

COOLIDGE SUSAN

WHAT KATY
DID NEXT

Susan Coolidge
What Katy Did Next

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=36322748

What Katy Did Next:

Содержание

CHAPTER I	4
CHAPTER II	17
CHAPTER III	33
CHAPTER IV	53
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	56

Susan Coolidge

What Katy Did Next

CHAPTER I

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

The September sun was glinting cheerfully into a pretty bedroom furnished with blue. It danced on the glossy hair and bright eyes of two girls, who sat together hemming ruffles for a white muslin dress. The half-finished skirt of the dress lay on the bed; and as each crisp ruffle was completed, the girls added it to the snowy heap, which looked like a drift of transparent clouds or a pile of foamy white-of-egg beaten stiff enough to stand alone.

These girls were Clover and Elsie Carr, and it was Clover's first evening dress for which they were hemming ruffles. It was nearly two years since a certain visit made by Johnnie to Inches Mills, of which some of you have read in "Nine Little Goslings;" and more than three since Clover and Katy had returned home from the boarding-school at Hillsover.

Clover was now eighteen. She was a very small Clover still, but it would have been hard to find anywhere a prettier little maiden than she had grown to be. Her skin was so exquisitely fair that her arms and wrists and shoulders, which were round and

dimpled like a baby's, seemed cut out of daisies or white rose leaves. Her thick, brown hair waved and coiled gracefully about her head. Her smile was peculiarly sweet; and the eyes, always Clover's chief beauty, had still that pathetic look which made them irresistible to tender-hearted people.

Elsie, who adored Clover, considered her as beautiful as girls in books, and was proud to be permitted to hem ruffles for the dress in which she was to burst upon the world. Though, as for that, not much "bursting" was possible in Burnet, where tea-parties of a middle-aged description, and now and then a mild little dance, represented "gayety" and "society." Girls "came out" very much, as the sun comes out in the morning,—by slow degrees and gradual approaches, with no particular one moment which could be fixed upon as having been the crisis of the joyful event.

"There," said Elsie, adding another ruffle to the pile on the bed,— "there's the fifth done. It's going to be ever so pretty, I think. I'm glad you had it all white; it's a great deal nicer."

"Cecy wanted me to have a blue bodice and sash," said Clover, "but I wouldn't. Then she tried to persuade me to get a long spray of pink roses for the skirt."

"I'm so glad you didn't! Cecy was always crazy about pink roses. I only wonder she didn't wear them when she was married!"

Yes; the excellent Cecy, who at thirteen had announced her intention to devote her whole life to teaching Sunday School,

visiting the poor, and setting a good example to her more worldly contemporaries, had actually forgotten these fine resolutions, and before she was twenty had become the wife of Sylvester Slack, a young lawyer in a neighboring town! Cecy's wedding and wedding-clothes, and Cecy's house-furnishing had been the great excitement of the preceding year in Burnet; and a fresh excitement had come since in the shape of Cecy's baby, now about two months old, and named "Katherine Clover," after her two friends. This made it natural that Cecy and her affairs should still be of interest in the Carr household; and Johnnie, at the time we write of, was making her a week's visit.

"She *was* rather wedded to them," went on Clover, pursuing the subject of the pink roses. "She was almost vexed when I wouldn't buy the spray. But it cost lots, and I didn't want it in the least, so I stood firm. Besides, I always said that my first party dress should be plain white. Girls in novels always wear white to their first balls; and fresh flowers are a great deal prettier, any way, than artificial. Katy says she'll give me some violets to wear."

"Oh, will she? That will be lovely!" cried the adoring Elsie. "Violets look just like you, somehow. Oh, Clover, what sort of a dress do you think I shall have when I grow up and go to parties and things? Won't it be awfully interesting when you and I go out to choose it?"

Just then the noise of some one running upstairs quickly made the sisters look up from their work. Footsteps are very significant

at times, and these footsteps suggested haste and excitement.

Another moment, the door opened, and Katy dashed in, calling out, "Papa!—Elsie, Clover, where's papa?"

"He went over the river to see that son of Mr. White's who broke his leg. Why, what's the matter?" asked Clover.

"Is somebody hurt?" inquired Elsie, startled at Katy's agitated looks.

"No, not hurt, but poor Mrs. Ashe is in such trouble."

Mrs. Ashe, it should be explained, was a widow who had come to Burnet some months previously, and had taken a pleasant house not far from the Carrs'. She was a pretty, lady-like woman, with a particularly graceful, appealing manner, and very fond of her one child, a little girl. Katy and papa both took a fancy to her at once; and the families had grown neighborly and intimate in a short time, as people occasionally do when circumstances are favorable.

"I'll tell you all about it in a minute," went on Katy. "But first I must find Alexander, and send him off to meet papa and beg him to hurry home." She went to the head of the stairs as she spoke, and called "Debby! Debby!" Debby answered. Katy gave her direction, and then came back again to the room where the other two were sitting.

"Now," she said, speaking more collectedly, "I must explain as fast as I can, for I have got to go back. You know that Mrs. Ashe's little nephew is here for a visit, don't you?"

"Yes, he came on Saturday."

"Well, he was ailing all day yesterday, and to-day he is worse, and she is afraid it is scarlet-fever. Luckily, Amy was spending the day with the Uphams yesterday, so she scarcely saw the boy at all; and as soon as her mother became alarmed, she sent her out into the garden to play, and hasn't let her come indoors since, so she can't have been exposed to any particular danger yet. I went by the house on my way down street, and there sat the poor little thing all alone in the arbor, with her dolly in her lap, looking so disconsolate. I spoke to her over the fence, and Mrs. Ashe heard my voice, and opened the upstairs window and called to me. She said Amy had never had the fever, and that the very idea of her having it frightened her to death. She is such a delicate child, you know."

"Oh, poor Mrs. Ashe!" cried Clover; "I am so sorry for her! Well, Katy, what did you do?"

"I hope I didn't do wrong, but I offered to bring Amy here. Papa won't object, I am almost sure."

"Why, of course he won't. Well?"

"I am going back now to fetch Amy. Mrs. Ashe is to let Ellen, who hasn't been in the room with the little boy, pack a bagful of clothes and put it out on the steps, and I shall send Alexander for it by and by. You can't think how troubled poor Mrs. Ashe was. She couldn't help crying when she said that Amy was all she had left in the world. And I nearly cried too, I was so sorry for her. She was so relieved when I said that we would take Amy. You know she has a great deal of confidence in papa."

"Yes, and in you too. Where will you put Amy to sleep, Katy?"

"What do you think would be best? In Dorry's room?"

"I think she'd better come in here with you, and I'll go into Dorry's room. She is used to sleeping with her mother, you know, and she would be lonely if she were left to herself."

"Perhaps that will be better, only it is a great bother for you, Clovy dear."

"I don't mind," responded Clover, cheerfully. "I rather like to change about and try a new room once in a while. It's as good as going on a journey—almost."

She pushed aside the half-finished dress as she spoke, opened a drawer, took out its contents, and began to carry them across the entry to Dorry's room, doing everything with the orderly deliberation that was characteristic of whatever Clover did. Her preparations were almost complete before Katy returned, bringing with her little Amy Ashe.

Amy was a tall child of eight, with a frank, happy face, and long light hair hanging down her back. She looked like the pictures of "Alice in Wonderland;" but just at that moment it was a very woful little Alice indeed that she resembled, for her cheeks were stained with tears and her eyes swollen with recent crying.

"Why, what is the matter?" cried kind little Clover, taking Amy in her arms, and giving her a great hug. "Aren't you glad that you are coming to make us a visit? We are."

"Mamma didn't kiss me for good-by," sobbed the little girl. "She didn't come downstairs at all. She just put her head out of

the window and said, 'Good-by; Amy, be very good, and don't make Miss Carr any trouble,' and then she went away. I never went anywhere before without kissing mamma for good-by."

"Mamma was afraid to kiss you for fear she might give you the fever," explained Katy, taking her turn as a comforter. "It wasn't because she forgot. She felt worse about it than you did, I imagine. You know the thing she cares most for is that you shall not be ill as your cousin Walter is. She would rather do anything than have that happen. As soon as he gets well she will kiss you dozens of times, see if she doesn't. Meanwhile, she says in this note that you must write her a little letter every day, and she will hang a basket by a string out of the window, and you and I will go and drop the letters into the basket, and stand by the gate and see her pull it up. That will be funny, won't it? We will play that you are my little girl, and that you have a real mamma and a make-believe mamma."

"Shall I sleep with you?" demanded Amy,

"Yes, in that bed over there."

"It's a pretty bed," pronounced Amy after examining it gravely for a moment. "Will you tell me a story every morning?"

"If you don't wake me up too early. My stories are always sleepy till seven o'clock. Let us see what Ellen has packed in that bag, and then I'll give you some drawers of your own, and we will put the things away."

The bag was full of neat little frocks and underclothes stuffed hastily in all together. Katy took them out, smoothing the folds,

and crimping the tumbled ruffles with her fingers. As she lifted the last skirt, Amy, with a cry of joy, pounced on something that lay beneath it.

"It is Maria Matilda," she said, "I'm glad of that. I thought Ellen would forget her, and the poor child wouldn't know what to do with me and her little sister not coming to see her for so long. She was having the measles on the back shelf of the closet, you know, and nobody would have heard her if she had cried ever so loud."

"What a pretty face she has!" said Katy, taking the doll out of Amy's hands.

"Yes, but not so pretty as Mabel. Miss Upham says that Mabel is the prettiest child she ever saw. Look, Miss Clover," lifting the other doll from the table where she had laid it; "hasn't she got *sweet* eyes? She's older than Maria Matilda, and she knows a great deal more. She's begun on French verbs!"

"Not really! Which ones?"

"Oh, only 'J'aime, tu aimes, il aime,' you know,—the same that our class is learning at school. She hasn't tried any but that. Sometimes she says it quite nicely, but sometimes she's very stupid, and I have to scold her." Amy had quite recovered her spirits by this time.

"Are these the only dolls you have?"

"Oh, please don't call them *that!*" urged Amy. "It hurts their feelings dreadfully. I never let them know that they are dolls. They think that they are real children, only sometimes when they

are very bad I use the word for a punishment. I've got several other children. There's old Ragazza. My uncle named her, and she's made of rag, but she has such bad rheumatism that I don't play with her any longer; I just give her medicine. Then there's Effie Deans, she's only got one leg; and Mopsa the Fairy, she's a tiny one made out of china; and Peg of Linkinvaddy,—but she don't count, for she's all come to pieces."

"What very queer names your children have!" said Elsie, who had come in during the enumeration.

"Yes; Uncle Ned named them. He's a very funny uncle, but he's nice. He's always so much interested in my children."

"There's papa now!" cried Katy; and she ran downstairs to meet him.

"Did I do right?" she asked anxiously after she had told her story.

"Yes, my dear, perfectly right," replied Dr. Carr. "I only hope Amy was taken away in time. I will go round at once to see Mrs. Ashe and the boy; and, Katy, keep away from me when I come back, and keep the others away, till I have changed my coat."

It is odd how soon and how easily human beings accustom themselves to a new condition of things. When sudden illness comes, or sudden sorrow, or a house is burned up, or blown down by a tornado, there are a few hours or days of confusion and bewilderment, and then people gather up their wits and their courage and set to work to repair damages. They clear away ruins, plant, rebuild, very much as ants whose hill has been

trodden upon, after running wildly about for a little while, begin all together to reconstruct the tiny cone of sand which is so important in their eyes. In a very short time the changes which at first seem so sad and strange become accustomed and matter-of-course things which no longer surprise us.

It seemed to the Carrs after a few days as if they had always had Amy in the house with them. Papa's daily visit to the sick-room, their avoidance of him till after he had "changed his coat," Amy's lessons and games of play, her dressing and undressing, the walks with the make-believe mamma, the dropping of notes into the little basket, seemed part of a system of things which had been going on for a long, long time, and which everybody would miss should they suddenly stop.

But they by no means suddenly stopped. Little Walter Ashe's case proved to be rather a severe one; and after he had begun to mend, he caught cold somehow and was taken worse again. There were some serious symptoms, and for a few days Dr. Carr did not feel sure how things would turn. He did not speak of his anxiety at home, but kept silence and a cheerful face, as doctors know how to do. Only Katy, who was more intimate with her father than the rest, guessed that things were going gravely at the other house, and she was too well trained to ask questions. The threatening symptoms passed off, however, and little Walter slowly got better; but it was a long convalescence, and Mrs. Ashe grew thin and pale before he began to look rosy. There was no one on whom she could devolve the charge of the child. His

mother was dead; his father, an overworked business man, had barely time to run up once a week to see about him; there was no one at his home but a housekeeper, in whom Mrs. Ashe had not full confidence. So the good aunt denied herself the sight of her own child, and devoted her strength and time to Walter; and nearly two months passed, and still little Amy remained at Dr. Carr's.

She was entirely happy there. She had grown very fond of Katy, and was perfectly at home with the others. Phil and Johnnie, who had returned from her visit to Cecy, were by no means too old or too proud to be play-fellows to a child of eight; and with all the older members of the family Amy was a chosen pet. Debby baked turnovers, and twisted cinnamon cakes into all sorts of fantastic shapes to please her; Alexander would let her drive if she happened to sit on the front seat of the carryall; Dr. Carr was seldom so tired that he could not tell her a story,—and nobody told such nice stories as Dr. Carr, Amy thought; Elsie invented all manner of charming games for the hour before bedtime; Clover made wonderful capes and bonnets for Mabel and Maria Matilda; and Katy—Katy did all sorts of things.

Katy had a peculiar gift with children which is not easy to define. Some people possess it, and some do not; it cannot be learned, it comes by nature. She was bright and firm and equable all at once. She both amused and influenced them. There was something about her which excited the childish imagination, and always they felt her sympathy. Amy was a tractable child, and

intelligent beyond her age, but she was never quite so good with any one as with Katy. She followed her about like a little lover; she lavished upon her certain special words and caresses which she gave to no one else; and would kneel on her lap, patting Katy's shoulders with her soft hand, and cooing up into her face like a happy dove, for a half-hour together. Katy laughed at these demonstrations, but they pleased her very much. She loved to be loved, as all affectionate people do, but most of all to be loved by a child.

At last, the long convalescence ended, Walter was carried away to his father, with every possible precaution against fatigue and exposure, and an army of workpeople was turned into Mrs. Ashe's house. Plaster was scraped and painted, wall-papers torn down, mattresses made over, and clothing burned. At last Dr. Carr pronounced the premises in a sanitary condition, and Mrs. Ashe sent for her little girl to come home again.

Amy was overjoyed at the prospect of seeing her mother; but at the last moment she clung to Katy and cried as if her heart would break.

"I want you too," she said. "Oh, if Dr. Carr would only let you come and live with me and mamma, I should be so happy! I shall be so lone-ly!"

"Nonsense!" cried Clover. "Lonely with mamma, and those poor children of yours who have been wondering all these weeks what has become of you! They'll want a great deal of attention at first, I am sure; medicine and new clothes and whippings,—

all manner of things. You remember I promised to make a dress for Effie Deans out of that blue and brown plaid like Johnnie's balmoral. I mean to begin it to-morrow."

"Oh, will you?"—forgetting her grief—"that will be lovely. The skirt needn't be *very* full, you know. Effie doesn't walk much, because of only having one leg. She will be *so* pleased, for she hasn't had a new dress I don't know when."

Consoled by the prospect of Effie's satisfaction, Amy departed quite cheerfully, and Mrs. Ashe was spared the pain of seeing her only child in tears on the first evening of their reunion. But Amy talked so constantly of Katy, and seemed to love her so much, that it put a plan into her mother's head which led to important results, as the next CHAPTER will show.

CHAPTER II

AN INVITATION

It is a curious fact, and makes life very interesting, that, generally speaking, none of us have any expectation that things are going to happen till the very moment when they do happen. We wake up some morning with no idea that a great happiness is at hand, and before night it has come, and all the world is changed for us; or we wake bright and cheerful, with never a guess that clouds of sorrow are lowering in our sky, to put all the sunshine out for a while, and before noon all is dark. Nothing whispers of either the joy or the grief. No instinct bids us to delay or to hasten the opening of the letter or telegram, or the lifting of the latch of the door at which stands the messenger of good or ill. And because it may be, and often is, happy tidings that come, and joyful things which happen, each fresh day as it dawns upon us is like an unread story, full of possible interest and adventure, to be made ours as soon as we have cut the pages and begun to read.

Nothing whispered to Katy Carr, as she sat at the window mending a long rent in Johnnie's school coat, and saw Mrs. Ashe come in at the side gate and ring the office bell, that the visit had any special significance for her. Mrs. Ashe often did come to the office to consult Dr. Carr. Amy might not be quite well, Katy thought, or there might be a letter with something about Walter

in it, or perhaps matters had gone wrong at the house, where paperers and painters were still at work. So she went calmly on with her darning, drawing the "ravelling," with which her needle was threaded, carefully in and out, and taking nice even stitches without one prophetic thrill or tremor; while, if only she could have looked through the two walls and two doors which separated the room in which she sat from the office, and have heard what Mrs. Ashe was saying, the school coat would have been thrown to the winds, and for all her tall stature and propriety, she would have been skipping with delight and astonishment. For Mrs. Ashe was asking papa to let her do the very thing of all others that she most longed to do; she was asking him to let Katy go with her to Europe!

"I am not very well," she told the Doctor. "I got tired and run down while Walter was ill, and I don't seem to throw it off as I hoped I should. I feel as if a change would do me good. Don't you think so yourself?"

"Yes, I do," Dr. Carr admitted.

"This idea of Europe is not altogether a new one," continued Mrs. Ashe. "I have always meant to go some time, and have put it off, partly because I dreaded going alone, and didn't know anybody whom I exactly wanted to take with me. But if you will let me have Katy, Dr. Carr, it will settle all my difficulties. Amy loves her dearly, and so do I; she is just the companion I need; if I have her with me, I sha'n't be afraid of anything. I do hope you will consent."

"How long do you mean to be away?" asked Dr. Carr, divided between pleasure at these compliments to Katy and dismay at the idea of losing her.

"About a year, I think. My plans are rather vague as yet; but my idea was to spend a few weeks in Scotland and England first,—I have some cousins in London who will be good to us; and an old friend of mine married a gentleman who lives on the Isle of Wight; perhaps we might go there. Then we could cross over to France and visit Paris and a few other places; and before it gets cold go down to Nice, and from there to Italy. Katy would like to see Italy. Don't you think so?"

"I dare say she would," said Dr. Carr, with a smile. "She would be a queer girl if she didn't."

"There is one reason why I thought Italy would be particularly pleasant this winter for me and for her too," went on Mrs. Ashe; "and that is, because my brother will be there. He is a lieutenant in the navy, you know, and his ship, the 'Natchitoches,' is one of the Mediterranean squadron. They will be in Naples by and by, and if we were there at the same time we should have Ned to go about with; and he would take us to the receptions on the frigate, and all that, which would be a nice chance for Katy. Then toward spring I should like to go to Florence and Venice, and visit the Italian lakes and Switzerland in the early summer. But all this depends on your letting Katy go. If you decide against it, I shall give the whole thing up. But you won't decide against it,"—coaxingly,— "you will be kinder than that. I will take the

best possible care of her, and do all I can to make her happy, if only you will consent to lend her to me; and I shall consider it *such* a favor. And it is to cost you nothing. You understand, Doctor, she is to be my guest all through. That is a point I want to make clear in the outset; for she goes for my sake, and I cannot take her on any other conditions. Now, Dr. Carr, please, please! I am sure you won't deny me, when I have so set my heart upon having her."

Mrs. Ashe was very pretty and persuasive, but still Dr. Carr hesitated. To send Katy for a year's pleasuring in Europe was a thing that had never occurred to his mind as possible. The cost alone would have prevented; for country doctors with six children are not apt to be rich men, even in the limited and old-fashioned construction of the word "wealth." It seemed equally impossible to let her go at Mrs. Ashe's expense; at the same time, the chance was such a good one, and Mrs. Ashe so much in earnest and so urgent, that it was difficult to refuse point blank. He finally consented to take time for consideration before making his decision.

"I will talk it over with Katy," he said. "The child ought to have a say in the matter; and whatever we decide, you must let me thank you in her name as well as my own for your great kindness in proposing it."

"Doctor, I'm not kind at all, and I don't want to be thanked. My desire to take Katy with me to Europe is purely selfish. I am a lonely person," she went on; "I have no mother or sister, and

no cousins of my own age. My brother's profession keeps him at sea; I scarcely ever see him. I have no one but a couple of old aunts, too feeble in health to travel with me or to be counted on in case of any emergency. You see, I am a real case for pity."

Mrs. Ashe spoke gayly, but her brown eyes were dim with tears as she ended her little appeal. Dr. Carr, who was soft-hearted where women were concerned, was touched. Perhaps his face showed it, for Mrs. Ashe added in a more hopeful tone,—

"But I won't tease any more. I know you will not refuse me unless you think it right and necessary; and," she continued mischievously, "I have great faith in Katy as an ally. I am pretty sure that she will say that she wants to go."

And indeed Katy's cry of delight when the plan was proposed to her said that sufficiently, without need of further explanation. To go to Europe for a year with Mrs. Ashe and Amy seemed simply too delightful to be true. All the things she had heard about and read about—cathedrals, pictures, Alpine peaks, famous places, famous people—came rushing into her mind in a sort of bewildering tide as dazzling as it was overwhelming. Dr. Carr's objections, his reluctance to part with her, melted before the radiance of her satisfaction. He had no idea that Katy would care so much about it. After all, it was a great chance,—perhaps the only one of the sort that she would ever have. Mrs. Ashe could well afford to give Katy this treat, he knew; and it was quite true what she said, that it was a favor to her as well as to Katy. This train of reasoning led to its natural results. Dr. Carr began

to waver in his mind.

But, the first excitement over, Katy's second thoughts were more sober ones. How could papa manage without her for a whole year, she asked herself. He would miss her, she well knew, and might not the charge of the house be too much for Clover? The preserves were almost all made, that was one comfort; but there were the winter clothes to be seen to; Dorry needed new flannels, Elsie's dresses must be altered over for Johnnie,—there were cucumbers to pickle, the coal to order! A host of housewifely cares began to troop through Katy's mind, and a little pucker came into her forehead, and a worried look across the face which had been so bright a few minutes before. Strange to say, it was that little pucker and the look of worry which decided Dr. Carr.

"She is only twenty-one," he reflected; "hardly out of childhood. I don't want her to settle into an anxious, drudging state and lose her youth with caring for us all. She shall go; though how we are to manage without her I don't see. Little Clover will have to come to the fore, and show what sort of stuff there is in her."

"Little Clover" came gallantly "to the fore" when the first shock of surprise was over, and she had relieved her mind with one long private cry over having to do without Katy for a year. Then she wiped her eyes, and began to revel unselfishly in the idea of her sister's having so great a treat. Anything and everything seemed possible to secure it for her; and she made

light of all Katy's many anxieties and apprehensions.

"My dear child, I know a flannel undershirt when I see one, just as well as you do," she declared. "Tucks in Johnnie's dress, forsooth! why, of course. Ripping out a tuck doesn't require any superhuman ingenuity! Give me your scissors, and I'll show you at once. Quince marmalade? Debby can make that. Hers is about as good as yours; and if it wasn't, what should we care, as long as you are ascending Mont Blanc, and hob-nobbing with Michael Angelo and the crowned heads of Europe? I'll make the spiced peaches! I'll order the kindling! And if there ever comes a time when I feel lost and can't manage without advice, I'll go across to Mrs. Hall. Don't worry about us. We shall get on happily and easily; in fact, I shouldn't be surprised if I developed such a turn for housekeeping, that when you come back the family refused to change, and you had just to sit for the rest of your life and twirl your thumbs and watch me do it! Wouldn't that be fine?" and Clover laughed merrily. "So, Katy darling, cast that shadow from your brow, and look as a girl ought to look who's going to Europe. Why, if it were I who were going, I should simply stand on my head every moment of the time!"

"Not a very convenient position for packing," said Katy, smiling.

"Yes, it is, if you just turn your trunk upside down! When I think of all the delightful things you are going to do, I can hardly sit still. I *love* Mrs. Ashe for inviting you."

"So do I," said Katy, soberly. "It was the kindest thing! I can't

think why she did it."

"Well, I can," replied Clover, always ready to defend Katy even against herself. "She did it because she wanted you, and she wanted you because you are the dearest old thing in the world, and the nicest to have about. You needn't say you're not, for you are! Now, Katy, don't waste another thought on such miserable things as pickles and undershirts. We shall get along perfectly well, I do assure you. Just fix your mind instead on the dome of St. Peter's, or try to fancy how you'll feel the first time you step into a gondola or see the Mediterranean. There will be a moment! I feel a forty-horse power of housekeeping developing within me; and what fun it will be to get your letters! We shall fetch out the Encyclopaedia and the big Atlas and the 'History of Modern Europe,' and read all about everything you see and all the places you go to; and it will be as good as a lesson in geography and history and political economy all combined, only a great deal more interesting! We shall stick out all over with knowledge before you come back; and this makes it a plain duty to go, if it were only for our sakes." With these zealous promises, Katy was forced to be content. Indeed, contentment was not difficult with such a prospect of delight before her. When once her little anxieties had been laid aside, the idea of the coming journey grew in pleasantness every moment. Night after night she and papa and the children pored over maps and made out schemes for travel and sight-seeing, every one of which was likely to be discarded as soon as the real journey began. But they didn't

know that, and it made no real difference. Such schemes are the preliminary joys of travel, and it doesn't signify that they come to nothing after they have served their purpose.

Katy learned a great deal while thus talking over what she was to see and do. She read every scrap she could lay her hand on which related to Rome or Florence or Venice or London. The driest details had a charm for her now that she was likely to see the real places. She went about with scraps of paper in her pocket, on which were written such things as these: "Forum. When built? By whom built? More than one?" "What does *Cenacola* mean?" "Cecilia Metella. Who was she?" "Find out about Saint Catherine of Siena." "Who was Beatrice Cenci?" How she wished that she had studied harder and more carefully before this wonderful chance came to her. People always wish this when they are starting for Europe; and they wish it more and more after they get there, and realize of what value exact ideas and information and a fuller knowledge of the foreign languages are to all travellers; how they add to the charm of everything seen, and enhance the ease of everything done.

All Burnet took an interest in Katy's plans, and almost everybody had some sort of advice or help, or some little gift to offer. Old Mrs. Worrett, who, though fatter than ever, still retained the power of locomotion, drove in from Conic Section in her roomy carryall with the present of a rather obsolete copy of "Murray's Guide," in faded red covers, which her father had used in his youth, and which she was sure Katy would find convenient;

also a bottle of Brown's Jamaica Ginger, in case of sea-sickness. Debby's sister-in-law brought a bundle of dried chamomile for the same purpose. Some one had told her it was the "handiest thing in the world to take along with you on them steamboats." Cecy sent a wonderful old-gold and scarlet contrivance to hang on the wall of the stateroom. There were pockets for watches, and pockets for medicines, and pockets for handkerchief and hairpins,—in short, there were pockets for everything; besides a pincushion with "Bon Voyage" in rows of shining pins, a bottle of eau-de-cologne, a cake of soap, and a hammer and tacks to nail the whole up with. Mrs. Hall's gift was a warm and very pretty woollen wrapper of dark blue flannel, with a pair of soft knitted slippers to match. Old Mr. Worrett sent a note of advice, recommending Katy to take a quinine pill every day that she was away, never to stay out late, because the dews "over there" were said to be unwholesome, and on no account to drink a drop of water which had not been boiled.

From Cousin Helen came a delightful travelling-bag, light and strong at once, and fitted up with all manner of nice little conveniences. Miss Inches sent a "History of Europe" in five fat volumes, which was so heavy that it had to be left at home. In fact, a good many of Katy's presents had to be left at home, including a bronze paper-weight in the shape of a griffin, a large pair of brass screw candlesticks, and an ormolu inkstand with a pen-rest attached, which weighed at least a pound and a half. These Katy laid aside to enjoy after her return. Mrs. Ashe and Cousin Helen

had both warned her of the inconvenient consequences of weight in baggage; and by their advice she had limited herself to a single trunk of moderate size, besides a little flat valise for use in her stateroom.

Clover's gift was a set of blank books for notes, journals, etc. In one of these, Katy made out a list of "Things I must see," "Things I must do," "Things I would like to see," "Things I would like to do." Another she devoted to various good shopping addresses which had been given her; for though she did not expect to do any shopping herself, she thought Mrs. Ashe might find them useful. Katy's ideas were still so simple and unworldly, and her experience of life so small, that it had not occurred to her how very tantalizing it might be to stand in front of shop windows full of delightful things and not be able to buy any of them. She was accordingly overpowered with surprise, gratitude, and the sense of sudden wealth, when about a week before the start her father gave her three little thin strips of paper, which he told her were circular notes, and worth a hundred dollars apiece. He also gave her five English sovereigns.

"Those are for immediate use," he said. "Put the notes away carefully, and don't lose them. You had better have them cashed one at a time as you require them. Mrs. Ashe will explain how. You will need a gown or so before you come back, and you'll want to buy some photographs and so on, and there will be fees —"

"But, papa," protested Katy, opening wide her candid eyes, "I

didn't expect you to give me any money, and I'm afraid you are giving me too much. Do you think you can afford it? Really and truly, I don't want to buy things. I shall see everything, you know, and that's enough."

Her father only laughed.

"You'll be wiser and greedier before the year is out, my dear," he replied. "Three hundred dollars won't go far, as you'll find. But it's all I can spare, and I trust you to keep within it, and not come home with any long bills for me to pay."

"Papa! I should think not!" cried Katy, with unsophisticated horror.

One very interesting thing was to happen before they sailed, the thought of which helped both Katy and Clover through the last hard days, when the preparations were nearly complete, and the family had leisure to feel dull and out of spirits. Katy was to make Rose Red a visit.

Rose had by no means been idle during the three years and a half which had elapsed since they all parted at Hillsover, and during which the girls had not seen her. In fact, she had made more out of the time than any of the rest of them, for she had been engaged for eighteen months, had been married, and was now keeping house near Boston with a little Rose of her own, who, she wrote to Clover, was a perfect angel, and more delicious than words could say! Mrs. Ashe had taken passage in the "Spartacus," sailing from Boston; and it was arranged that Katy should spend the last two days before sailing, with Rose,

while Mrs. Ashe and Amy visited an old aunt in Hingham. To see Rose in her own home, and Rose's husband, and Rose's baby, was only next in interest to seeing Europe. None of the changes in her lot seemed to have changed her particularly, to judge by the letter she sent in reply to Katy's announcing her plans, which letter ran as follows:—

"LONGWOOD, September 20.

"My dearest child,—Your note made me dance with delight. I stood on my head waving my heels wildly to the breeze till Deniston thought I must be taken suddenly mad; but when I explained he did the same. It is too enchanting, the whole of it. I put it at the head of all the nice things that ever happened, except my baby. Write the moment you get this by what train you expect to reach Boston, and when you roll into the station you will behold two forms, one tall and stalwart, the other short and fatsome, waiting for you. They will be those of Deniston and myself. Deniston is not beautiful, but he is good, and he is prepared to *adore* you. The baby is both good and beautiful, and you will adore her. I am neither; but you know all about me, and I always did adore you and always shall. I am going out this moment to the butcher's to order a calf fatted for your special behoof; and he shall be slain and made into cutlets the moment I hear from you. My funny little house, which is quite a dear little house too, assumes a new interest in my eyes from the fact that you so soon are to see it. It is somewhat queer, as you might know my house would be; but I think you will like it.

"I saw Silvery Mary the other day and told her you were coming. She is the same mouse as ever. I shall ask her and some of the other girls to come out to lunch on one of your days. Good-by, with a hundred and fifty kisses to Clovy and the rest.

"Your loving

"ROSE RED."

"She never signs herself Browne, I observe," said Clover, as she finished the letter.

"Oh, Rose Red Browne would sound too funny. Rose Red she must stay till the end of the CHAPTER; no other name could suit her half so well, and I can't imagine her being called anything else. What fun it will be to see her and little Rose!"

"And Deniston Browne," put in Clover.

"Somehow I find it rather hard to take in the fact that there is a Deniston Browne," observed Katy.

"It will be easier after you have seen him, perhaps."

The last day came, as last days will. Katy's trunk, most carefully and exactly packed by the united efforts of the family, stood in the hall, locked and strapped, not to be opened again till the party reached London. This fact gave it a certain awful interest in the eyes of Phil and Johnnie, and even Elsie gazed upon it with respect. The little valise was also ready; and Dorry, the neat-handed, had painted a red star on both ends of both it and the trunk, that they might be easily picked from among a heap of luggage. He now proceeded to prepare and paste on two square cards, labelled respectively, "Hold" and "State-room."

Mrs. Hall had told them that this was the correct thing to do.

Mrs. Ashe had been full of business likewise in putting her house to rights for a family who had rented it for the time of her absence, and Katy and Clover had taken a good many hours from their own preparations to help her. All was done at last; and one bright morning in October, Katy stood on the wharf with her family about her, and a lump in her throat which made it difficult to speak to any of them. She stood so very still and said so very little, that a bystander not acquainted with the circumstances might have dubbed her "unfeeling;" while the fact was that she was feeling too much!

The first bell rang. Katy kissed everybody quietly and went on board with her father. Her parting from him, hardest of all, took place in the midst of a crowd of people; then he had to leave her, and as the wheels began to revolve she went out on the side deck to have a last glimpse of the home faces. There they were: Elsie crying tumultuously, with her head on papa's coat-sleeve; John laughing, or trying to laugh, with big tears running down her cheeks the while; and brave little Clover waving her handkerchief encouragingly, but with a very sober look on her face. Katy's heart went out to the little group with a sudden passion of regret and yearning. Why had she said she would go? What was all Europe in comparison with what she was leaving? Life was so short, how could she take a whole year out of it to spend away from the people she loved best? If it had been left to her to choose, I think she would have flown back to the shore then and

there, and given up the journey, I also think she would have been heartily sorry a little later, had she done so.

But it was not left for her to choose. Already the throb of the engines was growing more regular and the distance widening between the great boat and the wharf. Gradually the dear faces faded into distance; and after watching till the flutter of Clover's handkerchief became an undistinguishable speck, Katy went to the cabin with a heavy heart. But there were Mrs. Ashe and Amy, inclined to be homesick also, and in need of cheering; and Katy, as she tried to brighten them, gradually grew bright herself, and recovered her hopeful spirits. Burnet pulled less strongly as it got farther away, and Europe beckoned more brilliantly now that they were fairly embarked on their journey. The sun shone, the lake was a beautiful, dazzling blue, and Katy said to herself, "After all, a year is not very long, and how happy I am going to be!"

CHAPTER III

ROSE AND ROSEBUD

Thirty-six hours later the Albany train, running smoothly across the green levels beyond the Mill Dam, brought the travellers to Boston.

Katy looked eagerly from the window for her first glimpse of the city of which she had heard so much. "Dear little Boston! How nice it is to see it again!" she heard a lady behind her say; but why it should be called "little Boston" she could not imagine. Seen from the train, it looked large, imposing, and very picturesque, after flat Burnet with its one bank down to the edge of the lake. She studied the towers, steeples, and red roofs crowding each other up the slopes of the Tri-Mountain, and the big State House dome crowning all, and made up her mind that she liked the looks of it better than any other city she had ever seen.

The train slackened its speed, ran for a few moments between rows of tall, shabby brick walls, and with a long, final screech of its whistle came to halt in the station-house. Every one made a simultaneous rush for the door; and Katy and Mrs. Ashe, waiting to collect their books and bags, found themselves wedged into their seats and unable to get out. It was a confusing moment, and not comfortable; such moments never are.

But the discomfort brightened into a sense of relief as, looking out of the window, Katy caught sight of a face exactly opposite, which had evidently caught sight of her,—a fresh, pretty face, with light, waving hair, pink cheeks all a-dimple, and eyes which shone with laughter and welcome. It was Rose herself, not a bit changed during the years since they parted. A tall young man stood beside her, who must, of course, be her husband, Deniston Browne.

"There is Rose Red," cried Katy to Mrs. Ashe. "Oh, doesn't she look dear and natural? Do wait and let me introduce you. I want you to know her."

But the train had come in a little behind time, and Mrs. Ashe was afraid of missing the Hingham boat; so she only took a hasty peep from the window at Rose, pronounced her to be charming-looking, kissed Katy hurriedly, reminded her that they must be on the steamer punctually at twelve o'clock the following Saturday, and was gone, with Amy beside her; so that Katy, following last of all the slow-moving line of passengers, stepped all alone down from the platform into the arms of Rose Red.

"You darling!" was Rose's first greeting. "I began to think you meant to spend the night in the car, you were so long in getting out. Well, how perfectly lovely this is! Deniston, here is Katy; Katy, this is my husband."

Rose looked about fifteen as she spoke, and so absurdly young to have a "husband," that Katy could not help laughing as she shook hands with "Deniston;" and his own eyes twinkled with

fun and evident recognition of the same joke. He was a tall young man, with a pleasant, "steady" face, and seemed to be infinitely amused, in a quiet way, with everything which his wife said and did.

"Let us make haste and get out of this hole," went on Rose. "I can scarcely see for the smoke. Deniston, dear, please find the cab, and have Katy's luggage put on it. I am wild to get her home, and exhibit baby before she chews up her new sash or does something else that is dreadful, to spoil her looks. I left her sitting in state, Katy, with all her best clothes on, waiting to be made known to you."

"My large trunk is to go straight to the steamer," explained Katy, as she gave her checks to Mr. Browne. "I only want the little one taken out to Longwood, please."

"Now, this is cosey," remarked Rose, when they were seated in the cab with Katy's bag at their feet. "Deniston, my love, I wish you were going out with us. There's a nice little bench here all ready and vacant, which is just suited to a man of your inches. You won't? Well, come in the early train, then. Don't forget.—Now, isn't he just as nice as I told you he was?" she demanded, the moment the cab began to move.

"He looks very nice indeed, as far as I can judge in three minutes and a quarter."

"My dear, it ought not to take anybody of ordinary discernment a minute and a quarter to perceive that he is simply the dearest fellow that ever lived," said Rose. "I discovered it

three seconds after I first beheld him, and was desperately in love with him before he had fairly finished his first bow after introduction."

"And was he equally prompt?" asked Katy.

"He says so," replied Rose, with a pretty blush. "But then, you know, he could hardly say less after such a frank confession on my part. It is no more than decent of him to make believe, even if it is not true. Now, Katy, look at Boston, and see if you don't *love* it!"

The cab had now turned into Boylston Street; and on the right hand lay the Common, green as summer after the autumn rains, with the elm arches leafy still. Long, slant beams of afternoon sun were filtering through the boughs and falling across the turf and the paths, where people were walking and sitting, and children and babies playing together. It was a delightful scene; and Katy received an impression of space and cheer and air and freshness, which ever after was associated with her recollection of Boston.

Rose was quite satisfied with her raptures as they drove through Charles Street, between the Common and the Public Garden, all ablaze with autumn flowers, and down the length of Beacon Street with the blue bay shining between the handsome houses on the water side. Every vestibule and bay-window was gay with potted plants and flower-boxes; and a concourse of happy-looking people, on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, was surging to and fro like an equal, prosperous tide, while the sunlight glorified all.

"Boston shows a soft Venetian side," quoted Katy, after a while. "I know now what Mr. Lowell meant when he wrote that. I don't believe there is a more beautiful place in the world."

"Why, of course there isn't," retorted Rose, who was a most devoted little Bostonian, in spite of the fact that she had lived in Washington nearly all her life. "I've not seen much beside, to be sure, but that is no matter; I know it is true. It is the dream of my life to come into the city to live. I don't care what part I live in,—West End, South End, North End; it's all one to me, so long as it is Boston!"

"But don't you like Longwood?" asked Katy, looking out admiringly at the pretty places set amid vines and shrubberies, which they were now passing. "It looks so very pretty and pleasant."

"Yes, it's well enough for any one who has a taste for natural beauties," replied Rose. "I haven't; I never had. There is nothing I hate so much as Nature! I'm a born cockney. I'd rather live in one room over Jordan and Marsh's, and see the world wag past, than be the owner of the most romantic villa that ever was built, I don't care where it may be situated."

The cab now turned in at a gate and followed a curving drive bordered with trees to a pretty stone house with a porch embowered with Virginia creepers, before which it stopped.

"Here we are!" cried Rose, springing out. "Now, Katy, you mustn't even take time to sit down before I show you the dearest baby that ever was sent to this sinful earth. Here, let me take your

bag; come straight upstairs, and I will exhibit her to you."

They ran up accordingly, and Rose took Katy into a large sunny nursery, where, tied with pink ribbon into a little basket-chair and watched over by a pretty young nurse, sat a dear, fat, fair baby, so exactly like Rose in miniature that no one could possibly have mistaken the relationship. The baby began to laugh and coo as soon as it caught sight of its gay little mother, and exhibited just such another dimple as hers, in the middle of a pink cheek. Katy was enchanted.

"Oh, you darling!" she said. "Would she come to me, do you think, Rose?"

"Why, of course she shall," replied Rose, picking up the baby as if she had been a pillow, and stuffing her into Katy's arms head first. "Now, just look at her, and tell me if ever you saw anything so enchanting in the whole course of your life before? Isn't she big? Isn't she beautiful? Isn't she good? Just see her little hands and her hair! She never cries except when it is clearly her duty to cry. See her turn her head to look at me! Oh, you angel!" And seizing the long-suffering baby, she smothered it with kisses. "I never, never, never did see anything so sweet. Smell her, Katy! Doesn't she smell like heaven?"

Little Rose was indeed a delicious baby, all dimples and good-humor and violet-powder, with a skin as soft as a lily's leaf, and a happy capacity for allowing herself to be petted and cuddled without remonstrance. Katy wanted to hold her all the time; but this Rose would by no means permit; in fact, I may as well say at

once that the two girls spent a great part of their time during the visit in fighting for the possession of the baby, who looked on at the struggle, and smiled on the victor, whichever it happened to be, with all the philosophic composure of Helen of Troy. She was so soft and sunny and equable, that it was no more trouble to care for and amuse her than if she had been a bird or a kitten; and, as Rose remarked, it was "ten times better fun."

"I was never allowed as much doll as I wanted in my infancy," she said. "I suppose I tore them to pieces too soon; and they couldn't give me tin ones to play with, as they did wash-bowls when I broke the china ones."

"Were you such a very bad child?" asked Katy.

"Oh, utterly depraved, I believe. You wouldn't think so now, would you? I recollect some dreadful occasions at school. Once I had my head pinned up in my apron because I *would* make faces at the other scholars, and they laughed; but I promptly bit a bay-window through the apron, and ran my tongue out of it till they laughed worse than ever. The teacher used to send me home with notes fastened to my pinafore with things like this written in them: 'Little Frisk has been more troublesome than usual to-day. She has pinched all the younger children, and bent the bonnets of all the older ones. We hope to see an amendment soon, or we do not know what we shall do.'"

"Why did they call you Little Frisk?" inquired Katy, after she had recovered from the laugh which Rose's reminiscences called forth.

"It was a term of endearment, I suppose; but somehow my family never seemed to enjoy it as they ought. I cannot understand," she went on reflectively, "why I had not sense enough to suppress those awful little notes. It would have been so easy to lose them on the way home, but somehow it never occurred to me. Little Rose will be wiser than that; won't you, my angel? She will tear up the horrid notes—mammy will show her how!"

All the time that Katy was washing her face and brushing the dust of the railway from her dress, Rose sat by with the little Rose in her lap, entertaining her thus. When she was ready, the droll little mamma tucked her baby under her arm and led the way downstairs to a large square parlor with a bay-window, through which the westering sun was shining. It was a pretty room, and had a flavor about it "just like Rose," Katy declared. No one else would have hung the pictures or looped back the curtains in exactly that way, or have hit upon the happy device of filling the grate with a great bunch of marigolds, pale brown, golden, and orange, to simulate the fire, which would have been quite too warm on so mild an evening. Morris papers and chintzes and "artistic" shades of color were in their infancy at that date; but Rose's taste was in advance of her time, and with a foreshadowing of the coming "reaction," she had chosen a "greenery, yallery" paper for her walls, against which hung various articles which looked a great deal queerer then than they would to-day. There was a mandolin, picked up at some Eastern

sale, a warming-pan in shining brass from her mother's attic, two old samplers worked in faded silks, and a quantity of gayly tinted Japanese fans and embroideries. She had also begged from an old aunt at Beverly Farms a couple of droll little armchairs in white painted wood, with covers of antique needle-work. One had "Chit" embroidered on the middle of its cushion; the other, "Chat." These stood suggestively at the corners of the hearth.

"Now, Katy," said Rose, seating herself in "Chit," "pull up 'Chat' and let us begin."

So they did begin, and went on, interrupted only by Baby Rose's coos and splutters, till the dusk fell, till appetizing smells floated through from the rear of the house, and the click of a latch-key announced Mr. Browne, come home just in time for dinner.

The two days' visit went only too quickly. There is nothing more fascinating to a girl than the menage of a young couple of her own age. It is a sort of playing at real life without the cares and the sense of responsibility that real life is sure to bring. Rose was an adventurous housekeeper. She was still new to the position, she found it very entertaining, and she delighted in experiments of all sorts. If they turned out well, it was good fun; if not, that was funnier still! Her husband, for all his serious manner, had a real boy's love of a lark, and he aided and abetted her in all sorts of whimsical devices. They owned a dog who was only less dear than the baby, a cat only less dear than the dog, a parrot whose education required constant supervision, and a hutch of

ring-doves whose melancholy little "whuddering" coos were the delight of Rose the less. The house seemed astir with young life all over. The only elderly thing in it was the cook, who had the reputation of a dreadful temper; only, unfortunately, Rose made her laugh so much that she never found time to be cross.

Katy felt quite an old, experienced person amid all this movement and liveliness and cheer. It seemed to her that nobody in the world could possibly be having such a good time as Rose; but Rose did not take the same view of the situation.

"It's all very well now," she said, "while the warm weather lasts; but in winter Longwood is simply grewsome. The wind never stops blowing day nor night. It howls and it roars and it screams, till I feel as if every nerve in my body were on the point of snapping in two. And the snow, ugh! And the wind, ugh! And burglars! Every night of our lives they come,—or I think they come,—and I lie awake and hear them sharpening their tools and forcing the locks and murdering the cook and kidnapping Baby, till I long to die, and have done with them forever! Oh, Nature is the most unpleasant thing!"

"Burglars are not Nature," objected Katy.

"What are they, then? Art? High Art? Well, whatever they are, I do not like them. Oh, if ever the happy day comes when Deniston consents to move into town, I never wish to set my eyes on the country again as long as I live, unless—well, yes, I should like to come out just once more in the horse-cars and *kick* that elm-tree by the fence! The number of times that I have lain awake

at night listening to its creaking!"

"You might kick it without waiting to have a house in town."

"Oh, I shouldn't dare as long as we are living here! You never know what Nature may do. She has ways of her own of getting even with people," remarked her friend, solemnly.

No time must be lost in showing Boston to Katy, Rose said. So the morning after her arrival she was taken in bright and early to see the sights. There were not quite so many sights to be seen then as there are today. The Art Museum had not got much above its foundations; the new Trinity Church was still in the future; but the big organ and the bronze statue of Beethoven were in their glory, and every day at high noon a small straggling audience wandered into Music Hall to hear the instrument played. To this extempore concert Katy was taken, and to Faneuil Hall and the Athenaeum, to Doll and Richards's, where was an exhibition of pictures, to the Granary Graveyard, and the Old South. Then the girls did a little shopping; and by that time they were quite tired enough to make the idea of luncheon agreeable, so they took the path across the Common to the Joy Street Mall.

Katy was charmed by all she had seen. The delightful nearness of so many interesting things surprised her. She perceived what is one of Boston's chief charms,—that the Common and its surrounding streets make a natural centre and rallying-point for the whole city; as the heart is the centre of the body and keeps up a quick correspondence and regulates the life of all its extremities. The stately old houses on Beacon Street, with their

rounded fronts, deep window-casements, and here and there a mauve or a lilac pane set in the sashes, took her fancy greatly; and so did the State House, whose situation made it sufficiently imposing, even before the gilding of the dome.

Up the steep steps of the Joy Street Mall they went, to the house on Mt. Vernon Street which the Reddings had taken on their return from Washington nearly three years before. Rose had previously shown Katy the site of the old family house on Summer Street, where she was born, now given over wholly to warehouses and shops. Their present residence was one of those wide old-fashioned brick houses on the crest of the hill, whose upper windows command the view across to the Boston Highlands; in the rear was a spacious yard, almost large enough to be called a garden, walled in with ivies and grapevines, under which were long beds full of roses and chrysanthemums and marigolds and mignonette.

Rose carried a latch-key in her pocket, which she said had been one of her wedding-gifts; with this she unlocked the front door and let Katy into a roomy white-painted hall.

"We will go straight through to the back steps," she said. "Mamma is sure to be sitting there; she always sits there till the first frost; she says it makes her think of the country. How different people are! I don't want to think of the country, but I'm never allowed to forget it for a moment. Mamma is so fond of those steps and the garden."

There, to be sure, Mrs. Redding was found sitting in a wicker-

work chair under the shade of the grapevines, with a big basket of mending at her side. It looked so homely and country-like to find a person thus occupied in the middle of a busy city, that Katy's heart warmed to her at once.

Mrs. Redding was a fair little woman, scarcely taller than Rose and very much like her. She gave Katy a kind welcome.

"You do not seem like a stranger," she said, "Rose has told us so much about you and your sister. Sylvia will be very disappointed not to see you. She went off to make some visits when we broke up in the country, and is not to be home for three weeks yet."

Katy was disappointed, too, for she had heard a great deal about Sylvia and had wished very much to meet her. She was shown her picture, from which she gathered that she did not look in the least like Rose; for though equally fair, her fairness was of the tall aquiline type, quite different from Rose's dimpled prettiness. In fact, Rose resembled her mother, and Sylvia her father; they were only alike in little peculiarities of voice and manner, of which a portrait did not enable Katy to judge.

The two girls had a cosy little luncheon with Mrs. Redding, after which Rose carried Katy off to see the house and everything in it which was in any way connected with her own personal history,—the room where she used to sleep, the high-chair in which she sat as a baby and which was presently to be made over to little Rose, the sofa where Deniston offered himself, and the exact spot on the carpet on which she had stood while they were

being married! Last of all,—

"Now you shall see the best and dearest thing in the whole house," she said, opening the door of a room in the second story.— "Grandmamma, here is my friend Katy Carr, whom you have so often heard me tell about."

It was a large pleasant room, with a little wood-fire blazing in a grate, by which, in an arm-chair full of cushions, with a Solitaire-board on a little table beside her, sat a sweet old lady. This was Rose's father's mother. She was nearly eighty; but she was beautiful still, and her manner had a gracious old-fashioned courtesy which was full of charm. She had been thrown from a carriage the year before, and had never since been able to come downstairs or to mingle in the family life.

"They come to me instead," she told Katy. "There is no lack of pleasant company," she added; "every one is very good to me. I have a reader for two hours a day, and I read to myself a little, and play Patience and Solitaire, and never lack entertainment."

There was something restful in the sight of such a lovely specimen of old age. Katy realized, as she looked at her, what a loss it had been to her own life that she had never known either of her grandparents. She sat and gazed at old Mrs. Redding with a mixture of regret and fascination. She longed to hold her hand, and kiss her, and play with her beautiful silvery hair, as Rose did. Rose was evidently the old lady's peculiar darling. They were on the most intimate terms; and Rose dimpled and twinkled, and made saucy speeches, and told all her little adventures and

the baby's achievements, and made jests, and talked nonsense as freely as to a person of her own age. It was a delightful relation.

"Grandmamma has taken a fancy to you, I can see," she told Katy, as they drove back to Longwood. "She always wants to know my friends; and she has her own opinions about them, I can tell you."

"Do you really think she liked me?" said Katy, warmly. "I am so glad if she did, for I *loved* her. I never saw a really beautiful old person before."

"Oh, there's nobody like her," rejoined Rose. "I can't imagine what it would be not to have her." Her merry little face was quite sad and serious as she spoke. "I wish she were not so old," she added with a sigh. "If we could only put her back twenty years! Then, perhaps, she would live as long as I do."

But, alas! there is no putting back the hands on the dial of time, no matter how much we may desire it.

The second day of Katy's visit was devoted to the luncheon-party of which Rose had written in her letter, and which was meant to be a reunion or "side CHAPTER" of the S.S.U.C. Rose had asked every old Hillsover girl who was within reach. There was Mary Silver, of course, and Esther Dearborn, both of whom lived in Boston; and by good luck Alice Gibbons happened to be making Esther a visit, and Ellen Gray came in from Waltham, where her father had recently been settled over a parish, so that all together they made six of the original nine of the society; and Quaker Row itself never heard a merrier confusion of tongues

than resounded through Rose's pretty parlor for the first hour after the arrival of the guests.

There was everybody to ask after, and everything to tell. The girls all seemed wonderfully unchanged to Katy, but they professed to find her very grown up and dignified.

"I wonder if I am," she said. "Clover never told me so. But perhaps she has grown dignified too."

"Nonsense!" cried Rose; "Clover could no more be dignified than my baby could. Mary Silver, give me that child this moment! I never saw such a greedy thing as you are; you have kept her to yourself at least a quarter of an hour, and it isn't fair."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Mary, laughing and covering her mouth with her hand exactly in her old, shy, half-frightened way.

"We only need Mrs. Nipson to make our little party complete," went on Rose, "or dear Miss Jane! What has become of Miss Jane, by the way? Do any of you know?"

"Oh, she is still teaching at Hillsover and waiting for her missionary. He has never come back. Berry Searles says that when he goes out to walk he always walks away from the United States, for fear of diminishing the distance between them."

"What a shame!" said Katy, though she could not help laughing. "Miss Jane was really quite nice,—no, not nice exactly, but she had good things about her."

"Had she!" remarked Rose, satirically. "I never observed them. It required eyes like yours, real 'double million magnifying-glasses of h'extra power,' to find them out. She was

all teeth and talons as far as I was concerned; but I think she really did have a softish spot in her old heart for you, Katy, and it's the only good thing I ever knew about her."

"What has become of Lilly Page?" asked Ellen.

"She's in Europe with her mother. I dare say you'll meet, Katy, and what a pleasure that will be! And have you heard about Bella? she's teaching school in the Indian Territory. Just fancy that scrap teaching school!"

"Isn't it dangerous?" asked Mary Silver.

"Dangerous? How? To her scholars, do you mean? Oh, the Indians! Well, her scalp will be easy to identify if she has adhered to her favorite pomatum; that's one comfort," put in naughty Rose.

It was a merry luncheon indeed, as little Rose seemed to think, for she laughed and cooed incessantly. The girls were enchanted with her, and voted her by acclamation an honorary member of the S.S.U.C. Her health was drunk in Apollinaris water with all the honors, and Rose returned thanks in a droll speech. The friends told each other their histories for the past three years; but it was curious how little, on the whole, most of them had to tell. Though, perhaps, that was because they did not tell all; for Alice Gibbons confided to Katy in a whisper that she strongly suspected Esther of being engaged, and at the same moment Ellen Gray was convulsing Rose by the intelligence that a theological student from Andover was "very attentive" to Mary Silver.

"My dear, I don't believe it," Rose said, "not even a theological student would dare! and if he did, I am quite sure Mary would consider it most improper. You must be mistaken, Ellen."

"No, I'm not mistaken; for the theological student is my second cousin, and his sister told me all about it. They are not engaged exactly, but she hasn't said no; so he hopes she will say yes."

"Oh, she'll never say no; but then she will never say yes, either. He would better take silence as consent! Well, I never did think I should live to see Silvery Mary married. I should as soon have expected to find the Thirty-nine Articles engaged in a flirtation. She's a dear old thing, though, and as good as gold; and I shall consider your second cousin a lucky man if he persuades her."

"I wonder where we shall all be when you come back, Katy," said Esther Dearborn as they parted at the gate. "A year is a long time; all sorts of things may happen in a year."

These words rang in Katy's ears as she fell asleep that night. "All sorts of things may happen in a year," she thought, "and they may not be all happy things, either." Almost she wished that the journey to Europe had never been thought of!

But when she waked the next morning to the brightest of October suns shining out of a clear blue sky, her misgivings fled. There could not have been a more beautiful day for their start.

She and Rose went early into town, for old Mrs. Bedding had made Katy promise to come for a few minutes to say good-by. They found her sitting by the fire as usual, though her windows

were open to admit the sun-warmed air. A little basket of grapes stood on the table beside her, with a nosegay of tea-roses on top. These were from Rose's mother, for Katy to take on board the steamer; and there was something else, a small parcel twisted up in thin white paper.

"It is my good-by gift," said the dear old lady. "Don't open it now. Keep it till you are well out at sea, and get some little thing with it as a keepsake from me."

Grateful and wondering, Katy put the little parcel in her pocket. With kisses and good wishes she parted from these new made friends, and she and Rose drove to the steamer, stopping for Mr. Browne by the way. They were a little late, so there was not much time for farewells after they arrived; but Rose snatched a moment for a private interview with the stewardess, unnoticed by Katy, who was busy with Mrs. Ashe and Amy.

The bell rang, and the great steam-vessel slowly backed into the stream. Then her head was turned to sea, and down the bay she went, leaving Rose and her husband still waving their handkerchiefs on the pier. Katy watched them to the last, and when she could no longer distinguish them, felt that her final link with home was broken.

It was not till she had settled her things in the little cabin which was to be her home for the next ten days, had put her bonnet and dress for safe keeping in the upper berth, nailed up her red and yellow bag, and donned the woollen gown, ulster, and soft felt hat which were to do service during the voyage, that she found

time to examine the mysterious parcel.

Behold, it was a large, beautiful gold-piece, twenty dollars!

"What a darling old lady!" said Katy; and she gave the gold-piece a kiss. "How did she come to think of such a thing? I wonder if there is anything in Europe good enough to buy with it?"

CHAPTER IV

ON THE "SPARTACUS."

The ulster and the felt hat soon came off again, for a head wind lay waiting in the offing, and the "Spartacus" began to pitch and toss in a manner which made all her unseasoned passengers glad to betake themselves to their berths. Mrs. Ashe and Amy were among the earliest victims of sea-sickness; and Katy, after helping them to settle in their staterooms, found herself too dizzy and ill to sit up a moment longer, and thankfully resorted to her own.

As the night came on, the wind grew stronger and the motion worse. The "Spartacus" had the reputation of being a dreadful "roller," and seemed bound to justify it on this particular voyage. Down, down, down the great hull would slide till Katy would hold her breath with fear lest it might never right itself again; then slowly, slowly the turn would be made, and up, up, up it would go, till the cant on the other side was equally alarming. On the whole, Katy preferred to have her own side of the ship, the downward one; for it was less difficult to keep herself in the berth, from which she was in continual danger of being thrown. The night seemed endless, for she was too frightened to sleep except in broken snatches; and when day dawned, and she looked through the little round pane of glass in the port-hole, only gray

sky and gray weltering waves and flying spray and rain met her view.

"Oh, dear, why do people ever go to sea, unless they must?" she thought feebly to herself. She wanted to get up and see how Mrs. Ashe had lived through the night, but the attempt to move made her so miserably ill that she was glad to sink again on her pillows.

The stewardess looked in with offers of tea and toast, the very idea of which was simply dreadful, and pronounced the other lady "'orridly ill, worse than you are, Miss," and the little girl "takin' on dreadful in the h'upper berth." Of this fact Katy soon had audible proof; for as her dizzy senses rallied a little, she could hear Amy in the opposite stateroom crying and sobbing pitifully. She seemed to be angry as well as sick, for she was scolding her poor mother in the most vehement fashion.

"I hate being at sea," Katy heard her say. "I won't stay in this nasty old ship. Mamma! Mamma! do you hear me? I won't stay in this ship! It wasn't a bit kind of you to bring me to such a horrid place. It was very unkind; it was cru-el. I want to go back, mamma. Tell the captain to take me back to the land. Mamma, why don't you speak to me? Oh, I am so sick and so very unhappy. Don't you wish you were dead? I do!"

And then came another storm of sobs, but never a sound from Mrs. Ashe, who, Katy suspected, was too ill to speak. She felt very sorry for poor little Amy, raging there in her high berth like some imprisoned creature, but she was powerless to help her.

She could only resign herself to her own discomforts, and try to believe that somehow, sometime, this state of things must mend,—either they should all get to land or all go to the bottom and be drowned, and at that moment she didn't care very much which it turned out to be.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.