only a little way below the window, the wide, flat tin roof of Miss Polly's sun parlor built over the porte-cochere. The sight filled her with longing. If only, now, she were out there!

Fearfully she looked behind her. Back there, somewhere, were her hot little room and her still hotter bed; but between her and them lay a horrid desert of blackness across which one must feel one's way with outstretched, shrinking arms; while before her, out on the sun-parlor roof, were the moonlight and the cool, sweet night air.

If only her bed were out there! And folks did sleep out of doors. Joel Hartley at home, who was so sick with the consumption, HAD to sleep out of doors.

Suddenly Pollyanna remembered that she had seen near this attic window a row of long white bags hanging from nails.

Nancy had said that they contained the winter clothing, put away for the summer. A little fearfully now, Pollyanna felt her way to these bags, selected a nice fat soft one (it contained Miss Polly's sealskin coat) for a bed; and a thinner one to be doubled up for a pillow, and still another (which was so thin it seemed almost empty) for a covering. Thus equipped, Pollyanna in high glee pattered to the moonlit window again, raised the sash, stuffed her burden through to the roof below, then let herself down after it, closing the window carefully behind her—Pollyanna had not forgotten those flies with the marvellous feet that carried things.

How deliciously cool it was! Pollyanna quite danced up and down with delight, drawing in long, full breaths of the refreshing air. The tin roof under her feet crackled with little resounding snaps that Pollyanna rather liked. She walked, indeed, two or three times back and forth from end to end—it gave her such a pleasant sensation of airy space after her hot little room; and the roof was so broad and flat that she had no fear of falling off. Finally, with a sigh of content, she curled herself up on the sealskin-coat mattress, arranged one bag for a pillow and the other for a covering, and settled herself to sleep.

"I'm so glad now that the screens didn't come," she murmured, blinking up at the stars; "else I couldn't have had this!"

Downstairs in Miss Polly's room next the sun parlor, Miss Polly herself was hurrying into dressing gown and slippers, her face white and frightened. A minute before she had been telephoning in a shaking voice to Timothy:

"Come up quick!—you and your father. Bring lanterns. Somebody is on the roof of the sun parlor. He must have climbed up the rose trellis or somewhere, and of course he can get right into the house through the east window in the attic. I have locked the attic door down here—but hurry, quick!"

Sometime later, Pollyanna, just dropping off to sleep, was

startled by a lantern flash, and a trio of amazed ejaculations. She opened her eyes to find Timothy at the top of a ladder near her, Old Tom just getting through the window, and her aunt peering out at her from behind him.

"Pollyanna, what does this mean?" cried Aunt Polly then.

Pollyanna blinked sleepy eyes and sat up.

"Why, Mr. Tom—Aunt Polly!" she stammered. "Don't look so scared! It isn't that I've got the consumption, you know, like Joel Hartley. It's only that I was so hot—in there. But I shut the window, Aunt Polly, so the flies couldn't carry those germ things in."

Timothy disappeared suddenly down the ladder. Old Tom, with almost equal precipitation, handed his lantern to Miss Polly, and followed his son. Miss Polly bit her lip hard—until the men were gone; then she said sternly:

"Pollyanna, hand those things to me at once and come in here. Of all the extraordinary children!" she ejaculated a little later, as, with Pollyanna by her side, and the lantern in her hand, she turned back into the attic.

To Pollyanna the air was all the more stifling after that cool breath of the out of doors; but she did not complain. She only drew a long quivering sigh.

At the top of the stairs Miss Polly jerked out crisply:

"For the rest of the night, Pollyanna, you are to sleep in my bed with me. The screens will be here tomorrow, but until then I consider it my duty to keep you where I know where you are."

Pollyanna drew in her breath.

"With you?—in your bed?" she cried rapturously. "Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, how perfectly lovely of you! And when I've so wanted to sleep with someone sometime—someone that belonged to me, you know; not a Ladies' Aider. I've HAD them. My! I reckon I am glad now those screens didn't come! Wouldn't you be?"

There was no reply. Miss Polly was stalking on ahead.

Miss Polly, to tell the truth, was feeling curiously helpless. For the third time since Pollyanna's arrival, Miss Polly was punishing Pollyanna—and for the third time she was being confronted with the amazing fact that her punishment was being taken as a special reward of merit. No wonder Miss Polly was feeling curiously helpless.

CHAPTER VIII
Pollyanna Pays a Visit

It was not long before life at the Harrington homestead settled into something like order—though not exactly the order that Miss Polly had at first prescribed. Pollyanna sewed, practiced, read aloud, and studied cooking in the kitchen, it is true; but she did not give to any of these things quite so much time as had first been planned. She had more time, also, to "just live," as she expressed it, for almost all of every afternoon from two until six o'clock was hers to do with as she liked—provided she did not "like" to do certain things already prohibited by Aunt Polly.

It is a question, perhaps, whether all this leisure time was given to the child as a relief to Pollyanna from work—or as a relief to Aunt Polly from Pollyanna. Certainly, as those first July days passed, Miss Polly found occasion many times to ejaculate "What an extraordinary child!" and certainly the reading and sewing lessons found her at their conclusion each day somewhat dazed and wholly exhausted.

Nancy, in the kitchen, fared better. She was not dazed nor exhausted. Wednesdays and Saturdays came to be, indeed, red-letter days to her.

There were no children in the immediate neighborhood of the Harrington homestead for Pollyanna to play with. The house itself was on the outskirts of the village, and though there were other houses not far away, they did not chance to contain any boys or girls near Pollyanna's age. This, however, did not seem to disturb Pollyanna in the least.

"Oh, no, I don't mind it at all," she explained to Nancy. "I'm happy just to walk around and see the streets and the

houses and watch the people. I just love people. Don't you, Nancy?"

"Well, I can't say I do—all of 'em," retorted Nancy, tersely.

Almost every pleasant afternoon found Pollyanna begging for "an errand to run," so that she might be off for a walk in one direction or another; and it was on these walks that frequently she met the Man. To herself Pollyanna always called him "the Man," no matter if she met a dozen other men the same day.

The Man often wore a long black coat and a high silk hat—two things that the "just men" never wore. His face was clean shaven and rather pale, and his hair, showing below his hat, was somewhat gray. He walked erect, and rather rapidly, and he was always alone, which made Pollyanna vaguely sorry for him. Perhaps it was because of this that she one day spoke to him.

"How do you do, sir? Isn't this a nice day?" she called cheerily, as she approached him.

The man threw a hurried glance about him, then stopped uncertainly.

"Did you speak—to me?" he asked in a sharp voice.

"Yes, sir," beamed Pollyanna. "I say, it's a nice day, isn't it?"

"Eh? Oh! Humph!" he grunted; and strode on again.

Pollyanna laughed. He was such a funny man, she thought.

The next day she saw him again.

"'Tisn't quite so nice as yesterday, but it's pretty nice," she called out cheerfully.

"Eh? Oh! Humph!" grunted the man as before; and once again Pollyanna laughed happily.

When for the third time Pollyanna accosted him in much the same manner, the man stopped abruptly.

"See here, child, who are you, and why are you speaking

to me every day?"

"I'm Pollyanna Whittier, and I thought you looked lonesome. I'm so glad you stopped. Now we're introduced—only I don't know your name yet."

"Well, of all the—" The man did not finish his sentence, but strode on faster than ever.

Pollyanna looked after him with a disappointed droop to her usually smiling lips.

"Maybe he didn't understand—but that was only half an introduction. I don't know HIS name, yet," she murmured, as she proceeded on her way.

Pollyanna was carrying calf's-foot jelly to Mrs. Snow today. Miss Polly Harrington always sent something to Mrs. Snow once a week. She said she thought that it was her duty, inasmuch as Mrs. Snow was poor, sick, and a member of her church—it was the duty of all the church members to look out for her, of course. Miss Polly did her duty by Mrs. Snow usually on Thursday afternoons—not personally, but through Nancy. Today Pollyanna had begged the privilege, and Nancy had promptly given it to her in accordance with Miss Polly's orders.

"And it's glad that I am ter get rid of it," Nancy had declared in private afterwards to Pollyanna; "though it's a shame ter be tuckin' the job off on ter you, poor lamb, so it is, it is!"

"But I'd love to do it, Nancy."

"Well, you won't—after you've done it once," predicted Nancy, sourly.

"Why not?"

"Because nobody does. If folks wa'n't sorry for her there wouldn't a soul go near her from mornin' till night, she's that cantankerous. All is, I pity her daughter what HAS ter take care of her."

"But, why, Nancy?"

Nancy shrugged her shoulders.

"Well, in plain words, it's just that nothin' whatever has

happened, has happened right in Mis' Snow's eyes. Even the days of the week ain't run ter her mind. If it's Monday she's bound ter say she wished 'twas Sunday; and if you take her jelly you're pretty sure ter hear she wanted chicken—but if you DID bring her chicken, she'd be jest hankerin' for lamb broth!"

"Why, what a funny woman," laughed Pollyanna. "I think I shall like to go to see her. She must be so surprising and—and different. I love DIFFERENT folks."

"Humph! Well, Mis' Snow's 'different,' all right—I hope, for the sake of the rest of us!" Nancy had finished grimly.

Pollyanna was thinking of these remarks today as she turned in at the gate of the shabby little cottage. Her eyes were quite sparkling, indeed, at the prospect of meeting this "different" Mrs. Snow.

A pale-faced, tired-looking young girl answered her knock at the door.

"How do you do?" began Pollyanna politely. "I'm from Miss Polly Harrington, and I'd like to see Mrs. Snow, please."

"Well, if you would, you're the first one that ever 'liked' to see her," muttered the girl under her breath; but Pollyanna did not hear this. The girl had turned and was leading the way through the hall to a door at the end of it.

In the sickroom, after the girl had ushered her in and closed the door, Pollyanna blinked a little before she could accustom her eyes to the gloom. Then she saw, dimly outlined, a woman half-sitting up in the bed across the room. Pollyanna advanced at once.

"How do you do, Mrs. Snow? Aunt Polly says she hopes you are comfortable today, and she's sent you some calf's-foot jelly."

"Dear me! Jelly?" murmured a fretful voice. "Of course I'm very much obliged, but I was hoping 'twould be lamb broth today."

Pollyanna frowned a little.

"Why, I thought it was CHICKEN you wanted when folks brought you jelly," she said.

"What?" The sick woman turned sharply.

"Why, nothing, much," apologized Pollyanna, hurriedly; "and of course it doesn't really make any difference. It's only that Nancy said it was chicken you wanted when we brought jelly, and lamb broth when we brought chicken—but maybe 'twas the other way, and Nancy forgot."

The sick woman pulled herself up till she sat erect in the bed—a most unusual thing for her to do, though Pollyanna did not know this.

"Well, Miss Impertinence, who are you?" she demanded.

Pollyanna laughed gleefully.

"Oh, THAT isn't my name, Mrs. Snow—and I'm so glad 'tisn't, too! That would be worse than 'Hephzibah,' wouldn't it? I'm Pollyanna Whittier, Miss Polly Harrington's niece, and I've come to live with her. That's why I'm here with the jelly this morning."

All through the first part of this sentence, the sick woman had sat interestedly erect; but at the reference to the jelly she fell back on her pillow listlessly.

"Very well; thank you. Your aunt is very kind, of course, but my appetite isn't very good this morning, and I was wanting lamb—" She stopped suddenly, then went on with an abrupt change of subject. "I never slept a wink last night—not a wink!"

"O dear, I wish I didn't," sighed Pollyanna, placing the jelly on the little stand and seating herself comfortably in the nearest chair. "You lose such a lot of time just sleeping! Don't you think so?"

"Lose time—sleeping!" exclaimed the sick woman.

"Yes, when you might be just living, you know. It seems such a pity we can't live nights, too."

Once again the woman pulled herself erect in her bed.

"Well, if you ain't the amazing young one!" she cried.

"Here! do you go to that window and pull up the curtain," she directed. "I should like to know what you look like!"

Pollyanna rose to her feet, but she laughed a little ruefully.

"O dear! then you'll see my freckles, won't you?" she sighed, as she went to the window; "—and just when I was being so glad it was dark and you couldn't see 'em. There! Now you can—oh!" she broke off excitedly, as she turned back to the bed; "I'm so glad you wanted to see me, because now I can see you! They didn't tell me you were so pretty!"

"Me!—pretty!" scoffed the woman, bitterly.

"Why, yes. Didn't you know it?" cried Pollyanna.

"Well, no, I didn't," retorted Mrs. Snow, dryly. Mrs. Snow had lived forty years, and for fifteen of those years she had been too busy wishing things were different to find much time to enjoy things as they were.

"Oh, but your eyes are so big and dark, and your hair's all dark, too, and curly," cooed Pollyanna. "I love black curls. (That's one of the things I'm going to have when I get to Heaven.) And you've got two little red spots in your cheeks. Why, Mrs. Snow, you ARE pretty! I should think you'd know it when you looked at yourself in the glass."

"The glass!" snapped the sick woman, falling back on her pillow. "Yes, well, I hain't done much prinkin' before the mirror these days—and you wouldn't, if you was flat on your back as I am!"

"Why, no, of course not," agreed Pollyanna, sympathetically. "But wait—just let me show you," she exclaimed, skipping over to the bureau and picking up a small hand-glass.

On the way back to the bed she stopped, eyeing the sick woman with a critical gaze.

"I reckon maybe, if you don't mind, I'd like to fix your hair just a little before I let you see it," she proposed. "May I fix your hair, please?"

"Why, I—suppose so, if you want to," permitted Mrs. Snow, grudgingly; "but 'twon't stay, you know."

"Oh, thank you. I love to fix people's hair," exulted Pollyanna, carefully laying down the hand-glass and reaching for a comb. "I sha'n't do much today, of course—I'm in such a hurry for you to see how pretty you are; but someday I'm going to take it all down and have a perfectly lovely time with it," she cried, touching with soft fingers the waving hair above the sick woman's forehead.

For five minutes Pollyanna worked swiftly, deftly, combing a refractory curl into fluffiness, perking up a drooping ruffle at the neck, or shaking a pillow into plumpness so that the head might have a better pose. Meanwhile the sick woman, frowning prodigiously, and openly scoffing at the whole procedure, was, in spite of herself, beginning to tingle with a feeling perilously near to excitement.

"There!" panted Pollyanna, hastily plucking a pink from a vase nearby and tucking it into the dark hair where it would give the best effect. "Now I reckon we're ready to be looked at!" And she held out the mirror in triumph.

"Humph!" grunted the sick woman, eyeing her reflection severely. "I like red pinks better than pink ones; but then, it'll fade, anyhow, before night, so what's the difference!"

"But I should think you'd be glad they did fade," laughed Pollyanna, "'cause then you can have the fun of getting some more. I just love your hair fluffed out like that," she finished with a satisfied gaze. "Don't you?"

"Hm-m; maybe. Still—'twon't last, with me tossing back and forth on the pillow as I do."

"Of course not—and I'm glad, too," nodded Pollyanna, cheerfully, "because then I can fix it again. Anyhow, I should think you'd be glad it's black—black shows up so much nicer on a pillow than yellow hair like mine does."

"Maybe; but I never did set much store by black hair—shows gray too soon," retorted Mrs. Snow. She spoke fretfully, but she still held the mirror before her face.

"Oh, I love black hair! I should be so glad if I only had it,"

sighed Pollyanna.

Mrs. Snow dropped the mirror and turned irritably.

"Well, you wouldn't!—not if you were me. You wouldn't be glad for black hair nor anything else—if you had to lie here all day as I do!"

Pollyanna bent her brows in a thoughtful frown.

"Why, 'twould be kind of hard—to do it then, wouldn't it?" she mused aloud.

"Do what?"

"Be glad about things."

"Be glad about things—when you're sick in bed all your days? Well, I should say it would," retorted Mrs. Snow. "If you don't think so, just tell me something to be glad about; that's all!"

To Mrs. Snow's unbounded amazement, Pollyanna sprang to her feet and clapped her hands.

"Oh, goody! That'll be a hard one—won't it? I've got to go, now, but I'll think and think all the way home; and maybe the next time I come I can tell it to you. Goodbye. I've had a lovely time! Goodbye," she called again, as she tripped through the doorway.

"Well, I never! Now, what does she mean by that?" ejaculated Mrs. Snow, staring after her visitor. By and by she turned her head and picked up the mirror, eyeing her reflection critically.

"That little thing HAS got a knack with hair and no mistake," she muttered under her breath. "I declare, I didn't know it could look so pretty. But then, what's the use?" she sighed, dropping the little glass into the bedclothes, and rolling her head on the pillow fretfully.

A little later, when Milly, Mrs. Snow's daughter, came in, the mirror still lay among the bedclothes—though it had been carefully hidden from sight.

"Why, mother—the curtain is up!" cried Milly, dividing her amazed stare between the window and the pink in her

mother's hair.

"Well, what if it is?" snapped the sick woman. "I needn't stay in the dark all my life, if I am sick, need I?"

"Why, n-no, of course not," rejoined Milly, in hasty conciliation, as she reached for the medicine bottle. "It's only—well, you know very well that I've tried to get you to have a lighter room for ages and you wouldn't."

There was no reply to this. Mrs. Snow was picking at the lace on her nightgown. At last she spoke fretfully.

"I should think SOMEBODY might give me a new night-dress—instead of lamb broth, for a change!"

"Why—mother!"

No wonder Milly quite gasped aloud with bewilderment. In the drawer behind her at that moment lay two new night-dresses that Milly for months had been vainly urging her mother to wear.

CHAPTER IX
Which Tells of the Man

It rained the next time Pollyanna saw the Man. She greeted him, however, with a bright smile.

"It isn't so nice today, is it?" she called blithesomely. "I'm glad it doesn't rain always, anyhow!"

The man did not even grunt this time, nor turn his head. Pollyanna decided that of course he did not hear her. The next time, therefore (which happened to be the following day), she spoke up louder. She thought it particularly necessary to do this, anyway, for the Man was striding along, his hands behind his back, and his eyes on the ground—which seemed, to Pollyanna, preposterous in the face of the glorious sunshine and the freshly-washed morning air: Pollyanna, as a special treat, was on a morning errand today.

"How do you do?" she chirped. "I'm so glad it isn't yesterday, aren't you?"

The man stopped abruptly. There was an angry scowl on his face.

"See here, little girl, we might just as well settle this thing right now, once for all," he began testily. "I've got something besides the weather to think of. I don't know whether the sun shines or not." Pollyanna beamed joyously.

"No, sir; I thought you didn't. That's why I told you."

"Yes; well—Eh? What?" he broke off sharply, in sudden understanding of her words.

"I say, that's why I told you—so you would notice it, you know—that the sun shines, and all that. I knew you'd be glad it did if you only stopped to think of it—and you didn't look a bit as if you WERE thinking of it!"

"Well, of all the—" ejaculated the man, with an oddly impotent gesture. He started forward again, but after the second step he turned back, still frowning.

"See here, why don't you find someone your own age to talk to?"

"I'd like to, sir, but there aren't any 'round here, Nancy says. Still, I don't mind so very much. I like old folks just as well, maybe better, sometimes—being used to the Ladies' Aid, so."

"Humph! The Ladies' Aid, indeed! Is that what you took me for?" The man's lips were threatening to smile, but the scowl above them was still trying to hold them grimly stern.

Pollyanna laughed gleefully.

"Oh, no, sir. You don't look a mite like a Ladies' Aider—not but that you're just as good, of course—maybe better," she added in hurried politeness. "You see, I'm sure you're much nicer than you look!"

The man made a queer noise in his throat.

"Well, of all the—" he ejaculated again, as he turned and strode on as before.

The next time Pollyanna met the Man, his eyes were gazing straight into hers, with a quizzical directness that made his face look really pleasant, Pollyanna thought.

"Good afternoon," he greeted her a little stiffly. "Perhaps I'd better say right away that I KNOW the sun is shining today."

"But you don't have to tell me," nodded Pollyanna, brightly. "I KNEW you knew it just as soon as I saw you."

"Oh, you did, did you?"

"Yes, sir; I saw it in your eyes, you know, and in your smile."

"Humph!" grunted the man, as he passed on.

The Man always spoke to Pollyanna after this, and frequently he spoke first, though usually he said little but "good afternoon." Even that, however, was a great surprise to

Nancy, who chanced to be with Pollyanna one day when the greeting was given.

"Sakes alive, Miss Pollyanna," she gasped, "did that man SPEAK TO YOU?"

"Why, yes, he always does—now," smiled Pollyanna.

"'He always does'! Goodness! Do you know who—he—is?" demanded Nancy.

Pollyanna frowned and shook her head.

"I reckon he forgot to tell me one day. You see, I did my part of the introducing, but he didn't."

Nancy's eyes widened.

"But he never speaks ter anybody, child—he hain't for years, I guess, except when he just has to, for business, and all that. He's John Pendleton. He lives all by himself in the big house on Pendleton Hill. He won't even have anyone 'round ter cook for him—comes down ter the hotel for his meals three times a day. I know Sally Miner, who waits on him, and she says he hardly opens his head enough ter tell what he wants ter eat. She has ter guess it more'n half the time—only it'll be somethin' CHEAP! She knows that without no tellin'."

Pollyanna nodded sympathetically.

"I know. You have to look for cheap things when you're poor. Father and I took meals out a lot. We had beans and fish balls most generally. We used to say how glad we were we liked beans—that is, we said it specially when we were looking at the roast turkey place, you know, that was sixty cents. Does Mr. Pendleton like beans?"

"Like 'em! What if he does—or don't? Why, Miss Pollyanna, he ain't poor. He's got loads of money, John Pendleton has—from his father. There ain't nobody in town as rich as he is. He could eat dollar bills, if he wanted to—and not know it."

Pollyanna giggled.

"As if anybody COULD eat dollar bills and not know it, Nancy, when they come to try to chew 'em!"

"Ho! I mean he's rich enough ter do it," shrugged Nancy. "He ain't spendin' his money, that's all. He's a-savin' of it."

"Oh, for the heathen," surmised Pollyanna. "How perfectly splendid! That's denying yourself and taking up your cross. I know; father told me."

Nancy's lips parted abruptly, as if there were angry words all ready to come; but her eyes, resting on Pollyanna's jubilantly trustful face, saw something that prevented the words being spoken.

"Humph!" she vouchsafed. Then, showing her old-time interest, she went on: "But, say, it is queer, his speakin' to you, honestly, Miss Pollyanna. He don't speak ter no one; and he lives all alone in a great big lovely house all full of jest grand things, they say. Some says he's crazy, and some jest cross; and some says he's got a skeleton in his closet."

"Oh, Nancy!" shuddered Pollyanna. "How can he keep such a dreadful thing? I should think he'd throw it away!"

Nancy chuckled. That Pollyanna had taken the skeleton literally instead of figuratively, she knew very well; but, perversely, she refrained from correcting the mistake.

"And EVERYBODY says he's mysterious," she went on. "Some years he jest travels, week in and week out, and it's always in heathen countries—Egypt and Asia and the Desert of Sahara, you know."

"Oh, a missionary," nodded Pollyanna.

Nancy laughed oddly.

"Well, I didn't say that, Miss Pollyanna. When he comes back he writes books—queer, odd books, they say, about some gimcrack he's found in them heathen countries. But he don't never seem ter want ter spend no money here—leastways, not for jest livin'."

"Of course not—if he's saving it for the heathen," declared Pollyanna. "But he is a funny man, and he's different, too, just like Mrs. Snow, only he's a different different."

"Well, I guess he is—rather," chuckled Nancy.

"I'm gladder'n ever now, anyhow, that he speaks to me," sighed Pollyanna contentedly.

CHAPTER X
A Surprise for Mrs. Snow

The next time Pollyanna went to see Mrs. Snow, she found that lady, as at first, in a darkened room.

"It's the little girl from Miss Polly's, mother," announced Milly, in a tired manner; then Pollyanna found herself alone with the invalid.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" asked a fretful voice from the bed. "I remember you. ANYbody'd remember you, I guess, if they saw you once. I wish you had come yesterday. I WANTED you yesterday."

"Did you? Well, I'm glad 'tisn't any farther away from yesterday than today is, then," laughed Pollyanna, advancing cheerily into the room, and setting her basket carefully down on a chair. "My! but aren't you dark here, though? I can't see you a bit," she cried, unhesitatingly crossing to the window and pulling up the shade. "I want to see if you've fixed your hair like I did—oh, you haven't! But, never mind; I'm glad you haven't, after all, 'cause maybe you'll let me do it—later. But now I want you to see what I've brought you."

The woman stirred restlessly.

"Just as if how it looks would make any difference in how it tastes," she scoffed—but she turned her eyes toward the basket. "Well, what is it?"

"Guess! What do you want?" Pollyanna had skipped back to the basket. Her face was alight. The sick woman frowned.

"Why, I don't WANT anything, as I know of," she sighed. "After all, they all taste alike!"

Pollyanna chuckled.

"This won't. Guess! If you DID want something, what

would it be?"

The woman hesitated. She did not realize it herself, but she had so long been accustomed to wanting what she did not have, that to state off-hand what she DID want seemed impossible—until she knew what she had. Obviously, however, she must say something. This extraordinary child was waiting.

"Well, of course, there's lamb broth—"

"I've got it!" crowed Pollyanna.

"But that's what I DIDN'T want," sighed the sick woman, sure now of what her stomach craved. "It was chicken I wanted."

"Oh, I've got that, too," chuckled Pollyanna.

The woman turned in amazement.

"Both of them?" she demanded.

"Yes—and calf's-foot jelly," triumphed Pollyanna. "I was just bound you should have what you wanted for once; so Nancy and I fixed it. Oh, of course, there's only a little of each—but there's some of all of 'em! I'm so glad you did want chicken," she went on contentedly, as she lifted the three little bowls from her basket. "You see, I got to thinking on the way here—what if you should say tripe, or onions, or something like that, that I didn't have! Wouldn't it have been a shame—when I'd tried so hard?" she laughed merrily.

There was no reply. The sick woman seemed to be trying—mentally to find something she had lost.

"There! I'm to leave them all," announced Pollyanna, as she arranged the three bowls in a row on the table. "Like enough it'll be lamb broth you want tomorrow. How do you do today?" she finished in polite inquiry.

"Very poorly, thank you," murmured Mrs. Snow, falling back into her usual listless attitude. "I lost my nap this morning. Nellie Higgins next door has begun music lessons, and her practicing drives me nearly wild. She was at it all the morning—every minute! I'm sure, I don't know what I shall do!"

Polly nodded sympathetically.

"I know. It IS awful! Mrs. White had it once—one of my Ladies' Aiders, you know. She had rheumatic fever, too, at the same time, so she couldn't thrash 'round. She said 'twould have been easier if she could have. Can you?"

"Can I—what?"

"Thrash 'round—move, you know, so as to change your position when the music gets too hard to stand."

Mrs. Snow stared a little.

"Why, of course I can move—anywhere—in bed," she rejoined a little irritably.

"Well, you can be glad of that, then, anyhow, can't you?" nodded Pollyanna. "Mrs. White couldn't. You can't thrash when you have rheumatic fever—though you want to something awful, Mrs. White says. She told me afterwards she reckoned she'd have gone raving crazy if it hadn't been for Mr. White's sister's ears—being deaf, so."

"Sister's—EARS! What do you mean?"

Pollyanna laughed.

"Well, I reckon I didn't tell it all, and I forgot you didn't know Mrs. White. You see, Miss White was deaf—awfully deaf; and she came to visit 'em and to help take care of Mrs. White and the house. Well, they had such an awful time making her understand ANYTHING, that after that, every time the piano commenced to play across the street, Mrs. White felt so glad she COULD hear it, that she didn't mind so much that she DID hear it, 'cause she couldn't help thinking how awful 'twould be if she was deaf and couldn't hear anything, like her husband's sister. You see, she was playing the game, too. I'd told her about it."

"The—game?"

Pollyanna clapped her hands.

"There! I 'most forgot; but I've thought it up, Mrs. Snow—what you can be glad about."

"GLAD about! What do you mean?"

"Why, I told you I would. Don't you remember? You asked me to tell you something to be glad about—glad, you know, even though you did have to lie here abed all day."

"Oh!" scoffed the woman. "THAT? Yes, I remember that; but I didn't suppose you were in earnest any more than I was."

"Oh, yes, I was," nodded Pollyanna, triumphantly; "and I found it, too. But 'TWAS hard. It's all the more fun, though, always, when 'tis hard. And I will own up, honest to true, that I couldn't think of anything for a while. Then I got it."

"Did you, really? Well, what is it?" Mrs. Snow's voice was sarcastically polite.

Pollyanna drew a long breath.

"I thought—how glad you could be—that other folks weren't like you—all sick in bed like this, you know," she announced impressively. Mrs. Snow stared. Her eyes were angry.

"Well, really!" she ejaculated then, in not quite an agreeable tone of voice.

"And now I'll tell you the game," proposed Pollyanna, blithely confident. "It'll be just lovely for you to play—it'll be so hard. And there's so much more fun when it is hard! You see, it's like this." And she began to tell of the missionary barrel, the crutches, and the doll that did not come.

The story was just finished when Milly appeared at the door.

"Your aunt is wanting you, Miss Pollyanna," she said with dreary listlessness. "She telephoned down to the Harlows' across the way. She says you're to hurry—that you've got some practicing to make up before dark."

Pollyanna rose reluctantly.

"All right," she sighed. "I'll hurry." Suddenly she laughed. "I suppose I ought to be glad I've got legs to hurry with, hadn't I, Mrs. Snow?"

There was no answer. Mrs. Snow's eyes were closed. But Milly, whose eyes were wide open with surprise, saw that there were tears on the wasted cheeks.

"Goodbye," flung Pollyanna over her shoulder, as she reached the door. "I'm awfully sorry about the hair—I wanted to do it. But maybe I can next time!"

One by one the July days passed. To Pollyanna, they were happy days, indeed. She often told her aunt, joyously, how very happy they were. Whereupon her aunt would usually reply, wearily:

"Very well, Pollyanna. I am gratified, of course, that they are happy; but I trust that they are profitable, as well—otherwise I should have failed signally in my duty."

Generally Pollyanna would answer this with a hug and a kiss—a proceeding that was still always most disconcerting to Miss Polly; but one day she spoke. It was during the sewing hour.

"Do you mean that it wouldn't be enough then, Aunt Polly, that they should be just happy days?" she asked wistfully.

"That is what I mean, Pollyanna."

"They must be pro-fi-ta-ble as well?"

"Certainly."

"What is being pro-fi-ta-ble?"

"Why, it—it's just being profitable—having profit, something to show for it, Pollyanna. What an extraordinary child you are!"

"Then just being glad isn't pro-fi-ta-ble?" questioned Pollyanna, a little anxiously.

"Certainly not."

"O dear! Then you wouldn't like it, of course. I'm afraid, now, you won't ever play the game, Aunt Polly."

"Game? What game?"

"Why, that father—" Pollyanna clapped her hand to her lips. "N-nothing," she stammered. Miss Polly frowned.

"That will do for this morning, Pollyanna," she said tersely. And the sewing lesson was over.

It was that afternoon that Pollyanna, coming down from

her attic room, met her aunt on the stairway.

"Why, Aunt Polly, how perfectly lovely!" she cried. "You were coming up to see me! Come right in. I love company," she finished, scampering up the stairs and throwing her door wide open.

Now Miss Polly had not been intending to call on her niece. She had been planning to look for a certain white wool shawl in the cedar chest near the east window. But to her unbounded surprise now, she found herself, not in the main attic before the cedar chest, but in Pollyanna's little room sitting in one of the straight-backed chairs—so many, many times since Pollyanna came, Miss Polly had found herself like this, doing some utterly unexpected, surprising thing, quite unlike the thing she had set out to do!

"I love company," said Pollyanna, again, flitting about as if she were dispensing the hospitality of a palace; "specially since I've had this room, all mine, you know. Oh, of course, I had a room, always, but 'twas a hired room, and hired rooms aren't half as nice as owned ones, are they? And of course I do own this one, don't I?"

"Why, y-yes, Pollyanna," murmured Miss Polly, vaguely wondering why she did not get up at once and go to look for that shawl.

"And of course NOW I just love this room, even if it hasn't got the carpets and curtains and pictures that I'd been want—" With a painful blush Pollyanna stopped short. She was plunging into an entirely different sentence when her aunt interrupted her sharply.

"What's that, Pollyanna?"

"N-nothing, Aunt Polly, truly. I didn't mean to say it."

"Probably not," returned Miss Polly, coldly; "but you did say it, so suppose we have the rest of it."

"But it wasn't anything only that I'd been kind of planning on pretty carpets and lace curtains and things, you know. But, of course—"

"PLANNING on them!" interrupted Miss Polly, sharply.

Pollyanna blushed still more painfully.

"I ought not to have, of course, Aunt Polly," she apologized. "It was only because I'd always wanted them and hadn't had them, I suppose. Oh, we'd had two rugs in the barrels, but they were little, you know, and one had ink spots, and the other holes; and there never were only those two pictures; the one fath—I mean the good one we sold, and the bad one that broke. Of course if it hadn't been for all that I shouldn't have wanted them, so—pretty things, I mean; and I shouldn't have got to planning all through the hall that first day how pretty mine would be here, and—and—but, truly, Aunt Polly, it wasn't but just a minute—I mean, a few minutes—before I was being glad that the bureau DIDN'T have a looking-glass, because it didn't show my freckles; and there couldn't be a nicer picture than the one out my window there; and you've been so good to me, that—"

Miss Polly rose suddenly to her feet. Her face was very red.

"That will do, Pollyanna," she said stiffly. "You have said quite enough, I'm sure."

The next minute she had swept down the stairs—and not until she reached the first floor did it suddenly occur to her that she had gone up into the attic to find a white wool shawl in the cedar chest near the east window.

Less than twenty-four hours later, Miss Polly said to Nancy, crisply:

"Nancy, you may move Miss Pollyanna's things downstairs this morning to the room directly beneath. I have decided to have my niece sleep there for the present."

"Yes, ma'am," said Nancy aloud.

"O glory!" said Nancy to herself.

To Pollyanna, a minute later, she cried joyously:

"And won't ye jest be listenin' ter this, Miss Pollyanna. You're ter sleep downstairs in the room straight under this. You are—you are!"

Pollyanna actually grew white.

"You mean—why, Nancy, not really—really and truly?"

"I guess you'll think it's really and truly," prophesied Nancy, exultingly, nodding her head to Pollyanna over the armful of dresses she had taken from the closet. "I'm told ter take down yer things, and I'm goin' ter take 'em, too, 'fore she gets a chance ter change her mind."

Pollyanna did not stop to hear the end of this sentence. At the imminent risk of being dashed headlong, she was flying downstairs, two steps at a time.

Bang went two doors and a chair before Pollyanna at last reached her goal—Aunt Polly.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, did you mean it, really? Why, that room's got EVERYTHING—the carpet and curtains and three pictures, besides the one outdoors, too, 'cause the windows look the same way. Oh, Aunt Polly!"

"Very well, Pollyanna. I am gratified that you like the change, of course; but if you think so much of all those things, I trust you will take proper care of them; that's all. Pollyanna, please pick up that chair; and you have banged two doors in the last half-minute." Miss Polly spoke sternly, all the more sternly because, for some inexplicable reason, she felt inclined to cry—and Miss Polly was not used to feeling inclined to cry.

Pollyanna picked up the chair.

"Yes'm; I know I banged 'em—those doors," she admitted cheerfully. "You see I'd just found out about the room, and I reckon you'd have banged doors if—" Pollyanna stopped short and eyed her aunt with new interest. "Aunt Polly, DID you ever bang doors?"

"I hope—not, Pollyanna!" Miss Polly's voice was properly shocked.

"Why, Aunt Polly, what a shame!" Pollyanna's face expressed only concerned sympathy.

"A shame!" repeated Aunt Polly, too dazed to say more.

"Why, yes. You see, if you'd felt like banging doors you'd

have banged 'em, of course; and if you didn't, that must have meant that you weren't ever glad over anything—or you would have banged 'em. You couldn't have helped it. And I'm so sorry you weren't ever glad over anything!"

"PollyANNA!" gasped the lady; but Pollyanna was gone, and only the distant bang of the attic-stairway door answered for her. Pollyanna had gone to help Nancy bring down "her things."

Miss Polly, in the sitting room, felt vaguely disturbed;—but then, of course she HAD been glad—over some things!

CHAPTER XI
Introducing Jimmy

August came. August brought several surprises and some changes—none of which, however, were really a surprise to Nancy. Nancy, since Pollyanna's arrival, had come to look for surprises and changes.

First there was the kitten.

Pollyanna found the kitten meowing pitifully some distance down the road. When systematic questioning of the neighbors failed to find anyone who claimed it, Pollyanna brought it home at once, as a matter of course.

"And I was glad I didn't find anyone who owned it, too," she told her aunt in happy confidence; "'cause I wanted to bring it home all the time. I love kitties. I knew you'd be glad to let it live here."

Miss Polly looked at the forlorn little gray bunch of neglected misery in Pollyanna's arms, and shivered: Miss Polly did not care for cats—not even pretty, healthy, clean ones.

"Ugh! Pollyanna! What a dirty little beast! And it's sick, I'm sure, and all mangy and fleay."

"I know it, poor little thing," crooned Pollyanna, tenderly, looking into the little creature's frightened eyes. "And it's all trembly, too, it's so scared. You see it doesn't know, yet, that we're going to keep it, of course."

"No—nor anybody else," retorted Miss Polly, with meaning emphasis.

"Oh, yes, they do," nodded Pollyanna, entirely misunderstanding her aunt's words. "I told everybody we should keep it, if I didn't find where it belonged. I knew you'd be glad to have it—poor little lonesome thing!"

Miss Polly opened her lips and tried to speak; but in vain. The curious helpless feeling that had been hers so often since Pollyanna's arrival, had her now fast in its grip.

"Of course I knew," hurried on Pollyanna, gratefully, "that you wouldn't let a dear little lonesome kitty go hunting for a home when you'd just taken ME in; and I said so to Mrs. Ford when she asked if you'd let me keep it. Why, I had the Ladies' Aid, you know, and kitty didn't have anybody. I knew you'd feel that way," she nodded happily, as she ran from the room.

"But, Pollyanna, Pollyanna," remonstrated Miss Polly. "I don't—" But Pollyanna was already halfway to the kitchen, calling:

"Nancy, Nancy, just see this dear little kitty that Aunt Polly is going to bring up along with me!" And Aunt Polly, in the sitting room—who abhorred cats—fell back in her chair with a gasp of dismay, powerless to remonstrate.

The next day it was a dog, even dirtier and more forlorn, perhaps, than was the kitten; and again Miss Polly, to her dumfounded amazement, found herself figuring as a kind protector and an angel of mercy—a role that Pollyanna so unhesitatingly thrust upon her as a matter of course, that the woman—who abhorred dogs even more than she did cats, if possible—found herself as before, powerless to remonstrate.

When, in less than a week, however, Pollyanna brought home a small, ragged boy, and confidently claimed the same protection for him, Miss Polly did have something to say. It happened after this wise.

On a pleasant Thursday morning Pollyanna had been taking calf's-foot jelly again to Mrs. Snow. Mrs. Snow and Pollyanna were the best of friends now. Their friendship had started from the third visit Pollyanna had made, the one after she had told Mrs. Snow of the game. Mrs. Snow herself was playing the game now, with Pollyanna. To be sure, she was not playing it very well—she had been sorry for everything for

so long, that it was not easy to be glad for anything now. But under Pollyanna's cheery instructions and merry laughter at her mistakes, she was learning fast. Today, even, to Pollyanna's huge delight, she had said that she was glad Pollyanna brought calf's-foot jelly, because that was just what she had been wanting—she did not know that Milly, at the front door, had told Pollyanna that the minister's wife had already that day sent over a great bowlful of that same kind of jelly.

Pollyanna was thinking of this now when suddenly she saw the boy.

The boy was sitting in a disconsolate little heap by the roadside, whittling half-heartedly at a small stick.

"Hullo," smiled Pollyanna, engagingly.

The boy glanced up, but he looked away again, at once.

"Hullo yourself," he mumbled.

Pollyanna laughed.

"Now you don't look as if you'd be glad even for calf's-foot jelly," she chuckled, stopping before him.

The boy stirred restlessly, gave her a surprised look, and began to whittle again at his stick, with the dull, broken-bladed knife in his hand.

Pollyanna hesitated, then dropped herself comfortably down on the grass near him. In spite of Pollyanna's brave assertion that she was "used to Ladies' Aiders," and "didn't mind," she had sighed at times for some companion of her own age. Hence her determination to make the most of this one.

"My name's Pollyanna Whittier," she began pleasantly. "What's yours?"

Again the boy stirred restlessly. He even almost got to his feet. But he settled back.

"Jimmy Bean," he grunted with ungracious indifference.

"Good! Now we're introduced. I'm glad you did your part—some folks don't, you know. I live at Miss Polly

Harrington's house. Where do you live?"

"Nowhere."

"Nowhere! Why, you can't do that—everybody lives somewhere," asserted Pollyanna.

"Well, I don't—just now. I'm huntin' up a new place."

"Oh! Where is it?"

The boy regarded her with scornful eyes.

"Silly! As if I'd be a-huntin' for it—if I knew!"

Pollyanna tossed her head a little. This was not a nice boy, and she did not like to be called "silly." Still, he was somebody besides—old folks. "Where did you live—before?" she queried.

"Well, if you ain't the beat'em for askin' questions!" sighed the boy impatiently.

"I have to be," retorted Pollyanna calmly, "else I couldn't find out a thing about you. If you'd talk more I wouldn't talk so much."

The boy gave a short laugh. It was a sheepish laugh, and not quite a willing one; but his face looked a little pleasanter when he spoke this time.

"All right then—here goes! I'm Jimmy Bean, and I'm ten years old goin' on eleven. I come last year ter live at the Orphans' Home; but they've got so many kids there ain't much room for me, an' I wa'n't never wanted, anyhow, I don't believe. So I've quit. I'm goin' ter live somewheres else—but I hain't found the place, yet. I'd LIKE a home—jest a common one, ye know, with a mother in it, instead of a Matron. If ye has a home, ye has folks; an' I hain't had folks since—dad died. So I'm a-huntin' now. I've tried four houses, but—they didn't want me—though I said I expected ter work, 'course. There! Is that all you want ter know?" The boy's voice had broken a little over the last two sentences.

"Why, what a shame!" sympathized Pollyanna. "And didn't there anybody want you? O dear! I know just how you feel, because after—after my father died, too, there wasn't

anybody but the Ladies' Aid for me, until Aunt Polly said she'd take—" Pollyanna stopped abruptly. The dawning of a wonderful idea began to show in her face.

"Oh, I know just the place for you," she cried. "Aunt Polly'll take you—I know she will! Didn't she take me? And didn't she take Fluffy and Buffy, when they didn't have any one to love them, or any place to go?—and they're only cats and dogs. Oh, come, I know Aunt Polly'll take you! You don't know how good and kind she is!"

Jimmy Bean's thin little face brightened.

"Honest Injun? Would she, now? I'd work, ye know, an' I'm real strong!" He bared a small, bony arm.

"Of course she would! Why, my Aunt Polly is the nicest lady in the world—now that my mama has gone to be a Heaven angel. And there's rooms—heaps of 'em," she continued, springing to her feet, and tugging at his arm. "It's an awful big house. Maybe, though," she added a little anxiously, as they hurried on, "maybe you'll have to sleep in the attic room. I did, at first. But there's screens there now, so 'twon't be so hot, and the flies can't get in, either, to bring in the germ-things on their feet. Did you know about that? It's perfectly lovely! Maybe she'll let you read the book if you're good—I mean, if you're bad. And you've got freckles, too,"—with a critical glance—"so you'll be glad there isn't any looking-glass; and the outdoor picture is nicer than any wall-one could be, so you won't mind sleeping in that room at all, I'm sure," panted Pollyanna, finding suddenly that she needed the rest of her breath for purposes other than talking.

"Gorry!" exclaimed Jimmy Bean tersely and uncomprehendingly, but admiringly. Then he added: "I shouldn't think anybody who could talk like that, runnin', would need ter ask no questions ter fill up time with!"

Pollyanna laughed.

"Well, anyhow, you can be glad of that," she retorted; "for when I'm talking, YOU don't have to!"

When the house was reached, Pollyanna unhesitatingly piloted her companion straight into the presence of her amazed aunt.

"Oh, Aunt Polly," she triumphed, "just look a-here! I've got something ever so much nicer, even, than Fluffy and Buffy for you to bring up. It's a real live boy. He won't mind a bit sleeping in the attic, at first, you know, and he says he'll work; but I shall need him the most of the time to play with, I reckon."

Miss Polly grew white, then very red. She did not quite understand; but she thought she understood enough.

"Pollyanna, what does this mean? Who is this dirty little boy? Where did you find him?" she demanded sharply.

The "dirty little boy" fell back a step and looked toward the door. Pollyanna laughed merrily.

"There, if I didn't forget to tell you his name! I'm as bad as the Man. And he is dirty, too, isn't he?—I mean, the boy is—just like Fluffy and Buffy were when you took them in. But I reckon he'll improve all right by washing, just as they did, and—Oh, I 'most forgot again," she broke off with a laugh. "This is Jimmy Bean, Aunt Polly."

"Well, what is he doing here?"

"Why, Aunt Polly, I just told you!" Pollyanna's eyes were wide with surprise. "He's for you. I brought him home—so he could live here, you know. He wants a home and folks. I told him how good you were to me, and to Fluffy and Buffy, and that I knew you would be to him, because of course he's even nicer than cats and dogs."

Miss Polly dropped back in her chair and raised a shaking hand to her throat. The old helplessness was threatening once more to overcome her. With a visible struggle, however, Miss Polly pulled herself suddenly erect.

"That will do, Pollyanna. This is a little the most absurd thing you've done yet. As if tramp cats and mangy dogs weren't bad enough but you must needs bring home ragged

little beggars from the street, who—"

There was a sudden stir from the boy. His eyes flashed and his chin came up. With two strides of his sturdy little legs he confronted Miss Polly fearlessly.

"I ain't a beggar, marm, an' I don't want nothin' o' you. I was cal'latin' ter work, of course, fur my board an' keep. I wouldn't have come ter your old house, anyhow, if this 'ere girl hadn't 'a' made me, a-tellin' me how you was so good an' kind that you'd be jest dyin' ter take me in. So, there!" And he wheeled about and stalked from the room with a dignity that would have been absurd had it not been so pitiful.

"Oh, Aunt Polly," choked Pollyanna. "Why, I thought you'd be GLAD to have him here! I'm sure, I should think you'd be glad—"

Miss Polly raised her hand with a peremptory gesture of silence. Miss Polly's nerves had snapped at last. The "good and kind" of the boy's words were still ringing in her ears, and the old helplessness was almost upon her, she knew. Yet she rallied her forces with the last atom of her will power.

"Pollyanna," she cried sharply, "WILL you stop using that everlasting word 'glad'! It's 'glad'—'glad'—'glad' from morning till night until I think I shall grow wild!"

From sheer amazement Pollyanna's jaw dropped.

"Why, Aunt Polly," she breathed, "I should think you'd be glad to have me gl—Oh!" she broke off, clapping her hand to her lips and hurrying blindly from the room.

Before the boy had reached the end of the driveway, Pollyanna overtook him.

"Boy! Boy! Jimmy Bean, I want you to know how—how sorry I am," she panted, catching him with a detaining hand.

"Sorry nothin'! I ain't blamin' you," retorted the boy, sullenly. "But I ain't no beggar!" he added, with sudden spirit.

"Of course you aren't! But you mustn't blame auntie," appealed Pollyanna. "Probably I didn't do the introducing right, anyhow; and I reckon I didn't tell her much who you

were. She is good and kind, really—she's always been; but I probably didn't explain it right. I do wish I could find some place for you, though!"

The boy shrugged his shoulders and half turned away.

"Never mind. I guess I can find one myself. I ain't no beggar, you know."

Pollyanna was frowning thoughtfully. Of a sudden she turned, her face illumined.

"Say, I'll tell you what I WILL do! The Ladies' Aid meets this afternoon. I heard Aunt Polly say so. I'll lay your case before them. That's what father always did, when he wanted anything—educating the heathen and new carpets, you know."

The boy turned fiercely.

"Well, I ain't a heathen or a new carpet. Besides—what is a Ladies' Aid?"

Pollyanna stared in shocked disapproval.

"Why, Jimmy Bean, wherever have you been brought up?—not to know what a Ladies' Aid is!"

"Oh, all right—if you ain't tellin'," grunted the boy, turning and beginning to walk away indifferently.

Pollyanna sprang to his side at once.

"It's—it's—why, it's just a lot of ladies that meet and sew and give suppers and raise money and—and talk; that's what a Ladies' Aid is. They're awfully kind—that is, most of mine was, back home. I haven't seen this one here, but they're always good, I reckon. I'm going to tell them about you this afternoon."

Again the boy turned fiercely.

"Not much you will! Maybe you think I'm goin' ter stand 'round an' hear a whole LOT o' women call me a beggar, instead of jest ONE! Not much!"

"Oh, but you wouldn't be there," argued Pollyanna, quickly. "I'd go alone, of course, and tell them."

"You would?"

"Yes; and I'd tell it better this time," hurried on Pollyanna, quick to see the signs of relenting in the boy's face. "And there'd be some of 'em, I know, that would be glad to give you a home."

"I'd work—don't forget ter say that," cautioned the boy.

"Of course not," promised Pollyanna, happily, sure now that her point was gained. "Then I'll let you know tomorrow."

"Where?"

"By the road—where I found you today; near Mrs. Snow's house."

"All right. I'll be there." The boy paused before he went on slowly: "Maybe I'd better go back, then, for ter-night, ter the Home. You see I hain't no other place ter stay; and—and I didn't leave till this mornin'. I slipped out. I didn't tell 'em I wasn't comin' back, else they'd pretend I couldn't come—though I'm thinkin' they won't do no worryin' when I don't show up sometime. They ain't like FOLKS, ye know. They don't CARE!"

"I know," nodded Pollyanna, with understanding eyes. "But I'm sure, when I see you tomorrow, I'll have just a common home and folks that do care all ready for you. Goodbye!" she called brightly, as she turned back toward the house.

In the sitting-room window at that moment, Miss Polly, who had been watching the two children, followed with sombre eyes the boy until a bend of the road hid him from sight. Then she sighed, turned, and walked listlessly upstairs—and Miss Polly did not usually move listlessly. In her ears still was the boy's scornful "you was so good and kind." In her heart was a curious sense of desolation—as of something lost.

CHAPTER XII
Before the Ladies' Aid

Dinner, which came at noon in the Harrington homestead, was a silent meal on the day of the Ladies' Aid meeting. Pollyanna, it is true, tried to talk; but she did not make a success of it, chiefly because four times she was obliged to break off a "glad" in the middle of it, much to her blushing discomfort. The fifth time it happened, Miss Polly moved her head wearily.

"There, there, child, say it, if you want to," she sighed. "I'm sure I'd rather you did than not if it's going to make all this fuss."

Pollyanna's puckered little face cleared.

"Oh, thank you. I'm afraid it would be pretty hard—not to say it. You see I've played it so long."

"You've—what?" demanded Aunt Polly.

"Played it—the game, you know, that father—" Pollyanna stopped with a painful blush at finding herself so soon again on forbidden ground.

Aunt Polly frowned and said nothing. The rest of the meal was a silent one.

Pollyanna was not sorry to hear Aunt Polly tell the minister's wife over the telephone, a little later, that she would not be at the Ladies' Aid meeting that afternoon, owing to a headache. When Aunt Polly went upstairs to her room and closed the door, Pollyanna tried to be sorry for the headache; but she could not help feeling glad that her aunt was not to be present that afternoon when she laid the case of Jimmy Bean before the Ladies' Aid. She could not forget that Aunt Polly had called Jimmy Bean a little beggar; and she did not

want Aunt Polly to call him that—before the Ladies' Aid.

Pollyanna knew that the Ladies' Aid met at two o'clock in the chapel next the church, not quite half a mile from home. She planned her going, therefore, so that she should get there a little before three.

"I want them all to be there," she said to herself; "else the very one that wasn't there might be the one who would be wanting to give Jimmy Bean a home; and, of course, two o'clock always means three, really—to Ladies' Aiders."

Quietly, but with confident courage, Pollyanna ascended the chapel steps, pushed open the door and entered the vestibule. A soft babel of feminine chatter and laughter came from the main room. Hesitating only a brief moment Pollyanna pushed open one of the inner doors.

The chatter dropped to a surprised hush. Pollyanna advanced a little timidly. Now that the time had come, she felt unwontedly shy. After all, these half-strange, half-familiar faces about her were not her own dear Ladies' Aid.

"How do you do, Ladies' Aiders?" she faltered politely. "I'm Pollyanna Whittier. I—I reckon some of you know me, maybe; anyway, I do YOU—only I don't know you all together this way."

The silence could almost be felt now. Some of the ladies did know this rather extraordinary niece of their fellow-member, and nearly all had heard of her; but not one of them could think of anything to say, just then.

"I—I've come to—to lay the case before you," stammered Pollyanna, after a moment, unconsciously falling into her father's familiar phraseology.

There was a slight rustle.

"Did—did your aunt send you, my dear?" asked Mrs. Ford, the minister's wife.

Pollyanna colored a little.

"Oh, no. I came all by myself. You see, I'm used to Ladies' Aiders. It was Ladies' Aiders that brought me up—with

father."

Somebody tittered hysterically, and the minister's wife frowned.

"Yes, dear. What is it?"

"Well, it—it's Jimmy Bean," sighed Pollyanna. "He hasn't any home except the Orphan one, and they're full, and don't want him, anyhow, he thinks; so he wants another. He wants one of the common kind, that has a mother instead of a Matron in it—folks, you know, that'll care. He's ten years old going on eleven. I thought some of you might like him—to live with you, you know."

"Well, did you ever!" murmured a voice, breaking the dazed pause that followed Pollyanna's words.

With anxious eyes Pollyanna swept the circle of faces about her.

"Oh, I forgot to say; he will work," she supplemented eagerly.

Still there was silence; then, coldly, one or two women began to question her. After a time they all had the story and began to talk among themselves, animatedly, not quite pleasantly.

Pollyanna listened with growing anxiety. Some of what was said she could not understand. She did gather, after a time, however, that there was no woman there who had a home to give him, though every woman seemed to think that some of the others might take him, as there were several who had no little boys of their own already in their homes. But there was no one who agreed herself to take him. Then she heard the minister's wife suggest timidly that they, as a society, might perhaps assume his support and education instead of sending quite so much money this year to the little boys in faraway India.

A great many ladies talked then, and several of them talked all at once, and even more loudly and more unpleasantly than before. It seemed that their society was

famous for its offering to Hindu missions, and several said they should die of mortification if it should be less this year. Some of what was said at this time Pollyanna again thought she could not have understood, too, for it sounded almost as if they did not care at all what the money DID, so long as the sum opposite the name of their society in a certain "report" "headed the list"—and of course that could not be what they meant at all! But it was all very confusing, and not quite pleasant, so that Pollyanna was glad, indeed, when at last she found herself outside in the hushed, sweet air—only she was very sorry, too: for she knew it was not going to be easy, or anything but sad, to tell Jimmy Bean tomorrow that the Ladies' Aid had decided that they would rather send all their money to bring up the little India boys than to save out enough to bring up one little boy in their own town, for which they would not get "a bit of credit in the report," according to the tall lady who wore spectacles.

"Not but that it's good, of course, to send money to the heathen, and I shouldn't want 'em not to send SOME there," sighed Pollyanna to herself, as she trudged sorrowfully along. "But they acted as if little boys HERE weren't any account—only little boys 'way off. I should THINK, though, they'd rather see Jimmy Bean grow—than just a report!"

CHAPTER XIII
In Pendleton Woods

Pollyanna had not turned her steps toward home, when she left the chapel. She had turned them, instead, toward Pendleton Hill. It had been a hard day, for all it had been a "vacation one" (as she termed the infrequent days when there was no sewing or cooking lesson), and Pollyanna was sure that nothing would do her quite so much good as a walk through the green quiet of Pendleton Woods. Up Pendleton Hill, therefore, she climbed steadily, in spite of the warm sun on her back.

"I don't have to get home till half-past five, anyway," she was telling herself; "and it'll be so much nicer to go around by the way of the woods, even if I do have to climb to get there."

It was very beautiful in the Pendleton Woods, as Pollyanna knew by experience. But today it seemed even more delightful than ever, notwithstanding her disappointment over what she must tell Jimmy Bean tomorrow.

"I wish they were up here—all those ladies who talked so loud," sighed Pollyanna to herself, raising her eyes to the patches of vivid blue between the sunlit green of the treetops. "Anyhow, if they were up here, I just reckon they'd change and take Jimmy Bean for their little boy, all right," she finished, secure in her conviction, but unable to give a reason for it, even to herself.

Suddenly Pollyanna lifted her head and listened. A dog had barked some distance ahead. A moment later he came dashing toward her, still barking.

"Hullo, doggie—hullo!" Pollyanna snapped her fingers at the dog and looked expectantly down the path. She had seen

the dog once before, she was sure. He had been there with the Man, Mr. John Pendleton. She was looking now, hoping to see him. For some minutes she watched eagerly, but he did not appear. Then she turned her attention toward the dog.

The dog, as even Pollyanna could see, was acting strangely. He was still barking—giving little short, sharp yelps, as if of alarm. He was running back and forth, too, in the path ahead. Soon they reached a side path, and down this the little dog fairly flew, only to come back at once, whining and barking.

"Ho! That isn't the way home," laughed Pollyanna, still keeping to the main path.

The little dog seemed frantic now. Back and forth, back and forth, between Pollyanna and the side path he vibrated, barking and whining pitifully. Every quiver of his little brown body, and every glance from his beseeching brown eyes were eloquent with appeal—so eloquent that at last Pollyanna understood, turned, and followed him.

Straight ahead, now, the little dog dashed madly; and it was not long before Pollyanna came upon the reason for it all: a man lying motionless at the foot of a steep, overhanging mass of rock a few yards from the side path.

A twig cracked sharply under Pollyanna's foot, and the man turned his head. With a cry of dismay Pollyanna ran to his side.

"Mr. Pendleton! Oh, are you hurt?"

"Hurt? Oh, no! I'm just taking a siesta in the sunshine," snapped the man irritably. "See here, how much do you know? What can you do? Have you got any sense?"

Pollyanna caught her breath with a little gasp, but—as was her habit—she answered the questions literally, one by one.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, I—I don't know so very much, and I can't do a great many things; but most of the Ladies' Aiders, except Mrs. Rawson, said I had real good sense. I heard 'em

say so one day—they didn't know I heard, though."

The man smiled grimly.

"There, there, child, I beg your pardon, I'm sure; it's only this confounded leg of mine. Now listen." He paused, and with some difficulty reached his hand into his trousers pocket and brought out a bunch of keys, singling out one between his thumb and forefinger. "Straight through the path there, about five minutes' walk, is my house. This key will admit you to the side door under the porte-cochere. Do you know what a porte-cochere is?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Auntie has one with a sun parlor over it. That's the roof I slept on—only I didn't sleep, you know. They found me."

"Eh? Oh! Well, when you get into the house, go straight through the vestibule and hall to the door at the end. On the big, flat-topped desk in the middle of the room you'll find a telephone. Do you know how to use a telephone?"

"Oh, yes, sir! Why, once when Aunt Polly—"

"Never mind Aunt Polly now," cut in the man scowlingly, as he tried to move himself a little.

"Hunt up Dr. Thomas Chilton's number on the card you'll find somewhere around there—it ought to be on the hook down at the side, but it probably won't be. You know a telephone card, I suppose, when you see one!"

"Oh, yes, sir! I just love Aunt Polly's. There's such a lot of queer names, and—"

"Tell Dr. Chilton that John Pendleton is at the foot of Little Eagle Ledge in Pendleton Woods with a broken leg, and to come at once with a stretcher and two men. He'll know what to do besides that. Tell him to come by the path from the house."

"A broken leg? Oh, Mr. Pendleton, how perfectly awful!" shuddered Pollyanna. "But I'm so glad I came! Can't I do—"

"Yes, you can—but evidently you won't! WILL you go and do what I ask and stop talking," moaned the man, faintly.

And, with a little sobbing cry, Pollyanna went.

Pollyanna did not stop now to look up at the patches of blue between the sunlit tops of the trees. She kept her eyes on the ground to make sure that no twig nor stone tripped her hurrying feet.

It was not long before she came in sight of the house. She had seen it before, though never so near as this. She was almost frightened now at the massiveness of the great pile of gray stone with its pillared verandas and its imposing entrance. Pausing only a moment, however, she sped across the big neglected lawn and around the house to the side door under the porte-cochere. Her fingers, stiff from their tight clutch upon the keys, were anything but skillful in their efforts to turn the bolt in the lock; but at last the heavy, carved door swung slowly back on its hinges.

Pollyanna caught her breath. In spite of her feeling of haste, she paused a moment and looked fearfully through the vestibule to the wide, somber hall beyond, her thoughts in a whirl. This was John Pendleton's house; the house of mystery; the house into which no one but its master entered; the house which sheltered, somewhere—a skeleton. Yet she, Pollyanna, was expected to enter alone these fearsome rooms, and telephone the doctor that the master of the house lay now—

With a little cry Pollyanna, looking neither to the right nor the left, fairly ran through the hall to the door at the end and opened it.

The room was large, and somber with dark woods and hangings like the hall; but through the west window the sun threw a long shaft of gold across the floor, gleamed dully on the tarnished brass andirons in the fireplace, and touched the nickel of the telephone on the great desk in the middle of the room. It was toward this desk that Pollyanna hurriedly tiptoed.

The telephone card was not on its hook; it was on the floor. But Pollyanna found it, and ran her shaking forefinger

down through the C's to "Chilton." In due time she had Dr. Chilton himself at the other end of the wires, and was tremblingly delivering her message and answering the doctor's terse, pertinent questions. This done, she hung up the receiver and drew a long breath of relief.

Only a brief glance did Pollyanna give about her; then, with a confused vision in her eyes of crimson draperies, book-lined walls, a littered floor, an untidy desk, innumerable closed doors (any one of which might conceal a skeleton), and everywhere dust, dust, dust, she fled back through the hall to the great carved door, still half open as she had left it.

In what seemed, even to the injured man, an incredibly short time, Pollyanna was back in the woods at the man's side.

"Well, what is the trouble? Couldn't you get in?" he demanded.

Pollyanna opened wide her eyes.

"Why, of course I could! I'm HERE," she answered. "As if I'd be here if I hadn't got in! And the doctor will be right up just as soon as possible with the men and things. He said he knew just where you were, so I didn't stay to show him. I wanted to be with you."

"Did you?" smiled the man, grimly. "Well, I can't say I admire your taste. I should think you might find pleasanter companions."

"Do you mean—because you're so—cross?"

"Thanks for your frankness. Yes."

Pollyanna laughed softly.

"But you're only cross OUTSIDE—You aren't cross inside a bit!"

"Indeed! How do you know that?" asked the man, trying to change the position of his head without moving the rest of his body.

"Oh, lots of ways; there—like that—the way you act with the dog," she added, pointing to the long, slender hand that rested on the dog's sleek head near him. "It's funny how dogs

and cats know the insides of folks better than other folks do, isn't it? Say, I'm going to hold your head," she finished abruptly.

The man winced several times and groaned once; softly while the change was being made; but in the end he found Pollyanna's lap a very welcome substitute for the rocky hollow in which his head had lain before.

"Well, that is—better," he murmured faintly.

He did not speak again for some time. Pollyanna, watching his face, wondered if he were asleep. She did not think he was. He looked as if his lips were tight shut to keep back moans of pain. Pollyanna herself almost cried aloud as she looked at his great, strong body lying there so helpless. One hand, with fingers tightly clenched, lay out flung, motionless. The other, limply open, lay on the dog's head. The dog, his wistful, eager eyes on his master's face, was motionless, too.

Minute by minute the time passed. The sun dropped lower in the west and the shadows grew deeper under the trees. Pollyanna sat so still she hardly seemed to breathe. A bird alighted fearlessly within reach of her hand, and a squirrel whisked his bushy tail on a tree branch almost under her nose—yet with his bright little eyes all the while on the motionless dog.

At last the dog pricked up his cars and whined softly; then he gave a short, sharp bark. The next moment Pollyanna heard voices, and very soon their owners appeared three men carrying a stretcher and various other articles.

The tallest of the party—a smooth-shaven, kind-eyed man whom Pollyanna knew by sight as "Dr. Chilton"—advanced cheerily.

"Well, my little lady, playing nurse?"

"Oh, no, sir," smiled Pollyanna. "I've only held his head—I haven't given him a mite of medicine. But I'm glad I was here."

"So am I," nodded the doctor, as he turned his absorbed attention to the injured man.

CHAPTER XIV
Just a Matter of Jelly

Pollyanna was a little late for supper on the night of the accident to John Pendleton; but, as it happened, she escaped without reproof.

Nancy met her at the door.

"Well, if I ain't glad ter be settin' my two eyes on you," she sighed in obvious relief. "It's half-past six!"

"I know it," admitted Pollyanna anxiously; "but I'm not to blame—truly I'm not. And I don't think even Aunt Polly will say I am, either."

"She won't have the chance," retorted Nancy, with huge satisfaction. "She's gone."

"Gone!" gasped Pollyanna. "You don't mean that I've driven her away?" Through Pollyanna's mind at the moment trooped remorseful memories of the morning with its unwanted boy, cat, and dog, and its unwelcome "glad" and forbidden "father" that would spring to her forgetful little tongue. "Oh, I DIDN'T drive her away?"

"Not much you did," scoffed Nancy. "Her cousin died suddenly down to Boston, and she had ter go. She had one o' them yeller telegram letters after you went away this afternoon, and she won't be back for three days. Now I guess we're glad all right. We'll be keepin' house tergether, jest you and me, all that time. We will, we will!"

Pollyanna looked shocked.

"Glad! Oh, Nancy, when it's a funeral?"

"Oh, but 'twa'n't the funeral I was glad for, Miss Pollyanna. It was—" Nancy stopped abruptly. A shrewd twinkle came into her eyes. "Why, Miss Pollyanna, as if it

wa'n't yerself that was teachin' me ter play the game," she reproached her gravely.

Pollyanna puckered her forehead into a troubled frown.

"I can't help it, Nancy," she argued with a shake of her head. "It must be that there are some things that 'tisn't right to play the game on—and I'm sure funerals is one of them. There's nothing in a funeral to be glad about."

Nancy chuckled.

"We can be glad 'tain't our'n," she observed demurely. But Pollyanna did not hear. She had begun to tell of the accident; and in a moment Nancy, open-mouthed, was listening.

At the appointed place the next afternoon, Pollyanna met Jimmy Bean according to agreement. As was to be expected, of course, Jimmy showed keen disappointment that the Ladies' Aid preferred a little India boy to himself.

"Well, maybe 'tis natural," he sighed. "Of course things you don't know about are always nicer'n things you do, same as the pertater on 'tother side of the plate is always the biggest. But I wish I looked that way ter somebody 'way off. Wouldn't it be jest great, now, if only somebody over in India wanted ME?"

Pollyanna clapped her hands.

"Why, of course! That's the very thing, Jimmy! I'll write to my Ladies' Aiders about you. They aren't over in India; they're only out west—but that's awful far away, just the same. I reckon you'd think so if you'd come all the way here as I did!"

Jimmy's face brightened.

"Do you think they would—truly—take me?" he asked.

"Of course they would! Don't they take little boys in India to bring up? Well, they can just play you are the little India boy this time. I reckon you're far enough away to make a report, all right. You wait. I'll write 'em. I'll write Mrs. White. No, I'll write Mrs. Jones. Mrs. White has got the most money, but Mrs. Jones gives the most—which is kind of funny, isn't

it?—when you think of it. But I reckon some of the Aiders will take you."

"All right—but don't furgit ter say I'll work fur my board an' keep," put in Jimmy. "I ain't no beggar, an' biz'ness is biz'ness, even with Ladies' Aiders, I'm thinkin'." He hesitated, then added: "An' I s'pose I better stay where I be fur a spell yet—till you hear."

"Of course," nodded Pollyanna emphatically. "Then I'll know just where to find you. And they'll take you—I'm sure you're far enough away for that. Didn't Aunt Polly take—Say!" she broke off, suddenly, "DO you suppose I was Aunt Polly's little girl from India?"

"Well, if you ain't the queerest kid," grinned Jimmy, as he turned away.

It was about a week after the accident in Pendleton Woods that Pollyanna said to her aunt one morning:

"Aunt Polly, please would you mind very much if I took Mrs. Snow's calf's-foot jelly this week to someone else? I'm sure Mrs. Snow wouldn't—this once."

"Dear me, Pollyanna, what ARE you up to now?" sighed her aunt. "You ARE the most extraordinary child!"

Pollyanna frowned a little anxiously.

"Aunt Polly, please, what is extraordinary? If you're EXtraordinary you can't be ORdinary, can you?"

"You certainly cannot."

"Oh, that's all right, then. I'm glad I'm EXtraordinary," sighed Pollyanna, her face clearing. "You see, Mrs. White used to say Mrs. Rawson was a very ordinary woman—and she disliked Mrs. Rawson something awful. They were always fight—I mean, father had—that is, I mean, WE had more trouble keeping peace between them than we did between any of the rest of the Aiders," corrected Pollyanna, a little breathless from her efforts to steer between the Scylla of her father's past commands in regard to speaking of church quarrels, and the Charybdis of her aunt's present commands in

regard to speaking of her father.

"Yes, yes; well, never mind," interposed Aunt Polly, a trifle impatiently. "You do run on so, Pollyanna, and no matter what we're talking about you always bring up at those Ladies' Aiders!"

"Yes'm," smiled Pollyanna, cheerfully, "I reckon I do, maybe. But you see they used to bring me up, and—"

"That will do, Pollyanna," interrupted a cold voice. "Now what is it about this jelly?"

"Nothing, Aunt Polly, truly, that you would mind, I'm sure. You let me take jelly to HER, so I thought you would to HIM—this once. You see, broken legs aren't like—like lifelong invalids, so his won't last forever as Mrs. Snow's does, and she can have all the rest of the things after just once or twice."

"'Him'? 'He'? 'Broken leg'? What are you talking about, Pollyanna?"

Pollyanna stared; then her face relaxed.

"Oh, I forgot. I reckon you didn't know. You see, it happened while you were gone. It was the very day you went that I found him in the woods, you know; and I had to unlock his house and telephone for the men and the doctor, and hold his head, and everything. And of course then I came away and haven't seen him since. But when Nancy made the jelly for Mrs. Snow this week I thought how nice it would be if I could take it to him instead of her, just this once. Aunt Polly, may I?"

"Yes, yes, I suppose so," acquiesced Miss Polly, a little wearily. "Who did you say he was?"

"The Man. I mean, Mr. John Pendleton."

Miss Polly almost sprang from her chair.

"JOHN PENDLETON!"

"Yes. Nancy told me his name. Maybe you know him."

Miss Polly did not answer this. Instead she asked:

"Do YOU know him?"

Pollyanna nodded.

"Oh, yes. He always speaks and smiles—now. He's only cross OUTSIDE, you know. I'll go and get the jelly. Nancy had it 'most fixed when I came in," finished Pollyanna, already halfway across the room.

"Pollyanna, wait!" Miss Polly's voice was suddenly very stern. "I've changed my mind. I would prefer that Mrs. Snow had that jelly today—as usual. That is all. You may go now."

Pollyanna's face fell.

"Oh, but Aunt Polly, HERS will last. She can always be sick and have things, you know; but his is just a broken leg, and legs don't last—I mean, broken ones. He's had it a whole week now."

"Yes, I remember. I heard Mr. John Pendleton had met with an accident," said Miss Polly, a little stiffly; "but—I do not care to be sending jelly to John Pendleton, Pollyanna."

"I know, he is cross—outside," admitted Pollyanna, sadly, "so I suppose you don't like him. But I wouldn't say 'twas you sent it. I'd say 'twas me. I like him. I'd be glad to send him jelly."

Miss Polly began to shake her head again. Then, suddenly, she stopped, and asked in a curiously quiet voice:

"Does he know who you—are, Pollyanna?"

The little girl sighed.

"I reckon not. I told him my name, once, but he never calls me it—never."

"Does he know where you—live?"

"Oh, no. I never told him that."

"Then he doesn't know you're my—niece?"

"I don't think so."

For a moment there was silence. Miss Polly was looking at Pollyanna with eyes that did not seem to see her at all. The little girl, shifting impatiently from one small foot to the other, sighed audibly. Then Miss Polly roused herself with a start.

"Very well, Pollyanna," she said at last, still in that queer

voice, so unlike her own; "you may take the jelly to Mr. Pendleton as your own gift. But understand: I do not send it. Be very sure that he does not think I do!"

"Yes'm—no'm—thank you, Aunt Polly," exulted Pollyanna, as she flew through the door.

CHAPTER XV
Dr. Chilton

The great gray pile of masonry looked very different to Pollyanna when she made her second visit to the house of Mr. John Pendleton. Windows were open, an elderly woman was hanging out clothes in the backyard, and the doctor's gig stood under the porte-cochere.

As before Pollyanna went to the side door. This time she rang the bell—her fingers were not stiff today from a tight clutch on a bunch of keys.

A familiar looking small dog bounded up the steps to greet her, but there was a slight delay before the woman who had been hanging out the clothes opened the door.

"If you please, I've brought some calf's-foot jelly for Mr. Pendleton," smiled Pollyanna.

"Thank you," said the woman, reaching for the bowl in the little girl's hand. "Who shall I say sent it? And it's calf's-foot jelly?"

The doctor, coming into the hall at that moment, heard the woman's words and saw the disappointed look on Pollyanna's face. He stepped quickly forward.

"Ah! Some calf's-foot jelly?" he asked genially. "That will be fine! Maybe you'd like to see our patient, eh?"

"Oh, yes, sir," beamed Pollyanna; and the woman, in obedience to a nod from the doctor, led the way down the hall at once, though plainly with vast surprise on her face.

Behind the doctor, a young man (a trained nurse from the nearest city) gave a disturbed exclamation.

"But, Doctor, didn't Mr. Pendleton give orders not to admit—anyone?"

"Oh, yes," nodded the doctor, imperturbably. "But I'm

giving orders now. I'll take the risk." Then he added whimsically: "You don't know, of course; but that little girl is better than a six-quart bottle of tonic any day. If anything or anybody can take the grouch out of Pendleton this afternoon, she can. That's why I sent her in."

"Who is she?"

For one brief moment the doctor hesitated.

"She's the niece of one of our best known residents. Her name is Pollyanna Whittier. I—I don't happen to enjoy a very extensive personal acquaintance with the little lady as yet; but lots of my patients do—I'm thankful to say!"

The nurse smiled.

"Indeed! And what are the special ingredients of this wonder-working—tonic of hers?"

The doctor shook his head.

"I don't know. As near as I can find out it is an overwhelming, unquenchable gladness for everything that has happened or is going to happen. At any rate, her quaint speeches are constantly being repeated to me, and, as near as I can make out, 'just being glad' is the tenor of most of them. As is," he added, with another whimsical smile, as he stepped out on to the porch, "I wish I could prescribe her—and buy her—as I would a box of pills;—though if there gets to be many of her in the world, you and I might as well go to ribbon-selling and ditch-digging for all the money we'd get out of nursing and doctoring," he laughed, picking up the reins and stepping into the gig.

Pollyanna, meanwhile, in accordance with the doctor's orders, was being escorted to John Pendleton's rooms.

Her way led through the great library at the end of the hall, and, rapid as was her progress through it, Pollyanna saw at once that great changes had taken place. The book-lined walls and the crimson curtains were the same; but there was no litter on the floor, no untidiness on the desk, and not so much as a grain of dust in sight. The telephone card hung in

its proper place, and the brass andirons had been polished. One of the mysterious doors was open, and it was toward this that the maid led the way. A moment later Pollyanna found herself in a sumptuously furnished bedroom while the maid was saying in a frightened voice:

"If you please, sir, here—here's a little girl with some jelly. The doctor said I was to—to bring her in."

The next moment Pollyanna found herself alone with a very cross-looking man lying flat on his back in bed.

"See here, didn't I say—" began an angry voice. "Oh, it's you!" it broke off not very graciously, as Pollyanna advanced toward the bed.

"Yes, sir," smiled Pollyanna. "Oh, I'm so glad they let me in! You see, at first the lady 'most took my jelly, and I was so afraid I wasn't going to see you at all. Then the doctor came, and he said I might. Wasn't he lovely to let me see you?"

In spite of himself the man's lips twitched into a smile; but all he said was, "Humph!"

"And I've brought you some jelly," resumed Pollyanna; "—calf's-foot. I hope you like it?" There was a rising inflection in her voice.

"Never ate it." The fleeting smile had gone, and the scowl had come back to the man's face.

For a brief instant Pollyanna's countenance showed disappointment; but it cleared as she set the bowl of jelly down.

"Didn't you? Well, if you didn't, then you can't know you DON'T like it, anyhow, can you? So I reckon I'm glad you haven't, after all. Now, if you knew—"

"Yes, yes; well, there's one thing I know all right, and that is that I'm flat on my back right here this minute, and that I'm liable to stay here—till doomsday, I guess."

Pollyanna looked shocked.

"Oh, no! It couldn't be till doomsday, you know, when the angel Gabriel blows his trumpet, unless it should come quicker than we think it will—oh, of course, I know the Bible

says it may come quicker than we think, but I don't think it will—that is, of course I believe the Bible; but I mean I don't think it will come as much quicker as it would if it should come now, and—"

John Pendleton laughed suddenly—and aloud. The nurse, coming in at that moment, heard the laugh, and beat a hurried—but a very silent—retreat. He had the air of a frightened cook who, seeing the danger of a breath of cold air striking a half-done cake, hastily shuts the oven door.

"Aren't you getting a little mixed?" asked John Pendleton of Pollyanna.

The little girl laughed.

"Maybe. But what I mean is, that legs don't last—broken ones, you know—like lifelong invalids, same as Mrs. Snow has got. So yours won't last till doomsday at all. I should think you could be glad of that."

"Oh, I am," retorted the man grimly.

"And you didn't break but one. You can be glad 'twasn't two." Pollyanna was warming to her task.

"Of course! So fortunate," sniffed the man, with uplifted eyebrows; "looking at it from that standpoint, I suppose I might be glad I wasn't a centipede and didn't break fifty!"

Pollyanna chuckled.

"Oh, that's the best yet," she crowed. "I know what a centipede is; they've got lots of legs. And you can be glad __"

"Oh, of course," interrupted the man, sharply, all the old bitterness coming back to his voice; "I can be glad, too, for all the rest, I suppose—the nurse, and the doctor, and that confounded woman in the kitchen!"

"Why, yes, sir—only think how bad 'twould be if you DIDN'T have them!"

"Well, I—eh?" he demanded sharply.

"Why, I say, only think how bad it would be if you didn't have 'em—and you lying here like this!"

"As if that wasn't the very thing that was at the bottom of the whole matter," retorted the man, testily, "because I am lying here like this! And yet you expect me to say I'm glad because of a fool woman who disarranges the whole house and calls it 'regulating,' and a man who aids and abets her in it, and calls it 'nursing,' to say nothing of the doctor who eggs 'em both on—and the whole bunch of them, meanwhile, expecting me to pay them for it, and pay them well, too!"

Pollyanna frowned sympathetically.

"Yes, I know. THAT part is too bad—about the money—when you've been saving it, too, all this time."

"When—eh?"

"Saving it—buying beans and fish balls, you know. Say, DO you like beans?—or do you like turkey better, only on account of the sixty cents?"

"Look a-here, child, what are you talking about?"

Pollyanna smiled radiantly.

"About your money, you know—denying yourself, and saving it for the heathen. You see, I found out about it. Why, Mr. Pendleton, that's one of the ways I knew you weren't cross inside. Nancy told me."

The man's jaw dropped.

"Nancy told you I was saving money for the—Well, may I inquire who Nancy is?"

"Our Nancy. She works for Aunt Polly."

"Aunt Polly! Well, who is Aunt Polly?"

"She's Miss Polly Harrington. I live with her."

The man made a sudden movement.

"Miss—Polly—Harrington!" he breathed. "You live with—HER!"

"Yes; I'm her niece. She's taken me to bring up—on account of my mother, you know," faltered Pollyanna, in a low voice. "She was her sister. And after father—went to be with her and the rest of us in Heaven, there wasn't any one left for me down here but the Ladies' Aid; so she took me."

The man did not answer. His face, as he lay back on the pillow now, was very white—so white that Pollyanna was frightened. She rose uncertainly to her feet.

"I reckon maybe I'd better go now," she proposed. "I—I hope you'll like—the jelly."

The man turned his head suddenly, and opened his eyes. There was a curious longing in their dark depths which even Pollyanna saw, and at which she marveled.

"And so you are—Miss Polly Harrington's niece," he said gently.

"Yes, sir."

Still the man's dark eyes lingered on her face, until Pollyanna, feeling vaguely restless, murmured:

"I—I suppose you know—her."

John Pendleton's lips curved in an odd smile.

"Oh, yes; I know her." He hesitated, then went on, still with that curious smile. "But—you don't mean—you can't mean that it was Miss Polly Harrington who sent that jelly—to me?" he said slowly.

Pollyanna looked distressed.

"N-no, sir: she didn't. She said I must be very sure not to let you think she did send it. But I—"

"I thought as much," vouchsafed the man, shortly, turning away his head. And Pollyanna, still more distressed, tiptoed from the room.

Under the porte-cochere she found the doctor waiting in his gig. The nurse stood on the steps.

"Well, Miss Pollyanna, may I have the pleasure of seeing you home?" asked the doctor smilingly. "I started to drive on a few minutes ago; then it occurred to me that I'd wait for you."

"Thank you, sir. I'm glad you did. I just love to ride," beamed Pollyanna, as he reached out his hand to help her in.

"Do you?" smiled the doctor, nodding his head in farewell to the young man on the steps. "Well, as near as I can judge,

there are a good many things you 'love' to do—eh?" he added, as they drove briskly away.

Pollyanna laughed.

"Why, I don't know. I reckon perhaps there are," she admitted. "I like to do 'most everything that's LIVING. Of course I don't like the other things very well—sewing, and reading out loud, and all that. But THEY aren't LIVING."

"No? What are they, then?"

"Aunt Polly says they're 'learning to live,'" sighed Pollyanna, with a rueful smile.

The doctor smiled now—a little queerly.

"Does she? Well, I should think she might say—just that."

"Yes," responded Pollyanna. "But I don't see it that way at all. I don't think you have to LEARN how to live. I didn't, anyhow."

The doctor drew a long sigh.

"After all, I'm afraid some of us—do have to, little girl," he said. Then, for a time he was silent. Pollyanna, stealing a glance at his face, felt vaguely sorry for him. He looked so sad. She wished, uneasily, that she could "do something." It was this, perhaps, that caused her to say in a timid voice:

"Dr. Chilton, I should think being a doctor would, be the very gladdest kind of a business there was."

The doctor turned in surprise.

"'Gladdest'!—when I see so much suffering always, everywhere I go?" he cried.

She nodded.

"I know; but you're HELPING it—don't you see?—and of course you're glad to help it! And so that makes you the gladdest of any of us, all the time."

The doctor's eyes filled with sudden hot tears. The doctor's life was a singularly lonely one. He had no wife and no home save his two-room office in a boarding house. His profession was very dear to him. Looking now into Pollyanna's shining eyes, he felt as if a loving hand had been suddenly laid

on his head in blessing. He knew, too, that never again would a long day's work or a long night's weariness be quite without that new-found exaltation that had come to him through Pollyanna's eyes.

"God bless you, little girl," he said unsteadily. Then, with the bright smile his patients knew and loved so well, he added: "And I'm thinking, after all, that it was the doctor, quite as much as his patients, that needed a draft of that tonic!" All of which puzzled Pollyanna very much—until a chipmunk, running across the road, drove the whole matter from her mind.

The doctor left Pollyanna at her own door, smiled at Nancy, who was sweeping off the front porch, then drove rapidly away.

"I've had a perfectly beautiful ride with the doctor," announced Pollyanna, bounding up the steps. "He's lovely, Nancy!"

"Is he?"

"Yes. And I told him I should think his business would be the very gladdest one there was."

"What!—goin' ter see sick folks—an' folks what ain't sick but thinks they is, which is worse?" Nancy's face showed open skepticism.

Pollyanna laughed gleefully.

"Yes. That's 'most what he said, too; but there is a way to be glad, even then. Guess!"

Nancy frowned in meditation. Nancy was getting so she could play this game of "being glad" quite successfully, she thought. She rather enjoyed studying out Pollyanna's "posers," too, as she called some of the little girl's questions.

"Oh, I know," she chuckled. "It's just the opposite from what you told Mis' Snow."

"Opposite?" repeated Pollyanna, obviously puzzled.

"Yes. You told her she could be glad because other folks wasn't like her—all sick, you know."

"Yes," nodded Pollyanna.

"Well, the doctor can be glad because he isn't like other folks—the sick ones, I mean, what he doctors," finished Nancy in triumph.

It was Pollyanna's turn to frown.

"Why, y-yes," she admitted. "Of course that IS one way, but it isn't the way I said; and—someway, I don't seem to quite like the sound of it. It isn't exactly as if he said he was glad they WERE sick, but—You do play the game so funny, sometimes Nancy," she sighed, as she went into the house.

Pollyanna found her aunt in the sitting room.

"Who was that man—the one who drove into the yard, Pollyanna?" questioned the lady a little sharply.

"Why, Aunt Polly, that was Dr. Chilton! Don't you know him?"

"Dr. Chilton! What was he doing—here?"

"He drove me home. Oh, and I gave the jelly to Mr. Pendleton, and—"

Miss Polly lifted her head quickly.

"Pollyanna, he did not think I sent it?"

"Oh, no, Aunt Polly. I told him you didn't."

Miss Polly grew a sudden vivid pink.

"You TOLD him I didn't!"

Pollyanna opened wide her eyes at the remonstrative dismay in her aunt's voice.

"Why, Aunt Polly, you SAID to!"

Aunt Polly sighed.

"I SAID, Pollyanna, that I did not send it, and for you to be very sure that he did not think I DID!—which is a very different matter from TELLING him outright that I did not send it." And she turned vexedly away.

"Dear me! Well, I don't see where the difference is," sighed Pollyanna, as she went to hang her hat on the one particular hook in the house upon which Aunt Polly had said that it must be hung.

CHAPTER XVI
A Red Rose and a Lace Shawl

It was on a rainy day about a week after Pollyanna's visit to Mr. John Pendleton, that Miss Polly was driven by Timothy to an early afternoon committee meeting of the Ladies' Aid Society. When she returned at three o'clock, her cheeks were a bright, pretty pink, and her hair, blown by the damp wind, had fluffed into kinks and curls wherever the loosened pins had given leave.

Pollyanna had never before seen her aunt look like this.

"Oh—oh—oh! Why, Aunt Polly, you've got 'em, too," she cried rapturously, dancing round and round her aunt, as that lady entered the sitting room.

"Got what, you impossible child?"

Pollyanna was still revolving round and round her aunt.

"And I never knew you had 'em! Can folks have 'em when you don't know they've got 'em? DO you suppose I could?—'fore I get to Heaven, I mean," she cried, pulling out with eager fingers the straight locks above her ears. "But then, they wouldn't be black, if they did come. You can't hide the black part."

"Pollyanna, what does all this mean?" demanded Aunt Polly, hurriedly removing her hat, and trying to smooth back her disordered hair.

"No, no—please, Aunt Polly!" Pollyanna's jubilant voice turned to one of distressed appeal. "Don't smooth 'em out! It's those that I'm talking about—those darling little black curls. Oh, Aunt Polly, they're so pretty!"

"Nonsense! What do you mean, Pollyanna, by going to the Ladies' Aid the other day in that absurd fashion about

that beggar boy?"

"But it isn't nonsense," urged Pollyanna, answering only the first of her aunt's remarks. "You don't know how pretty you look with your hair like that! Oh, Aunt Polly, please, mayn't I do your hair like I did Mrs. Snow's, and put in a flower? I'd so love to see you that way! Why, you'd be ever so much prettier than she was!"

"Pollyanna!" (Miss Polly spoke very sharply—all the more sharply because Pollyanna's words had given her an odd throb of joy: when before had anybody cared how she, or her hair looked? When before had anybody "loved" to see her "pretty"?) "Pollyanna, you did not answer my question. Why did you go to the Ladies' Aid in that absurd fashion?"

"Yes'm, I know; but, please, I didn't know it was absurd until I went and found out they'd rather see their report grow than Jimmy. So then I wrote to MY Ladies' Aiders—'cause Jimmy is far away from them, you know; and I thought maybe he could be their little India boy same as—Aunt Polly, WAS I your little India girl? And, Aunt Polly, you WILL let me do your hair, won't you?"

Aunt Polly put her hand to her throat—the old, helpless feeling was upon her, she knew.

"But, Pollyanna, when the ladies told me this afternoon how you came to them, I was so ashamed! I—"

Pollyanna began to dance up and down lightly on her toes.

"You didn't!—You didn't say I COULDN'T do your hair," she crowed triumphantly; "and so I'm sure it means just the other way 'round, sort of—like it did the other day about Mr. Pendleton's jelly that you didn't send, but didn't want me to say you didn't send, you know. Now wait just where you are. I'll get a comb."

"But Pollyanna, Pollyanna," remonstrated Aunt Polly, following the little girl from the room and panting upstairs after her.

"Oh, did you come up here?" Pollyanna greeted her at the

door of Miss Polly's own room. "That'll be nicer yet! I've got the comb. Now sit down, please, right here. Oh, I'm so glad you let me do it!"

"But, Pollyanna, I—I—"

Miss Polly did not finish her sentence. To her helpless amazement she found herself in the low chair before the dressing table, with her hair already tumbling about her ears under ten eager, but very gentle fingers.

"Oh, my! what pretty hair you've got," prattled Pollyanna; "and there's so much more of it than Mrs. Snow has, too! But, of course, you need more, anyhow, because you're well and can go to places where folks can see it. My! I reckon folks'll be glad when they do see it—and surprised, too, 'cause you've hid it so long. Why, Aunt Polly, I'll make you so pretty everybody'll just love to look at you!"

"Pollyanna!" gasped a stifled but shocked voice from a veil of hair. "I—I'm sure I don't know why I'm letting you do this silly thing."

"Why, Aunt Polly, I should think you'd be glad to have folks like to look at you! Don't you like to look at pretty things? I'm ever so much happier when I look at pretty folks, 'cause when I look at the other kind I'm so sorry for them."

"But—but—"

"And I just love to do folks' hair," purred Pollyanna, contentedly. "I did quite a lot of the Ladies' Aiders'—but there wasn't any of them so nice as yours. Mrs. White's was pretty nice, though, and she looked just lovely one day when I dressed her up in—Oh, Aunt Polly, I've just happened to think of something! But it's a secret, and I sha'n't tell. Now your hair is almost done, and pretty quick I'm going to leave you just a minute; and you must promise—promise—PROMISE not to stir nor peek, even, till I come back. Now remember!" she finished, as she ran from the room.

Aloud Miss Polly said nothing. To herself she said that of course she should at once undo the absurd work of her niece's

fingers, and put her hair up properly again. As for "peeking" just as if she cared how—

At that moment—unaccountably—Miss Polly caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror of the dressing table. And what she saw sent such a flush of rosy color to her cheeks that—she only flushed the more at the sight.

She saw a face—not young, it is true—but just now alight with excitement and surprise. The cheeks were a pretty pink. The eyes sparkled. The hair, dark, and still damp from the outdoor air, lay in loose waves about the forehead and curved back over the ears in wonderfully becoming lines, with softening little curls here and there.

So amazed and so absorbed was Miss Polly with what she saw in the glass that she quite forgot her determination to do over her hair, until she heard Pollyanna enter the room again. Before she could move, then, she felt a folded something slipped across her eyes and tied in the back.

"Pollyanna, Pollyanna! What are you doing?" she cried.

Pollyanna chuckled.

"That's just what I don't want you to know, Aunt Polly, and I was afraid you WOULD peek, so I tied on the handkerchief. Now sit still. It won't take but just a minute, then I'll let you see."

"But, Pollyanna," began Miss Polly, struggling blindly to her feet, "you must take this off! You—child, child! what ARE you doing?" she gasped, as she felt a soft something slipped about her shoulders.

Pollyanna only chuckled the more gleefully. With trembling fingers she was draping about her aunt's shoulders the fleecy folds of a beautiful lace shawl, yellowed from long years of packing away, and fragrant with lavender. Pollyanna had found the shawl the week before when Nancy had been regulating the attic; and it had occurred to her today that there was no reason why her aunt, as well as Mrs. White of her Western home, should not be "dressed up."

Her task completed, Pollyanna surveyed her work with eyes that approved, but that saw yet one touch wanting. Promptly, therefore, she pulled her aunt toward the sun parlor where she could see a belated red rose blooming on the trellis within reach of her hand.

"Pollyanna, what are you doing? Where are you taking me to?" recoiled Aunt Polly, vainly trying to hold herself back. "Pollyanna, I shall not—"

"It's just to the sun parlor—only a minute! I'll have you ready now quicker'n no time," panted Pollyanna, reaching for the rose and thrusting it into the soft hair above Miss Polly's left ear. "There!" she exulted, untying the knot of the handkerchief and flinging the bit of linen far from her. "Oh, Aunt Polly, now I reckon you'll be glad I dressed you up!"

For one dazed moment Miss Polly looked at her bedecked self, and at her surroundings; then she gave a low cry and fled to her room. Pollyanna, following the direction of her aunt's last dismayed gaze, saw, through the open windows of the sun parlor, the horse and gig turning into the driveway. She recognized at once the man who held the reins. Delightedly she leaned forward.

"Dr. Chilton, Dr. Chilton! Did you want to see me? I'm up here."

"Yes," smiled the doctor, a little gravely. "Will you come down, please?"

In the bedroom Pollyanna found a flushed-faced, angry-eyed woman plucking at the pins that held a lace shawl in place.

"Pollyanna, how could you?" moaned the woman. "To think of your rigging me up like this, and then letting me—BE SEEN!"

Pollyanna stopped in dismay.

"But you looked lovely—perfectly lovely, Aunt Polly; and—"

"'Lovely'!" scorned the woman, flinging the shawl to one

side and attacking her hair with shaking fingers.

"Oh, Aunt Polly, please, please let the hair stay!"

"Stay? Like this? As if I would!" And Miss Polly pulled the locks so tightly back that the last curl lay stretched dead at the ends of her fingers.

"O dear! And you did look so pretty," almost sobbed Pollyanna, as she stumbled through the door.

Downstairs Pollyanna found the doctor waiting in his gig.

"I've prescribed you for a patient, and he's sent me to get the prescription filled," announced the doctor. "Will you go?"

"You mean—an errand—to the drug store?" asked Pollyanna, a little uncertainly. "I used to go some—for the Ladies' Aiders."

The doctor shook his head with a smile.

"Not exactly. It's Mr. John Pendleton. He would like to see you today, if you'll be so good as to come. It's stopped raining, so I drove down after you. Will you come? I'll call for you and bring you back before six o'clock."

"I'd love to!" exclaimed Pollyanna. "Let me ask Aunt Polly."

In a few moments she returned, hat in hand, but with rather a sober face.

"Didn't—your aunt want you to go?" asked the doctor, a little diffidently, as they drove away.

"Y-yes," sighed Pollyanna. "She—she wanted me to go TOO much, I'm afraid."

"Wanted you to go TOO MUCH!"

Pollyanna sighed again.

"Yes. I reckon she meant she didn't want me there. You see, she said: 'Yes, yes, run along, run along—do! I wish you'd gone before.'"

The doctor smiled—but with his lips only. His eyes were very grave. For some time he said nothing; then, a little hesitatingly, he asked:

"Wasn't it—your aunt I saw with you a few minutes ago—

in the window of the sun parlor?"

Pollyanna drew a long breath.

"Yes; that's what's the whole trouble, I suppose. You see I'd dressed her up in a perfectly lovely lace shawl I found upstairs, and I'd fixed her hair and put on a rose, and she looked so pretty. Didn't YOU think she looked just lovely?"

For a moment the doctor did not answer. When he did speak his voice was so low Pollyanna could but just hear the words.

"Yes, Pollyanna, I—I thought she did look—just lovely."

"Did you? I'm so glad! I'll tell her," nodded the little girl, contentedly.

To her surprise the doctor gave a sudden exclamation.

"Never! Pollyanna, I—I'm afraid I shall have to ask you not to tell her—that."

"Why, Dr. Chilton! Why not? I should think you'd be glad—"

"But she might not be," cut in the doctor.

Pollyanna considered this for a moment.

"That's so—maybe she wouldn't," she sighed. "I remember now; 'twas 'cause she saw you that she ran. And she—she spoke afterwards about her being seen in that rig."

"I thought as much," declared the doctor, under his breath.

"Still, I don't see why," maintained Pollyanna, "—when she looked so pretty!"

The doctor said nothing. He did not speak again, indeed, until they were almost to the great stone house in which John Pendleton lay with a broken leg.

CHAPTER XVII
"Just Like a Book"

John Pendleton greeted Pollyanna today with a smile.

"Well, Miss Pollyanna, I'm thinking you must be a very forgiving little person, else you wouldn't have come to see me again today."

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, I was real glad to come, and I'm sure I don't see why I shouldn't be, either."

"Oh, well, you know, I was pretty cross with you, I'm afraid, both the other day when you so kindly brought me the jelly, and that time when you found me with the broken leg at first. By the way, too, I don't think I've ever thanked you for that. Now I'm sure that even you would admit that you were very forgiving to come and see me, after such ungrateful treatment as that!"

Pollyanna stirred uneasily.

"But I was glad to find you—that is, I don't mean I was glad your leg was broken, of course," she corrected hurriedly.

John Pendleton smiled.

"I understand. Your tongue does get away with you once in a while, doesn't it, Miss Pollyanna? I do thank you, however; and I consider you a very brave little girl to do what you did that day. I thank you for the jelly, too," he added in a lighter voice.

"Did you like it?" asked Pollyanna with interest.

"Very much. I suppose—there isn't any more today that—that Aunt Polly DIDN'T send, is there?" he asked with an odd smile.

His visitor looked distressed.

"N-no, sir." She hesitated, then went on with heightened

color. "Please, Mr. Pendleton, I didn't mean to be rude the other day when I said Aunt Polly did NOT send the jelly."

There was no answer. John Pendleton was not smiling now. He was looking straight ahead of him with eyes that seemed to be gazing through and beyond the object before them. After a time he drew a long sigh and turned to Pollyanna. When he spoke his voice carried the old nervous fretfulness.

"Well, well, this will never do at all! I didn't send for you to see me moping this time. Listen! Out in the library—the big room where the telephone is, you know—you will find a carved box on the lower shelf of the big case with glass doors in the corner not far from the fireplace. That is, it'll be there if that confounded woman hasn't 'regulated' it to somewhere else! You may bring it to me. It is heavy, but not too heavy for you to carry, I think."

"Oh, I'm awfully strong," declared Pollyanna, cheerfully, as she sprang to her feet. In a minute she had returned with the box.

It was a wonderful half-hour that Pollyanna spent then. The box was full of treasures—curios that John Pendleton had picked up in years of travel—and concerning each there was some entertaining story, whether it were a set of exquisitely carved chessmen from China, or a little jade idol from India.

It was after she had heard the story about the idol that Pollyanna murmured wistfully:

"Well, I suppose it WOULD be better to take a little boy in India to bring up—one that didn't know any more than to think that God was in that doll-thing—than it would be to take Jimmy Bean, a little boy who knows God is up in the sky. Still, I can't help wishing they had wanted Jimmy Bean, too, besides the India boys."

John Pendleton did not seem to hear. Again his, eyes were staring straight before him, looking at nothing. But soon he

had roused himself, and had picked up another curio to talk about.

The visit, certainly, was a delightful one, but before it was over, Pollyanna was realizing that they were talking about something besides the wonderful things in the beautiful carved box. They were talking of herself, of Nancy, of Aunt Polly, and of her daily life. They were talking, too, even of the life and home long ago in the far western town.

Not until it was nearly time for her to go, did the man say, in a voice Pollyanna had never before heard from stern John Pendleton:

"Little girl, I want you to come to see me often. Will you? I'm lonesome, and I need you. There's another reason—and I'm going to tell you that, too. I thought, at first, after I found out who you were, the other day, that I didn't want you to come any more. You reminded me of—of something I have tried for long years to forget. So I said to myself that I never wanted to see you again; and every day, when the doctor asked if I wouldn't let him bring you to me, I said no.

"But after a time I found I was wanting to see you so much that—that the fact that I WASN'T seeing you was making me remember all the more vividly the thing I was so wanting to forget. So now I want you to come. Will you—little girl?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Pendleton," breathed Pollyanna, her eyes luminous with sympathy for the sad-faced man lying back on the pillow before her. "I'd love to come!"

"Thank you," said John Pendleton, gently.

After supper that evening, Pollyanna, sitting on the back porch, told Nancy all about Mr. John Pendleton's wonderful carved box, and the still more wonderful things it contained.

"And ter think," sighed Nancy, "that he SHOWED ye all them things, and told ye about 'em like that—him that's so cross he never talks ter no one—no one!"

"Oh, but he isn't cross, Nancy, only outside," demurred Pollyanna, with quick loyalty. "I don't see why everybody

thinks he's so bad, either. They wouldn't, if they knew him. But even Aunt Polly doesn't like him very well. She wouldn't send the jelly to him, you know, and she was so afraid he'd think she did send it!"

"Probably she didn't call him no duty," shrugged Nancy. "But what beats me is how he happened ter take ter you so, Miss Pollyanna—meanin' no offence ter you, of course—but he ain't the sort o' man what gen'rally takes ter kids; he ain't, he ain't."

Pollyanna smiled happily.

"But he did, Nancy," she nodded, "only I reckon even he didn't want to—ALL the time. Why, only today he owned up that one time he just felt he never wanted to see me again, because I reminded him of something he wanted to forget. But afterwards—"

"What's that?" interrupted Nancy, excitedly. "He said you reminded him of something he wanted to forget?"

"Yes. But afterwards—"

"What was it?" Nancy was eagerly insistent.

"He didn't tell me. He just said it was something."

"THE MYSTERY!" breathed Nancy, in an awestruck voice. "That's why he took to you in the first place. Oh, Miss Pollyanna! Why, that's just like a book—I've read lots of 'em; 'Lady Maud's Secret,' and 'The Lost Heir,' and 'Hidden for Years'—all of 'em had mysteries and things just like this. My stars and stockings! Just think of havin' a book lived right under yer nose like this an' me not knowin' it all this time! Now tell me everythin'—everythin' he said, Miss Pollyanna, there's a dear! No wonder he took ter you; no wonder—no wonder!"

"But he didn't," cried Pollyanna, "not till I talked to HIM, first. And he didn't even know who I was till I took the calf's-foot jelly, and had to make him understand that Aunt Polly didn't send it, and—"

Nancy sprang to her feet and clasped her hands together

suddenly.

"Oh, Miss Pollyanna, I know, I know—I KNOW I know!" she exulted rapturously. The next minute she was down at Pollyanna's side again. "Tell me—now think, and answer straight and true," she urged excitedly. "It was after he found out you was Miss Polly's niece that he said he didn't ever want ter see ye again, wa'n't it?"

"Oh, yes. I told him that the last time I saw him, and he told me this today."

"I thought as much," triumphed Nancy. "And Miss Polly wouldn't send the jelly herself, would she?"

"No."

"And you told him she didn't send it?"

"Why, yes; I—"

"And he began ter act queer and cry out sudden after he found out you was her niece. He did that, didn't he?"

"Why, y-yes; he did act a little queer—over that jelly," admitted Pollyanna, with a thoughtful frown.

Nancy drew a long sigh.

"Then I've got it, sure! Now listen. MR. JOHN PENDLETON WAS MISS POLLY HARRINGTON'S LOVER!" she announced impressively, but with a furtive glance over her shoulder.

"Why, Nancy, he couldn't be! She doesn't like him," objected Pollyanna.

Nancy gave her a scornful glance.

"Of course she don't! THAT'S the quarrel!"

Pollyanna still looked incredulous, and with another long breath Nancy happily settled herself to tell the story.

"It's like this. Just before you come, Mr. Tom told me Miss Polly had had a lover once. I didn't believe it. I couldn't—her and a lover! But Mr. Tom said she had, and that he was livin' now right in this town. And NOW I know, of course. It's John Pendleton. Hain't he got a mystery in his life? Don't he shut himself up in that grand house alone, and never speak ter no

one? Didn't he act queer when he found out you was Miss Polly's niece? And now hain't he owned up that you remind him of somethin' he wants ter forget? Just as if ANYBODY couldn't see 'twas Miss Polly!—an' her sayin' she wouldn't send him no jelly, too. Why, Miss Pollyanna, it's as plain as the nose on yer face; it is, it is!"

"Oh-h!" breathed Pollyanna, in wide-eyed amazement. "But, Nancy, I should think if they loved each other they'd make up some time. Both of 'em all alone, so, all these years. I should think they'd be glad to make up!"

Nancy sniffed disdainfully.

"I guess maybe you don't know much about lovers, Miss Pollyanna. You ain't big enough yet, anyhow. But if there IS a set o' folks in the world that wouldn't have no use for that 'ere 'glad game' o' your'n, it'd be a pair o' quarrellin' lovers; and that's what they be. Ain't he cross as sticks, most gen'rally?—and ain't she—"

Nancy stopped abruptly, remembering just in time to whom, and about whom, she was speaking. Suddenly, however, she chuckled.

"I ain't sayin', though, Miss Pollyanna, but what it would be a pretty slick piece of business if you could GET 'em ter playin' it—so they WOULD be glad ter make up. But, my land! wouldn't folks stare some—Miss Polly and him! I guess, though, there ain't much chance, much chance!"

Pollyanna said nothing; but when she went into the house a little later, her face was very thoughtful.

CHAPTER XVIII
Prisms

As the warm August days passed, Pollyanna went very frequently to the great house on Pendleton Hill. She did not feel, however, that her visits were really a success. Not but that the man seemed to want her there—he sent for her, indeed, frequently; but that when she was there, he seemed scarcely any the happier for her presence—at least, so Pollyanna thought.

He talked to her, it was true, and he showed her many strange and beautiful things—books, pictures, and curios. But he still fretted audibly over his own helplessness, and he chafed visibly under the rules and "regulatings" of the unwelcome members of his household. He did, indeed, seem to like to hear Pollyanna talk, however, and Pollyanna talked, Pollyanna liked to talk—but she was never sure that she would not look up and find him lying back on his pillow with that white, hurt look that always pained her; and she was never sure which—if any—of her words had brought it there. As for telling him the "glad game," and trying to get him to play it—Pollyanna had never seen the time yet when she thought he would care to hear about it. She had twice tried to tell him; but neither time had she got beyond the beginning of what her father had said—John Pendleton had on each occasion turned the conversation abruptly to another subject.

Pollyanna never doubted now that John Pendleton was her Aunt Polly's one-time lover; and with all the strength of her loving, loyal heart, she wished she could in some way bring happiness into their, to her mind, miserably lonely lives.

Just how she was to do this, however, she could not see. She talked to Mr. Pendleton about her aunt; and he listened,

sometimes politely, sometimes irritably, frequently with a quizzical smile on his usually stern lips. She talked to her aunt about Mr. Pendleton—or rather, she tried to talk to her about him. As a general thing, however, Miss Polly would not listen—long. She always found something else to talk about. She frequently did that, however, when Pollyanna was talking of others—of Dr. Chilton, for instance. Pollyanna laid this, though, to the fact that it had been Dr. Chilton who had seen her in the sun parlor with the rose in her hair and the lace shawl draped about her shoulders. Aunt Polly, indeed, seemed particularly bitter against Dr. Chilton, as Pollyanna found out one day when a hard cold shut her up in the house.

"If you are not better by night I shall send for the doctor," Aunt Polly said.

"Shall you? Then I'm going to be worse," gurgled Pollyanna. "I'd love to have Dr. Chilton come to see me!"

She wondered, then, at the look that came to her aunt's face.

"It will not be Dr. Chilton, Pollyanna," Miss Polly said sternly. "Dr. Chilton is not our family physician. I shall send for Dr. Warren—if you are worse."

Pollyanna did not grow worse, however, and Dr. Warren was not summoned.

"And I'm so glad, too," Pollyanna said to her aunt that evening. "Of course I like Dr. Warren, and all that; but I like Dr. Chilton better, and I'm afraid he'd feel hurt if I didn't have him. You see, he wasn't really to blame, after all, that he happened to see you when I'd dressed you up so pretty that day, Aunt Polly," she finished wistfully.

"That will do, Pollyanna. I really do not wish to discuss Dr. Chilton—or his feelings," reproved Miss Polly, decisively.

Pollyanna looked at her for a moment with mournfully interested eyes; then she sighed:

"I just love to see you when your cheeks are pink like that, Aunt Polly; but I would so like to fix your hair. If—Why,

Aunt Polly!" But her aunt was already out of sight down the hall.

It was toward the end of August that Pollyanna, making an early morning call on John Pendleton, found the flaming band of blue and gold and green edged with red and violet lying across his pillow. She stopped short in awed delight.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, it's a baby rainbow—a real rainbow come in to pay you a visit!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands together softly. "Oh—oh—oh, how pretty it is! But how DID it get in?" she cried.

The man laughed a little grimly: John Pendleton was particularly out of sorts with the world this morning.

"Well, I suppose it 'got in' through the beveled edge of that glass thermometer in the window," he said wearily. "The sun shouldn't strike it at all but it does in the morning."

"Oh, but it's so pretty, Mr. Pendleton! And does just the sun do that? My! if it was mine I'd have it hang in the sun all day long!"

"Lots of good you'd get out of the thermometer, then," laughed the man. "How do you suppose you could tell how hot it was, or how cold it was, if the thermometer hung in the sun all day?"

"I shouldn't care," breathed Pollyanna, her fascinated eyes on the brilliant band of colors across the pillow. "Just as if anybody'd care when they were living all the time in a rainbow!"

The man laughed. He was watching Pollyanna's rapt face a little curiously. Suddenly a new thought came to him. He touched the bell at his side.

"Nora," he said, when the elderly maid appeared at the door, "bring me one of the big brass candlesticks from the mantel in the front drawing room."

"Yes, sir," murmured the woman, looking slightly dazed. In a minute she had returned. A musical tinkling entered the room with her as she advanced wonderingly toward the bed.

It came from the prism pendants encircling the old-fashioned candelabrum in her hand.

"Thank you. You may set it here on the stand," directed the man. "Now get a string and fasten it to the sash-curtain fixtures of that window there. Take down the sash-curtain, and let the string reach straight across the window from side to side. That will be all. Thank you," he said, when she had carried out his directions.

As she left the room he turned smiling eyes toward the wondering Pollyanna.

"Bring me the candlestick now, please, Pollyanna."

With both hands she brought it; and in a moment he was slipping off the pendants, one by one, until they lay, a round dozen of them, side by side, on the bed.

"Now, my dear, suppose you take them and hook them to that little string Nora fixed across the window. If you really WANT to live in a rainbow—I don't see but we'll have to have a rainbow for you to live in!"

Pollyanna had not hung up three of the pendants in the sunlit window before she saw a little of what was going to happen. She was so excited then she could scarcely control her shaking fingers enough to hang up the rest. But at last her task was finished, and she stepped back with a low cry of delight.

It had become a fairyland—that sumptuous, but dreary bedroom. Everywhere were bits of dancing red and green, violet and orange, gold and blue. The wall, the floor, and the furniture, even to the bed itself, were aflame with shimmering bits of color.

"Oh, oh, oh, how lovely!" breathed Pollyanna; then she laughed suddenly. "I just reckon the sun himself is trying to play the game now, don't you?" she cried, forgetting for the moment that Mr. Pendleton could not know what she was talking about. "Oh, how I wish I had a lot of those things! How I would like to give them to Aunt Polly and Mrs. Snow

and—lots of folks. I reckon THEN they'd be glad all right! Why, I think even Aunt Polly'd get so glad she couldn't help banging doors if she lived in a rainbow like that. Don't you?"

Mr. Pendleton laughed.

"Well, from my remembrance of your aunt, Miss Pollyanna, I must say I think it would take something more than a few prisms in the sunlight to—to make her bang many doors—for gladness. But come, now, really, what do you mean?"

Pollyanna stared slightly; then she drew a long breath.

"Oh, I forgot. You don't know about the game. I remember now."

"Suppose you tell me, then."

And this time Pollyanna told him. She told him the whole thing from the very first—from the crutches that should have been a doll. As she talked, she did not look at his face. Her rapt eyes were still on the dancing flecks of color from the prism pendants swaying in the sunlit window.

"And that's all," she sighed, when she had finished. "And now you know why I said the sun was trying to play it—that game."

For a moment there was silence. Then a low voice from the bed said unsteadily:

"Perhaps; but I'm thinking that the very finest prism of them all is yourself, Pollyanna."

"Oh, but I don't show beautiful red and green and purple when the sun shines through me, Mr. Pendleton!"

"Don't you?" smiled the man. And Pollyanna, looking into his face, wondered why there were tears in his eyes.

"No," she said. Then, after a minute she added mournfully: "I'm afraid, Mr. Pendleton, the sun doesn't make anything but freckles out of me. Aunt Polly says it DOES make them!"

The man laughed a little; and again Pollyanna looked at him: the laugh had sounded almost like a sob.

CHAPTER XIX
Which Is Somewhat Surprising

Pollyanna entered school in September. Preliminary examinations showed that she was well advanced for a girl of her years, and she was soon a happy member of a class of girls and boys her own age.

School, in some ways, was a surprise to Pollyanna; and Pollyanna, certainly, in many ways, was very much of a surprise to school. They were soon on the best of terms, however, and to her aunt Pollyanna confessed that going to school WAS living, after all—though she had had her doubts before.

In spite of her delight in her new work, Pollyanna did not forget her old friends. True, she could not give them quite so much time now, of course; but she gave them what time she could. Perhaps John Pendleton, of them all, however, was the most dissatisfied.

One Saturday afternoon he spoke to her about it.

"See here, Pollyanna, how would you like to come and live with me?" he asked, a little impatiently. "I don't see anything of you, nowadays."

Pollyanna laughed—Mr. Pendleton was such a funny man!

"I thought you didn't like to have folks 'round," she said.

He made a wry face.

"Oh, but that was before you taught me to play that wonderful game of yours. Now I'm glad to be waited on, hand and foot! Never mind, I'll be on my own two feet yet, one of these days; then I'll see who steps around," he finished, picking up one of the crutches at his side and shaking it playfully at the little girl. They were sitting in the great library

today.

"Oh, but you aren't really glad at all for things; you just SAY you are," pouted Pollyanna, her eyes on the dog, dozing before the fire. "You know you don't play the game right EVER, Mr. Pendleton—you know you don't!"

The man's face grew suddenly very grave.

"That's why I want you, little girl—to help me play it. Will you come?"

Pollyanna turned in surprise.

"Mr. Pendleton, you don't really mean—that?"

"But I do. I want you. Will you come?"

Pollyanna looked distressed.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, I can't—you know I can't. Why, I'm—Aunt Polly's!"

A quick something crossed the man's face that Pollyanna could not quite understand. His head came up almost fiercely.

"You're no more hers than—Perhaps she would let you come to me," he finished more gently. "Would you come—if she did?"

Pollyanna frowned in deep thought.

"But Aunt Polly has been so—good to me," she began slowly; "and she took me when I didn't have anybody left but the Ladies' Aid, and—"

Again that spasm of something crossed the man's face; but this time, when he spoke, his voice was low and very sad.

"Pollyanna, long years ago I loved somebody very much. I hoped to bring her, someday, to this house. I pictured how happy we'd be together in our home all the long years to come."

"Yes," pitied Pollyanna, her eyes shining with sympathy.

"But—well, I didn't bring her here. Never mind why. I just didn't that's all. And ever since then this great gray pile of stone has been a house—never a home. It takes a woman's hand and heart, or a child's presence, to make a home, Pollyanna; and I have not had either. Now will you come, my

dear?"

Pollyanna sprang to her feet. Her face was fairly illumined.

"Mr. Pendleton, you—you mean that you wish you—you had had that woman's hand and heart all this time?"

"Why, y-yes, Pollyanna."

"Oh, I'm so glad! Then it's all right," sighed the little girl. "Now you can take us both, and everything will be lovely."

"Take—you—both?" repeated the man, dazedly.

A faint doubt crossed Pollyanna's countenance.

"Well, of course, Aunt Polly isn't won over, yet; but I'm sure she will be if you tell it to her just as you did to me, and then we'd both come, of course."

A look of actual terror leaped to the man's eyes.

"Aunt Polly come—HERE!"

Pollyanna's eyes widened a little.

"Would you rather go THERE?" she asked. "Of course the house isn't quite so pretty, but it's nearer—"

"Pollyanna, what ARE you talking about?" asked the man, very gently now.

"Why, about where we're going to live, of course," rejoined Pollyanna, in obvious surprise. "I THOUGHT you meant here, at first. You said it was here that you had wanted Aunt Polly's hand and heart all these years to make a home, and—"

An inarticulate cry came from the man's throat. He raised his hand and began to speak; but the next moment he dropped his hand nervelessly at his side.

"The doctor, sir," said the maid in the doorway.

Pollyanna rose at once.

John Pendleton turned to her feverishly.

"Pollyanna, for Heaven's sake, say nothing of what I asked you—yet," he begged, in a low voice. Pollyanna dimpled into a sunny smile.

"Of course not! Just as if I didn't know you'd rather tell her yourself!" she called back merrily over her shoulder.

John Pendleton fell limply back in his chair.

"Why, what's up?" demanded the doctor, a minute later, his fingers on his patient's galloping pulse.

A whimsical smile trembled on John Pendleton's lips.

"Overdose of your—tonic, I guess," he laughed, as he noted the doctor's eyes following Pollyanna's little figure down the driveway.

CHAPTER XX
Which Is More Surprising

Sunday mornings Pollyanna usually attended church and Sunday school. Sunday afternoons she frequently went for a walk with Nancy. She had planned one for the day after her Saturday afternoon visit to Mr. John Pendleton; but on the way home from Sunday school Dr. Chilton overtook her in his gig, and brought his horse to a stop.

"Suppose you let me drive you home, Pollyanna," he suggested. "I want to speak to you a minute. I, was just driving out to your place to tell you," he went on, as Pollyanna settled herself at his side. "Mr. Pendleton sent a special request for you to go to see him this afternoon, SURE. He says it's very important."

Pollyanna nodded happily.

"Yes, it is, I know. I'll go."

The doctor eyed her with some surprise.

"I'm not sure I shall let you, after all," he declared, his eyes twinkling. "You seemed more upsetting than soothing yesterday, young lady."

Pollyanna laughed.

"Oh, it wasn't me, truly—not really, you know; not so much as it was Aunt Polly."

The doctor turned with a quick start.

"Your—aunt!" he ejaculated.

Pollyanna gave a happy little bounce in her seat.

"Yes. And it's so exciting and lovely, just like a story, you know. I—I'm going to tell you," she burst out, with sudden decision. "He said not to mention it; but he wouldn't mind your knowing, of course. He meant not to mention it to

HER."

"HER?"

"Yes; Aunt Polly. And, of course he WOULD want to tell her himself instead of having me do it—lovers, so!"

"Lovers!" As the doctor said the word, the horse started violently, as if the hand that held the reins had given them a sharp jerk.

"Yes," nodded Pollyanna, happily. "That's the story-part, you see. I didn't know it till Nancy told me. She said Aunt Polly had a lover years ago, and they quarreled. She didn't know who it was at first. But we've found out now. It's Mr. Pendleton, you know."

The doctor relaxed suddenly, the hand holding the reins fell limply to his lap.

"Oh! No; I—didn't know," he said quietly.

Pollyanna hurried on—they were nearing the Harrington homestead.

"Yes; and I'm so glad now. It's come out lovely. Mr. Pendleton asked me to come and live with him, but of course I wouldn't leave Aunt Polly like that—after she'd been so good to me. Then he told me all about the woman's hand and heart that he used to want, and I found out that he wanted it now; and I was so glad! For of course if he wants to make up the quarrel, everything will be all right now, and Aunt Polly and I will both go to live there, or else he'll come to live with us. Of course Aunt Polly doesn't know yet, and we haven't got everything settled; so I suppose that is why he wanted to see me this afternoon, sure."

The doctor sat suddenly erect. There was an odd smile on his lips.

"Yes; I can well imagine that Mr. John Pendleton does—want to see you, Pollyanna," he nodded, as he pulled his horse to a stop before the door.

"There's Aunt Polly now in the window," cried Pollyanna; then, a second later: "Why, no, she isn't—but I thought I saw

her!"

"No; she isn't there—now," said the doctor, His lips had suddenly lost their smile.

Pollyanna found a very nervous John Pendleton waiting for her that afternoon.

"Pollyanna," he began at once. "I've been trying all night to puzzle out what you meant by all that, yesterday—about my wanting your Aunt Polly's hand and heart here all those years. What did you mean?"

"Why, because you were lovers, you know once; and I was so glad you still felt that way now."

"Lovers!—your Aunt Polly and I?"

At the obvious surprise in the man's voice, Pollyanna opened wide her eyes.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, Nancy said you were!"

The man gave a short little laugh.

"Indeed! Well, I'm afraid I shall have to say that Nancy—didn't know."

"Then you—weren't lovers?" Pollyanna's voice was tragic with dismay.

"Never!"

"And it ISN'T all coming out like a book?"

There was no answer. The man's eyes were moodily fixed out the window.

"O dear! And it was all going so splendidly," almost sobbed Pollyanna. "I'd have been so glad to come—with Aunt Polly."

"And you won't—now?" The man asked the question without turning his head.

"Of course not! I'm Aunt Polly's."

The man turned now, almost fiercely.

"Before you were hers, Pollyanna, you were—your mother's. And—it was your mother's hand and heart that I wanted long years ago."

"My mother's!"

"Yes. I had not meant to tell you, but perhaps it's better, after all, that I do—now." John Pendleton's face had grown very white. He was speaking with evident difficulty. Pollyanna, her eyes wide and frightened, and her lips parted, was gazing at him fixedly. "I loved your mother; but she—didn't love me. And after a time she went away with—your father. I did not know until then how much I did—care. The whole world suddenly seemed to turn black under my fingers, and—But, never mind. For long years I have been a cross, crabbed, unlovable, unloved old man—though I'm not nearly sixty, yet, Pollyanna. Then, one day, like one of the prisms that you love so well, little girl, you danced into my life, and flecked my dreary old world with dashes of the purple and gold and scarlet of your own bright cheeriness. I found out, after a time, who you were, and—and I thought then I never wanted to see you again. I didn't want to be reminded of—your mother. But—you know how that came out. I just had to have you come. And now I want you always. Pollyanna, won't you come NOW?"

"But, Mr. Pendleton, I—there's Aunt Polly!" Pollyanna's eyes were blurred with tears.

The man made an impatient gesture.

"What about me? How do you suppose I'm going to be 'glad' about anything—without you? Why, Pollyanna, it's only since you came that I've been even half glad to live! But if I had you for my own little girl, I'd be glad for—anything; and I'd try to make you glad, too, my dear. You shouldn't have a wish ungratified. All my money, to the last cent, should go to make you happy."

Pollyanna looked shocked.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, as if I'd let you spend it on me—all that money you've saved for the heathen!"

A dull red came to the man's face. He started to speak, but Pollyanna was still talking.

"Besides, anybody with such a lot of money as you have

doesn't need me to make you glad about things. You're making other folks so glad giving them things that you just can't help being glad yourself! Why, look at those prisms you gave Mrs. Snow and me, and the gold piece you gave Nancy on her birthday, and—"

"Yes, yes—never mind about all that," interrupted the man. His face was very, very red now—and no wonder, perhaps: it was not for "giving things" that John Pendleton had been best known in the past. "That's all nonsense. 'Twasn't much, anyhow—but what there was, was because of you. YOU gave those things; not I! Yes, you did," he repeated, in answer to the shocked denial in her face. "And that only goes to prove all the more how I need you, little girl," he added, his voice softening into tender pleading once more. "If ever, ever I am to play the 'glad game,' Pollyanna, you'll have to come and play it with me."

The little girl's forehead puckered into a wistful frown.

"Aunt Polly has been so good to me," she began; but the man interrupted her sharply. The old irritability had come back to his face. Impatience which would brook no opposition had been a part of John Pendleton's nature too long to yield very easily now to restraint.

"Of course she's been good to you! But she doesn't want you, I'll warrant, half so much as I do," he contested.

"Why, Mr. Pendleton, she's glad, I know, to have—"

"Glad!" interrupted the man, thoroughly losing his patience now. "I'll wager Miss Polly doesn't know how to be glad—for anything! Oh, she does her duty, I know. She's a very DUTIFUL woman. I've had experience with her 'duty,' before. I'll acknowledge we haven't been the best of friends for the last fifteen or twenty years. But I know her. Everyone knows her—and she isn't the 'glad' kind, Pollyanna. She doesn't know how to be. As for your coming to me—you just ask her and see if she won't let you come. And, oh, little girl, little girl, I want you so!" he finished brokenly.

Pollyanna rose to her feet with a long sigh.

"All right. I'll ask her," she said wistfully. "Of course I don't mean that I wouldn't like to live here with you, Mr. Pendleton, but—" She did not complete her sentence. There was a moment's silence, then she added: "Well, anyhow, I'm glad I didn't tell her yesterday;—'cause then I supposed SHE was wanted, too."

John Pendleton smiled grimly.

"Well, yes, Pollyanna; I guess it is just as well you didn't mention it—yesterday."

"I didn't—only to the doctor; and of course he doesn't count."

"The doctor!" cried John Pendleton, turning quickly. "Not—Dr.—Chilton?"

"Yes; when he came to tell me you wanted to see me today, you know."

"Well, of all the—" muttered the man, falling back in his chair. Then he sat up with sudden interest. "And what did Dr. Chilton say?" he asked.

Pollyanna frowned thoughtfully.

"Why, I don't remember. Not much, I reckon. Oh, he did say he could well imagine you did want to see me."

"Oh, did he, indeed!" answered John Pendleton. And Pollyanna wondered why he gave that sudden queer little laugh.

CHAPTER XXI
A Question Answered

The sky was darkening fast with what appeared to be an approaching thunder shower when Pollyanna hurried down the hill from John Pendleton's house. Halfway home she met Nancy with an umbrella. By that time, however, the clouds had shifted their position and the shower was not so imminent.

"Guess it's goin' 'round ter the north," announced Nancy, eyeing the sky critically. "I thought 'twas, all the time, but Miss Polly wanted me ter come with this. She was WORRIED about ye!"

"Was she?" murmured Pollyanna abstractedly, eyeing the clouds in her turn.

Nancy sniffed a little.

"You don't seem ter notice what I said," she observed aggrievedly. "I said yer aunt was WORRIED about ye!"

"Oh," sighed Pollyanna, remembering suddenly the question she was so soon to ask her aunt. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare her."

"Well, I'm glad," retorted Nancy, unexpectedly. "I am, I am."

Pollyanna stared.

"GLAD that Aunt Polly was scared about me! Why, Nancy, THAT isn't the way to play the game—to be glad for things like that!" she objected.

"There wa'n't no game in it," retorted Nancy. "Never thought of it. YOU don't seem ter sense what it means ter have Miss Polly WORRIED about ye, child!"

"Why, it means worried—and worried is horrid—to feel,"

maintained Pollyanna. "What else can it mean?"

Nancy tossed her head.

"Well, I'll tell ye what it means. It means she's at last gettin' down somewheres near human—like folks; an' that she ain't jest doin' her duty by ye all the time."

"Why, Nancy," demurred the scandalized Pollyanna, "Aunt Polly always does her duty. She—she's a very dutiful woman!" Unconsciously Pollyanna repeated John Pendleton's words of half an hour before.

Nancy chuckled.

"You're right she is—and she always was, I guess! But she's somethin' more, now, since you came."

Pollyanna's face changed. Her brows drew into a troubled frown.

"There, that's what I was going to ask you, Nancy," she sighed. "Do you think Aunt Polly likes to have me here? Would she mind—if if I wasn't here anymore?"

Nancy threw a quick look into the little girl's absorbed face. She had expected to be asked this question long before, and she had dreaded it. She had wondered how she should answer it—how she could answer it honestly without cruelly hurting the questioner. But now, NOW, in the face of the new suspicions that had become convictions by the afternoon's umbrella-sending—Nancy only welcomed the question with open arms. She was sure that, with a clean conscience today, she could set the love-hungry little girl's heart at rest.

"Likes ter have ye here? Would she miss ye if ye wa'n't here?" cried Nancy, indignantly. "As if that wa'n't jest what I was tellin' of ye! Didn't she send me posthaste with an umbrella 'cause she see a little cloud in the sky? Didn't she make me tote yer things all downstairs, so you could have the pretty room you wanted? Why, Miss Pollyanna, when ye remember how at first she hated ter have—"

With a choking cough Nancy pulled herself up just in

time.

"And it ain't jest things I can put my fingers on, neither," rushed on Nancy, breathlessly. "It's little ways she has, that shows how you've been softenin' her up an' mellerin' her down—the cat, and the dog, and the way she speaks ter me, and oh, lots o' things. Why, Miss Pollyanna, there ain't no tellin' how she'd miss ye—if ye wa'n't here," finished Nancy, speaking with an enthusiastic certainty that was meant to hide the perilous admission she had almost made before. Even then she was not quite prepared for the sudden joy that illumined Pollyanna's face.

"Oh, Nancy, I'm so glad—glad—glad! You don't know how glad I am that Aunt Polly—wants me!"

"As if I'd leave her now!" thought Pollyanna, as she climbed the stairs to her room a little later. "I always knew I wanted to live with Aunt Polly—but I reckon maybe I didn't know quite how much I wanted Aunt Polly—to want to live with ME!"

The task of telling John Pendleton of her decision would not be an easy one, Pollyanna knew, and she dreaded it. She was very fond of John Pendleton, and she was very sorry for him—because he seemed to be so sorry for himself. She was sorry, too, for the long, lonely life that had made him so unhappy; and she was grieved that it had been because of her mother that he had spent those dreary years. She pictured the great gray house as it would be after its master was well again, with its silent rooms, its littered floors, its disordered desk; and her heart ached for his loneliness. She wished that somewhere, someone might be found who—And it was at this point that she sprang to her feet with a little cry of joy at the thought that had come to her.

As soon as she could, after that, she hurried up the hill to John Pendleton's house; and in due time she found herself in the great dim library, with John Pendleton himself sitting near her, his long, thin hands lying idle on the arms of his chair,

and his faithful little dog at his feet.

"Well, Pollyanna, is it to be the 'glad game' with me, all the rest of my life?" asked the man, gently.

"Oh, yes," cried Pollyanna. "I've thought of the very gladdest kind of a thing for you to do, and—"

"With—YOU?" asked John Pendleton, his mouth growing a little stern at the corners.

"N-no; but—"

"Pollyanna, you aren't going to say no!" interrupted a voice deep with emotion.

"I—I've got to, Mr. Pendleton; truly I have. Aunt Polly —"

"Did she REFUSE—to let you—come?"

"I—I didn't ask her," stammered the little girl, miserably.

"Pollyanna!"

Pollyanna turned away her eyes. She could not meet the hurt, grieved gaze of her friend.

"So you didn't even ask her!"

"I couldn't, sir—truly," faltered Pollyanna. "You see, I found out—without asking. Aunt Polly WANTS me with her, and—and I want to stay, too," she confessed bravely. "You don't know how good she's been to me; and—and I think, really, sometimes she's beginning to be glad about things—lots of things. And you know she never used to be. You said it yourself. Oh, Mr. Pendleton, I COULDN'T leave Aunt Polly—now!"

There was a long pause. Only the snapping of the wood fire in the grate broke the silence. At last, however, the man spoke.

"No, Pollyanna; I see. You couldn't leave her—now," he said. "I won't ask you—again." The last word was so low it was almost inaudible; but Pollyanna heard.

"Oh, but you don't know about the rest of it," she reminded him eagerly. "There's the very gladdest thing you CAN do—truly there is!"

"Not for me, Pollyanna."

"Yes, sir, for you. You SAID it. You said only a—a woman's hand and heart or a child's presence could make a home. And I can get it for you—a child's presence;—not me, you know, but another one."

"As if I would have any but you!" resented an indignant voice.

"But you will—when you know; you're so kind and good! Why, think of the prisms and the gold pieces, and all that money you save for the heathen, and—"

"Pollyanna!" interrupted the man, savagely. "Once for all let us end that nonsense! I've tried to tell you half a dozen times before. There is no money for the heathen. I never sent a penny to them in my life. There!"

He lifted his chin and braced himself to meet what he expected—the grieved disappointment of Pollyanna's eyes. To his amazement, however, there was neither grief nor disappointment in Pollyanna's eyes. There was only surprised joy.

"Oh, oh!" she cried, clapping her hands. "I'm so glad! That is," she corrected, coloring distressfully, "I don't mean that I'm not sorry for the heathen, only just now I can't help being glad that you don't want the little India boys, because all the rest have wanted them. And so I'm glad you'd rather have Jimmy Bean. Now I know you'll take him!"

"Take—WHO?"

"Jimmy Bean. He's the 'child's presence,' you know; and he'll be so glad to be it. I had to tell him last week that even my Ladies' Aid out west wouldn't take him, and he was so disappointed. But now—when he hears of this—he'll be so glad!"

"Will he? Well, I won't," ejaculated the man, decisively. "Pollyanna, this is sheer nonsense!"

"You don't mean—you won't take him?"

"I certainly do mean just that."

"But he'd be a lovely child's presence," faltered Pollyanna. She was almost crying now. "And you COULDN'T be lonesome—with Jimmy 'round."

"I don't doubt it," rejoined the man; "but—I think I prefer the lonesomeness."

It was then that Pollyanna, for the first time in weeks, suddenly remembered something Nancy had once told her. She raised her chin aggrievedly.

"Maybe you think a nice live little boy wouldn't be better than that old dead skeleton you keep somewhere; but I think it would!"

"SKELETON?"

"Yes. Nancy said you had one in your closet, somewhere."

"Why, what—" Suddenly the man threw back his head and laughed. He laughed very heartily indeed—so heartily that Pollyanna began to cry from pure nervousness. When he saw that, John Pendleton sat erect very promptly. His face grew grave at once.

"Pollyanna, I suspect you are right—more right than you know," he said gently. "In fact, I KNOW that a 'nice live little boy' would be far better than—my skeleton in the closet; only—we aren't always willing to make the exchange. We are apt to still cling to—our skeletons, Pollyanna. However, suppose you tell me a little more about this nice little boy." And Pollyanna told him.

Perhaps the laugh cleared the air; or perhaps the pathos of Jimmy Bean's story as told by Pollyanna's eager little lips touched a heart already strangely softened. At all events, when Pollyanna went home that night she carried with her an invitation for Jimmy Bean himself to call at the great house with Pollyanna the next Saturday afternoon.

"And I'm so glad, and I'm sure you'll like him," sighed Pollyanna, as she said goodbye. "I do so want Jimmy Bean to have a home—and folks that care, you know."

CHAPTER XXII
Sermons and Woodboxes

On the afternoon that Pollyanna told John Pendleton of Jimmy Bean, the Rev. Paul Ford climbed the hill and entered the Pendleton Woods, hoping that the hushed beauty of God's out-of-doors would still the tumult that His children of men had wrought.

The Rev. Paul Ford was sick at heart. Month by month, for a year past, conditions in the parish under him had been growing worse and worse; until it seemed that now, turn which way he would, he encountered only wrangling, backbiting, scandal, and jealousy. He had argued, pleaded, rebuked, and ignored by turns; and always and through all he had prayed—earnestly, hopefully. But today miserably he was forced to own that matters were no better, but rather worse.

Two of his deacons were at swords' points over a silly something that only endless brooding had made of any account. Three of his most energetic women workers had withdrawn from the Ladies' Aid Society because a tiny spark of gossip had been fanned by wagging tongues into a devouring flame of scandal. The choir had split over the amount of solo work given to a fanciedly preferred singer. Even the Christian Endeavor Society was in a ferment of unrest owing to open criticism of two of its officers. As to the Sunday School—it had been the resignation of its superintendent and two of its teachers that had been the last straw, and that had sent the harassed minister to the quiet woods for prayer and meditation.

Under the green arch of the trees the Rev. Paul Ford faced the thing squarely. To his mind, the crisis had come.

Something must be done—and done at once. The entire work of the church was at a standstill. The Sunday services, the weekday prayer meeting, the missionary teas, even the suppers and socials were becoming less and less well attended. True, a few conscientious workers were still left. But they pulled at cross purposes, usually; and always they showed themselves to be acutely aware of the critical eyes all about them, and of the tongues that had nothing to do but to talk about what the eyes saw.

And because of all this, the Rev. Paul Ford understood very well that he (God's minister), the church, the town, and even Christianity itself was suffering; and must suffer still more unless—

Clearly something must be done, and done at once. But what?

Slowly the minister took from his pocket the notes he had made for his next Sunday's sermon. Frowningly he looked at them. His mouth settled into stern lines, as aloud, very impressively, he read the verses on which he had determined to speak:

"'But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.'

"'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.'

"'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'"

It was a bitter denunciation. In the green aisles of the woods, the minister's deep voice rang out with scathing effect. Even the birds and squirrels seemed hushed into awed silence.

It brought to the minister a vivid realization of how those words would sound the next Sunday when he should utter them before his people in the sacred hush of the church.

His people!—they WERE his people. Could he do it? Dare he do it? Dare he not do it? It was a fearful denunciation, even without the words that would follow—his own words. He had prayed and prayed. He had pleaded earnestly for help, for guidance. He longed—oh, how earnestly he longed!—to take now, in this crisis, the right step. But was this—the right step?

Slowly the minister folded the papers and thrust them back into his pocket. Then, with a sigh that was almost a moan, he flung himself down at the foot of a tree, and covered his face with his hands.

It was there that Pollyanna, on her way home from the Pendleton house, found him. With a little cry she ran forward.

"Oh, oh, Mr. Ford! You—YOU haven't broken YOUR leg or—or anything, have you?" she gasped.

The minister dropped his hands, and looked up quickly. He tried to smile.

"No, dear—no, indeed! I'm just—resting."

"Oh," sighed Pollyanna, falling back a little. "That's all right, then. You see, Mr. Pendleton HAD broken his leg when I found him—but he was lying down, though. And you are sitting up."

"Yes, I am sitting up; and I haven't broken anything—that doctors can mend."

The last words were very low, but Pollyanna heard them. A swift change crossed her face. Her eyes glowed with tender sympathy.

"I know what you mean—something plagues you. Father used to feel like that, lots of times. I reckon ministers do—most generally. You see there's such a lot depends on 'em, somehow."

The Rev. Paul Ford turned a little wonderingly.

"Was YOUR father a minister, Pollyanna?"

"Yes, sir. Didn't you know? I supposed everybody knew that. He married Aunt Polly's sister, and she was my mother."

"Oh, I understand. But, you see, I haven't been here many years, so I don't know all the family histories."

"Yes, sir—I mean, no, sir," smiled Pollyanna.

There was a long pause. The minister, still sitting at the foot of the tree, appeared to have forgotten Pollyanna's presence. He had pulled some papers from his pocket and unfolded them; but he was not looking at them. He was gazing, instead, at a leaf on the ground a little distance away—and it was not even a pretty leaf. It was brown and dead. Pollyanna, looking at him, felt vaguely sorry for him.

"It—it's a nice day," she began hopefully.

For a moment there was no answer; then the minister looked up with a start.

"What? Oh!—yes, it is a very nice day."

"And 'tisn't cold at all, either, even if 'tis October," observed Pollyanna, still more hopefully. "Mr. Pendleton had a fire, but he said he didn't need it. It was just to look at. I like to look at fires, don't you?"

There was no reply this time, though Pollyanna waited patiently, before she tried again—by a new route.

"Do You like being a minister?"

The Rev. Paul Ford looked up now, very quickly.

"Do I like—Why, what an odd question! Why do you ask that, my dear?"

"Nothing—only the way you looked. It made me think of my father. He used to look like that—sometimes."

"Did he?" The minister's voice was polite, but his eyes had gone back to the dried leaf on the ground.

"Yes, and I used to ask him just as I did you if he was glad he was a minister."

The man under the tree smiled a little sadly.

"Well—what did he say?"

"Oh, he always said he was, of course, but 'most always he said, too, that he wouldn't STAY a minister a minute if 'twasn't for the rejoicing texts."

"The—WHAT?" The Rev. Paul Ford's eyes left the leaf and gazed wonderingly into Pollyanna's merry little face.

"Well, that's what father used to call 'em," she laughed. "Of course the Bible didn't name 'em that. But it's all those that begin 'Be glad in the Lord,' or 'Rejoice greatly,' or 'Shout for joy,' and all that, you know—such a lot of 'em. Once, when father felt specially bad, he counted 'em. There were eight hundred of 'em."

"Eight hundred!"

"Yes—that told you to rejoice and be glad, you know; that's why father named 'em the 'rejoicing texts.'"

"Oh!" There was an odd look on the minister's face. His eyes had fallen to the words on the top paper in his hands—"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "And so your father—liked those 'rejoicing texts,'" he murmured.

"Oh, yes," nodded Pollyanna, emphatically. "He said he felt better right away, that first day he thought to count 'em. He said if God took the trouble to tell us eight hundred times to be glad and rejoice, He must want us to do it—SOME. And father felt ashamed that he hadn't done it more. After that, they got to be such a comfort to him, you know, when things went wrong; when the Ladies' Aiders got to fight—I mean, when they DIDN'T AGREE about something," corrected Pollyanna, hastily. "Why, it was those texts, too, father said, that made HIM think of the game—he began with ME on the crutches—but he said 'twas the rejoicing texts that started him on it."

"And what game might that be?" asked the minister.

"About finding something in everything to be glad about, you know. As I said, he began with me on the crutches." And once more Pollyanna told her story—this time to a man who listened with tender eyes and understanding ears.

A little later Pollyanna and the minister descended the hill, hand in hand. Pollyanna's face was radiant. Pollyanna loved to talk, and she had been talking now for some time: there seemed to be so many, many things about the game, her father, and the old home life that the minister wanted to know.

At the foot of the hill their ways parted, and Pollyanna down one road, and the minister down another, walked on alone.

In the Rev. Paul Ford's study that evening the minister sat thinking. Near him on the desk lay a few loose sheets of paper—his sermon notes. Under the suspended pencil in his fingers lay other sheets of paper, blank—his sermon to be. But the minister was not thinking either of what he had written, or of what he intended to write. In his imagination he was far away in a little western town with a missionary minister who was poor, sick, worried, and almost alone in the world—but who was poring over the Bible to find how many times his Lord and Master had told him to "rejoice and be glad."

After a time, with a long sigh, the Rev. Paul Ford roused himself, came back from the far Western town, and adjusted the sheets of paper under his hand.

"Matthew twenty-third; 13-14 and 23," he wrote; then, with a gesture of impatience, he dropped his pencil and pulled toward him a magazine left on the desk by his wife a few minutes before. Listlessly his tired eyes turned from paragraph to paragraph until these words arrested them:

"A father one day said to his son, Tom, who, he knew, had refused to fill his mother's woodbox that morning: 'Tom, I'm sure you'll be glad to go and bring in some wood for your mother.' And without a word Tom went. Why? Just because his father showed so plainly that he expected him to do the right thing. Suppose he had said: 'Tom, I overheard what you said to your mother this morning, and I'm ashamed of you. Go at once and fill that woodbox!' I'll warrant that woodbox,

would be empty yet, so far as Tom was concerned!"

On and on read the minister—a word here, a line there, a paragraph somewhere else:

"What men and women need is encouragement. Their natural resisting powers should be strengthened, not weakened.... Instead of always harping on a man's faults, tell him of his virtues. Try to pull him out of his rut of bad habits. Hold up to him his better self, his REAL self that can dare and do and win out!... The influence of a beautiful, helpful, hopeful character is contagious, and may revolutionize a whole town.... People radiate what is in their minds and in their hearts. If a man feels kindly and obliging, his neighbors will feel that way, too, before long. But if he scolds and scowls and criticizes—his neighbors will return scowl for scowl, and add interest!... When you look for the bad, expecting it, you will get it. When you know you will find the good—you will get that.... Tell your son Tom you KNOW he'll be glad to fill that woodbox—then watch him start, alert and interested!"

The minister dropped the paper and lifted his chin. In a moment he was on his feet, tramping the narrow room back and forth, back and forth. Later, sometime later, he drew a long breath, and dropped himself in the chair at his desk.

"God helping me, I'll do it!" he cried softly. "I'll tell all my Toms I KNOW they'll be glad to fill that woodbox! I'll give them work to do, and I'll make them so full of the very joy of doing it that they won't have TIME to look at their neighbors' woodboxes!" And he picked up his sermon notes, tore straight through the sheets, and cast them from him, so that on one side of his chair lay "But woe unto you," and on the other, "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" while across the smooth white paper before him his pencil fairly flew—after first drawing one black line through Matthew twenty-third; 13-14 and 23.

Thus it happened that the Rev. Paul Ford's sermon the next Sunday was a veritable bugle-call to the best that was in

every man and woman and child that heard it; and its text was one of Pollyanna's shining eight hundred:

"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart."

CHAPTER XXIII
An Accident

At Mrs. Snow's request, Pollyanna went one day to Dr. Chilton's office to get the name of a medicine which Mrs. Snow had forgotten. As it chanced, Pollyanna had never before seen the inside of Dr. Chilton's office.

"I've never been to your home before! This IS your home, isn't it?" she said, looking interestedly about her.

The doctor smiled a little sadly.

"Yes—such as 'tis," he answered, as he wrote something on the pad of paper in his hand; "but it's a pretty poor apology for a home, Pollyanna. They're just rooms, that's all—not a home."

Pollyanna nodded her head wisely. Her eyes glowed with sympathetic understanding.

"I know. It takes a woman's hand and heart, or a child's presence to make a home," she said.

"Eh?" The doctor wheeled about abruptly.

"Mr. Pendleton told me," nodded Pollyanna, again; "about the woman's hand and heart, or the child's presence, you know. Why don't you get a woman's hand and heart, Dr. Chilton? Or maybe you'd take Jimmy Bean—if Mr. Pendleton doesn't want him."

Dr. Chilton laughed a little constrainedly.

"So Mr. Pendleton says it takes a woman's hand and heart to make a home, does he?" he asked evasively.

"Yes. He says his is just a house, too. Why don't you, Dr. Chilton?"

"Why don't I—what?" The doctor had turned back to his desk.

"Get a woman's hand and heart. Oh—and I forgot." Pollyanna's face showed suddenly a painful color. "I suppose I ought to tell you. It wasn't Aunt Polly that Mr. Pendleton loved long ago; and so we—we aren't going there to live. You see, I told you it was—but I made a mistake. I hope YOU didn't tell anyone," she finished anxiously.

"No—I didn't tell anyone, Pollyanna," replied the doctor, a little queerly.

"Oh, that's all right, then," sighed Pollyanna in relief. "You see you're the only one I told, and I thought Mr. Pendleton looked sort of funny when I said I'd told YOU."

"Did he?" The doctor's lips twitched.

"Yes. And of course he wouldn't want many people to know it—when 'twasn't true. But why don't you get a woman's hand and heart, Dr. Chilton?"

There was a moment's silence; then very gravely the doctor said:

"They're not always to be had—for the asking, little girl."

Pollyanna frowned thoughtfully.

"But I should think you could get 'em," she argued. The flattering emphasis was unmistakable.

"Thank you," laughed the doctor, with uplifted eyebrows. Then, gravely again: "I'm afraid some of your older sisters would not be quite so—confident. At least, they—they haven't shown themselves to be so—obliging," he observed.

Pollyanna frowned again. Then her eyes widened in surprise.

"Why, Dr. Chilton, you don't mean—you didn't try to get somebody's hand and heart once, like Mr. Pendleton, and—and couldn't, did you?"

The doctor got to his feet a little abruptly.

"There, there, Pollyanna, never mind about that now. Don't let other people's troubles worry your little head. Suppose you run back now to Mrs. Snow. I've written down the name of the medicine, and the directions how she is to take

it. Was there anything else?"

Pollyanna shook her head.

"No, Sir; thank you, Sir," she murmured soberly, as she turned toward the door. From the little hallway she called back, her face suddenly alight: "Anyhow, I'm glad 'twasn't my mother's hand and heart that you wanted and couldn't get, Dr. Chilton. Goodbye!"

It was on the last day of October that the accident occurred. Pollyanna, hurrying home from school, crossed the road at an apparently safe distance in front of a swiftly approaching motor car.

Just what happened, no one could seem to tell afterward. Neither was there anyone found who could tell why it happened or who was to blame that it did happen. Pollyanna, however, at five o'clock, was borne, limp and unconscious, into the little room that was so dear to her. There, by a white-faced Aunt Polly and a weeping Nancy she was undressed tenderly and put to bed, while from the village, hastily summoned by telephone, Dr. Warren was hurrying as fast as another motor car could bring him.

"And ye didn't need ter more'n look at her aunt's face," Nancy was sobbing to Old Tom in the garden, after the doctor had arrived and was closeted in the hushed room; "ye didn't need ter more'n look at her aunt's face ter see that 'twa'n't no duty that was eatin' her. Yer hands don't shake, and yer eyes don't look as if ye was tryin' ter hold back the Angel o' Death himself, when you're jest doin' yer DUTY, Mr. Tom they don't, they don't!"

"Is she hurt—bad?" The old man's voice shook.

"There ain't no tellin'," sobbed Nancy. "She lay back that white an' still she might easy be dead; but Miss Polly said she wa'n't dead—an' Miss Polly had oughter know, if anyone would—she kept up such a listenin' an' a feelin' for her heartbeats an' her breath!"

"Couldn't ye tell anythin' what it done to her?—that—

that—" Old Tom's face worked convulsively.

Nancy's lips relaxed a little.

"I wish ye WOULD call it somethin', Mr. Tom an' somethin' good an' strong, too. Drat it! Ter think of its runnin' down our little girl! I always hated the evil-smellin' things, anyhow—I did, I did!"

"But where is she hurt?"

"I don't know, I don't know," moaned Nancy. "There's a little cut on her blessed head, but 'tain't bad—that ain't—Miss Polly says. She says she's afraid it's infernally she's hurt."

A faint flicker came into Old Tom's eyes.

"I guess you mean internally, Nancy," he said dryly. "She's hurt infernally, all right—plague take that autymobile!—but I don't guess Miss Polly'd be usin' that word, all the same."

"Eh? Well, I don't know, I don't know," moaned Nancy, with a shake of her head as she turned away. "Seems as if I jest couldn't stand it till that doctor gits out o' there. I wish I had a washin' ter do—the biggest washin' I ever see, I do, I do!" she wailed, wringing her hands helplessly.

Even after the doctor was gone, however, there seemed to be little that Nancy could tell Mr. Tom. There appeared to be no bones broken, and the cut was of slight consequence; but the doctor had looked very grave, had shaken his head slowly, and had said that time alone could tell. After he had gone, Miss Polly had shown a face even whiter and more drawn looking than before. The patient had not fully recovered consciousness, but at present she seemed to be resting as comfortably as could be expected. A trained nurse had been sent for, and would come that night. That was all. And Nancy turned sobbingly, and went back to her kitchen.

It was sometime during the next forenoon that Pollyanna opened conscious eyes and realized where she was.

"Why, Aunt Polly, what's the matter? Isn't it daytime? Why don't I get up?" she cried. "Why, Aunt Polly, I can't get up," she moaned, falling back on the pillow, after an

ineffectual attempt to lift herself.

"No, dear, I wouldn't try—just yet," soothed her aunt quickly, but very quietly.

"But what is the matter? Why can't I get up?"

Miss Polly's eyes asked an agonized question of the white-capped young woman standing in the window, out of the range of Pollyanna's eyes.

The young woman nodded.

"Tell her," the lips said.

Miss Polly cleared her throat, and tried to swallow the lump that would scarcely let her speak.

"You were hurt, dear, by the automobile last night. But never mind that now. Auntie wants you to rest and go to sleep again."

"Hurt? Oh, yes; I—I ran." Pollyanna's eyes were dazed. She lifted her hand to her forehead. "Why, it's—done up, and it—hurts!"

"Yes, dear; but never mind. Just—just rest."

"But, Aunt Polly, I feel so funny, and so bad! My legs feel so—so queer—only they don't FEEL—at all!"

With an imploring look into the nurse's face, Miss Polly struggled to her feet, and turned away. The nurse came forward quickly.

"Suppose you let me talk to you now," she began cheerily. "I'm sure I think it's high time we were getting acquainted, and I'm going to introduce myself. I am Miss Hunt, and I've come to help your aunt take care of you. And the very first thing I'm going to do is to ask you to swallow these little white pills for me."

Pollyanna's eyes grew a bit wild.

"But I don't want to be taken care of—that is, not for long! I want to get up. You know I go to school. Can't I go to school tomorrow?"

From the window where Aunt Polly stood now there came a half-stifled cry.

"Tomorrow?" smiled the nurse, brightly.

"Well, I may not let you out quite so soon as that, Miss Pollyanna. But just swallow these little pills for me, please, and we'll see what THEY'LL do."

"All right," agreed Pollyanna, somewhat doubtfully; "but I MUST go to school day after tomorrow—there are examinations then, you know."

She spoke again, a minute later. She spoke of school, and of the automobile, and of how her head ached; but very soon her voice trailed into silence under the blessed influence of the little white pills she had swallowed.

CHAPTER XXIV
John Pendleton

Pollyanna did not go to school "tomorrow," nor the "day after tomorrow." Pollyanna, however, did not realize this, except momentarily when a brief period of full consciousness sent insistent questions to her lips. Pollyanna did not realize anything, in fact, very clearly until a week had passed; then the fever subsided, the pain lessened somewhat, and her mind awoke to full consciousness. She had then to be told all over again what had occurred.

"And so it's hurt that I am, and not sick," she sighed at last. "Well, I'm glad of that."

"G-glad, Pollyanna?" asked her aunt, who was sitting by the bed.

"Yes. I'd so much rather have broken legs like Mr. Pendleton's than life-long-invalids like Mrs. Snow, you know. Broken legs get well, and lifelong-invalids don't."

Miss Polly—who had said nothing whatever about broken legs—got suddenly to her feet and walked to the little dressing table across the room. She was picking up one object after another now, and putting each down, in an aimless fashion quite unlike her usual decisiveness. Her face was not aimless-looking at all, however; it was white and drawn.

On the bed Pollyanna lay blinking at the dancing band of colors on the ceiling, which came from one of the prisms in the window.

"I'm glad it isn't smallpox that ails me, too," she murmured contentedly. "That would be worse than freckles. And I'm glad 'tisn't whooping cough—I've had that, and it's horrid—and I'm glad 'tisn't appendicitis nor measles, 'cause

they're catching—measles are, I mean—and they wouldn't let you stay here."

"You seem to—to be glad for a good many things, my dear," faltered Aunt Polly, putting her hand to her throat as if her collar bound.

Pollyanna laughed softly.

"I am. I've been thinking of 'em—lots of 'em—all the time I've been looking up at that rainbow. I love rainbows. I'm so glad Mr. Pendleton gave me those prisms! I'm glad of some things I haven't said yet. I don't know but I'm 'most glad I was hurt."

"Pollyanna!"

Pollyanna laughed softly again. She turned luminous eyes on her aunt. "Well, you see, since I have been hurt, you've called me 'dear' lots of times—and you didn't before. I love to be called 'dear'—by folks that belong to you, I mean. Some of the Ladies' Aiders did call me that; and of course that was pretty nice, but not so nice as if they had belonged to me, like you do. Oh, Aunt Polly, I'm so glad you belong to me!"

Aunt Polly did not answer. Her hand was at her throat again. Her eyes were full of tears. She had turned away and was hurrying from the room through the door by which the nurse had just entered.

It was that afternoon that Nancy ran out to Old Tom, who was cleaning harnesses in the barn. Her eyes were wild.

"Mr. Tom, Mr. Tom, guess what's happened," she panted. "You couldn't guess in a thousand years—you couldn't, you couldn't!"

"Then I cal'late I won't try," retorted the man, grimly, "specially as I hain't got more'n TEN ter live, anyhow, probably. You'd better tell me first off, Nancy."

"Well, listen, then. Who do you s'pose is in the parlor now with the mistress? Who, I say?"

Old Tom shook his head.

"There's no tellin'," he declared.

"Yes, there is. I'm tellin'. It's—John Pendleton!"

"Sho, now! You're jokin', girl."

"Not much I am—an' me a-lettin' him in myself—crutches an' all! An' the team he come in a-waitin' this minute at the door for him, jest as if he wa'n't the cranky old crosspatch he is, what never talks ter no one! jest think, Mr. Tom—HIM a-callin' on HER!"

"Well, why not?" demanded the old man, a little aggressively.

Nancy gave him a scornful glance.

"As if you didn't know better'n me!" she derided.

"Eh?"

"Oh, you needn't be so innercent," she retorted with mock indignation; "—you what led me wildgoose chasin' in the first place!"

"What do ye mean?"

Nancy glanced through the open barn door toward the house, and came a step nearer to the old man.

"Listen! 'Twas you that was tellin' me Miss Polly had a lover in the first place, wa'n't it? Well, one day I thinks I finds two and two, and I puts 'em tergether an' makes four. But it turns out ter be five—an' no four at all, at all!"

With a gesture of indifference Old Tom turned and fell to work.

"If you're goin' ter talk ter me, you've got ter talk plain horse sense," he declared testily. "I never was no hand for figgers."

Nancy laughed.

"Well, it's this," she explained. "I heard somethin' that made me think him an' Miss Polly was lovers."

"MR. PENDLETON!" Old Tom straightened up.

"Yes. Oh, I know now; he wasn't. It was that blessed child's mother he was in love with, and that's why he wanted—but never mind that part," she added hastily, remembering just in time her promise to Pollyanna not to tell that

Mr. Pendleton had wished her to come and live with him. "Well, I've been askin' folks about him some, since, and I've found out that him an' Miss Polly hain't been friends for years, an' that she's been hatin' him like pizen owin' ter the silly gossip that coupled their names tergether when she was eighteen or twenty."

"Yes, I remember," nodded Old Tom. "It was three or four years after Miss Jennie give him the mitten and went off with the other chap. Miss Polly knew about it, of course, and was sorry for him. So she tried ter be nice to him. Maybe she overdid it a little—she hated that minister chap so who had took off her sister. At any rate, somebody begun ter make trouble. They said she was runnin' after him."

"Runnin' after any man—her!" interjected Nancy.

"I know it; but they did," declared Old Tom, "and of course no gal of any spunk'll stand that. Then about that time come her own lover an' the trouble with HIM. After that she shut up like an oyster an' wouldn't have nothin' ter do with nobody fur a spell. Her heart jest seemed to turn bitter at the core."

"Yes, I know. I've heard about that now," rejoined Nancy; "an' that's why you could 'a' knocked me down with a feather when I see HIM at the door—him, what she hain't spoke to for years! But I let him in an' went an' told her."

"What did she say?" Old Tom held his breath suspended.

"Nothin'—at first. She was so still I thought she hadn't heard; and I was jest goin' ter say it over when she speaks up quiet like: 'Tell Mr. Pendleton I will be down at once.' An' I come an' told him. Then I come out here an' told you," finished Nancy, casting another backward glance toward the house.

"Humph!" grunted Old Tom; and fell to work again.

In the ceremonious "parlor" of the Harrington homestead, Mr. John Pendleton did not have to wait long before a swift step warned him of Miss Polly's coming. As he attempted

to rise, she made a gesture of remonstrance. She did not offer her hand, however, and her face was coldly reserved.

"I called to ask for—Pollyanna," he began at once, a little brusquely.

"Thank you. She is about the same," said Miss Polly.

"And that is—won't you tell me HOW she is?" His voice was not quite steady this time.

A quick spasm of pain crossed the woman's face.

"I can't, I wish I could!"

"You mean—you don't know?"

"Yes."

"But—the doctor?"

"Dr. Warren himself seems—at sea. He is in correspondence now with a New York specialist. They have arranged for a consultation at once."

"But—but what WERE her injuries that you do know?"

"A slight cut on the head, one or two bruises, and—and an injury to the spine which has seemed to cause—paralysis from the hips down."

A low cry came from the man. There was a brief silence; then, huskily, he asked:

"And Pollyanna—how does she—take it?"

"She doesn't understand—at all—how things really are. And I CAN'T tell her."

"But she must know—something!"

Miss Polly lifted her hand to the collar at her throat in the gesture that had become so common to her of late.

"Oh, yes. She knows she can't—move; but she thinks her legs are—broken. She says she's glad it's broken legs like yours rather than 'lifelong-invalids' like Mrs. Snow's; because broken legs get well, and the other—doesn't. She talks like that all the time, until it—it seems as if I should—die!"

Through the blur of tears in his own eyes, the man saw the drawn face opposite, twisted with emotion. Involuntarily his thoughts went back to what Pollyanna had said when he

had made his final plea for her presence: "Oh, I couldn't leave Aunt Polly—now!"

It was this thought that made him ask very gently, as soon as he could control his voice:

"I wonder if you know, Miss Harrington, how hard I tried to get Pollyanna to come and live with me."

"With YOU!—Pollyanna!"

The man winced a little at the tone of her voice; but his own voice was still impersonally cool when he spoke again.

"Yes. I wanted to adopt her—legally, you understand; making her my heir, of course."

The woman in the opposite chair relaxed a little. It came to her, suddenly, what a brilliant future it would have meant for Pollyanna—this adoption; and she wondered if Pollyanna were old enough and mercenary enough—to be tempted by this man's money and position.

"I am very fond of Pollyanna," the man was continuing. "I am fond of her both for her own sake, and for—her mother's. I stood ready to give Pollyanna the love that had been twenty-five years in storage."

"LOVE." Miss Polly remembered suddenly why SHE had taken this child in the first place—and with the recollection came the remembrance of Pollyanna's own words uttered that very morning: "I love to be called 'dear' by folks that belong to you!" And it was this love-hungry little girl that had been offered the stored-up affection of twenty-five years:—and she was old enough to be tempted by love! With a sinking heart Miss Polly realized that. With a sinking heart, too, she realized something else: the dreariness of her own future now without Pollyanna.

"Well?" she said. And the man, recognizing the self-control that vibrated through the harshness of the tone, smiled sadly.

"She would not come," he answered.

"Why?"

"She would not leave you. She said you had been so good to her. She wanted to stay with you—and she said she THOUGHT you wanted her to stay," he finished, as he pulled himself to his feet.

He did not look toward Miss Polly. He turned his face resolutely toward the door. But instantly he heard a swift step at his side, and found a shaking hand thrust toward him.

"When the specialist comes, and I know anything—definite about Pollyanna, I will let you hear from me," said a trembling voice. "Goodbye—and thank you for coming. Pollyanna will be pleased."

CHAPTER XXV
A Waiting Game

On the day after John Pendleton's call at the Harrington homestead, Miss Polly set herself to the task of preparing Pollyanna for the visit of the specialist.

"Pollyanna, my dear," she began gently, "we have decided that we want another doctor besides Dr. Warren to see you. Another one might tell us something new to do—to help you get well faster, you know."

A joyous light came to Pollyanna's face.

"Dr. Chilton! Oh, Aunt Polly, I'd so love to have Dr. Chilton! I've wanted him all the time, but I was afraid you didn't, on account of his seeing you in the sun parlor that day, you know; so I didn't like to say anything. But I'm so glad you do want him!"

Aunt Polly's face had turned white, then red, then back to white again. But when she answered, she showed very plainly that she was trying to speak lightly and cheerfully.

"Oh, no, dear! It wasn't Dr. Chilton at all that I meant. It is a new doctor—a very famous doctor from New York, who—who knows a great deal about—about hurts like yours."

Pollyanna's face fell.

"I don't believe he knows half so much as Dr. Chilton."

"Oh, yes, he does, I'm sure, dear."

"But it was Dr. Chilton who doctored Mr. Pendleton's broken leg, Aunt Polly. If—if you don't mind VERY much, I WOULD LIKE to have Dr. Chilton—truly I would!"

A distressed color suffused Miss Polly's face. For a moment she did not speak at all; then she said gently—though yet with a touch of her old stern decisiveness:

"But I do mind, Pollyanna. I mind very much. I would do anything—almost anything for you, my dear; but I—for reasons which I do not care to speak of now, I don't wish Dr. Chilton called in on—on this case. And believe me, he can NOT know so much about—about your trouble, as this great doctor does, who will come from New York tomorrow."

Pollyanna still looked unconvinced.

"But, Aunt Polly, if you LOVED Dr. Chilton—"

"WHAT, Pollyanna?" Aunt Polly's voice was very sharp now. Her cheeks were very red, too.

"I say, if you loved Dr. Chilton, and didn't love the other one," sighed Pollyanna, "seems to me that would make some difference in the good he would do; and I love Dr. Chilton."

The nurse entered the room at that moment, and Aunt Polly rose to her feet abruptly, a look of relief on her face.

"I am very sorry, Pollyanna," she said, a little stiffly; "but I'm afraid you'll have to let me be the judge, this time. Besides, it's already arranged. The New York doctor is coming tomorrow."

As it happened, however, the New York doctor did not come "tomorrow." At the last moment a telegram told of an unavoidable delay owing to the sudden illness of the specialist himself. This led Pollyanna into a renewed pleading for the substitution of Dr. Chilton—"which would be so easy now, you know."

But as before, Aunt Polly shook her head and said "no, dear," very decisively, yet with a still more anxious assurance that she would do anything—anything but that—to please her dear Pollyanna.

As the days of waiting passed, one by one, it did indeed, seem that Aunt Polly was doing everything (but that) that she could do to please her niece.

"I wouldn't 'a' believed it—you couldn't 'a' made me believe it," Nancy said to Old Tom one morning. "There don't seem ter be a minute in the day that Miss Polly ain't jest

hangin' 'round waitin' ter do somethin' for that blessed lamb if 'tain't more than ter let in the cat—an' her what wouldn't let Fluff nor Buff upstairs for love nor money a week ago; an' now she lets 'em tumble all over the bed jest 'cause it pleases Miss Pollyanna!

"An' when she ain't doin' nothin' else, she's movin' them little glass danglers 'round ter diff'rent winders in the room so the sun'll make the 'rainbows dance,' as that blessed child calls it. She's sent Timothy down ter Cobb's greenhouse three times for fresh flowers—an' that besides all the posies fetched in ter her, too. An' the other day, if I didn't find her sittin' 'fore the bed with the nurse actually doin' her hair, an' Miss Pollyanna lookin' on an' bossin' from the bed, her eyes all shinin' an' happy. An' I declare ter goodness, if Miss Polly hain't wore her hair like that every day now—jest ter please that blessed child!"

Old Tom chuckled.

"Well, it strikes me Miss Polly herself ain't lookin' none the worse—for wearin' them 'ere curls 'round her forehead," he observed dryly.

"'Course she ain't," retorted Nancy, indignantly. "She looks like FOLKS, now. She's actually almost—"

"Keerful, now, Nancy!" interrupted the old man, with a slow grin. "You know what you said when I told ye she was handsome once."

Nancy shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, she ain't handsome, of course; but I will own up she don't look like the same woman, what with the ribbons an' lace jiggers Miss Pollyanna makes her wear 'round her neck."

"I told ye so," nodded the man. "I told ye she wa'n't—old."

Nancy laughed.

"Well, I'll own up she HAIN'T got quite so good an imitation of it—as she did have, 'fore Miss Pollyanna come. Say, Mr. Tom, who WAS her lover? I hain't found that out,

yet; I hain't, I hain't!"

"Hain't ye?" asked the old man, with an odd look on his face. "Well, I guess ye won't then from me."

"Oh, Mr. Tom, come on, now," wheedled the girl. "Ye see, there ain't many folks here that I CAN ask."

"Maybe not. But there's one, anyhow, that ain't answerin'," grinned Old Tom. Then, abruptly, the light died from his eyes. "How is she, ter-day—the little gal?"

Nancy shook her head. Her face, too, had sobered.

"Just the same, Mr. Tom. There ain't no special diff'rence, as I can see—or anybody, I guess. She jest lays there an' sleeps an' talks some, an' tries ter smile an' be 'glad' 'cause the sun sets or the moon rises, or some other such thing, till it's enough ter make yer heart break with achin'."

"I know; it's the 'game'—bless her sweet heart!" nodded Old Tom, blinking a little.

"She told YOU, then, too, about that 'ere—game?"

"Oh, yes. She told me long ago." The old man hesitated, then went on, his lips twitching a little. "I was growlin' one day 'cause I was so bent up and crooked; an' what do ye s'pose the little thing said?"

"I couldn't guess. I wouldn't think she could find ANYTHIN' about THAT ter be glad about!"

"She did. She said I could be glad, anyhow, that I didn't have ter STOOP SO FAR TER DO MY WEEDIN' 'cause I was already bent part way over."

Nancy gave a wistful laugh.

"Well, I ain't surprised, after all. You might know she'd find somethin'. We've been playin' it—that game—since almost the first, 'cause there wa'n't no one else she could play it with—though she did speak of—her aunt."

"MISS POLLY!"

Nancy chuckled.

"I guess you hain't got such an awful diff'rent opinion o' the mistress than I have," she bridled.

Old Tom stiffened.

"I was only thinkin' 'twould be—some of a surprise—to her," he explained with dignity.

"Well, yes, I guess 'twould be—THEN," retorted Nancy. "I ain't sayin' what 'twould be NOW. I'd believe anythin' o' the mistress now—even that she'd take ter playin' it herself!"

"But hain't the little gal told her—ever? She's told ev'ryone else, I guess. I'm hearin' of it ev'rywhere, now, since she was hurted," said Tom.

"Well, she didn't tell Miss Polly," rejoined Nancy. "Miss Pollyanna told me long ago that she couldn't tell her, 'cause her aunt didn't like ter have her talk about her father; an' 'twas her father's game, an' she'd have ter talk about him if she did tell it. So she never told her."

"Oh, I see, I see." The old man nodded his head slowly. "They was always bitter against the minister chap—all of 'em, 'cause he took Miss Jennie away from 'em. An' Miss Polly—young as she was—couldn't never forgive him; she was that fond of Miss Jennie—in them days. I see, I see. 'Twas a bad mess," he sighed, as he turned away.

"Yes, 'twas—all 'round, all 'round," sighed Nancy in her turn, as she went back to her kitchen.

For no one were those days of waiting easy. The nurse tried to look cheerful, but her eyes were troubled. The doctor was openly nervous and impatient. Miss Polly said little; but even the softening waves of hair about her face, and the becoming laces at her throat, could not hide the fact that she was growing thin and pale. As to Pollyanna—Pollyanna petted the dog, smoothed the cat's sleek head, admired the flowers and ate the fruits and jellies that were sent in to her; and returned innumerable cheery answers to the many messages of love and inquiry that were brought to her bedside. But she, too, grew pale and thin; and the nervous activity of the poor little hands and arms only emphasized the pitiful motionlessness of the once active little feet and legs now lying

so woefully quiet under the blankets.

As to the game—Pollyanna told Nancy these days how glad she was going to be when she could go to school again, go to see Mrs. Snow, go to call on Mr. Pendleton, and go to ride with Dr. Chilton nor did she seem to realize that all this "gladness" was in the future, not the present. Nancy, however, did realize it—and cry about it, when she was alone.

CHAPTER XXVI
A Door Ajar

Just a week from the time Dr. Mead, the specialist, was first expected, he came. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man with kind gray eyes, and a cheerful smile. Pollyanna liked him at once, and told him so.

"You look quite a lot like MY doctor, you see," she added engagingly.

"YOUR doctor?" Dr. Mead glanced in evident surprise at Dr. Warren, talking with the nurse a few feet away. Dr. Warren was a small, brown-eyed man with a pointed brown beard.

"Oh, THAT isn't my doctor," smiled Pollyanna, divining his thought. "Dr. Warren is Aunt Polly's doctor. My doctor is Dr. Chilton."

"Oh-h!" said Dr. Mead, a little oddly, his eyes resting on Miss Polly, who, with a vivid blush, had turned hastily away.

"Yes." Pollyanna hesitated, then continued with her usual truthfulness. "You see, I wanted Dr. Chilton all the time, but Aunt Polly wanted you. She said you knew more than Dr. Chilton, anyway about—about broken legs like mine. And of course if you do, I can be glad for that. Do you?"

A swift something crossed the doctor's face that Pollyanna could not quite translate.

"Only time can tell that, little girl," he said gently; then he turned a grave face toward Dr. Warren, who had just come to the bedside.

Everyone said afterward that it was the cat that did it. Certainly, if Fluffy had not poked an insistent paw and nose against Pollyanna's unlatched door, the door would not have

swung noiselessly open on its hinges until it stood perhaps a foot ajar; and if the door had not been open, Pollyanna would not have heard her aunt's words.

In the hall the two doctors, the nurse, and Miss Polly stood talking. In Pollyanna's room Fluffy had just jumped to the bed with a little purring "meow" of joy when through the open door sounded clearly and sharply Aunt Polly's agonized exclamation.

"Not that! Doctor, not that! You don't mean—the child—will NEVER WALK again!"

It was all confusion then. First, from the bedroom came Pollyanna's terrified "Aunt Polly Aunt Polly!" Then Miss Polly, seeing the open door and realizing that her words had been heard, gave a low little moan and—for the first time in her life—fainted dead away.

The nurse, with a choking "She heard!" stumbled toward the open door. The two doctors stayed with Miss Polly. Dr. Mead had to stay—he had caught Miss Polly as she fell. Dr. Warren stood by, helplessly. It was not until Pollyanna cried out again sharply and the nurse closed the door, that the two men, with a despairing glance into each other's eyes, awoke to the immediate duty of bringing the woman in Dr. Mead's arms back to unhappy consciousness.

In Pollyanna's room, the nurse had found a purring gray cat on the bed vainly trying to attract the attention of a white-faced, wild-eyed little girl.

"Miss Hunt, please, I want Aunt Polly. I want her right away, quick, please!"

The nurse closed the door and came forward hurriedly. Her face was very pale.

"She—she can't come just this minute, dear. She will—a little later. What is it? Can't I—get it?"

Pollyanna shook her head.

"But I want to know what she said—just now. Did you hear her? I want Aunt Polly—she said something. I want her

to tell me 'tisn't true—'tisn't true!"

The nurse tried to speak, but no words came. Something in her face sent an added terror to Pollyanna's eyes.

"Miss Hunt, you DID hear her! It is true! Oh, it isn't true! You don't mean I can't ever—walk again?"

"There, there, dear—don't, don't!" choked the nurse. "Perhaps he didn't know. Perhaps he was mistaken. There's lots of things that could happen, you know."

"But Aunt Polly said he did know! She said he knew more than anybody else about—about broken legs like mine!"

"Yes, yes, I know, dear; but all doctors make mistakes sometimes. Just—just don't think any more about it now—please don't, dear."

Pollyanna flung out her arms wildly. "But I can't help thinking about it," she sobbed. "It's all there is now to think about. Why, Miss Hunt, how am I going to school, or to see Mr. Pendleton, or Mrs. Snow, or—or anybody?" She caught her breath and sobbed wildly for a moment. Suddenly she stopped and looked up, a new terror in her eyes. "Why, Miss Hunt, if I can't walk, how am I ever going to be glad for—ANYTHING?"

Miss Hunt did not know "the game;" but she did know that her patient must be quieted, and that at once. In spite of her own perturbation and heartache, her hands had not been idle, and she stood now at the bedside with the quieting powder ready.

"There, there, dear, just take this," she soothed; "and by and by we'll be more rested, and we'll see what can be done then. Things aren't half as bad as they seem, dear, lots of times, you know."

Obediently Pollyanna took the medicine, and sipped the water from the glass in Miss Hunt's hand.

"I know; that sounds like things father used to say," faltered Pollyanna, blinking off the tears. "He said there was always something about everything that might be worse; but

I reckon he'd never just heard he couldn't ever walk again. I don't see how there CAN be anything about that, that could be worse—do you?"

Miss Hunt did not reply. She could not trust herself to speak just then.

CHAPTER XXVII
Two Visits

It was Nancy who was sent to tell Mr. John Pendleton of Dr. Mead's verdict. Miss Polly had remembered her promise to let him have direct information from the house. To go herself, or to write a letter, she felt to be almost equally out of the question. It occurred to her then to send Nancy.

There had been a time when Nancy would have rejoiced greatly at this extraordinary opportunity to see something of the House of Mystery and its master. But today her heart was too heavy to, rejoice at anything. She scarcely even looked about her at all, indeed, during the few minutes, she waited for Mr. John Pendleton to appear.

"I'm Nancy, sir," she said respectfully, in response to the surprised questioning of his eyes, when he came into the room. "Miss Harrington sent me to tell you about—Miss Pollyanna."

"Well?"

In spite of the curt terseness of the word, Nancy quite understood the anxiety that lay behind that short "well?"

"It ain't well, Mr. Pendleton," she choked.

"You don't mean—" He paused, and she bowed her head miserably.

"Yes, sir. He says—she can't walk again—never."

For a moment there was absolute silence in the room; then the man spoke, in a voice shaken with emotion.

"Poor—little—girl! Poor—little—girl!"

Nancy glanced at him, but dropped her eyes at once. She had not supposed that sour, cross, stern John Pendleton could look like that. In a moment he spoke again, still in the low,

unsteady voice.

"It seems cruel—never to dance in the sunshine again! My little prism girl!"

There was another silence; then, abruptly, the man asked:

"She herself doesn't know yet—of course—does she?"

"But she does, sir." sobbed Nancy, "an' that's what makes it all the harder. She found out—drat that cat! I begs yer pardon," apologized the girl, hurriedly. "It's only that the cat pushed open the door an' Miss Pollyanna overheard 'em talkin'. She found out—that way."

"Poor—little—girl!" sighed the man again.

"Yes, sir. You'd say so, sir, if you could see her," choked Nancy. "I hain't seen her but twice since she knew about it, an' it done me up both times. Ye see it's all so fresh an' new to her, an' she keeps thinkin' all the time of new things she can't do—NOW. It worries her, too, 'cause she can't seem ter be glad—maybe you don't know about her game, though," broke off Nancy, apologetically.

"The 'glad game'?" asked the man. "Oh, yes; she told me of that."

"Oh, she did! Well, I guess she has told it generally ter most folks. But ye see, now she—she can't play it herself, an' it worries her. She says she can't think of a thing—not a thing about this not walkin' again, ter be glad about."

"Well, why should she?" retorted the man, almost savagely.

Nancy shifted her feet uneasily.

"That's the way I felt, too—till I happened ter think—it WOULD be easier if she could find somethin', ye know. So I tried to—to remind her."

"To remind her! Of what?" John Pendleton's voice was still angrily impatient.

"Of—of how she told others ter play it Mis' Snow, and the rest, ye know—and what she said for them ter do. But the poor little lamb just cries, an' says it don't seem the same,

somehow. She says it's easy ter TELL lifelong invalids how ter be glad, but 'tain't the same thing when you're the lifelong invalid yerself, an' have ter try ter do it. She says she's told herself over an' over again how glad she is that other folks ain't like her; but that all the time she's sayin' it, she ain't really THINKIN' of anythin' only how she can't ever walk again."

Nancy paused, but the man did not speak. He sat with his hand over his eyes.

"Then I tried ter remind her how she used ter say the game was all the nicer ter play when—when it was hard," resumed Nancy, in a dull voice. "But she says that, too, is diff'rent—when it really IS hard. An' I must be goin', now, sir," she broke off abruptly.

At the door she hesitated, turned, and asked timidly:

"I couldn't be tellin' Miss Pollyanna that—that you'd seen Jimmy Bean again, I s'pose, sir, could I?"

"I don't see how you could—as I haven't seen him," observed the man a little shortly. "Why?"

"Nothin', sir, only—well, ye see, that's one of the things that she was feelin' bad about, that she couldn't take him ter see you, now. She said she'd taken him once, but she didn't think he showed off very well that day, and that she was afraid you didn't think he would make a very nice child's presence, after all. Maybe you know what she means by that; but I didn't, sir."

"Yes, I know—what she means."

"All right, sir. It was only that she was wantin' ter take him again, she said, so's ter show ye he really was a lovely child's presence. And now she—can't—drat that autymobile! I begs yer pardon, sir. Goodbye!" And Nancy fled precipitately.

It did not take long for the entire town of Beldingsville to learn that the great New York doctor had said Pollyanna Whittier would never walk again; and certainly never before

had the town been so stirred. Everybody knew by sight now the piquant little freckled face that had always a smile of greeting; and almost everybody knew of the "game" that Pollyanna was playing. To think that now never again would that smiling face be seen on their streets—never again would that cheery little voice proclaim the gladness of some every-day experience! It seemed unbelievable, impossible, cruel.

In kitchens and sitting rooms, and over backyard fences women talked of it, and wept openly. On street corners and in store lounging-places the men talked, too, and wept—though not so openly. And neither the talking nor the weeping grew less when fast on the heels of the news itself, came Nancy's pitiful story that Pollyanna, face to face with what had come to her, was bemoaning most of all the fact that she could not play the game; that she could not now be glad over—anything.

It was then that the same thought must have, in some way, come to Pollyanna's friends. At all events, almost at once, the mistress of the Harrington homestead, greatly to her surprise, began to receive calls: calls from people she knew, and people she did not know; calls from men, women, and children—many of whom Miss Polly had not supposed that her niece knew at all.

Some came in and sat down for a stiff five or ten minutes. Some stood awkwardly on the porch steps, fumbling with hats or handbags, according to their sex. Some brought a book, a bunch of flowers, or a dainty to tempt the palate. Some cried frankly. Some turned their backs and blew their noses furiously. But all inquired very anxiously for the little injured girl; and all sent to her some message—and it was these messages which, after a time, stirred Miss Polly to action.

First came Mr. John Pendleton. He came without his crutches today.

"I don't need to tell you how shocked I am," he began almost harshly. "But can—nothing be done?"

Miss Polly gave a gesture of despair.

"Oh, we're 'doing,' of course, all the time. Dr. Mead prescribed certain treatments and medicines that might help, and Dr. Warren is carrying them out to the letter, of course. But—Dr. Mead held out almost no hope."

John Pendleton rose abruptly—though he had but just come. His face was white, and his mouth was set into stern lines. Miss Polly, looking at him, knew very well why he felt that he could not stay longer in her presence. At the door he turned.

"I have a message for Pollyanna," he said. "Will you tell her, please, that I have seen Jimmy Bean and—that he's going to be my boy hereafter. Tell her I thought she would be—GLAD to know. I shall adopt him, probably."

For a brief moment Miss Polly lost her usual well-bred self-control.

"You will adopt Jimmy Bean!" she gasped.

The man lifted his chin a little.

"Yes. I think Pollyanna will understand. You will tell her I thought she would be—GLAD!"

"Why, of—of course," faltered Miss Polly.

"Thank you," bowed John Pendleton, as he turned to go.

In the middle of the floor Miss Polly stood, silent and amazed, still looking after the man who had just left her. Even yet she could scarcely believe what her ears had heard. John Pendleton ADOPT Jimmy Bean? John Pendleton, wealthy, independent, morose, reputed to be miserly and supremely selfish, to adopt a little boy—and such a little boy?

With a somewhat dazed face Miss Polly went upstairs to Pollyanna's room.

"Pollyanna, I have a message for you from Mr. John Pendleton. He has just been here. He says to tell you he has taken Jimmy Bean for his little boy. He said he thought you'd be glad to know it."

Pollyanna's wistful little face flamed into sudden joy.

"Glad? GLAD? Well, I reckon I am glad! Oh, Aunt Polly, I've so wanted to find a place for Jimmy—and that's such a lovely place! Besides, I'm so glad for Mr. Pendleton, too. You see, now he'll have the child's presence."

"The—what?"

Pollyanna colored painfully. She had forgotten that she had never told her aunt of Mr. Pendleton's desire to adopt her—and certainly she would not wish to tell her now that she had ever thought for a minute of leaving her—this dear Aunt Polly!

"The child's presence," stammered Pollyanna, hastily. "Mr. Pendleton told me once, you see, that only a woman's hand and heart or a child's presence could make a—a home. And now he's got it—the child's presence."

"Oh, I—see," said Miss Polly very gently; and she did see—more than Pollyanna realized. She saw something of the pressure that was probably brought to bear on Pollyanna herself at the time John Pendleton was asking HER to be the "child's presence," which was to transform his great pile of gray stone into a home. "I see," she finished, her eyes stinging with sudden tears.

Pollyanna, fearful that her aunt might ask further embarrassing questions, hastened to lead the conversation away from the Pendleton house and its master.

"Dr. Chilton says so, too—that it takes a woman's hand and heart, or a child's presence, to make a home, you know," she remarked.

Miss Polly turned with a start.

"DR. CHILTON! How do you know—that?"

"He told me so. 'Twas when he said he lived in just rooms, you know—not a home."

Miss Polly did not answer. Her eyes were out the window.

"So I asked him why he didn't get 'em—a woman's hand and heart, and have a home."

"Pollyanna!" Miss Polly had turned sharply. Her cheeks

showed a sudden color.

"Well, I did. He looked so—so sorrowful."

"What did he—say?" Miss Polly asked the question as if in spite of some force within her that was urging her not to ask it.

"He didn't say anything for a minute; then he said very low that you couldn't always get 'em for the asking."

There was a brief silence. Miss Polly's eyes had turned again to the window. Her cheeks were still unnaturally pink.

Pollyanna sighed.

"He wants one, anyhow, I know, and I wish he could have one."

"Why, Pollyanna, HOW do you know?"

"Because, afterwards, on another day, he said something else. He said that low, too, but I heard him. He said that he'd give all the world if he did have one woman's hand and heart. Why, Aunt Polly, what's the matter?" Aunt Polly had risen hurriedly and gone to the window.

"Nothing, dear. I was changing the position of this prism," said Aunt Polly, whose whole face now was aflame.

CHAPTER XXVIII
The Game and Its Players

It was not long after John Pendleton's second visit that Milly Snow called one afternoon. Milly Snow had never before been to the Harrington homestead. She blushed and looked very embarrassed when Miss Polly entered the room.

"I—I came to inquire for the little girl," she stammered.

"You are very kind. She is about the same. How is your mother?" rejoined Miss Polly, wearily.

"That is what I came to tell you—that is, to ask you to tell Miss Pollyanna," hurried on the girl, breathlessly and incoherently. "We think it's—so awful—so perfectly awful that the little thing can't ever walk again; and after all she's done for us, too—for mother, you know, teaching her to play the game, and all that. And when we heard how now she couldn't play it herself—poor little dear! I'm sure I don't see how she CAN, either, in her condition!—but when we remembered all the things she'd said to us, we thought if she could only know what she HAD done for us, that it would HELP, you know, in her own case, about the game, because she could be glad—that is, a little glad—" Milly stopped helplessly, and seemed to be waiting for Miss Polly to speak.

Miss Polly had sat politely listening, but with a puzzled questioning in her eyes. Only about half of what had been said, had she understood. She was thinking now that she always had known that Milly Snow was "queer," but she had not supposed she was crazy. In no other way, however, could she account for this incoherent, illogical, unmeaning rush of words. When the pause came she filled it with a quiet:

"I don't think I quite understand, Milly. Just what is it that

you want me to tell my niece?"

"Yes, that's it; I want you to tell her," answered the girl, feverishly. "Make her see what she's done for us. Of course she's SEEN some things, because she's been there, and she's known mother is different; but I want her to know HOW different she is—and me, too. I'm different. I've been trying to play it—the game—a little."

Miss Polly frowned. She would have asked what Milly meant by this "game," but there was no opportunity. Milly was rushing on again with nervous volubility.

"You know nothing was ever right before—for mother. She was always wanting 'em different. And, really, I don't know as one could blame her much—under the circumstances. But now she lets me keep the shades up, and she takes interest in things—how she looks, and her nightdress, and all that. And she's actually begun to knit little things—reins and baby blankets for fairs and hospitals. And she's so interested, and so GLAD to think she can do it!—and that was all Miss Pollyanna's doings, you know, 'cause she told mother she could be glad she'd got her hands and arms, anyway; and that made mother wonder right away why she didn't DO something with her hands and arms. And so she began to do something—to knit, you know. And you can't think what a different room it is now, what with the red and blue and yellow worsteds, and the prisms in the window that SHE gave her—why, it actually makes you feel BETTER just to go in there now; and before I used to dread it awfully, it was so dark and gloomy, and mother was so—so unhappy, you know.

"And so we want you to please tell Miss Pollyanna that we understand it's all because of her. And please say we're so glad we know her, that we thought, maybe if she knew it, it would make her a little glad that she knew us. And—and that's all," sighed Milly, rising hurriedly to her feet. "You'll tell her?"

"Why, of course," murmured Miss Polly, wondering just how much of this remarkable discourse she could remember to tell.

These visits of John Pendleton and Milly Snow were only the first of many; and always there were the messages—the messages which were in some ways so curious that they caused Miss Polly more and more to puzzle over them.

One day there was the little Widow Benton. Miss Polly knew her well, though they had never called upon each other. By reputation she knew her as the saddest little woman in town—one who was always in black. Today, however, Mrs. Benton wore a knot of pale blue at the throat, though there were tears in her eyes. She spoke of her grief and horror at the accident; then she asked diffidently if she might see Pollyanna.

Miss Polly shook her head.

"I am sorry, but she sees no one yet. A little later—perhaps."

Mrs. Benton wiped her eyes, rose, and turned to go. But after she had almost reached the hall door she came back hurriedly.

"Miss Harrington, perhaps, you'd give her—a message," she stammered.

"Certainly, Mrs. Benton; I shall be very glad to."

Still the little woman hesitated; then she spoke.

"Will you tell her, please, that—that I've put on THIS," she said, just touching the blue bow at her throat. Then, at Miss Polly's ill-concealed look of surprise, she added: "The little girl has been trying for so long to make me wear—some color, that I thought she'd be—glad to know I'd begun. She said that Freddy would be so glad to see it, if I would. You know Freddy's ALL I have now. The others have all—" Mrs. Benton shook her head and turned away. "If you'll just tell Pollyanna—SHE'LL understand." And the door closed after her.

A little later, that same day, there was the other widow—at least, she wore widow's garments. Miss Polly did not know her at all. She wondered vaguely how Pollyanna could have known her. The lady gave her name as "Mrs. Tarbell."

"I'm a stranger to you, of course," she began at once. "But I'm not a stranger to your little niece, Pollyanna. I've been at the hotel all summer, and every day I've had to take long walks for my health. It was on these walks that I've met your niece—she's such a dear little girl! I wish I could make you understand what she's been to me. I was very sad when I came up here; and her bright face and cheery ways reminded me of—my own little girl that I lost years ago. I was so shocked to hear of the accident; and then when I learned that the poor child would never walk again, and that she was so unhappy because she couldn't be glad any longer—the dear child!—I just had to come to you."

"You are very kind," murmured Miss Polly.

"But it is you who are to be kind," demurred the other. "I—I want you to give her a message from me. Will you?"

"Certainly."

"Will you just tell her, then, that Mrs. Tarbell is glad now. Yes, I know it sounds odd, and you don't understand. But—if you'll pardon me I'd rather not explain." Sad lines came to the lady's mouth, and the smile left her eyes. "Your niece will know just what I mean; and I felt that I must tell—her. Thank you; and pardon me, please, for any seeming rudeness in my call," she begged, as she took her leave.

Thoroughly mystified now, Miss Polly hurried upstairs to Pollyanna's room.

"Pollyanna, do you know a Mrs. Tarbell?"

"Oh, yes. I love Mrs. Tarbell. She's sick, and awfully sad; and she's at the hotel, and takes long walks. We go together. I mean—we used to." Pollyanna's voice broke, and two big tears rolled down her cheeks.

Miss Polly cleared her throat hurriedly.

"We'll, she's just been here, dear. She left a message for you—but she wouldn't tell me what it meant. She said to tell you that Mrs. Tarbell is glad now."

Pollyanna clapped her hands softly.

"Did she say that—really? Oh, I'm so glad!"

"But, Pollyanna, what did she mean?"

"Why, it's the game, and—" Pollyanna stopped short, her fingers to her lips.

"What game?"

"N-nothing much, Aunt Polly; that is—I can't tell it unless I tell other things that—that I'm not to speak of."

It was on Miss Polly's tongue to question her niece further; but the obvious distress on the little girl's face stayed the words before they were uttered.

Not long after Mrs. Tarbell's visit, the climax came. It came in the shape of a call from a certain young woman with unnaturally pink cheeks and abnormally yellow hair; a young woman who wore high heels and cheap jewelry; a young woman whom Miss Polly knew very well by reputation—but whom she was angrily amazed to meet beneath the roof of the Harrington homestead.

Miss Polly did not offer her hand. She drew back, indeed, as she entered the room.

The woman rose at once. Her eyes were very red, as if she had been crying. Half defiantly she asked if she might, for a moment, see the little girl, Pollyanna.

Miss Polly said no. She began to say it very sternly; but something in the woman's pleading eyes made her add the civil explanation that no one was allowed yet to see Pollyanna.

The woman hesitated; then a little brusquely she spoke. Her chin was still at a slightly defiant tilt.

"My name is Mrs. Payson—Mrs. Tom Payson. I presume you've heard of me—most of the good people in the town have—and maybe some of the things you've heard ain't true.

But never mind that. It's about the little girl I came. I heard about the accident, and—and it broke me all up. Last week I heard how she couldn't ever walk again, and—and I wished I could give up my two uselessly well legs for hers. She'd do more good trotting around on 'em one hour than I could in a hundred years. But never mind that. Legs ain't always given to the one who can make the best use of 'em, I notice."

She paused, and cleared her throat; but when she resumed her voice was still husky.

"Maybe you don't know it, but I've seen a good deal of that little girl of yours. We live on the Pendleton Hill road, and she used to go by often—only she didn't always GO BY. She came in and played with the kids and talked to me—and my man, when he was home. She seemed to like it, and to like us. She didn't know, I suspect, that her kind of folks don't generally call on my kind. Maybe if they DID call more, Miss Harrington, there wouldn't be so many—of my kind," she added, with sudden bitterness.

"Be that as it may, she came; and she didn't do herself no harm, and she did do us good—a lot o' good. How much she won't know—nor can't know, I hope; 'cause if she did, she'd know other things—that I don't want her to know.

"But it's just this. It's been hard times with us this year, in more ways than one. We've been blue and discouraged—my man and me, and ready for—'most anything. We was reckoning on getting a divorce about now, and letting the kids well, we didn't know what we would do with the kids. Then came the accident, and what we heard about the little girl's never walking again. And we got to thinking how she used to come and sit on our doorstep and train with the kids, and laugh, and—and just be glad. She was always being glad about something; and then, one day, she told us why, and about the game, you know; and tried to coax us to play it.

"Well, we've heard now that she's fretting her poor little life out of her, because she can't play it no more—that there's

nothing to be glad about. And that's what I came to tell her today—that maybe she can be a little glad for us, 'cause we've decided to stick to each other, and play the game ourselves. I knew she would be glad, because she used to feel kind of bad—at things we said, sometimes. Just how the game is going to help us, I can't say that I exactly see, yet; but maybe 'twill. Anyhow, we're going to try—'cause she wanted us to. Will you tell her?"

"Yes, I will tell her," promised Miss Polly, a little faintly. Then, with sudden impulse, she stepped forward and held out her hand. "And thank you for coming, Mrs. Payson," she said simply.

The defiant chin fell. The lips above it trembled visibly. With an incoherently mumbled something, Mrs. Payson blindly clutched at the outstretched hand, turned, and fled.

The door had scarcely closed behind her before Miss Polly was confronting Nancy in the kitchen.

"Nancy!"

Miss Polly spoke sharply. The series of puzzling, disconcerting visits of the last few days, culminating as they had in the extraordinary experience of the afternoon, had strained her nerves to the snapping point. Not since Miss Pollyanna's accident had Nancy heard her mistress speak so sternly.

"Nancy, WILL you tell me what this absurd 'game' is that the whole town seems to be babbling about? And what, please, has my niece to do with it? WHY does everybody, from Milly Snow to Mrs. Tom Payson, send word to her that they're 'playing it'? As near as I can judge, half the town are putting on blue ribbons, or stopping family quarrels, or learning to like something they never liked before, and all because of Pollyanna. I tried to ask the child herself about it, but I can't seem to make much headway, and of course I don't like to worry her—now. But from something I heard her say to you last night, I should judge you were one of them, too. Now WILL you tell me what it all means?"

To Miss Polly's surprise and dismay, Nancy burst into tears.

"It means that ever since last June that blessed child has jest been makin' the whole town glad, an' now they're turnin' 'round an' tryin' ter make her a little glad, too."

"Glad of what?"

"Just glad! That's the game."

Miss Polly actually stamped her foot.

"There you go like all the rest, Nancy. What game?"

Nancy lifted her chin. She faced her mistress and looked her squarely in the eye.

"I'll tell ye, ma'am. It's a game Miss Pollyanna's father learned her ter play. She got a pair of crutches once in a missionary barrel when she was wantin' a doll; an' she cried, of course, like any child would. It seems 'twas then her father told her that there wasn't ever anythin' but what there was somethin' about it that you could be glad about; an' that she could be glad about them crutches."

"Glad for—CRUTCHES!" Miss Polly choked back a sob—she was thinking of the helpless little legs on the bed upstairs.

"Yes'm. That's what I said, an' Miss Pollyanna said that's what she said, too. But he told her she COULD be glad—'cause she DIDN'T NEED 'EM."

"Oh-h!" cried Miss Polly.

"And after that she said he made a regular game of it—findin' somethin' in everythin' ter be glad about. An' she said ye could do it, too, and that ye didn't seem ter mind not havin' the doll so much, 'cause ye was so glad ye DIDN'T need the crutches. An' they called it the 'jest bein' glad' game. That's the game, ma'am. She's played it ever since."

"But, how—how—" Miss Polly came to a helpless pause.

"An' you'd be surprised ter find how cute it works, ma'am, too," maintained Nancy, with almost the eagerness of Pollyanna herself. "I wish I could tell ye what a lot she's done

for mother an' the folks out home. She's been ter see 'em, ye know, twice, with me. She's made me glad, too, on such a lot o' things—little things, an' big things; an' it's made 'em so much easier. For instance, I don't mind 'Nancy' for a name half as much since she told me I could be glad 'twa'n't 'Hephzibah.' An' there's Monday mornin's, too, that I used ter hate so. She's actually made me glad for Monday mornin's."

"Glad—for Monday mornings!"

Nancy laughed.

"I know it does sound nutty, ma'am. But let me tell ye. That blessed lamb found out I hated Monday mornin's somethin' awful; an' what does she up an' tell me one day but this: 'Well, anyhow, Nancy, I should think you could be gladder on Monday mornin' than on any other day in the week, because 'twould be a whole WEEK before you'd have another one!' An' I'm blest if I hain't thought of it ev'ry Monday mornin' since—an' it HAS helped, ma'am. It made me laugh, anyhow, ev'rytime I thought of it; an' laughin' helps, ye know—it does, it does!"

"But why hasn't—she told me—the game?" faltered Miss Polly. "Why has she made such a mystery of it, when I asked her?"

Nancy hesitated.

"Beggin' yer pardon, ma'am, you told her not ter speak of—her father; so she couldn't tell ye. 'Twas her father's game, ye see."

Miss Polly bit her lip.

"She wanted ter tell ye, first off," continued Nancy, a little unsteadily. "She wanted somebody ter play it with, ye know. That's why I begun it, so she could have someone."

"And—and—these others?" Miss Polly's voice shook now.

"Oh, ev'rybody, 'most, knows it now, I guess. Anyhow, I should think they did from the way I'm hearin' of it

ev'rywhere I go. Of course she told a lot, and they told the rest. Them things go, ye know, when they gets started. An' she was always so smilin' an' pleasant ter ev'ryone, an' so—so jest glad herself all the time, that they couldn't help knowin' it, anyhow. Now, since she's hurt, ev'rybody feels so bad—specially when they heard how bad SHE feels 'cause she can't find anythin' ter be glad about. An' so they've been comin' ev'ry day ter tell her how glad she's made THEM, hopin' that'll help some. Ye see, she's always wanted ev'rybody ter play the game with her."

"Well, I know somebody who'll play it—now," choked Miss Polly, as she turned and sped through the kitchen doorway.

Behind her, Nancy stood staring amazedly.

"Well, I'll believe anythin'—anythin' now," she muttered to herself. "Ye can't stump me with anythin' I wouldn't believe, now—o' Miss Polly!"

A little later, in Pollyanna's room, the nurse left Miss Polly and Pollyanna alone together.

"And you've had still another caller today, my dear," announced Miss Polly, in a voice she vainly tried to steady. "Do you remember Mrs. Payson?"

"Mrs. Payson? Why, I reckon I do! She lives on the way to Mr. Pendleton's, and she's got the prettiest little girl baby three years old, and a boy 'most five. She's awfully nice, and so's her husband—only they don't seem to know how nice each other is. Sometimes they fight—I mean, they don't quite agree. They're poor, too, they say, and of course they don't ever have barrels, 'cause he isn't a missionary minister, you know, like—well, he isn't."

A faint color stole into Pollyanna's cheeks which was duplicated suddenly in those of her aunt.

"But she wears real pretty clothes, sometimes, in spite of their being so poor," resumed Pollyanna, in some haste. "And she's got perfectly beautiful rings with diamonds and rubies

and emeralds in them; but she says she's got one ring too many, and that she's going to throw it away and get a divorce instead. What is a divorce, Aunt Polly? I'm afraid it isn't very nice, because she didn't look happy when she talked about it. And she said if she did get it, they wouldn't live there anymore, and that Mr. Payson would go 'way off, and maybe the children, too. But I should think they'd rather keep the ring, even if they did have so many more. Shouldn't you? Aunt Polly, what is a divorce?"

"But they aren't going 'way off, dear," evaded Aunt Polly, hurriedly. "They're going to stay right there together."

"Oh, I'm so glad! Then they'll be there when I go up to see—O dear!" broke off the little girl, miserably. "Aunt Polly, why CAN'T I remember that my legs don't go anymore, and that I won't ever, ever go up to see Mr. Pendleton again?"

"There, there, don't," choked her aunt. "Perhaps you'll drive up sometime. But listen! I haven't told you, yet, all that Mrs. Payson said. She wanted me to tell you that they—they were going to stay together and to play the game, just as you wanted them to."

Pollyanna smiled through tear-wet eyes.

"Did they? Did they, really? Oh, I am glad of that!"

"Yes, she said she hoped you'd be. That's why she told you, to make you—GLAD, Pollyanna."

Pollyanna looked up quickly.

"Why, Aunt Polly, you—you spoke just as if you knew—DO you know about the game, Aunt Polly?"

"Yes, dear." Miss Polly sternly forced her voice to be cheerfully matter-of-fact. "Nancy told me. I think it's a beautiful game. I'm going to play it now—with you."

"Oh, Aunt Polly—YOU? I'm so glad! You see, I've really wanted you most of anybody, all the time."

Aunt Polly caught her breath a little sharply. It was even harder this time to keep her voice steady; but she did it.

"Yes, dear; and there are all those others, too. Why,

Pollyanna, I think all the town is playing that game now with you—even to the minister! I haven't had a chance to tell you, yet, but this morning I met Mr. Ford when I was down to the village, and he told me to say to you that just as soon as you could see him, he was coming to tell you that he hadn't stopped being glad over those eight hundred rejoicing texts that you told him about. So you see, dear, it's just you that have done it. The whole town is playing the game, and the whole town is wonderfully happier—and all because of one little girl who taught the people a new game, and how to play it."

Pollyanna clapped her hands.

"Oh, I'm so glad," she cried. Then, suddenly, a wonderful light illumined her face. "Why, Aunt Polly, there IS something I can be glad about, after all. I can be glad I've HAD my legs, anyway—else I couldn't have done—that!"

CHAPTER XXIX
Through an Open Window

One by one the short winter days came and went—but they were not short to Pollyanna. They were long, and sometimes full of pain. Very resolutely, these days, however, Pollyanna was turning a cheerful face toward whatever came. Was she not specially bound to play the game, now that Aunt Polly was playing it, too? And Aunt Polly found so many things to be glad about! It was Aunt Polly, too, who discovered the story one day about the two poor little waifs in a snowstorm who found a blown-down door to crawl under, and who wondered what poor folks did that didn't have any door! And it was Aunt Polly who brought home the other story that she had heard about the poor old lady who had only two teeth, but who was so glad that those two teeth "hit"!

Pollyanna now, like Mrs. Snow, was knitting wonderful things out of bright colored worsteds that trailed their cheery lengths across the white spread, and made Pollyanna—again like Mrs. Snow—so glad she had her hands and arms, anyway.

Pollyanna saw people now, occasionally, and always there were the loving messages from those she could not see; and always they brought her something new to think about—and Pollyanna needed new things to think about.

Once she had seen John Pendleton, and twice she had seen Jimmy Bean. John Pendleton had told her what a fine boy Jimmy was getting to be, and how well he was doing. Jimmy had told her what a first-rate home he had, and what bang-up "folks" Mr. Pendleton made; and both had said that it was all owing to her.

"Which makes me all the gladder, you know, that I

HAVE had my legs," Pollyanna confided to her aunt afterwards.

The winter passed, and spring came. The anxious watchers over Pollyanna's condition could see little change wrought by the prescribed treatment. There seemed every reason to believe, indeed, that Dr. Mead's worst fears would be realized—that Pollyanna would never walk again.

Beldingsville, of course, kept itself informed concerning Pollyanna; and of Beldingsville, one man in particular fumed and fretted himself into a fever of anxiety over the daily bulletins which he managed in some way to procure from the bed of suffering. As the days passed, however, and the news came to be no better, but rather worse, something besides anxiety began to show in the man's face: despair, and a very dogged determination, each fighting for the mastery. In the end, the dogged determination won; and it was then that Mr. John Pendleton, somewhat to his surprise, received one Saturday morning a call from Dr. Thomas Chilton.

"Pendleton," began the doctor, abruptly, "I've come to you because you, better than anyone else in town, know something of my relations with Miss Polly Harrington."

John Pendleton was conscious that he must have started visibly—he did know something of the affair between Polly Harrington and Thomas Chilton, but the matter had not been mentioned between them for fifteen years, or more.

"Yes," he said, trying to make his voice sound concerned enough for sympathy, and not eager enough for curiosity. In a moment he saw that he need not have worried, however: the doctor was quite too intent on his errand to notice how that errand was received.

"Pendleton, I want to see that child. I want to make an examination. I MUST make an examination."

"Well—can't you?"

"CAN'T I! Pendleton, you know very well I haven't been inside that door for more than fifteen years. You don't

know—but I will tell you—that the mistress of that house told me that the NEXT time she ASKED me to enter it, I might take it that she was begging my pardon, and that all would be as before—which meant that she'd marry me. Perhaps you see her summoning me now—but I don't!"

"But couldn't you go—without a summons?"

The doctor frowned.

"Well, hardly. I have some pride, you know."

"But if you're so anxious—couldn't you swallow your pride and forget the quarrel—"

"Forget the quarrel!" interrupted the doctor, savagely. "I'm not talking of that kind of pride. So far as THAT is concerned, I'd go from here there on my knees—or on my head—if that would do any good. It's PROFESSIONAL pride I'm talking about. It's a case of sickness, and I'm a doctor. I can't butt in and say, 'Here, take me! can I?"

"Chilton, what was the quarrel?" demanded Pendleton.

The doctor made an impatient gesture, and got to his feet.

"What was it? What's any lovers' quarrel after it's over?" he snarled, pacing the room angrily. "A silly wrangle over the size of the moon or the depth of a river, maybe—it might as well be, so far as its having any real significance compared to the years of misery that follow them! Never mind the quarrel! So far as I am concerned, I am willing to say there was no quarrel. Pendleton, I must see that child. It may mean life or death. It will mean—I honestly believe—nine chances out of ten that Pollyanna Whittier will walk again!"

The words were spoken clearly, impressively; and they were spoken just as the one who uttered them had almost reached the open window near John Pendleton's chair. Thus it happened that very distinctly they reached the ears of a small boy kneeling beneath the window on the ground outside.

Jimmy Bean, at his Saturday morning task of pulling up the first little green weeds of the flowerbeds, sat up with ears

and eyes wide open.

"Walk! Pollyanna!" John Pendleton was saying. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that from what I can hear and learn—a mile from her bedside—that her case is very much like one that a college friend of mine has just helped. For years he's been making this sort of thing a special study. I've kept in touch with him, and studied, too, in a way. And from what I hear—but I want to SEE the girl!"

John Pendleton came erect in his chair.

"You must see her, man! Couldn't you—say, through Dr. Warren?"

The other shook his head.

"I'm afraid not. Warren has been very decent, though. He told me himself that he suggested consultation with me at the first, but—Miss Harrington said no so decisively that he didn't dare venture it again, even though he knew of my desire to see the child. Lately, some of his best patients have come over to me—so of course that ties my hands still more effectually. But, Pendleton, I've got to see that child! Think of what it may mean to her—if I do!"

"Yes, and think of what it will mean—if you don't!" retorted Pendleton.

"But how can I—without a direct request from her aunt?—which I'll never get!"

"She must be made to ask you!"

"How?"

"I don't know."

"No, I guess you don't—nor anybody else. She's too proud and too angry to ask me—after what she said years ago it would mean if she did ask me. But when I think of that child, doomed to lifelong misery, and when I think that maybe in my hands lies a chance of escape, but for that confounded nonsense we call pride and professional etiquette, I—" He did not finish his sentence, but with his hands thrust deep into

his pockets, he turned and began to tramp up and down the room again, angrily.

"But if she could be made to see—to understand," urged John Pendleton.

"Yes; and who's going to do it?" demanded the doctor, with a savage turn.

"I don't know, I don't know," groaned the other, miserably.

Outside the window Jimmy Bean stirred suddenly. Up to now he had scarcely breathed, so intently had he listened to every word.

"Well, by Jinks, I know!" he whispered, exultingly. "I'M a-goin' ter do it!" And forthwith he rose to his feet, crept stealthily around the corner of the house, and ran with all his might down Pendleton Hill.

CHAPTER XXX
Jimmy Takes the Helm

"It's Jimmy Bean. He wants ter see ye, ma'am," announced Nancy in the doorway.

"Me?" rejoined Miss Polly, plainly surprised. "Are you sure he did not mean Miss Pollyanna? He may see her a few minutes today, if he likes."

"Yes'm. I told him. But he said it was you he wanted."

"Very well, I'll come down." And Miss Polly arose from her chair a little wearily.

In the sitting room she found waiting for her a round-eyed, flushed-faced boy, who began to speak at once.

"Ma'am, I s'pose it's dreadful—what I'm doin', an' what I'm sayin'; but I can't help it. It's for Pollyanna, and I'd walk over hot coals for her, or face you, or—or anythin' like that, anytime. An' I think you would, too, if you thought there was a chance for her ter walk again. An' so that's why I come ter tell ye that as long as it's only pride an' et—et-somethin' that's keepin' Pollyanna from walkin', why I knew you WOULD ask Dr. Chilton here if you understood—"

"Wh-at?" interrupted Miss Polly, the look of stupefaction on her face changing to one of angry indignation.

Jimmy sighed despairingly.

"There, I didn't mean ter make ye mad. That's why I begun by tellin' ye about her walkin' again. I thought you'd listen ter that."

"Jimmy, what are you talking about?"

Jimmy sighed again.

"That's what I'm tryin' ter tell ye."

"Well, then tell me. But begin at the beginning, and be

sure I understand each thing as you go. Don't plunge into the middle of it as you did before—and mix everything all up!"

Jimmy wet his lips determinedly.

"Well, ter begin with, Dr. Chilton come ter see Mr. Pendleton, an' they talked in the library. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, Jimmy." Miss Polly's voice was rather faint.

"Well, the window was open, and I was weedin' the flower-bed under it; an' I heard 'em talk."

"Oh, Jimmy! LISTENING?"

"'Twa'n't about me, an' 'twa'n't sneak listenin'," bridled Jimmy. "And I'm glad I listened. You will be when I tell ye. Why, it may make Pollyanna—walk!"

"Jimmy, what do you mean?" Miss Polly was leaning forward eagerly.

"There, I told ye so," nodded Jimmy, contentedly. "Well, Dr. Chilton knows some doctor somewhere that can cure Pollyanna, he thinks—make her walk, ye know; but he can't tell sure till he SEES her. And he wants ter see her somethin' awful, but he told Mr. Pendleton that you wouldn't let him."

Miss Polly's face turned very red.

"But, Jimmy, I—I can't—I couldn't! That is, I didn't know!" Miss Polly was twisting her fingers together helplessly.

"Yes, an' that's what I come ter tell ye, so you WOULD know," asserted Jimmy, eagerly. "They said that for some reason—I didn't rightly catch what—you wouldn't let Dr. Chilton come, an' you told Dr. Warren so; an' Dr. Chilton couldn't come himself, without you asked him, on account of pride an' professional et—et—well, et-somethin' anyway. An' they was wishin' somebody could make you understand, only they didn't know who could; an' I was outside the winder, an' I says ter myself right away, 'By Jinks, I'll do it!' An' I come—an' have I made ye understand?"

"Yes; but, Jimmy, about that doctor," implored Miss Polly, feverishly. "Who was he? What did he do? Are they SURE he

could make Pollyanna walk?"

"I don't know who he was. They didn't say. Dr. Chilton knows him, an' he's just cured somebody just like her, Dr. Chilton thinks. Anyhow, they didn't seem ter be doin' no worryin' about HIM. 'Twas YOU they was worryin' about, 'cause you wouldn't let Dr. Chilton see her. An' say—you will let him come, won't you?—now you understand?"

Miss Polly turned her head from side to side. Her breath was coming in little uneven, rapid gasps. Jimmy, watching her with anxious eyes, thought she was going to cry. But she did not cry. After a minute she said brokenly:

"Yes—I'll let—Dr. Chilton—see her. Now run home, Jimmy—quick! I've got to speak to Dr. Warren. He's upstairs now. I saw him drive in a few minutes ago."

A little later Dr. Warren was surprised to meet an agitated, flushed-faced Miss Polly in the hall. He was still more surprised to hear the lady say, a little breathlessly:

"Dr. Warren, you asked me once to allow Dr. Chilton to be called in consultation, and—I refused. Since then I have reconsidered. I very much desire that you SHOULD call in Dr. Chilton. Will you not ask him at once—please? Thank you."

CHAPTER XXXI
A New Uncle

The next time Dr. Warren entered the chamber where Pollyanna lay watching the dancing shimmer of color on the ceiling, a tall, broad-shouldered man followed close behind him.

"Dr. Chilton!—oh, Dr. Chilton, how glad I am to see YOU!" cried Pollyanna. And at the joyous rapture of the voice, more than one pair of eyes in the room brimmed hot with sudden tears. "But, of course, if Aunt Polly doesn't want—"

"It is all right, my dear; don't worry," soothed Miss Polly, agitatedly, hurrying forward. "I have told Dr. Chilton that—that I want him to look you over—with Dr. Warren, this morning."

"Oh, then you asked him to come," murmured Pollyanna, contentedly.

"Yes, dear, I asked him. That is—" But it was too late. The adoring happiness that had leaped to Dr. Chilton's eyes was unmistakable and Miss Polly had seen it. With very pink cheeks she turned and left the room hurriedly.

Over in the window the nurse and Dr. Warren were talking earnestly. Dr. Chilton held out both his hands to Pollyanna.

"Little girl, I'm thinking that one of the very gladdest jobs you ever did has been done today," he said in a voice shaken with emotion.

At twilight a wonderfully tremulous, wonderfully different Aunt Polly crept to Pollyanna's bedside. The nurse was at supper. They had the room to themselves.

"Pollyanna, dear, I'm going to tell you—the very first one of all. Someday I'm going to give Dr. Chilton to you for your—uncle. And it's you that have done it all. Oh, Pollyanna, I'm so—happy! And so—glad!—darling!"

Pollyanna began to clap her hands; but even as she brought her small palms together the first time, she stopped, and held them suspended.

"Aunt Polly, Aunt Polly, WERE you the woman's hand and heart he wanted so long ago? You were—I know you were! And that's what he meant by saying I'd done the gladdest job of all—today. I'm so glad! Why, Aunt Polly, I don't know but I'm so glad that I don't mind—even my legs, now!"

Aunt Polly swallowed a sob.

"Perhaps, someday, dear—" But Aunt Polly did not finish. Aunt Polly did not dare to tell, yet, the great hope that Dr. Chilton had put into her heart. But she did say this—and surely this was quite wonderful enough—to Pollyanna's mind:

"Pollyanna, next week you're going to take a journey. On a nice comfortable little bed you're going to be carried in cars and carriages to a great doctor who has a big house many miles from here made on purpose for just such people as you are. He's a dear friend of Dr. Chilton's, and we're going to see what he can do for you!"

CHAPTER XXXII
Which Is a Letter from Pollyanna

"Dear Aunt Polly and Uncle Tom:—Oh, I can—I can—I CAN walk! I did today all the way from my bed to the window! It was six steps. My, how good it was to be on legs again!

"All the doctors stood around and smiled, and all the nurses stood beside of them and cried. A lady in the next ward who walked last week first, peeked into the door, and another one who hopes she can walk next month, was invited in to the party, and she laid on my nurse's bed and clapped her hands. Even Black Tilly who washes the floor, looked through the piazza window and called me 'Honey, child' when she wasn't crying too much to call me anything.

"I don't see why they cried. I wanted to sing and shout and yell! Oh—oh—oh! just think, I can walk—walk—WALK! Now I don't mind being here almost ten months, and I didn't miss the wedding, anyhow. Wasn't that just like you, Aunt Polly, to come on here and get married right beside my bed, so I could see you. You always do think of the gladdest things!

"Pretty soon, they say, I shall go home. I wish I could walk all the way there. I do. I don't think I shall ever want to ride anywhere any more. It will be so good just to walk. Oh, I'm so glad! I'm glad for everything. Why, I'm glad now I lost my legs for a while, for you never, never know how perfectly lovely legs are till you haven't got them—that go, I mean. I'm going to walk eight steps tomorrow.

"With heaps of love to everybody,

"POLLYANNA."