SAFE AT HOME. — Page 137.

DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES

BY SOPHIE MAY.

ILLUSTRATED

DOTTY AT SCHOOL.

LEE & SHEPARD BOSTON

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DOTTY DIMPLE AT SCHOOL.

By SOPHIE MAY,

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES."

Illustrated.

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6. *LITTLE PRUDY'S DOTTY DIMPLE.*

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DOTTY DIMPLE AT SCHOOL.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST DAY.

"O, DEAR, dear! Who set this basket down on my white apron? All wrinkled up! I can't go to school! And me with a new book, bought day before yesterday!"

"It was I, little sister," said Prudy, gently. "It was an accident; I'm sorry if I've hurt your apron."

"O, it isn't hurt any," replied Dotty, in a different tone; "not a speck, Prudy. But won't you please button my boots? There, I wish I was a horse, and then my shoes would be nailed on, and be done with it."

When the boots were buttoned, Dotty was in another flutter.

"Isn't it time to start yet? What a slow clock! Only eight! I'm going down to help Norah hang out the clothes."

"Just the napkins and little things, Norah," said she, suddenly appearing in the back-door yard with her apron half fastened. "I'll have time before I go to school, and mamma's always willing."

"Well, I suppose if you must, you must," said Norah, trying to talk with a clothes-pin in her mouth; "but it's pretty cold weather for little girls like you to be out, with nothing on their heads."

Dotty took up a handkerchief, shook it once or twice, and spread it on the line; but before she had secured it with a clothes-pin, it was frozen stiff.

"Why, Norah, what makes you starch

the clothes before you put them out? Why don't you wait till they're dry?"

"It isn't starch, Miss Dotty; it's the cold weather. You'd better run into the house before you freeze."

"Why, I haven't hung out but one napkin and two hangerjifs, Norah."

"No matter; your hands are as red as lobsters; and, another thing, you're shaking the clothes all to pieces. Did I ever tell you how your sister Prudy was served once, when she was a wee thing, and wouldn't mind me?"

"Didn't Prudy always mind? You said she did."

"Well, no; once Prudy was naughty. I told her to go away from the door, and not touch the frosty nails; but she didn't pay any heed; and by and by she came crying to me, and do you believe, there were nails sticking to her fingers."

"Honest? truly?"

"Yes; Prudy remembers it, I know."

"I mean to go ask her," said Dotty, dropping a collar and bounding away. "Prudy," said she, rushing into the house breathless, her cheeks and the tip of her nose glowing with the kisses of the wind. "I'll tell you something. *Did* you ever have nails sticking to your fingers?"

"Yes, and I have now," replied Prudy, holding out her hands, and exhibiting her rosy finger-tips.

"O, those! Why, Prudy Parlin, I think you're real too-bad, and Norah too! She didn't want me to spread clo'es; so she told a hint. She's always telling hints. If I was a Cath'lic, and little girls wanted to hang out clo'es, and make thimble-cookies and things, I wouldn't treat 'em so, and say there was nails, when I meant finger-nails!"

"O, well, Dotty, Norah thinks we are try-patiences, I s'pose. Mother doesn't allow her to scold, and so she has to *manage*."

"H'm!" ejaculated Dotty, with a curling lip. But all this while the "slow clock" was busy.

"Now it is a quarter OF," said Prudy. She uttered the words as coolly as if they were of very slight importance; but Dotty's little heart beat like a drum. How often had she heard Prudy say, "It's a quarter *of*," and seen her skip out of the house, kissing her hand for good by! As the door closed after her, Dotty had always felt as if it shut herself out of something beautiful — something every way desirable.

And now it was coming, — the day and the hour. She was about to be a school-girl at last. No longer a little child, who stays at home and plays with paper dolls,

but a little woman, who goes out to learn the ways of the world.

As the two children walked on together in advance of Susy, every object looked to Dotty wondrous fair.

"Prudy," said she, confidentially, "I've played enough. I may play a little more once in a while, but not much. I want to grow a great lady, like mamma, and read poetry, and write letters."

"Yes, dear; but when you get to talking so fast, you keep pushing me into the street with your elbow."

"Do I? I didn't mean to. O, how white the world is! Looks like a frosted cake. Prudy, don't you wish you's dead?"

"No; what an idea!"

"Nor I don't, either."

"Then what made you ask if I did, Dotty Dimple?"

"O, I was only thinking about the angels' sifting down snow. Look at the drift top o' that store. So hard you could jump on it, and not leave a scar."

"Please, Dotty, keep your elbow still. Here we are at the school-house. Now remember, you must behave like a little lady."

"Needn't tell me that, Prudy Parlin. It isn't as if I was *some* girls, that don't know your A B C's. Six years old — going on seven. Can — "

Dotty was about to say, "Can tie a bow-knot," and would have added quite a list of other accomplishments; but as she found herself just then in a crowd of little girls, she very prudently closed her lips, and entered the school-room.

"Miss Parker, this is my little sister Alice," said Prudy, going up to the teach-

er; "but people know what you mean better if you say 'Dotty Dimple.' She has never been to school before; but she can read in the First Reader, if you let her spell the hard words aloud."

"Very well," said Miss Parker, with a smile. "I welcome Prudy Parlin's sister; and if she is half as good as Prudy, I shall never like to part with her to go up stairs."

Prudy slid her hand into Miss Parker's. She remembered how that warm-hearted young lady had kissed her with tears when she left the primary department.

"O, I think she'll be good, Miss Parker," said Prudy, in a low voice, while Dotty was looking out of the window; "only she never went to school in her life, and if she doesn't sit very still, I hope you'll try to excuse her."

Miss Parker gave the little pleader a hearty embrace.

Good by Dotty," said Prudy. "I must leave you now. Remember, when you go out to read, you mustn't twist your front hair."

"I never thought of twisting it, or sneezing either. Just's if—"

But Prudy was gone. Presently the bell rang, and school had begun. Miss Parker gave Dotty a seat beside a little girl in a dark-blue frock, who had eyes the color of gray stocking-yarn, and a dent in her chin so deep that Dotty was rather mortified, for it eclipsed both hers entirely.

"But, then, she isn't pretty, if she does have such a 'normous dimple, for there's a wart on her thumb, and I don't like warts."

The little girl's name was Sarah Penny, usually called Tate. She looked at the new scholar with some curiosity. Their eyes met, and then Tate smiled, showing some

irregular little teeth. Dotty smiled too, making her dimples as deep as possible. She watched Tate's chin, and was pleased to observe that the dent never moved. After this silent but friendly greeting, the two children felt a little acquainted.

"She's a real beauty," thought the good-natured Tate, gazing at her companion's lovely face without envy.

"*She* has zigzag teeth," thought the critical Miss Dimple; "but I like her."

Tate opened her Testament, and let Dotty look on with her while Miss Parker read aloud the morning chapter. It was a leather-covered Testament, and had been scratched by penknives.

"I s'pose she's a poor little girl," thought Dotty, "or she wouldn't have such an *owdrageous* old book! The outside of it 's all wrinkled up — looks like a raisin."

At this same moment Tate was thinking, "I s'pose SHE's a rich little girl, — got on a ring!"

Neither of the children, I fear, paid much heed to the reading. Tate turned back to the fly-leaf, and pointed out to Dotty the words in blue ink, "The Property of Isaac S. Penny," followed by the wonderful couplet, —

"If you don't believe this book is mine,
Please look on page thirty-nine."

Dotty could not read the writing, but was delighted with various hearts and darts, drawn in red ink, and eagles in black, with wings made of loops, and bills made of points. She thought they must have been drawn by a great genius.

After the morning exercises, she sat very prim, and looked straight before her at the blackboard.

"I don't so much as wink," thought she. "I wish Prudy could see me now."

But this unnatural stillness did not last long. Dotty very soon found that her companion had a slate, and she began to make pictures on it, swaying herself to and fro as she drew. Tate looked over Dotty's shoulders, and watched the pictures as they grew. It puzzled her a little to guess what they were meant for; and, strange to say, the little artist was quite as much puzzled herself.

"What is this thing?" whispered she to Tate. "I made it for a cat; but then, I went and put feathers in the tail, and now I guess it's a turkey."

Tate wrinkled her forehead, and eyed the doubtful picture with a wise look.

"It 'pears to me," replied she, hesitating, — "it 'pears to me more like a tea-pot."

Now, whispering was against the rule, and Dotty knew it as well as Tate; but they both thought if they put their heads together, and spoke so low that no one else could hear, there was no harm in it. At any rate, so thought Tate, for she had done it so long that her conscience was hardened.

"I'm not whispering to *you*," said she to Dotty; "I'm whispering to the slate."

Dotty stared a little.

"But you spect me to hear," said she; "so it's just the same."

When the time came for the youngest class in the First Reader, Dotty felt a little frightened.

"I can't read very well," thought she, "and p'raps the teacher'll put me down to the bottom of the foot."

But her fears were groundless; she was placed next to the head; and though the girl

above her could read as fast as a stone rolls down hill, Miss Parker said nothing about sending Dotty Dimple to "the bottom of the foot."

"I have as nice boots as they have, and ruffles round my wrist," thought the new pupil; "but they are all littler than me, and can read 'thout spelling the words out loud."

This was very humiliating. Dotty's curly head sank a little. She stepped out of line, and, closing her book, let it drop by her side.

"Raise your book, Alice, my dear," said the teacher, kindly, "and keep your finger on the place; that is the proper way."

"Yes'm," replied Dotty, demurely, and opened her Reader wrong side upward, at the same time stepping forward several inches in advance of the other girls. Tate

Penny tittered a little, and Dotty drew back in a moment.

"My mamma never made me stand in a straight line," murmured she, "and I don't know how."

Miss Parker saw Dotty's mortification, and hastened to soothe her.

"I dare say you will learn so fast," said she, "that you will make all these other little girls very much ashamed."

Dotty looked up, and her eyes brightened. "You never went to school before, I believe."

"No'm," replied Dotty, briskly, her unusual bashfulness disappearing in a moment. "No'm, I never; only, when I was at grandpa Parlin's, I went some days with Jennie Vance. My mamma used to let me read in her lap. You see she *couldn't* make me stand up in a row, 'cause I wasn't but one girl."

The other children smiled. They thought this must be a very strange child, to talk so familiarly with the teacher.

"Prudy taught me my letters," she went on: "A for ape, and B for bat — looked as if he had an umberella on him — and C for cat — a story for every one I learned. Prudy told real pretty stories, too. I can remember 'em now. But my mamma didn't have much time to 'tend to my reading; so she said, after Christmas I must go to your school."

Miss Parker pressed her lips together firmly — a habit she had when anything amused her. It was very clear to her mind that Miss Dimple did not understand the ways of a school-room. Dotty saw the other little girls looking at one another as if they were amused.

"They like to hear me talk," thought she,

throwing back her curly head. "I'll talk some more."

"Miss Parker, may I have a drink of water? 'Cause I've been eating snow; and when I eat snow it makes me thirsty. Jennie Vance used to carry a little bottle to school; but her teacher said she mustn't."

"Lina Rosenberg, it is your turn to read," remarked Miss Parker. "We will have no more talking, if you please."

The new scholar dropped her head, "like violets after rain," thinking, "O, dear, dear! what have I done now?"

CHAPTER II.

DOTTY AND TATE.

"WELL, little sister," said Prudy that evening, "how do you like going to school?"

"I don't know anything about it; you ask too many questions," replied the child, turning away suddenly.

"O, Dotty! I hope you haven't been a bad girl. Did Miss Parker have to speak to you?"

"She spoke to me—yes; what you s'pose?"

"Did you and that little Penny girl whisper, Dotty?"

"Yes. She talked to the slate, but she *meant* me."

"O, Dotty! And you answered back?"

"H'm, Prudy! D'you think I'se going to sit there and not say anything, and her a talking to me the whole time?"

"She's going to act awfully, I'm afraid," thought poor Prudy, who felt the whole care of her little sister on her own young shoulders.

"You didn't twirl your hair, and talk in the class, Dotty?"

Dotty stooped to pick up a pin which was not on the carpet.

"O, Prudy! I'm going to get me some paper, and oil it, and put it over pictures, and it'll draw splendid! With butter, you know! Shines through."

Prudy saw the flush of shame on her sister's cheeks, but did not know how keenly she was suffering.

"I wouldn't tell Prudy how the girls

laughed at me, and thought I was a *nidiot*. And the teacher too, I saw *her* laughing, inside of her sleeves. Every time I think of it I want to shut myself up in the closet."

"How did you like your school, Alice," said Mr. Parlin, as the family were all seated in the parlor after tea.

"Pretty well, sir," answered Dotty, faintly. "There was a man came in and talked. He said he learned *his* letters with a whalebone. I mean his teacher snipped him with it."

"It was the same man," said Prudy, "that came up stairs and talked to us. I guess he was a printer, for he told a story, and he said, 'The man approached the child, and found her weeping.' If he hadn't been a printer he wouldn't have said that; he'd have said, 'The man *went up* to the child and found she was *crying*.'"

"What do you mean by a printer, Prudy?"

"O, these men that write books, papa. They always use all the big words — don't they?"

Dotty was much obliged to her kind sister for leading the conversation away from the primary school, for she had been afraid some one might strike in with an awkward question.

"O, dear! I hoped I was going to have the sore throat," thought she, as she awoke next morning; "and then I could stay away from school. But nothing pleasant ever happens to me. When I want the sore throat, I can't have it; and when I don't want it, that's the very time it comes."

For several days Dotty continued to feel unhappy, and hardly dared play with the other little girls, lest they should laugh at her. But by degrees her sensitiveness wore

away, and after practising on her lessons at home till she could read without stumbling over the hard words, she became the gayest of the gay.

She drew her sled to school nearly every day, for there was enough dirty snow and ice in the yard to afford a little coasting. Several of the other children had sleds, but Lina Rosenberg had none, and, remembering the former friendship between herself and Dotty, followed her like her shadow, begging for rides.

Dotty bore this for a while; but at last her patience gave way.

"Lina Rosenbug," said she with dignity, "some days I can let you ride, and some days it may not be convenient for me to do so. I should *devise* you not to tease."

Lina pouted.

"My mother says you're a big-feeling lit-

tle girl," cried she. "You wouldn't stay to my house; you ran home, and crawled into the cellar; you know you did."

"Yes," retorted Dotty, "'cause my mamma didn't wish me to play with you, and I knew it. That's why I'd rather stay down cellar. She said you *betwitched* me, Lina Rosenbug."

Dotty was sorry, next minute, that she had spoken so unkindly.

"Now Lina never'll speak to me again," thought she. "Would *I* play with a little girl when her mamma said I *betwitched* her?"

But Dotty was quite mistaken. Lina had heard cross words all her little life, and was hardened to them. She clung to Miss Dimple only the more closely after this; which was a pity, for Dotty was really anxious to obey her mother, and keep away from the beguiling little Jewess.

Meanwhile Dotty was becoming rather intimate with her young seat-mate. She knew precisely how many dresses Tate had, and how many she expected to have; the names of her uncles and aunts; which were the good ones, that gave presents, and which were the cross ones, that made you shut the doors after you, and said, "O, *she* can skip up stairs and get my cap-box; she's just big enough to run."

In her turn Dotty related all her own adventures, both by sea and land, Tate listening with a quick twinkle of her large gray eyes, which was very encouraging.

Dotty did not spend all her time in whispering: she sometimes tried to study; but it was very hard to fix her thoughts. She would repeat a word again and again, and all the while be thinking of something else; or she would mean to look at her book, and,

instead of that, find herself watching Miss Parker, or counting the buttons on some little girl's frock.

Now, it happened that Miss Parker, though a fine teacher, and an excellent young lady, had one very foolish method; and it was this.

In the afternoon, before the school was dismissed, she asked the children to tell her if they had whispered during the day; and if they declared they had not, she smiled, and seemed very much pleased. All this would have been well enough, if the little creatures had told the truth; but, alas! they were so anxious for their teacher's smile, that they often, very often, told falsehoods.

Miss Parker had no idea she was tempting them to do wrong. She believed every word they said. If she had been more observing, she might have known that the children, who

looked so innocent, were really sad little chatterboxes. Dotty Dimple was amazed to see Tate's hand go up every night in token that she had not whispered.

"Why, Tate," said she one day, "you're just as bad as Jennie Vance! She lies, 'one to another,' and so do you!"

Tate looked grieved.

"O, Dotty Dimple! I don't do any such a thing!"

"But nights, when Miss Parker asks if we've whispered, you hold up your hand, Tate; and that's the same as to say, *you never!*"

"But I don't speak, Dotty Dimple. I shut my lips right together; and how CAN you tell a lie when you don't tell anything?"

"Well," said Dotty, hesitating, "p'raps it isn't telling a lie, but it's *doing* a lie. Miss Parker thinks you don't whisper, and then

she praises you. She never praises me, 'cause I keep my hand right down to my side. I'm a great deal better'n you are, Tate; but *she* doesn't know it."

"O, dear! I can't help it," said Tate, picking nervously at the wart on her thumb. "I don't like to get scolded at."

"Nor I either don't," responded Dotty. "Of course not — and her looking so sorry."

"Then why don't you hold up your hand?" said Tate. "She thinks you're real bad. I'd hold it up, and she'll like you a great deal better."

"I want to dreadfully, Tate. I'd rather hold up my hand than eat a choclid cake."

Dotty sighed as she spoke, and gazed sorrowfully at the beautiful teacher, whose love seemed so sweet and desirable.

"O, Tate! I've thought of something. S'pose now we try not to whisper."

Tate looked up in her companion's face to see if she was in earnest.

"Not whisper!"

"Yes; just one day."

"Why, we couldn't, Dotty; it's just no use."

"I'll try if you will," said Miss Dimple, anxiously, "'cause Miss Parker is a darling, and I want her to love me."

"Well, you may try, Dotty Dimple, but *I* shan't! I tried one day last summer, and it made me so hungry I like to died!"

Dotty said no more, but fell into a thoughtful mood.

O, how delightful it would be to have dear Miss Parker put her hand on her head, and say, with one of those beaming smiles,—

"This is my good little Dotty Dimple!"

How painful to hear her say, in a tone of displeasure,—

"Dotty, if you were only as good as Tate! Tate doesn't whisper all day long. Why don't you try to be like her?"

Ah, Miss Parker's lovely brown eyes could not have been very far-sighted, and her pretty little ears, with the coral jewels in them, were not good for much, I am sure. Dotty scowled fiercely at Tate that night, as she saw her hand rising like a little *white lie*.

"She isn't half so good as I am," thought Dotty; "but Miss Parker doesn't know it. To-morrow I'll try not to whisper, and then she'll call me a dear little girl, and it'll be the truth."

So to-morrow Dotty set out in earnest to be a good girl.

"Norah," said she, going into the kitchen at half past eight, while Prudy was busy reading, — "Norah, is there any alum in the house?"

"Slippery alum, do you mean, Miss Dotty?"

"I don't know. I guess it isn't slippery. I want a little piece about *so* big," said Dotty, exhibiting the ball of her thumb.

Norah took down a box from the highest shelf in the pantry, and, after searching a while, produced a bit of alum, and gave it to Dotty.

"But I can't see what you want of it," she said.

"Won't you ever tell anybody, Norah? It's to pucker up my mouth, so I shan't whisper."

Norah sat down upon the wood-box to laugh.

"Who put such a queer notion as that in your head, Miss Dotty?"

"O, I heard my mamma say she ate some once, when she was a little girl, and it

wrinkled her mouth all up, so she couldn't talk; but don't you tell."

"No, I won't tell; but if that is what you want it for, I shan't dare give you so much; it might make you sick. Here's a bit as big as a pea; it's all you ought to have, Miss Dotty."

The little girl put the precious morsel in her pocket, intending to eat it the last thing before she entered the school-room.

CHAPTER III.

DOING A LIE.

THE alum gave Dotty's mouth a puckery sensation; though, to her disappointment, she felt as much like talking as ever.

"But, Tate," said she, firmly, "I'm going to be good all day, as hard as I can; and I *devise* you not to try to make me speak."

This was before school began, and shortly afterwards Tate forgot the admonition, and fell to whispering, just as usual.

"Dotty, there's a boy, — his name's Daniel Page, — and he goes to church right before our pew. He acts awfully. Did you ever see Dannie?"

Dotty shook her head.

"Didn't you truly?"

Dotty shook her head again.

"Why, he lives on next to the same street you do. Didn't you *never* see him?"

Dotty shook her head with treble force.

"'Cause I was going to tell you what he did last Sunday. Do you want to hear?"

Miss Dimple's head shook as if she had the palsy.

"Well, I'm going to tell you, anyway, it was so queer. The minister he prayed, and Dannie he stood up, and turned round, and looked at me. And what do you s'pose he put into his mouth?"

Dotty was growing interested; thought of pea-nuts, taffy, licorice; but made no reply except to scowl as severely as possible.

"His hankychiff! Yes, it was. It had

red pictures over it — a lion and a man; and he stuffed it right in."

Dotty wanted to say, "Not the whole!" but shut her teeth together.

Tate proceeded.

"He poked and he poked, and he stretched his mouth open, and it kept going in, and bimeby 'twas all in, and the hem too — the whole hankychiff."

Dotty's eyes were big with astonishment.

"Yes, I saw it. His cheeks stuck out both sides, and his eyes too. I thought he was going to choke to death; and then I laughed!"

The recollection was so amusing that Tate hid behind her slate, and shook all over, while Dotty tried so hard to keep sober, that she tittered outright. Miss Parker frowned. This was a bad beginning. Dotty wished it was nine o'clock, and she could start again.

"What's the matter with you, Dotty Dimple?" said Tate. "You look as if you didn't feel pleasant."

Dotty thought there was no peace for her, and began to shake her head again in despair. The more Tate talked, the more she shook it; and while it was going like a tree in the wind, and she was bending on her friend a feebly furious scowl, Miss Parker drew near.

"Why, Dotty, I am astonished," said she, with marked displeasure; "what makes you behave so strangely to-day? You keep jerking your neck as if you meant to break it off. The children are watching you, and laughing."

Dotty tried to make an excuse, but could not think of any, and her silence seemed to Miss Parker like sullenness.

"O, dear, dear!" thought the unfortunate

child, "she thinks I mean to be naughty; and it's just 'cause I try so *dreadfully* to be good! It's no use! I may eat all the alum there is in the milliners' shops, and it don't do anything to my tongue. If it did, it's no use. Miss Parker never scolded when I whispered, and now when I don't whisper, she does!"

This was a very unpleasant reflection; it confused the child's ideas of right and wrong.

"It's 'cause I want to please Miss Parker, that I said I wouldn't whisper; but it doesn't please her — it displeases her. She'll never love me 'thout she's a mind to, and I don't mean to try."

So, when the teacher had passed down the aisle, and was hearing the primer class, Dotty turned round to Tate, and said, with a reckless smile, —

"Talk away, Tate. I give it up."

"I thought you'd give it up," replied Tate, triumphantly.

"O, I needn't if I didn't choose. I needn't speak forever 'n' ever, and you couldn't get the blade of a knife in 'tween my teeth. But I shan't; what's the use, and her looking the other way?"

"That's what I *always* told you," said Tate; "but you scolded, and said I was a naughty girl."

"Well, so you are; and I'll say it again, 'cause it's the truth. You, a-holding up your hand, and Miss Parker a-thinking you the best kind of a girl, Tate Penny! But I'm going to be naughty, too. She praises the naughty ones. O, yes; *don't* she praise 'em? and *we good ones* — O, it makes me feel cross!"

After Dotty had said this, it seemed to her she had excused herself to her own con-

science, and could go on whispering as much as she pleased. She and Tate had never whispered so much before. They watched every opportunity, when Miss Parker was busy, to keep their little tongues moving. Never did a pair of sociable pigeons, building a nest in the spring, chat more eagerly than these two children, with their heads close together, and their fingers intertwined. Every time Miss Parker happened to look that way, they were studying very hard; and she smiled, as if to say, "Good little girls! Dear little girls!"

"Very queer," thought Dotty; "she *says* it's against rules to whisper, but we can do it 'thout her scolding the leastest bit."

"Yes," replied Tate, "if I couldn't see any better 'n Miss Parker can, I'd wear spettycles."

"But she sees us when we do things she

never told us not to, and not breaking rules at all," said Dotty, scornfully. "For *ninstance*, she saw me shaking my head. Now, why couldn't I shake my head? *That* isn't against the rule!"

"No, indeed!"

"Well, but she came straight up here, and said she was *'stonished*. What made her 'stonished, when I wasn't breaking a rule?"

"She was afraid you'd break your neck," said Tate.

The day wore on, and Dotty grew more and more reckless.

"I've a great mind to hold up my hand to-night," thought she; but could not quite decide to do it. She was so busy debating the question that she hardly noticed when her spelling-class was called, and walked out behind Tate like one in a dream.

After the spelling, there came, as usual, the awful question, —

"How many have whispered to-day? All those who have not whispered may hold up their hands."

Dotty saw Tate's hand go up fearlessly, as it always did. Why not hers too?

"If I'm some bad, I might as well be all bad."

Dotty gave one glance at Miss Parker's red ear-rings, one glance of shame at her own boots, and then began to raise her left arm slowly, slowly, for *something* seemed to hold it down. It felt as heavy as an iron weight. She almost needed the other hand to help her draw it up. At the same time *something* knocked loudly at her heart, "Stop! stop! stop!"

But the arm got up at last, and nobody saw that it was as stiff as marble; it looked like the other arms that were raised, only it was in a sleeve that had a crimped ruffle round the wrist.

Miss Parker saw Dotty's hand, and her beautiful mouth was wreathed with smiles.

"Ah," cried she, "that is just what I've been wanting to see! I have looked in vain for that little hand."

Dotty gazed at a crack in the floor; for she could not meet her teacher's eye.

"My dear child," added Miss Parker, stroking Dotty's hair, "don't you feel a great deal happier to-night than usual? a great deal lighter-hearted? You don't know how this makes me love you, dear."

There it was; the praise of her teacher! Just what she had been longing for so much. But why didn't it make her happy? Happy! She was one mass of misery from head to foot. When Miss Parker kissed her so tenderly for good by, she wanted to scream, for the kiss "burnt her mouth."

"There," cried Tate, as they left the school-room, "aren't you glad you did it?"

"No, indeed," said Dotty, turning round upon her friend in a sort of frenzy, and shooting out the words like pins and needles. "What you s'pose? I should think you'd be 'shamed, Tate Penny; so 'shamed you'd want to die! Telling me to hold my hand up, when it's a *bommernibble* big black lie."

"You needn't to've done it," returned Tate, cowering before the lightning in Dotty's eyes.

"You're the wickedest girl there is in this town," went on the angry child. "Made me whisper, when I ate alum to purpose not to! Keep a-talking so I had to shake my head and make the scholars see it, and get scolded at! And then you *devised* me to tell a lie! I feel it coming up into my throat, Tate Penny; it chokes me so I can't talk. It's worse 'n if I'd said it. When you *do* a lie, it's a great deal worse."

Tate was too much overwhelmed to reply.

"But I know one thing," cried Dotty, setting her heels down firmly; "God won't blame me. He'll blame YOU. You go right home, and think how you've been acting, Tate Penny! And to-night, when you go to bed, you pray just as hard as you can!"

These words came out in a sudden gust. "Just as hard as you can, Tate Penny, for you're the one's been wicked; not me!"

Then, without a word of farewell, the children parted, Tate turning to the left with a puzzled look, as if she really did not know whether she was wicked or not, and Dotty turning to the right, her heart and throat full of choking sobs without any tears.

CHAPTER IV.

DOTTY AND HER MOTHER.

In spite of all Dotty had said about her own innocence, she felt so guilty that she was ready to sentence herself to the "penitential."

"Well, little one, how have things gone to-day?"

So said her father; for at the table she sat gazing mournfully at a piece of sponge cake.

"I don't know, papa. May I have a new slate? 'cause I've broke mine across the middle."

Mrs. Parlin, as well as her husband, no-

ticed Dotty's sorrowful face; but she made no remark till she went up stairs to put the child to bed. Then she took her into her own chamber, and seating herself in a sewing-chair, before the fire, drew Dotty into her lap. Nothing was said; but the little girl understood the action very well.

"Yes'm, I did do wrong. How'd you know it, mamma?"

After this she hid her face, and the two sat in silence for several moments, Mrs. Parlin holding Dotty's hand, and gently stroking it.

"Mamma, 'twas Tate Penny made me do it. Won't you please to not let me sit with Tate?"

"What did she make you do?"

"Made me tell a 'normous story, big as a house."

"You can't mean a lie?"

"Yes'm; I didn't *say* a lie, but *did* a lie; did it with my hand."

"What do you mean, Dotty?"

"I held it up, mamma, same's to say, I never; but I did, and the alum hadn't kept me from it; not a bit."

The little girl was quivering all over with agitation.

"By and by, when you can talk better, you may tell me what you did with your hand, and what you mean by the alum."

"O, dear, mamma! I'm all choked up, and can't talk; but 'tisn't my alum, 'cause that didn't do a thing to my tongue. Norah gave me some as big as the end of a slate pencil; but it never did a thing to my tongue. I could talk as fast as I could speak. But I wouldn't, and I didn't; and then Tate made me most shake my neck off; till bimeby I didn't care, and the teacher didn't care either. It's

against the rule; but there she sits in the desk, — Miss Parker does, — and don't hear anything, only when she's hearing classes and things; and then never looks anywhere, only right at the Reader, and picks a place in her neck."

"Don't talk *quite* so fast, dear, and then I shall understand you better."

"I said, mamma, she don't see us break the rules, 'thout she's walking up the aisle, or sometimes when she looks up quick out of a book. She says it's against the rules to whisper; but we do, and she likes us just the same; only if we don't put up our hand she don't like us, and don't praise us. I don't want her a-praising *me*, not when I've been naughty — should you, mamma? But Tate does. Tate held up *her* hand, and I didn't mean to; but the first thing I knew, I — I —"

"Why, Dotty!"

"Well, I shouldn't, not if Tate hadn't! 'Twas wicked; 'twas lying one to another, mamma; but Tate has done it five hundred million times! She's a worse girl 'n I am. O, dear me!"

"I cannot stop now to talk of Tate Penny," said Mrs. Parlin; "we must attend first to Dotty Dimple."

"Yes'm. I knew you'd 'tend to me. I don't b'lieve Tate's mother 'tends to *her*. I don't s'pect Tate knows much about the Bible, p'raps. Isn't it awful?"

Dotty picked away at the tidy on the back of the chair with an air of unconcern; but Mrs. Parlin observed that her mouth was twitching at the corners.

"Dotty!"

"Yes'm."

"You seem very anxious to set Tate Pen-

ny right. She has told a wrong story: what ought she to do about it?"

Dotty hung her head.

"Don't you know?"

"Yes'm."

"If she should say to her teacher, 'Miss Parker, I've deceived you; I'm sorry,' would that be enough?"

"No, mamma; and she wouldn't say so — Tate wouldn't."

"But why wouldn't it be enough, Dotty?"

"O, 'cause, mamma, it isn't Miss Parker she's 'bused."

"What do you mean, dear?"

"Why, 'twas somebody else — 'twas — God."

By this time Dotty's head was on her mother's bosom.

"Then you think Tate has offended her heavenly Father?"

"Yes'm, I do."

"Why do you think so?"

"O, 'cause He put it in the Bible that she mustn't tell a lie."

".Yes, dear."

"And He went and put it in another place, too," added Dotty, laying her hand on her left side; "right in here."

"True, my child."

"He put a whisper right into her heart, mamma. She can't hear it, but she can feel it, just like a watch ticking; and it says, 'Please, Tate, *don't* you tell a lie!'"

"Very well, Dotty. I am glad to see that you understand it so clearly. And now that Tate has disobeyed this whisper, what must she do?"

"Be sorry."

"Is that enough?"

"You know the rest, mamma."

"But tell, me, dear, as if I did not know."

"Ask God to forgive her," replied Dotty, with her lips close to her mother's sleeve.

"Then what must Dotty Dimple do? Hasn't she, too, been a naughty girl?"

The child slid out of Mrs. Parlin's lap, and knelt before her on the rug.

"O, mamma," said she, in a choked voice, "I'm afraid He won't forgive me."

"Are you sorry you did wrong?"

"Yes'm, I am. And 'twasn't Tate Penny made me; 'twas *me* did it myself."

"That is right, Dotty; so it was."

"But I won't hold up my hand again, 'thout it's to put my hair behind my ears. I won't do it to purpose — no, indeed!"

"Then, Dotty, you need not be afraid. 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us.'"

"Certain true, will He, mamma?"

"Yes, dear; we may always be sure of it."

Dotty sighed heavily.

"But you see, mamma, I knew I was doing a lie, and I did it to purpose."

"It was a great sin, my child; mother wouldn't say it wasn't. But if you are sorry, and tell God so, He is so 'faithful and just,' that He will certainly forgive you. He says He will."

Dotty paused a moment, while a look of relief passed over her troubled face, then whispered, brokenly, —

"O, our Father, please will you forgive me? 'Twas me did it — not Tate; and I did it to purpose; but I'm *so* sorry, and don't ever mean to do it again. For Christ's sake, Amen!"

CHAPTER V.

"THE SCREW-UP PENCIL."

"MOTHER," said Dotty, next morning, with eyes on the carpet, "I want to tell you something. Mayn't Prudy do it?"

"Do what, dear?"

"Talk to Miss Parker."

"Wouldn't it be better for you to make your own confession, my daughter?"

Dotty twisted her front hair very rapidly.

"Why, mamma, I could talk to her, you know, if 'twas about Tate Penny, how bad she is; but this is about *me*."

Mrs. Parlin reflected a moment.

"I think it would be better for you to go

to Miss Parker yourself, and tell her you are sorry you have deceived her; still, if you are not brave enough to do it, and your sister is willing, I shall make no objection."

Prudy said she was willing. Prudy was always expected to stand with a little flask in her hand, ready to pour oil on Dotty's troubled waters.

"Miss Parker," whispered she, taking the teacher aside, "my little sister has done a dreadful thing, and she can't be happy till you forgive her."

"Why, what has she done?" asked Miss Parker. "She learns wonderfully fast. I am pleased with Dotty. She gives me more trouble than my little Prudy did; but I like her very much. What has she done?"

"She told you a wrong story last night, Miss Parker. She and Tate Penny whisper the whole time; but Dotty held up her hand

in the class, and you praised her for being good; but she says your kiss 'burnt her mouth,' and the moment she got out of the school-room it seemed as if her heart would break."

"I remember I praised her," said Miss Parker, thoughtfully. "I never dreamed she had deceived me."

"Will you forgive her, Miss Parker? She wants to know if you certainly do."

"O, yes; you may tell her I forgive her," replied the teacher, still looking thoughtful. "But do you say she and Tate Penny both whisper? Tate has a very honest face; and I have never seen her whisper."

Prudy did not wonder at this; she remembered what a way Miss Parker had of *not* seeing.

"I *believe* Tate whispers," said Prudy; "but I ought not to have told of it. I'm sorry."

"I'm glad you did," returned Miss Parker. "I'm glad you did. It is just possible there may be other little girls who act the lie. I thought I could read faces, but the best of us are liable to mistakes."

Prudy hurried away, lest she should forget herself so far as to smile. After she had gone, Miss Parker called Dotty to her side.

"Your sister has been telling me all about it," putting her arm around the child. "I forgive you freely."

Dotty raised her face joyfully to meet her teacher's kiss, and this time it did not feel like a coal of fire on her lips.

"But you never will do so again, Dotty?"

"No'm, I don't think I'll ever."

"And you'll try, like a good little girl, not to whisper?"

Dotty put a corner of her apron in her mouth.

"You want me to love you, dear?"

"Yes'm."

"And can't you try not to whisper?"

"I don't dare to."

"Don't dare?"

"No'm; I'm afraid I'd break it."

"O, I only asked you to *try*."

"Yes'm; I know."

"It can't hurt you to try."

"Only it gets me cross."

"Cross, Dotty? What an idea!"

"Makes my neck ache, and face ache."

Miss Parker was amused. She did not know what the child meant.

"Yes'm, I tried yesterday, and you didn't like it — two hours — 'most three."

"Didn't like it?"

"No'm; you said you's *'stonished*. I shook my head, and shook my head, and you told me to stop."

"To be sure I did. But what had that to do with trying not to whisper?"

"O, 'cause I kept saying, 'No, no, no,' to Tate, and wouldn't answer her."

"Did she whisper to you?"

Dotty wanted to say, "Yes'm, awfully," but checked herself.

"I'd rather not say. My mamma doesn't wish me to tell things, Miss Parker. When it's sober true that people do things, she won't let me tell."

Miss Parker pressed Dotty a little closer to her side.

"Very well, my dear. But it seems that, at any rate, you talk to Tate, and it makes your neck and face ache if you don't talk; so perhaps I ought to separate you. What do you think?"

"Yes'm; no'm; I don't know."

"But I think *I* know, Dotty. I shall let

you sit with Lina Rosenberg. She is a very quiet child, and if you shut your lips together very tight, I think you may keep from whispering."

Dotty longed to say that her mother would not approve, for Lina was a naughty girl.

"Would that be telling a tale?" thought she. And just as she had decided that it would not be "a tale," and it was her duty to tell it, and just as she had opened her lips to inform Miss Parker that the little Jewess had *betwitched* her, Miss Parker rang the bell, and there was not a moment's time for another word.

The exchange was made. Dice Prosser (her true name was Lodoiska — too long for every day) was taken away from Lina, and placed with Tate, and Dotty and Lina were to sit together. It was not a pleasant ar-

rangement. Tate forgot that Dotty had called her the "wickedest girl in the world," and as the child went away, books and all, she bade her farewell with her eyes.

As for Dice, she was one of the dull ones, whom nobody either likes or dislikes. She had a half-awake look, as if she had been taken out of bed and sent to school in the middle of a nap.

"I'd rather sit alone if I was Tate," thought Dotty; "it would make me real *lonesome* to sit with Dice Prosser."

Lina gave Miss Dimple a sweet smile.

"There, now," whispered she, "I'm glad I've got somebody to talk to."

"But you musn't talk much, Lina Rosenbug, and I shan't never answer 'thout I'm a mind to."

"Why not?"

"O, 'cause I'm going to be rather good;

not *dreadful* good, but *rather* good. I've whispered too much, and now I'm going to take my screw-up pencil, and make pictures, most o' the time."

"Well, good by, Dotty Dimple."

"What do you mean by good by?"

"'Sh! I mean, don't talk any more now, 'cause Miss Parker's getting ready to walk up the aisle."

Lina began to study with all her might. Her teacher regarded her as a very good girl, because she did her mischief slyly. Lina was greatly interested in Dotty's "screw-up pencil," which had been a Christmas present, and in the afternoon tried to make Dotty use hers in exchange — a short wooden one, whose lead kept breaking off.

"But what do I want of such a thing, Lina Rosenbug? It won't mark."

"O, just squeeze it in your fingers, close

down to the tip, and that will hold in the broken pieces," said Lina, coolly. "You ought to let me use yours a while, 'cause you never lent me your sled all day yesterday."

"Nor shan't all day to-morrow! Lina Rosenbug, you take *French leave* with my things, and you know it."

The little Jewess humbled herself at once, and gave back the "screw-up pencil," which Dotty hastily dropped in her pocket, for her class was called. She thought no more about it that afternoon, being busy with her slate; and then Lina was so funny! She had a bottle in the desk with "bitters" in it, which she said her mother called "pancake drops;" very good for dropsy, if taken every five minutes, "regular." So, while they were busy drawing pictures, Lina would suddenly drop her slate and her head, and behind the covers of the desk she

and her patient, Miss Dimple, would take the medicine "regular."

"Best thing in the world to break up fevers," said Lina, gravely, as she passed the "pancake drops" to Dotty — sugar and water, with essence of peppermint thrown in. "My oldest son had the *log-jaw*, and it cured him so he died; and then my youngest, she had the whirlymajig — "

"O, Lina Rosenbug, you stop! Seems's if I should scream right out," gurgled Dotty; and as she spoke, a "pancake drop" went the wrong way, and choked her.

"Less noise in the third seat," said Miss Parker; whereupon Dotty giggled outright.

"She is growing troublesome," thought Miss Parker; "putting mischief into Lina's head, I fear."

"Do you think you've been a good girl to-day, Dotty?" asked Miss Parker, in the

spelling class. But she did not say a word to any one about the whispering, and it was a great relief.

"No'm," replied Dotty, with a discouraged sigh.

"I believe you mean well," added Miss Parker, kindly; "but you must not tempt Lina to do wrong. You are quite too full of mischief, dear."

"Not so full as Lina Rosenbug," was on Dotty's lips, but she did not let it come out.

It was at this very moment that she missed her pencil. Feeling a little nervous, she had unconsciously put her hand in her pocket.

"Why, where was her screw-up pencil?"

Dotty explored the depths of her pocket; there was no pencil there, and no hole either.

"I put it in, and I never took it out; and where *did* it go to?"

Dotty's mind went into a fog, but suddenly came out as bright as a sunbeam.

"That's why Lina wanted to keep me drinking, so I shouldn't remember; and that was when she put her hand in and took it."

Dotty could hardly wait for school to be out.

"Lina," she cried, the moment they were out of doors, "I know what you meant when you kept me drinking your bitters, and now I've found you out! Who'd you s'pose stole my screw-up pencil? *You* did!"

"Me? Me? O, what a story!"

"Yes, *you!*"

"Why, it's in your pocket, Dotty Dimple. I haven't seen it."

Dotty went on without pity.

"It was a present to me, you horrid Lina

Rosenbug! Will you give it to me, now, this minute? This minute, Lina Rosen-*bug!*"

"How can I give it to you, Dotty, when I haven't got it myself?"

"O, but you have! I almost felt you when you did it."

Lina clasped her hands together.

"I never, and I never, and I'll keep saying it forever," cried she, looking very pale.

"O, Lina Rosenbug, I knew, in the first place, I oughtn't to sit with you, when you haven't any mother to read the Bible to you —I mean she never does; but it's wicked and against the rule to steal. I tell you so if you never heard of it before, and you're an awful girl! I always knew it, ever since I went to your house and staid all night."

"But, Dotty—"

"O, you needn't say Dotty to me!"

"But I never."

"Yes, you did, for I *know!* And I'll tell my father the minute I see him! He won't 'low little girls to steal the screw-up pencils that people give me on the Christmas tree."

"O, do hear me, Dotty!"

"Yes, I hear; only you tell what isn't true, and the more you don't talk, the better you'll feel!

"O, dear! O, dear!"

"Do you feel sorry, then, Miss Rosenbug?"

"No, I'm sure I don't, Miss Dimple! Why should I be sorry, when I never did a thing?"

By this time, Lina's face, which had been very pale, was flushing crimson.

"O, you naughty, horrid girl!" cried Dotty, so loud that some of the other children could not help hearing. "You dread-

ful girl! When they take you and put you in the lock-up, and swear you to the jury, and the mayor says, 'It wasn't your screw-up pencil; little girl, what did you take it for?' *then* what'll you do, Lina Rosenbug? O, then I guess you'll be sorry!"

"Now, Dotty Dimple, do hush! Don't you see the girls are hearing?"

"Well, they ought to hear, for it's the sober, honest truth, as ever was in all this world, Lina Rosenbug!"

CHAPTER VI.

DOTTY AND LINA.

When Dotty reached home her eyes were blazing. A few tears would have quenched their fire, but she had not the "gift of tears." She ran all over the house to find her mother, and tell the story of the screw-up pencil; but Mrs. Parlin had gone out, and did not return till tea was ready. By that time Dotty was calmer, and her father only observed that her cheeks were unusually red.

"Well, chickie, how have things gone with you to-day? You have not had very good lessons, I fancy."

"Yes, sir," replied Dotty, in an excited tone. "I didn't miss but one word, and that was the teacher's fault; she put out 'saw,' but didn't say whether it was 'I saw John,' or a thing to chop wood with; so *of course*, I spelled it s-e-w!"

Mr. Parlin laughed.

"Miss Parker should be more careful how she puts out words. Is it not surprising how everybody contrives to cheat my little daughter, while she herself so seldom makes mistakes?"

Dotty did not see that her papa was joking, and feeling very much pleased with his remarks, she was about to pour out the story of her trials, when Prudy said, —

"'Saw? saw?' Is that a preposition, papa, or an adverb?"

Mr. Parlin laughed again, and remarked to his wife that he thought their children were "growing very learned."

"Prudy," said he, "you are attending the grammar school. Do you study grammar?"

"Yes, sir, and like it ever so much," replied Prudy, brightly.

"Do you know what a verb is?"

"O, yes, sir; it's a word that signifies to be, to act, or to be acted upon," was the parrot-like reply.

"Very well. Now can you tell me what is the verb in this sentence: 'John struck James with a big stick.'"

"O, yes, papa — *big stick*."

"Indeed! Why so?"

"O, sir, because the stick was what he did it with. P'raps he wouldn't have dared strike him at all if he hadn't had any stick!"

"O, what an idea!" cried wise Susy.

But her father and mother were not at all disturbed by Prudy's ignorance, and did not even try to set her right. In fact, they

thought she was too young to study grammar.

"But all this while we have not heard from Dotty," said Mrs. Parlin; "she began to speak a little while ago, and some of us interrupted her."

"O, nothing, mamma, only Lina Rosenbug's been stealing!"

"Stealing, Dotty!"

"Yes'm; my screw-up pencil."

"Are you perfectly sure?"

"Yes, mamma; my pocket was next to her, and there's where I put my pencil."

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Parlin. "Your pocket's being next to a person doesn't prove that that person has put his hand in it."

"But if she didn't, papa, who did?"

"I don't know, my daughter; perhaps nobody. How would you like it if Lina should say she knew you stole her mittens, just

because they happened to be hanging on a nail beside your cloak?"

"But, papa, I shouldn't want to steal her mittens; they're all full of holes!"

Mr. Parlin said nothing more just then. It was so hard to reason with the little girl, that one was obliged to choose one's words with care.

"In the very first place, Dotty," said her mother, "do you know you have lost the pencil? Perhaps it is laid away in a book, or in your desk, or there may be a hole in your pocket."

"No, mamma; it isn't anywhere at all, for I've looked in all those places, and there's no hole in my pocket, either. Lina was the one that took it, 'cause she liked that pencil."

"Be careful, Dotty."

"O, I'm very careful. I just know she

did it; and Mrs. Rosenbug wouldn't mind if she did."

"Dotty, I cannot allow you to talk so."

"Well, then, I won't; but I went there once, and staid all night, mamma, and that's how I know about Mrs. Rosenbug and the dog. But I couldn't make her say she did it; she kept saying she never. I devised her to give it right back. I told her I'd tell my papa, and when the mayor took her to the jurymens, *then* how'd she feel!"

"Why, Dotty, did you talk so to Lina?"

"O, I didn't say much, mamma; only told her she was an awful, wicked, horrid girl; and oughtn't I to say so, you know? for it's the black and blue truth, mamma, and you wouldn't want me to tell a lie!"

Dotty's tongue was running at such a rate that it must be stopped at once.

"You may go up stairs, Dotty, and get

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your grandmother's knitting; but do not let us hear another word about your pencil to-night."

After Dotty had gone to bed and forgotten her great wrong in a refreshing sleep, Mrs. Parlin went into the child's room, and took from the closet her little red frock. She touched it with loving hands; for there is something in the look of a little one's clothes that goes straight to a mother's heart. She wished to make sure there was no hole in the pocket. She turned it wrong side outward, and smiled as the slate pencils, empty spools, buttons, strings, bits of licorice, and wads of paper, fell into her lap.

"There is everything here *but* the screw-up pencil," said she to herself; "and I see no place where that could have crept out. But what is this?"

The skirt of the dress was lined, and just

where the pocket went in was a rent an inch long.

"She might have put the pencil in there; let me see."

So Mrs. Parlin examined, and found that a long and slender substance had dropped down to the bottom of the skirt. She put in her finger, and drew out the screw-up pencil.

"Poor little Lina! You have been unjustly accused! It grieves me that my daughter has such a hasty spirit."

Dotty was greatly surprised, in the morning, to see the pencil lying on her pillow.

"But perhaps it is not yours," said her mother; "it may belong to Tate Penny, or some other little girl."

"O, mamma Parlin, here's a place where I scratched it with a pin. What made you think I didn't know my own pencil?"

"Why, you said Lina had taken that."

"But she didn't, mamma," said Dotty, casting down her eyes.

"Excuse me, dear, but you said you 'just *knew*' she did."

"I meant — I — just *thought*."

"Ah, indeed! You only thought?"

"Yes'm."

"And just because you thought, although you couldn't know, you called Lina an 'awful, wicked, horrid girl.'"

"I truly s'posed she was, mamma," said Dotty, with her finger in her mouth.

"Your 'truly s'poses' are very cruel things, Dotty. What is going to be done with that little fiery tongue of yours?"

Dotty touched the tip of it, and felt very much as if she would like to pull it out by the roots.

"I don't know, mamma."

"Of course you will ask Lina's pardon for accusing her falsely."

"Yes'm."

"And after this I do hope my little girl will beware of hasty judgments."

"Yes'm."

Dotty was very eager to atone for her fault. The moment she saw Lina, she held up the pencil, exclaiming, —

"You didn't take it, Lina Rosenbug; now I know you didn't, for here it is; came out of my dress — and I'm sorry I said so."

"There, there, I knew you'd find it," said Lina, highly delighted.

"I shall be certain sure, next time, before I tell a person they *did* steal," added Dotty, penitently. "Will you forgive me?"

"O, yes, I forgive you," replied Lina, with a toss of her pretty head; "only you'd better not say so again. What'd you think if I should 'cuse *you* of stealing?"

"O, you wouldn't," said Dotty, quickly.

"You'd know better than to s'pose *I'd* steal."

"Why, Dotty Dimple! that's the same as to say *I* would."

"O, no, Lina, I don't think that. I wouldn't be so wicked! But I don't like to have you sit next to my pocket, though. Won't you please to change places?"

On the whole, it did not appear that Dotty's apologies had made a bad matter any better. Still she thought she had done her duty, and entered the school-room with a serene face.

Lina walked behind her, looking very sullen.

CHAPTER VII.

"BLOWING AWAY."

THINGS went on very much as usual with Miss Dimple. Lina did not quite forgive her for her unjust suspicions; still the two little girls chatted together, and seemed to be friends, for Lina knew how to keep her anger out of sight.

"But I don't like to sit with her, though," said Dotty to Tate. "I don't think she's very *respectiful*."

"I don't think she is, either," responded Tate, rolling those eyes of hers, which, Dotty said, looked like little bits of balls of gray stocking-yarn, with a black pin in the mid-

dle. "I don't think she is, either, and I know why."

"Why she isn't respectiful?" said Dotty.

"Yes; you tell me why *you* think so, and then I'll tell you why *I* think so."

"Well, 'cause," said Dotty, "her mother sells *locker* beer, and snips with a thimble, and keeps *such* a dog; and then they — O, I don't know what; but they don't seem very respectiful at that house. Now *you* tell why."

"I think it's because there's so much dirt on her dresses," said Tate, lowering her voice; "and that's what I always thought."

"There isn't any more dirt on her dresses than there is on her aprons," rejoined Dotty, "and not quite so much; but any way, I don't want to sit with her, and she keeps me whispering just as much as you do."

"Nor I don't like to sit with that Dice

Prosser," said Tate; "she's just like a rubber baby."

"Look here, Tate: you and I are the best kind of friends."

"Yes, indeed, Dotty Dimple."

"When I said you's the wickedest girl there is in this state, I didn't mean so, Tate!"

"Of course you didn't mean so, for you couldn't," replied good-natured Tate.

"No! I like you ever so much," said Dotty, with emphasis, "only I don't like you about your holding up your hand, nights, for that's a lie."

"But I haven't held it up for the longest while, Dotty Dimple."

"No; because Miss Parker has stopped asking if we whisper. What you s'pose made her stop? You'd do it just the same, Tate, if she asked us; but then I forgive

you; you are some bad, but not so bad as Lina Rosenbug. It can't hurt me if you do tell stories with your hands, and I want to sit with you again."

"And so do I want to sit with you, Dot Dimple."

"Miss Parker's such a darling," continued Dotty, "and that's what I began to say in the first place: who knows but if we ask her in just the prettiest way —"

"Not to-day, but to-morrow," said Tate; "wait and I'll wear my ruffled apron, and we'll go up to her together and tell her —"

"O, no, Tate, we mustn't tell her Lina isn't respectiful! P'r'aps she doesn't know it, and it would be telling a tale. We'll take hold of hands, and say, we want to be together, 'cause we're the best friends that ever was, and mean to be as good as ladies."

"Yes, that's it," said Tate; and the chil-

dren parted at the foot of a blackened elm, which they called "the half-way tree." It was the place where they usually parted at night with a mutual kiss.

It happened that the next day was stormy, so Tate could not wear her ruffled apron.

"It looks as if we were going to have a heavy snow-storm," said Mrs. Parlin, looking out of the window. "Edward, is it best to let Alice go to school?"

"O, yes, I think so," said Mr. Parlin, "you are not very tender — are you, chickie?"

Dotty had two little front pockets in her wrapper, and they were full of pop-corn.

"No, papa," said she, "I'm ever so tough," and went on sprinkling salt into her pockets from the salt-box with holes in the top. "No, papa, I want to go to school to-day very *partic'lar*. I wouldn't stay at home if the snow came down as big as this pop-corn."

So Dotty was put into a water-proof cloak, and went with her two sisters; no more afraid of the storm than a snow-bird wrapped in his feathers.

"You here? O, ho!" said Tate, putting her arm around Dotty; "they like to not let me come; but I told 'em you and I had some business."

"That's what I told my mother," said Dotty; "now let's go right up to Miss Parker, and ask her."

"No, I *dassent*, Dotty Dimple, my heart beats so; let's wait till noon."

The children waited, and meanwhile it snowed as if the sky were falling. Down fell the flakes, and the wind, whistling in glee, played with them, blowing them hither and yon. The air was so full of the white mass that Dotty thought the whole world looked as if it was shrouded in spotted lace.

And presently it was not like lace; it was like sheets waving to and fro; and you could barely catch the faintest glimpses of trees and houses. It seemed as if the children in the school-room were shut out from the rest of the world; yet the door that shut them out was made of the softest snow.

"I had no idea of such a storm," thought Miss Parker; "how are all these children to get home to dinner?"

But very soon the principal of the grammar school, up stairs, sent her a note, saying it was thought best not to dismiss school at noon, but have "a long session."

Miss Parker was glad of this, for she knew, if her little pupils went home, their parents would not be likely to send them back in the afternoon. She heard all the morning lessons, and then gave a half hour's recess, telling the children they might walk

about the room and whisper; but they would not wish, she said, to go out of doors in such a storm.

There was a deal of buzzing and promenading. Tate and Dotty marched around, holding each other by the hand, and humming "John Brown," under breath.

"Now's the time to go up to Miss Parker; she's only eating an apple," said Dotty.

"No, I dassent yet; let's wait till just before the bell rings," replied easy Tate, who never would do anything disagreeable till the last minute.

"Well, then," said Dotty, "let's go to the window and look out. Did you *ever*, Tate Penny? Don't you s'pose angels have wings?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, don't you s'pose, when the little boys-and-girls angels get to playing up there, the small feathers pop out?"

"I don't know."

"And neither don't I; only P'R'APS they do, and p'r'aps that's snow."

"The Bible don't say so," said Tate, "and besides, they wouldn't play hard enough."

"O, but the angels have such tender wings," said Dotty, confidently. "Now, if you had 'em on *your* back, and I should hit you just so — not hard a bit — how the feathers would fly!"

To make her meaning clear, Dotty gave Tate's shoulder a gentle pat, which would have done no harm if Tate had not been resting on one foot; but as she was, and the floor just in that spot was slippery, she fell against a desk, and made her nose bleed. She used first her own handkerchief, then Dotty's, till both were drenched, and Dotty had a wild impulse to offer her the pockets of her wrapper.

"O, dear, I'm so sorry, Tate Penny! Your nose is just like an inkstand; every time anybody touches it, it tips over."

"It isn't any matter," whispered Tate, "only I shall bleed the floor, and bleed my dress. I want to go home, and haven't any apron on."

"Here, take my slate, Tate Penny, and the sponge, too, while I ask Miss Parker if I mayn't go home with you."

"Tate has got the nose-bleed, Miss Parker," said Dotty, "both sides of her nose, and I was the one that did it, but 'twas *untennyshal*. Mayn't I take her home before she bleeds the house all up? She's got it real hard, both sides, Miss Parker."

The earnest look in Dotty's eyes was not to be resisted. Miss Parker forgot the weather, and consented. She knew Tate lived very near the school-house; but she

did not reflect that in this whizzing storm it was almost unsafe for such young children to walk even a short distance.

The little girls hurried on their cloaks and hoods, and started out, Miss Parker going into the entry with them, and giving Tate her own handkerchief, saying, —

"Use snow, my dear. I wouldn't come back to school, for you won't feel like it. Dotty, perhaps you'd better not go; it's a terrible storm, and Tate can do as well alone."

But Dotty insisted, and Miss Parker said no more. If she had only opened the outside door she would have seen at once what an imprudent thing she was allowing the children to do; but instead of opening the door, she turned and entered the schoolroom.

Dotty and Tate passed out into the storm.

The wind shrieked at them like some wild animal, and rushed upon them as if it were seeking its prey.

"O, O, Tate Penny," said Dotty catching her breath, "it's going to blow us to which ways!"

"There's snow enough, and more too; but I can't — catch it," gasped Tate, "to stop my — nose with — for the wind won't let me — keep still a — mi—mi—minute."

"Why, why! here I am, blowed down," cried Dotty; and next moment Tate blew down too.

"Let's go back to school," said she, with a tremulous sigh.

But this was not to be thought of, for as they turned around, they were choked by a powerful gust.

"'Twill blow us *out*," wailed Dotty, feeling like a feeble candle breathed upon by a giant.

Tate's nose had ceased to bleed; but as they were now outside the school-yard, they decided to keep on, especially as they could not help it.

"We don't walk," observed Dotty, helplessly; "we blow."

Still it was a hard struggle, for the snow was very deep indeed.

"What store is this?" said Tate, suddenly, after they had waded along in moody silence for quarter of an hour. "*What* store is it?"

"Don't you know the way to your own mother's house?" returned Dotty, falling head first into a drift.

"Yes; but where are we going to now? There used to be, O, Dotty, there used to be a house here, and now it's a *store*."

"Tate Penny, I never saw such a girl!"

"Yes, it is, I mean it was; and now what's this?"

"Why, it's a burnt place," said Dotty; "don't you know anything, Tate?"

"A burnt place? We don't live near a burnt place. I don't know where we are any more," said Tate, sitting down and beginning to cry.

Dotty looked around quite bewildered. Neither did she know where they were. She presumed they must be in Portland, for they had not had time to be blown out of the city. Yes, it was Portland; but what street? The late fire had swept away all the old "landmarks," and where there had been buildings were now only black ruins. Tate and Dotty were not the first who had been confused by these heaps of brick and mortar; many older people had lost their way that winter.

Dotty tried to peer through the moving sheets of snow-flakes, but only grew more and more confused.

"This must be somewhere else," concluded she, "somewhere else — a great way off."

"May be it's Cape 'Liz'beth," said Tate, crying afresh.

"Tate Penny, get up, or you'll die; that's the way to freeze to death."

"I want to die," moaned Tate.

"You stop it; stop dying this minute," screamed Dotty.

Tate rose drearily, but let the wind blow her down again.

"O, dear, Tate Penny, I wish your nose didn't bleed so easy!"

"Well, it does; but when I'm dead it won't."

"Tate, Tate, we can't ever be buried in the *stemmitry!*"

"Why not?"

"'Cause, we shall blow into the Stiftic Ocean."

"Do you s'pose we'll die?" said poor Tate, her eyes dripping icicles.

"No, *I* shan't," replied Dotty; "but you said *you* should."

Tate really did not know whether to keep her word or not. She thought she did not care.

"But if you do die, you'll be dreadful 'shamed of it," went on Dotty; "and there won't anybody pity you."

"I'm willing to go," said Tate, wringing her hands, "I'm willing to go, and keep going; but I don't know where to go to."

As she spoke they had reached a corner. "Where to go to," they might well ask, for the wind started up afresh, and, instead of blowing two ways, it blew four. It sent the children towards the west, and in the next instant hurled them north, against a lamp-post.

"I shouldn't think it need to act so to us little girls," said Tate, despairingly.

"O, dear," cried Dotty. "O, *dear*, dear, Tate Penny, I'm going to give up!"

Tate shrieked aloud. If Dotty gave up they were certainly lost.

CHAPTER VIII.

IS YOUR NAME SOLOMON?

All this while, Mr. Parlin, doing business in the city, and his wife, sewing by her cheerful fire, had neither of them felt any anxiety about their children. Why should they? They supposed them safe at school.

At one o'clock, as the storm was still increasing, Mr. Parlin went after them with a horse and sleigh. Susy and Prudy muffled themselves and danced down stairs in high glee, for such a fearful storm as this was an event in their lives. But where was Dotty? Their father came out of the primary room with a pale face, and Miss Parker followed him, repeating, —

"I am sure, Mr. Parlin, there is nothing to fear. She only went to Mrs. Penny's with Sarah — not an eighth of a mile. You turn down —— street, and it is the first house you see on the right, — brown, with green blinds."

"Yes, yes, I understand, Miss Parker; but I wonder you dared let such little ones go out of the yard. I trust it is all right; but if I were in your place, I would not allow it again."

Mr. Parlin told Susy and Prudy to wait while he went to Mrs. Penny's with the sleigh. Of course, when he got there, the Pennys knew nothing about the children, and were in a great fright on being informed that, more than an hour ago, Tate had started for home with Dotty.

Mrs. Penny was a widow; she had no one to send in search of her missing child but

her son Ben, a lad of fourteen, who was just recovering from a slow fever.

"I must go, mother," pleaded Ben; "I can't stand it to sit here and do nothing."

His mother helped him draw on his overcoat, and then, with trembling fingers, she wound a shawl about his hectic cheeks.

"You go down by the Back Cove, and I'll drive to Munjoy," said Mr. Parlin, hoarsely.

But first he had to go to the school-house for Susy and Prudy. He would have let them wait, but feared their mother would be anxious. He hurried them home with scarcely a word. They ran into the house very merrily, just as he had meant they should do; and when their mother cried out, —

"Ah, my little snow-images, where's Dotty?" they said, gayly, —

"O, she's gone to Tate Penny's; father went for her; it's something about the nose-bleed."

Mrs. Parlin did not think twice of the matter. She had as much as she could do to shake the children's clothes, and listen to their lively prattle about the snow-storm.

"Was there ever anything like it when you were a little girl?" said one. "And can there be a *flood* of snow? The rainbow isn't any sign, is it, only about the rain?" said another.

"It appears to me," remarked Mrs. Parlin, looking at the clock, "your papa is gone a long while. I thought Mrs. Penny lived very near?"

"So she does," answered Prudy. "I'm afraid Tate is sick."

Mrs. Parlin feared so too, and that her husband was needed to go for the doctor. It must be dreadful, she thought, for people to be sick in such a terrible storm. It had not occurred to her, as yet, to be alarmed about her child.

The storm was all this time increasing, till Mr. Parlin could see neither the road nor his horse, and the poor animal scarcely knew whether he was wading through clouds or snow-drifts.

"It certainly is not strange the children should lose their way," thought Mr. Parlin. "I must have a care, or I shall lose mine, too."

As his horse was only a hinderance, he took him back to the stable, and pursued his way on foot.

Now we will return to the little ones, and see what they were doing.

Dotty had said she was going to give up; still she struggled on, and Tate followed, crying out, —

"If we die you'll say 'twas me did it; but who hit my nose?"

"O, Tate, I don't want to talk. I don't *want* to talk!"

"And who tried to go back to the schoolhouse, Dotty Dimple, but you wouldn't? And then we'd have been alive now!"

Dotty did not listen. She was thinking about the whooping-cough. Had she been saved from it in her babyhood, and lived six years, to meet with such a doom at last?

"My mamma said I had the whooping-cough so my face was purple. She thought I'd die in it; but I never. I lived over it, and the purple went off, and I've been alive ever since till to-day. O, my mamma didn't think this morning how I was going to die before she'd see me again! She'd have kissed me a million times for good by; she'd have hugged me like everything! And then, after she'd cried her eyes out, she'd have said, 'Dotty, take off your

water proof, dear; I don't want my little girl to go to school and never come home any more.'

"My father didn't know what he's doing, when he said I wasn't tender! He thought I'd cough to death when I was little; he didn't know this was a great deal worse 'n the whooping-cough."

Unhappy Dotty! Unhappy Tate! Two forlorn little creatures, fighting against a terrible fate!

"There don't anybody care what 'comes of us," said Dotty aloud, at last. "There isn't anybody anywhere, Tate Penny, and nothing in this world but just snow!"

"O, dear," echoed Tate, hugging herself. "I never was so cold but just once, and then my mother rolled me in a shawl."

"You never'll see your mother again," said Dotty, in a hard tone, as if she took a

grim pleasure in it; "never again; nor your house, nor your brother Ben, nor your little sister Tid. O, no! Just 'cause your nose bleeds so easy."

"You stop saying that, Dotty Dimple; it's bad enough —"

"O, Tate, what you s'pose I care about your nose? Miss Parker was the most to blame. Only think, little things like us, in the *Primary's* Department! And to send us off to freeze!"

"She'll feel dreadfully to-morrow," said Tate; "don't you believe they'll put it in the papers?"

"I see something black," exclaimed Dotty, "it's a boy!"

At that moment Enoch Rosenberg approached, his face almost hidden under a cloth cap and red comforter.

Dotty sprang upon him.

"O, Solly," cried she, "Solly Rosenbug! *Is* your name Solomon? I know your *brother's* is!"

"No; my name's Enoch," replied the tall youth. "There's only one Solomon in the family. Is this the little Parlin girl? What are you doing down this way?"

"O, Solly, Solly," gasped Dotty; and then her strength failed, and she sank at his feet.

Of course Tate did not keep up another second after that, but fell across Dotty with a smothered groan.

"Here's pretty doings!" thought Enoch; "two little young ones froze to death, and no house in sight! What were their folks thinking of, to let 'em out in such a trimmer of a storm? None o' *my* business; much as I can do to take care o' myself."

But Enoch had a heart, after all, and could not leave the children to perish. He took

Tate in his arms, she being the lighter of the two, and, as he could see, the fainter-hearted, and bade Dotty follow.

"I can't," said she, feebly.

"Nonsense! yes, you can, too."

Dotty did not rise.

This would never do. Enoch held up Tate with his left hand, and with his right raised Dotty and shook her fiercely.

"Now come along," said he; "if you don't, I'll call the dog."

Dotty roused at once. Enoch's words scattered the mist which was spreading over her thoughts, just as his mother's scolding scattered the cobwebs from the rafters. Dotty found she was not dead yet, and, more than that, she was not going to allow herself to be killed by a dog that belonged to the Rosenberg family. So she clung to Enoch, and struggled on. She hardly knew

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whether it was hours or minutes, for time was in a blur, like everything else; but by and by they came to a house.

Enoch walked in without knocking. A woman, with a baby in her arms, cried out, "Mercy on us!" dropped the baby into a cradle, and, seizing Tate, began to pull off her hood and cloak.

"Fly round, Martha Jane," said she to her daughter; "take the other one, and rub her hands as quick as you can! Susan Ellen, fetch the camphor-bottle! Where did these children come from?"

And without waiting for an answer, she ran for hot water and ginger.

"Drink this," said she, coming back with a steaming bowl, whose contents she stirred with a spoon. She was almost obliged to open the little girls' mouths before she could make them swallow.

"O, mother," said Martha Jane, tearfully, "don't you remember the lamb I told you about last year, at uncle Sam's? how stiff its little jaws were? We had to hold them apart, just this way, to pour down pepper tea."

Dotty looked up at the big girl in a green dress with a foolish smile.

"Am I a little sheep?" thought she, and closed her eyes.

She felt somebody tucking her into a warm bed. Her clothes had been removed, and there were nice blankets and shawls wrapped about her from head to foot. Then she fancied she was a baby with a purple face, dying of whooping-cough. That there was such a little girl as Tate Penny, she had quite forgotten. And Tate, who lay near her, had forgotten all about Dotty, and her own unfortunate nose. Mrs. Har-

ris stood watching them with enough motherly kindness in her heart to have warmed them, body and soul.

"Bless the little dears, they look all right now, and will be asleep in two minutes; but I assure you, Martha Jane, I thought, when they first came in, it was a pretty hard chance; they wouldn't have stood it out doors much longer."

Enoch was waiting in the next room. He was glad to hear the children were doing so well; but he did not say so, and hurried away with a cross face, as if he had already wasted a great deal of time.

"Call at Mrs. Parlin's without fail," said Mrs. Harris, "or else at the school-house."

"It's a good two miles to either place," grumbled Enoch; "and it isn't exactly summer weather, you'd better believe."

"O, but their folks must be told where

they are!" persisted Mrs. Harris. "Do go — there's a good boy! I've nobody but girls, and can't send!"

Enoch slammed the door after him, leaving kind Mrs. Harris in a fever of uncertainty whether he meant to go to Mr. Parlin's or not.

CHAPTER IX.

A LONG NIGHT.

Mr. Parlin found it very hard to push his way through the drifts, with the storm beating on all sides, and every snow-flake pricking like a needle. He thought of Ben Penny, and was almost afraid the sick lad would perish. It seemed to make very little difference which direction he took, since one was as likely to be right as another. As he was going down Congress Street, some one touched his arm.

"Look here, sir; be you Mr. Parlin?"

Enoch Rosenberg had spent several years with a farmer in the backwoods, and did

not talk very correctly. "The school-mistress says you're round after that little girl o' yourn."

"Yes, yes; what do you know of her?"

"Why, I've come to tell you she's safe and sound, and t'other little one too."

"Are you sure? Is it true? Where are they? Speak quick!"

"At Mr. Harris's — two miles off — no, considerable scant of two miles — down yonder. They'd have been as dead as door-nails, both of 'em, if I hadn't happened to have catched up with 'em. One of 'em, she hollered out to me, and then they fell down, one top o' the other, as near froze as ever you see."

"But how do you know they are safe now; tell me that!"

"I took 'em to Mr. Harris's; that's how I know. I had to scold considerable sharp,

and make believe I'se going to set a dog on 'em, afore I could bring 'em to."

Mr. Parlin drew his hand across his eyes. He could not bear to think his tender child had been in such horrible danger.

"What is your name, my young friend?" said he, offering his hand to Enoch; "and how did you know me? Call round to my office to-morrow; I want to see you again. This is not the time or place to thank you as you deserve."

Enoch's black eyes glittered. He understood that Mr. Parlin meant to give him some money, and this was just what he had expected, for he remembered the liberal reward bestowed on his mother for taking care of Dotty a day or two.

"Yes, sir," replied he, thinking, "he'll come down with something handsome! I ain't a mite afraid but he will. Guess

I wouldn't a' taken this tramp for nothing!"

Mr. Parlin hastened to Mrs. Penny. He found her pacing the floor, and staring straight before her with fixed eyes.

"Good news," said he; "the children are safe."

Mrs. Penny screamed as if he had struck her.

"Safe," repeated he; "they are at Mrs. Harris's. I know the woman — one of the kindest souls living."

Mrs. Penny screamed again, and wrung her hands. Mr. Parlin feared she was losing her reason; but very soon tears began to flow, and the weight on her brain gave way.

"If you can rest easy," said Mr. Parlin, "I do not think it will be best to bring the children home to-day. After this great fright and exposure, they need rest."

"O, no; don't go for them," cried Mrs. Penny. "I beg you won't go for them; I can't have my little Tate face such a storm again!"

Mr. Parlin turned to open the door; but Mrs. Penny was too excited to stop talking.

"Only think of my letting her go to school to-day! She said to me, 'O, ma, I must go; for Dotty Dimple and I have an engagement!' She thinks there's nobody like Dotty Dimple!"

Mr. Parlin turned the knob, but Mrs. Penny continued.

"The child came home one night very much agitated, and wanted to know why I didn't make her be good, like Dotty Dimple. I told her I couldn't; she must try for herself. 'But, ma,' said she, 'you ought to pray to me, and make me be good; that's what Dotty Dimple's mother does to her!

Dotty says, if our Nancy put her to bed, she shouldn't be any better 'n me!'"

Mr. Parlin laughed.

"Our little daughter thinks very well of herself," said he; "and that is the most discouraging thing about her. Good by, Mrs. Penny. To-morrow, as soon as the storm is over, I will go for the children."

"Good by, sir; and send my boy back, if you find him."

"Good by, thir," said a little dumpling of a girl, called Tid, peeping out from behind the closet door.

"My precious Tate," thought Mrs. Penny, earnestly; "if I ever get her home again, I will take more pains with her. I presume Nancy doesn't hear her say her prayers half the time. She seems inclined to tell wrong stories lately; who knows but I could break up the habit, if, as Dotty Dimple says, I put her to bed myself?"

Mr. Parlin overtook Ben Penny, and helped him home. By that time he longed for shelter: but how could he rest until he had seen for himself that Dotty was safe? The Rosenberg boy had no doubt intended to tell the truth, but there might be some mistake; so the anxious father went all the way to Mr. Harris's, and, when he arrived there, found the children fast asleep.

"Do stay and rest yourself, sir," said Mrs. Harris. "You look as if you couldn't walk another step."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Parlin; "an hour's rest would be very welcome; but I dare not take it; it is growing late."

The tired man set out again. By the time he reached home, he was so exhausted that he could scarcely speak.

"Why, my dear husband, what is the matter?" said Mrs. Parlin; "and where is Dotty?"

"Safe," replied Mr. Parlin from the depths of a sofa pillow, "safe!"

"Safe?"

"Yes, at Mrs. Harris's."

"At Mrs. Harris's, Edward? What is she doing there?"

"Having a good nap."

"Sleeping at this time of day?"

"Yes; you see she got thoroughly chilled."

"Chilled?"

"Yes; she and that Penny child lost their way?"

"Lost their way? When? Where?"

"Going from the school-house to Mrs. Penny's."

Prudy was excessively amused.

"Why, papa, the road isn't any longer 'n my little finger!"

"But this snow, my dear, is a great deal deeper than your finger. I fear we shall

hear of sad accidents, for it will prove one of the worst storms ever known in New England."

It was a fearful night. The wind shrieked and rattled the windows, and shook the storm-door. One would have thought a legion of wretched, starving beggars were prowling about the house, pleading to be let in. And still it was nothing but the wind.

"I wish my children were all at home," sighed Mrs. Parlin, every time the shrieks wakened her. "I know Mrs. Harris will take good care of Dotty; but I don't like to have my little girl away from me on such a night as this."

At the same time Dotty Dimple was lying in a room whose walls were papered so strangely, that she thought the pictures kept her awake even in the dark. A boy pump-

ing water for some cows — she wondered why the water didn't freeze; and a lady "jumping the rope with a shawl." Then the bedstead had very high posts, with a ball stuck upon every one, like a head on a pin.

"People do have such queer things in their houses that it keeps me awake," thought Dotty, who had been asleep most of the afternoon.

"And there's Tate, now — nothing keeps her awake. I wish she was; but I don't dare touch her for fear she'll have the nose-bleed."

The wind seized the house between its teeth and shook it.

"O, my!" thought Dotty, "where are we going to? S'pose this house should blow to Europe, and my father's house should blow to Boston! But there needn't anybody think I can help it, for I can't. It wasn't running

away. Miss Parker said we might; and I don't s'pect my papa knows this minute."

Dotty was so homesick that Mrs. Harris had not mentioned her father's visit.

"That Solly Rosenbug, that's called something else, — I've forgot his name, — he won't remember to tell him. My father 'll have to print me in the papers. 'My daughter Alice, with a calico wrapper on. Have you seen her? Little pockets in, and a pair of red mittens.' Nobody has ever seen me, the snow was so thick; and when they are so scared they can't speak a word, then I shall get there; but not go through the cellar window, though, 'cause I didn't run away, and couldn't help it. I was doing just right.

"How they'll feel! And what's the first words grandma'll say? I know. She always says 'em after I've had a dreadful time, and didn't get drowned, or die, —

"'He gave his angels a *charger of*, concerning thee.'

"I don't know what she means by an 'angel a charger of.' P'r'aps 'twill be Solly Rosenbug, she means; but she don't know how he looks, or she wouldn't call *him* an angel!"

It was a long night to Dotty. For the endless space of two hours she lay sad and homesick, thinking how dreary it was without her mother. In the morning the storm was past; but the wind, which had not slept a wink all night, started up as fresh as ever. When Dotty looked out of the window, there lay the world, all dead and buried, nothing to be seen but mounds of snow.

"The streets are gone," said Dotty, "and everything else. You could ride top o' the houses, and not know the difference. The trees look as if they were sound asleep and

being rocked, with their night-caps on. Horses sleep standing up; so do trees, too."

"My mother didn't sleep," said Tate. "I know she must a' laid awake and cried. She can't eat a speck o' breakfast, and Nancy'll bring her some toast in bed."

"My mamma never eats in bed," said Dotty; "she doesn't think it's proper; but she'll look paler'n your mother does, for I'm her youngest child!"

"Did you think my mother didn't love me as well as she did Tid?" asked Tate, in an injured tone, tracing a little rivulet with her finger-nail on the frosted pane.

"O, dear! I don't care how much she loves you, Tate, if my father'd only come and take me home."

"Cheer up, children," said Mrs. Harris; "he'll be here soon; just as soon as the men

can cut a road through the drifts. Now come and eat your breakfasts, dears."

"She heard what you said, Tate Penny! You always talk so loud!" whispered Dotty.

CHAPTER X.

SAFE AT HOME.

It was nearly noon before Mr. Parlin could go for the children. Dotty was received at home as joyfully as if she had been gone on a long journey.

"Kiss me all you're going to, Prudy," said she, as she sat in her mother's lap, with her sisters kneeling before her, "'cause, when you've kissed me enough, I want to put some *canther ice* on my lips, the wind has scorched 'em so."

"It's splendid that you didn't freeze," said Susy; "but what is the reason you are always getting into such awful fixes, Dotty Dimple?"

Dotty sat upright and looked down on Susy with an air of injured innocence.

"It wasn't *my* fix this time, Susy Parlin; it was Tate Penny's. And do you think my conscience pricks? No, indeed!"

"O, no," said Prudy, quickly; "it is so different —"

She was about to add, "from running away," but checked herself.

"Yes, Prudy, I didn't run away this time, truly; I *blowed* away. Why, I couldn't have helped it, mamma, not if I'd been the mayor, and 'bliged to put myself in the lock-up for it!"

"No, dear; we understand."

"I didn't think I'd ever sit in my own mother's lap again. I gave up, and my head went tipside over. Then Solly Rosenbug said he'd set the dog on me. There wasn't any dog! I shouldn't think he'd talk so to a

froze girl — should you? that never did a thing, only hold on to his jacket?"

"But, dear," said grandma Read, chafing Dotty's hands, "through the mercy of God, the boy saved thy life!"

"I s'pose so," said Dotty, solemnly; "was he an angel *a charger of?*"

"What does thee mean, Alice?"

"No'm, I didn't s'pose he was; I knew he wasn't."

Dotty hastened to change the subject.

"Grandma'll think I'm a *nidiot*," she reflected, "to call *him* an angel, with a comforter on, and fibbed about a dog!"

"Mamma, what is the sky made of, that makes it so blue?"

"What we call the sky, Dotty, is only atmosphere, or air. I cannot explain it to you; it seems blue because it is so far away."

"Why, that was what made *me* so 'blue' last night, 'cause *I* was so far away."

"Pshaw!" said Susy; "it's nonsense for such a little girl as you are to talk about the 'blues.' If you have them so much, I'm afraid they'll settle in your nose, and you'll be a 'Blue Nose,' like Norah."

"O, what did Norah say when I didn't come home? I'm going out to see."

"Norah," cried Dotty, bursting into the kitchen, "you never came in to ask if I was froze to death!"

Norah set down her flat-iron and kissed the child.

"Didn't I know for sure you wasn't last night, when your father came home and told us? And wouldn't it have broke my heart if you'd died in the storm?"

"Would it, though, Norah? Then your heart must be hard; a soft one couldn't break!"

"Well, well, Miss Dimple, you're the first one ever told me my heart was hard!"

"Turn your face round, Norah. Why, 'tisn't blue; the end of it's red?"

"What's red?"

"Your nose. I *thought* it wasn't blue!"

"Pretty talk that is, now," exclaimed Norah, angrily. "If mother and I had come straight from Ireland, it's Paddies we'd be. But if we stopped in Nova Scotie, it's Blue Noses; and that's all the manners there is in this country, for sure."

Dotty was rather glad to have made a sensation.

"It's 'cause your mother is so far away, Norah; that's why they say her nose is so blue, like the sky up there. I cannot explain it to you, but that's the reason why."

Norah's little flash of temper died out in a laugh. She would not allow herself to be angry with such a simple little child.

"Never mind about noses," said she, pleasantly." Here's something I baked for you this morning."

It was a little custard pie, with a delicate surface of sugar frosting.

"O, thank you, ever so much! I'll never call your nose blue again. Your mother's is, but yours isn't."

Dotty skipped away to show the pie to her sisters.

"Norah wouldn't have made it if I'd run away. Nobody blames me this time; how can they, Prudy, when I did just right?"

Little thrills of exceeding joy danced through and through Dotty's heart. It was so seldom she got into trouble when she "wasn't to blame," and could say she had done "just right"!

"What do you find in that paper that interests you so much, my dear?" said her fa-

ther, as he saw her eagerly spelling out the advertisements in the Portland Press.

Dotty did not reply at once. She did not like to confess that she had been looking for her own name, "Alice Parlin, a little girl with a red calico wrapper, and little pockets in." But no such name appeared. There seemed to be very much said about silk, and soap, and lard, and nails; but nothing at all concerning two little girls who had lost their way in the storm. Dotty concluded the mayor had not heard of it.

"Are you sure you know all your letters, Alice?" said Mr. Parlin, quite amused by her earnestness.

"O, papa, what an idea! When I've known them for years and years, and been to school in the *primary's* department in the First Reader up to the head three times!"

"I beg your pardon, my dear!"

Dotty thought she would give her father a proof that she could read.

"Papa," said she, looking up from the newspaper, with quite a grown-up expression of face, "who is *Scat?*"

"*Scat?* What do you mean, Alice?"

"O, there's a man in this paper called *Scat*, and it's such a funny name, I wanted to know where he lived."

Dotty passed the Press to her father, pointing to some votes in a recent election. "Jones 110, Fling 106, Scat. 45." "*Scat.* does not mean any one in particular," said Mr. Parlin, laughing; "it merely stands for 'scattering.'"

"But it *said* Scat.," returned Dotty, indignantly.

She had expected her father to express some surprise at her progress in reading. She would be careful next time, and choose

a better newspaper; the Portland Press said one thing when it meant another.

Mrs. Parlin thought Dotty was not well enough to go to school that afternoon.

"I don't know what Miss Parker 'll think," said the child; "she always looks to see if *I* am there."

But Dotty was not at all sorry to be sitting between her mother and her grandmother, making a book-mark, while the wind whistled at the windows, and the fire glowed in the grate.

"You needn't try to get in here, old Wind," said she, shaking her sampler fiercely; "you can't get through the double windows! O, mamma, it doesn't seem much as it did yesterday, with me a-blowing to which ways, and thought I shouldn't live to get home — hadn't any h-o-p-e," added she, quoting from her book-mark.

"We will try to be very thankful you were spared," said Mrs. Parlin, kissing the earnest little face.

"Yes, thee could easily have died," said Mrs. Read; "but the Lord willed it otherwise."

Dotty held her needle in the air, and looked into the coals. There was a picture there of a white snow-storm, and two little girls lying dead, like the babes in the wood, with only the storm to wrap them in chilly sheets of snow.

"Yes, we could have tipped over and died very easy," thought she, with a shudder; "but it wasn't best; so a boy came and saved us. But," said she, aloud, "I guess he didn't know God sent him, or he wouldn't have dared whistle a lie with his mouth, when there wasn't a bit of a dog to whistle to."

Grandma looked into the coals, and said nothing.

"I know what she wants to say," thought Dotty. "God saved me to purpose; and He wouldn't have saved me to purpose if He didn't s'pect I was going to be a good girl. And I mean to; O, yes, I mean to. I'll try harder 'n ever I tried before. No tempers I'm not going to have, and no anything that's naughty, and always put it in my prayers to ask if I needn't grow better every minute; and then I truly shall! You don't s'pose He'd hear and not pay 'tention? No; He always pays 'tention, and likes to have us ask such questions as that; mother says so."

Dotty plodded away at her book-mark, going to her mother with every stitch, or now and then venturing to make one of her own, which always had to be pulled out. But it was finished at last, and Prudy was

pleased with the present, only there was a slight mistake in the motto, and it read, "Hope on, *hop* ever."

"I didn't mean to tell you to hop," said Dotty; "I left out an 'e;' 'twas a mistake, there were so many e's; but I *do* know how to spell, Prudy Parlin."

"O, yes, little sister; Miss Parker says you learn very fast."

"O, Prudy, did you see her to-day; and what did she say about me and Tate?"

"She feels dreadfully, Dotty; the tears came to her eyes."

"They did, Prudy? Well, I should think they would. Letting two little things like us lose *ourself!* Wasn't it awful? She'll kiss me when I go back to school, and she'll want to give me pep'mints and taffy; but it wouldn't be polite right before the other girls. She'll only say, 'I'm glad to see our

dear little Dotty back again, and Tate, too,' says she, 'and you may sit together if you like, and just whisper the whole living time!' That's what she'll say."

"O, she won't, either, Dotty; you musn't think of such a thing," laughed Prudy.

CHAPTER XI.

BOSOM FRIENDS.

Dotty did not go to school again until the next Monday. Miss Parker kissed her affectionately, and said, she should never forgive herself for her thoughtlessness; which was very gratifying to Dotty.

At recess Miss Parker called both the little girls up to her, and asked for the history of their "blowing away." Dotty gave it with delight, and whenever her breath failed, Tate added a word of her own.

"If her nose hadn't bled that time, Miss Parker, we were going to ask you something. Mayn't we sit together? 'Cause Tate likes

me, and she don't like Dice Prosser; *do* you, Tate?"

"Not much," replied Tate, timidly; "but I don't hate her near so bad as you do Lina Rosenberg."

"O, I don't hate anybody," said Dotty, virtuously; "only I asked my mother which she wanted me to sit with, and she said 'Tate,' if you're perfectly willing, Miss Parker. Tate doesn't *betwitch* me, and I'm not afraid to have her sit next to my pocket."

"I have no objection to your changing your seats," said Miss Parker, smiling; "but I wish you to remember, children, that I have a great deal of care, and if you love me you will try to be quiet."

"So we will—won't we, Tate?" said Dotty, joyfully, as they moved their books. "We'll be better girls, 'cause, don't you know, we were saved to purpose?"

Dotty was as good as her word. She could not always keep her little tongue still; but on the whole, she tried so hard to do right, that Miss Parker loved her better and better every day.

The two little seat-mates were becoming "bosom friends." Tate regarded Dotty as a superior being, and Miss Dimple was quite willing to be looked up to and copied. Much of their time out of school was spent in printing letters to each other, of which this is a specimen: —

DEER TAIT:

Jhonnie cald Me *todelkins.* One time Flierway put a pertater onter the Kerryseen Kan, onter the nose. kiss tid for Me.

Truely yours,

ALICE PARLIN.

This letter was the longest one Dotty had ever written. It cost her an hour's patient labor, and just as she was folding it carefully in the shape of a diamond, Prudy tipped the inkstand over it, and almost "blotted it out forever." Dotty was about to scold, but stopped to count ten, and then said, with almost a smile, —

"No matter. You didn't spoil anything but the "Toddlekins," and that was so crooked I was 'shamed of it."

Then Dotty hung the letter on the clothes line to dry, while her heart danced for joy because she had been so patient with Prudy.

But one morning Tate did not appear at school, and to Miss Dimple's great grief, the following note was given her by Ben Penny: —

DARLING DOTTY:

I canot set with you enny more. Ime going to my mothers arnts scholl. The one that the mice eat up her cows. Good by.

Verry truley,

SARAH PENNY.

Dotty sat for a whole minute with her head on her hand. She could not remember about this queer "arnt," though Tate had described all her relatives, and, without doubt, this one among the others.

"Mice ate up her cows! It must be very great mice, or else very tinty cows!"

But the sad fact that Tate was going to another school made Dotty as lonesome as a widowed dove. She was obliged to go round to Mrs. Penny's that night to talk about it; she told her mother she "couldn't live if she didn't."

"O, mamma," cried she, as soon as she returned, "I do wish you'd let me go to that dear little school! It's Tate's aunt's mother, and she keeps cows and mice, and it's such a dear little school!"

"What do you know about the lady, Dotty?"

"O, Tate told me all about her. She wears one of these hair things you call a wig, and a cap right on over it; and to-morrow's Wednesday, no school in the afternoon; but her aunt's mother has it all day, and afterwards going to show 'em the sheeps and camp-meetings. And wants to know if I can go — there's little boys, too — with my red dress on, and stay to Tate's house to tea — if you don't care and perfectly willing. 'Cause it's a dear little school!"

Dotty caught her breath, and went on: —

"She wants me to go all the time, and not

go to Miss Parker, Tate does. The woman's real good, and prays in school with her eyes wide open. That's so she can see the little boys and little girls when they're doing naughty, and gets up and shakes 'em, and then she goes to praying again."

"I shouldn't want to go to such a school as that," said Prudy.

"O, she doesn't shake 'em, 'thout they need to be shook; she's a *good* woman, and lets 'em eat gingerbread in school."

Mrs. Parlin said Dotty might go just once, and see how she liked it. So, the next afternoon, she set out with Tate for "the dear little school." As they skipped along swinging each other by the hand, they were met by Johnny. Dotty began to hurry.

"Where are you going, Dot?"

"Going away."

"You don't say! When you coming back?"

"When I return!"

After which pert reply Dotty tossed her head, and swung Tate along upon the full run.

A flash of anger rose to Johnny's eyes. He and his little cousin had not had a quarrel since the Crystal Wedding, and he was starting for his aunt Mary's, to make an afternoon visit. Dotty saw the flash, and it set her thinking.

"*I* wouldn't want to go with me and Tate to where I wasn't wanted! But Johnny does! But, then, he said he wouldn't quarrel, 'thout I begun it, and *I* won't begin it. I'll stop throwing my head back, 'cause that always makes the tempers come."

She was learning to watch the lion in her bosom. When he began to shake his mane, she said, "Lie down, sir." It was the only way; after he had really got upon his feet, and begun to rage, Dotty couldn't stop him.

"Tate," said she, sweetly, "are you willing Johnny should go too? For I spect you want to; don't you, Johnny?"

It was a small sacrifice, and Dotty thought she was well repaid, when her cousin, with the greatest good humor, whipped a paper bag out of his pocket, and began to scatter about figs, and candy, and jujube paste.

"Yes, I'll go to school with you," said Johnny; "but who is Mrs. Piper? Peter's wife?"

"He's dead, her husband is," replied Tate. "I don't know what his name was."

CHAPTER XII.

"THE DEAR LITTLE SCHOOL."

Mrs. Piper lived in a white cottage which nestled all summer under a woodbine; but there was no woodbine now, and the strips of red leather, which had held it up, were left sticking here and there by nails, and looked frightfully like caterpillars. There was a yard before the house, and in it were two or three hen-coops, half buried in snow.

"She keeps 'em in the back room, in the winter," said Tate, referring to the chickens.

Tate opened the door, and was greeted by a black cat, and then by a gray one. A yellow kitten sprang out upon Johnny, and a

hen, with a lame leg bound up in a rag, pecked at Dotty's feet.

"Do crazy folks live here?" muttered Johnny.

Tate fumbled at the latch of the sitting-room door, but could not lift it, and it was opened from within by Mrs. Piper — a woman so fat and queer that Dotty concluded it must be Peter's mother, and she had eaten the whole "peck of peppers" at a meal. Her cheeks were the color of peppers, and her false hair, which was very false indeed, had fallen down from the top of her forehead and drifted round to one side.

"How do you do, my pretty pets?" said she to the three visitors, and stroked Dotty's face with her hand, which had an old kid glove on it without any fingers.

The room was not very large for a school-

room. There were only ten scholars in it, and they all seemed to feel quite at home; but Dotty looked in vain for the gingerbread. There was a little earthen tea-pot on the air-tight stove, also a flat-iron.

"What a queer school!" thought she; for the hens in the back room cackled so loud as to drown the voice of a little girl reading. Mrs. Piper saw Dotty laugh behind Johnny's shoulder, and she laughed too.

"You think I'm a funny old woman," said she, "because I keep hens in the shed; but it's a very warm place for 'em, dear. When I had little boys of my own, I didn't keep cats and hens; but now my little boys are all gone, and I want something to love — do you see?"

"Yes'm," said Dotty, very sorry Mrs. Piper's boys were all gone, but thinking that did not make the cats and hens any the less funny.

"The reason I want little children to come to my school is, because my hens and cats can't talk to me, and sometimes I am lonesome. I teach my scholars to be good," said she, turning to shake a little girl for snapping apple-seeds; "that is better than book-learning. I am talking to them to-day about truth. Do you always tell the truth, little dear?" said she to Dotty, so abruptly that Dotty found it hard to keep from laughing.

"Sometimes I don't, m'm; 'most always I do."

"That's right, little dear; that's right. A lie is an abomination; do you see? Can you say the word?"

"A-bommer-nation," repeated Dotty.

"'An abomination to the Lord.' That means He hates it. Now, if you ever feel as if you wanted to tell a lie, will you stop long enough to say 'abomination' three times?"

"Yes'm."

"*All*, answer me."

"Yes'm," cried the children in chorus, looking up from their paper balls, and paper boats, and picture-books.

"That's right, little dears," said Mrs Piper; and then she waddled away to hear a class of one boy in arithmetic. After this she told the children to study their spelling lessons; and while they were doing so she looked around with a satisfied smile, and taking the tea-pot off the stove, and filling it, began to water the plants in the windows.

Dotty bit her lips.

"Are those roses in the big bowls *tea*-roses?" thought she. "I've heard of such a kind, but I didn't know 'twas tea that made them so."

The plants were in cups, and saucers, and basins, and everything else but flower-pots.

There was a dew-plant in an iron kettle, spattered all over with little red blossoms, "like the measles," Dotty thought. "And the *caltycus* had something else the matter, for it was covered with little white pimples."

After the good lady had helped her forty plants to a cup of tea all around, it was time to hear the lessons. Tate was delighted to show the silver medal which hung from her neck by a blue ribbon, and was a sign that she stood at the head of her spelling class.

"Now school is done," said Mrs. Piper, settling her false hair; "and as you've been pretty good children for the last four weeks, I suppose you all want to see my pictures?"

"Yes, *ma'am*," cried the children, Johnny loudest of all.

"It isn't what everybody would call pictures," said Mrs. Piper, opening the bureau

drawers in the entry, while no less than four cats sprang upon her, and playfully tried to assist her in taking out her treasures.

"No, *I* shouldn't call them pictures," thought Dotty, as Mrs. Piper held them so high that she saw nothing but a rough, dark surface.

"Looks to me like hemlock bark," thought Johnny, and decided at once that he had been right in the first place, and the woman was certainly crazy.

Mrs. Piper set the pictures on a table. A murmur of surprise arose from the lips of Johnny and Dotty.

"A camp-meeting, little dears," explained Mrs. Piper, pointing to several wee tents made of white cloth, and spread around on the smooth surface of the bark, which had been covered with moss to imitate grass. There were sprigs of evergreen stuck in for

trees; and here and there a bit of broken looking-glass served for a brook. But the men and women formed the most attractive part of the scene. These were little rag babies as long as your finger, dressed for church; the men in long-tailed coats and stove-pipe hats, the women in gowns of all colors, and bonnets trimmed with tiny feathers, or very narrow taste. The preachers stood outside the tents, holding little things in their hands which Mrs. Piper said were hymn-books and Bibles, though they looked like bits of paper. The preachers were looking at the hymns with their little beads of eyes, and reading them aloud with their red worsted mouths. The men and women who seemed to be doing nothing at all but try to keep from tipping over, were actually singing, only the music, like the rippling of the looking-glass brooks, was so very low that it couldn't be heard.

"Do you see that man with the red cheeks? It was whiskey did it; but I stuck a pin in my finger, and rubbed on a little blood. He is singing, 'Happy day! Happy day!' After his sins were washed away he never drank any more. His name was John Peck; he was my brother. Little boys, I hope you will never drink!

"This man with the red shirt on was my husband; he was a sea captain; and one day his ship sank, and then I was a widow. Little girls, I hope you'll never be widows!"

Dotty hid behind Johnny's shoulder again. Mrs. Piper went on to the next picture.

"Here is Ruth and *Boze*," said she, meaning *Boaz*. "Did you ever read the story of Ruth? how she wouldn't leave Naomi? that's her mother-in-law. A good girl Ruth was, and a pretty girl. That is her apron she is holding up in her hands. I don't know

whether they made 'em with ruffles in those days or not; but the spears sticking out of it is wheat; she has picked it up in the field. And there is *Boze;* he is rich, for you see the gold on his coat-tail. And there's Naomi, that Ruth loved. Do you love your own mothers, little girls, and mind what they say? I hope so. It is a beautiful story. Ask some one to read it to you. And now, these sheep, what *do* you think they are made of?"

"*Dough*," cried Johnny.

Mrs. Piper looked crestfallen.

"Why, how did you know that, little dear? Yes, these sheep are made of dough; but their backs are ridged over with a pin to look like wool. I had sixteen, but I set 'em on the floor to dry, and the lame hen ate up ten. I want you all to be good little children and do right," added the good woman,

who tried to remember to put in a *moral* every few minutes. "And now I will show you some more things. Here is a piece of lava; came out of a volcano—Vesuvius. Here are some sharks' teeth, and these are whales' teeth; and see these big sea-shells, full of the roar of the sea that drowned my husband!

"There, that will do; it is growing dark. Now, is there anything you have learned at my school to-day, little dears?"

As she looked at Dotty, Dotty replied,—

"Yes'm; how to say Bommer-*nibble*."

"She means 'abomination,'" corrected Tate.

"Yes, I know. Remember, a lie is an abomination to the Lord. And now, good by, little dears."

So saying, Mrs. Piper made an old-fashioned courtesy, and waved the children out of the room with both hands.

They put on their wrappings in the hall, and passed out, leaving the dear, queer old lady alone with her flowers, cats, and chickens.

"I'm glad we've got far enough away so we can laugh," said Dotty.

"She's crazy," cried Johnny, "awful crazy."

Tate hurried along, and caught up with Dotty. She had lingered behind to kiss her auntie, and receive a seed-cake from her cupboard.

"Didn't I *say* it was a dear little school?" said Tate, for she had always known and loved her aunt Piper, and did not think how odd the dear woman must seem to a stranger.

"Ye—s," answered Dotty, "only my face is all burning a-fire, trying to keep from laughing."

"P'r'aps it's queer," said Tate; "but isn't she a darling?"

Dotty did not answer, and Johnny gave her a sly pinch on the arm, with a very comical look about his mouth.

"And you're going to tell your mamma you like the school, and ask her if you mayn't come, so you can sit with me, Dotty Dimple?"

Dotty was about to say, "Yes, I'll ask her;" for she thought, "I can do it 'way down in my throat, so she'll know I don't want to go — But, no; it's wicked to deceive Tate."

"You're going to ask your mother?" repeated Tate.

"Bommernibble, bommernibble, bommer-*nibble!*" whispered Dotty, forgetting the word, but remembering her promise. Then she felt quite brave, and said aloud, —

"No, Tate; I'd like to sit with you forever and always; but I shan't ask my moth-

er; 'cause I like Miss Parker the best. Miss Parker isn't crazy, and she isn't a *nidiot!*"

"Nor my auntie isn't, either," said Tate, ready to cry.

"I never said she was, Tate; *did* I, Johnny? But I don't want to go to a school where the hens *kerdahcut* right in the house, and they give their flowers tea and coffee!"

"Hurrah for you, Dot Dimple!" cried Johnny; but poor little Tate wiped off a tear with the thumb of her mitten.

The end of it all was, that as Dotty would not go to Mrs. Piper's school, Tate left it, and went back to Miss Parker with Dotty.

"We want to sit together as long as we live," said Dotty, coming home one night in a very happy frame of mind; "and the teacher says we are her little comforts!"

"Only think of Dotty's being a comfort!" said Susy, with a curling lip; but Mrs. Par-

lin looked at her oldest daughter reprovingly, and Susy added, —

"But you do grow better, Dotty, I declare you do!" and kissed the child on the forehead.

Praise from Susy! This was something new! Dotty's eyes twinkled and shone like stars on a winter's night.

"You are getting to be just like anybody now," said Prudy. "You can make bookmarks, and go to school, and have vacations."

"I know it," replied Dotty, with a queenly pose of the head; "and when we go to vacation, next summer, there won't anybody ask, 'Is this Mrs. Parlin's baby?'"

"No, indeed," said Prudy, consolingly. "Flyaway will be the only baby there is at Willowbrook next summer, and *she* is growing up."

"I wish it was next summer now," sighed Dotty.

And it *will* be "next summer" before we see Miss Dimple again.

Let us hope she may arrive at her grandfather Parlin's in good health and spirits, and that we who meet her there may be as rosy and happy as herself.