

Fanny Aunt

The Two Story Mittens and the Little Play Mittens



Aunt Fanny

**The Two Story Mittens
and the Little Play Mittens**

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Fanny A.

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Frances Elizabeth Barrow

The Two Story Mittens and the Little Play Mittens Being the Fourth Book of the Series

MORE ABOUT THE MITTENS

The mittens were coming bravely on. Some evenings, Aunt Fanny could not send a story; and then the little mother read an entertaining book, or chatted pleasantly with her children.

There had been twelve pairs finished, during the reading of the third book, and several more were on the way. George had written the most delightful letters, each of which was read to his eagerly-listening sisters and brothers several times, for they were never tired of hearing about life in camp.

This evening, the mother drew another letter, received that day, out of her pocket. The very sight of the envelope, with the precious flag in the corner, caused their eyes to sparkle, and their fingers to fly at their patriotic and loving work.

"Attention!" said the mother in a severe, military tone. Everybody burst out laughing, choked it off, immediately straightened themselves up as stiff as ramrods, and she began:

"Dear Mother, Captain, and all the beloved squad: – Our camp is splendid! We call it Camp Ellsworth. It covers the westward slope of a beautiful hill. The air is pure and fresh, and our streets (for we have real ones) are kept as clean as a pin. Not an end of a cigar, or an inch of potato peeling, dare to show themselves. Directly back of the camp strong earthworks have been thrown up, with rifle pits in front; and these are manned by four artillery companies from New York. Our commissary is a very good fellow, but I wish he would buy pork with less fat. I am like the boy in school, who wrote home to his mother, his face all puckered up with disgust: "They make us eat p-h-a-t!!" When I swizzle it (or whatever you call that kind of cooking) in a pan over the fire, there is nothing left of a large slice, but a little shrivelled brown bit, swimming in about half a pint of melted lard, not quarter enough to satisfy a great robin redbreast like me; but I make the most of it, by pointing my bread for some time at it, and then eating a lot of bread before I begin at the pork. The pointing, you see, gives the bread a flavor."

The children screamed with laughter at this, and wanted to have some salt pork cooked immediately to try the "pointing" flavor. Their mother promised to have some for breakfast, and went on reading:

"We are very busy at drills. I give the boys plenty of field exercise, quick step, skirmishes, double quick, and all manner of manœuvres. After drill, we sing songs, tell jokes, and *play* jokes upon each other, but we don't forget, in doing this, that we are *gentlemen*."

"Oh dear mother, I am crazy to be in action! I am afraid, if we don't have a battle soon, I shall get motheaten. Our General is a glorious fellow, and is just as anxious as we are to have it over; peace will come all the sooner. Hollo! Here comes "Tapp," and I must blow out my half inch of tallow candle, and go to bed.

"Good-by, all my dear ones. Love and pray for your affectionate son and brother,
George."

"Ah!" sighed the children, as the mother folded up the letter. Then they were silent, thinking of the dear brother who wanted so much to be in the dreadful battle; and the little mother was looking very mournful when there came a ring at the bell.

The servant handed in a package, which proved to be a story from "Aunt Fanny." It came very fortunately; and the mittens grew fast, as the little mother read the interesting history of —

The Party Lillie gave for Miss Florence

THE PARTY LILLIE GAVE FOR MISS FLORENCE

"Oh, mamma, please *do* buy me a new doll," said Lillie, one day in June.

"Why, how you talk!" answered her mother. "What has become of your large family?"

"Oh, mamma! Minnie, the china doll, has only one leg, and my three wax dolls are no better. Fanny has only one arm; both Julia's eyes are out; and the kitten scratched off Maria's wig the other day, and she has the most dreadful-looking, bald pate you ever saw! Instead of its being made of nice white wax, it is nothing but old brown paper! I think it is very mean not to make dolls' bald heads like other people's! Then I could have dressed Maria up in pantaloons, and made a grandfather of her. But now she is fit for nothing but to be put in a cornfield to scare away the crows."

Lillie's mother laughed, and kissed her lovely daughter, who had not met with any of the terrible misfortunes that had befallen her wax and china family. *She* had both her round and chubby white arms; and two pretty and active legs, that made themselves very useful in skipping and jumping from morning till night; and just the prettiest golden brown wig you ever saw. It was fastened on so tight, that the kitten, with all her scratchings, could never twitch it off; in fact, every single hair was fastened by a root in her dear little head, and fell in soft, natural curls over her dimpled cheeks.

That very afternoon, her mother went out shopping; and looking in at a toy shop window, she saw a splendid wax doll nearly three feet long. It was dressed up in all manner of furbelows, but the dress did not look half so fresh and lovely as the doll. The arms and hands were all wax, round, pinky-white, and beautifully shaped, with two cunning dimples in the elbows, and four little dimples in the back of each hand. She had dark curling hair, large blue eyes, and very small feet.

"Well," said the loving mother to herself, "I really *must* try to get this splendid doll for my darling Lillie." Her own gentle blue eyes quite sparkled at the thought of the happiness such a present would bring with it. So she walked quickly in, and asked the price.

Oh dear! It was twenty dollars!

This was more than the mother thought right to give for the doll; and she told the man so, very politely. He was a very wise man, and what is more and better, kept a toy shop, because he loved children dearly; so he put his head on one side, and thought; then he looked out of the corner of his eye at the lady, and saw what a pleasant, sweet expression was on her face; then he thought again – this time, how disappointed the sweet little girl at home would be, if she knew her mother was out looking for a doll for her, and came home without one; and then he said, "What do you think the doll is worth?"

Lillie's mother told him what she considered a fair price, and the darling, good toyman spoke up as quick as a flash, "You shall have it, ma'am! Here, John, put this doll in paper, and take it to 'No. 13 Clinton Place.'"

Lillie's sister Helen was going to spend the summer with her dear grandmamma in Middletown. A splendid idea came into the kind mother's head. Taking Helen into a room alone, she said, "My dear, you will want some sewing to do, while you are away; suppose you take the beautiful doll and make up several suits of clothes for her, just as neatly as possible. I am sure your grandmamma will help you; and when you return, we will have a delightful surprise for Lillie." The darling, good sister, was just as pleased as possible with this plan: indeed, she had not got past liking to play with dolls herself; and she was very different from some elder sisters, who take an unamiable pleasure in teasing the younger ones, instead of joining in their plays, and doing everything to add to their happiness. So the doll and all sorts of pretty muslins and silks, and materials for under garments, were mysteriously packed away in Helen's trunk, and she went off to her grandmother's pleasant country house, without Lillie's having the slightest suspicion of what she was going to do. She was very busy all summer making the clothes, with her grandmamma's help. Many of the pleasant mornings she sat on the steps of the door, listening to the singing of the birds as she sewed.

And now this is a very good place to tell you about Lillie and her sisters; for she had three dear sisters – Helen, Mary, and sweet little Maggie; and no brother at all. The only one she ever had, went to live with Jesus in heaven, after staying only fifteen months here in this world.

You know already what a kind mother the children had; and I am very certain their papa loved them just as much. When he is with them, his dark, bright, and piercing eyes droop and soften into an expression of so much affection, that one day, when I was visiting at his house, I caught myself repeating the words of a perfect little poem, which seemed to have been written expressly for him. It is so beautiful, and describes the children so well, with the change of one or two words, that I have ventured to copy it here for you. It was written by Gerald Massey.

"There be four maidens; four loving maidens;
Four bonny maidens, mine;
Four precious jewels are set in Life's crown,
On prayer-lifted brows to shine.
Eight starry eyes, all love-luminous,
Look out of our heaven so tender;
Since the honeymoon glowing and glorious
Arose in its ripening splendor.

"There's Lillie bell, the duchess of wonderland,
With her dance of life, dimples and curls;
Whose bud of a mouth into sweet kisses bursts,
A-smile with the little white pearls:
And Mary our rosily-goldening peach,
On the sunniest side of the wall;
And Helen – mother's own darling,
And Maggie, the baby of all."

The summer was passed by our dear little Lillie in playing and frolicking, and sometimes tearing her frocks; which last, her mother minded not the least bit, as long as it was an accident. I don't, either. Children had better tear their frocks a little, jumping, climbing over fences, and getting fat and healthy, than to sit in the house, looking pale and miserable. My Alice often comes in, a perfect object to behold! I sometimes wonder the ragman, who drives the old cart with a row of jingling bells strung over the top, don't mistake her for a bundle of rags gone out for a walk. I don't feel *worried* about it; for if he *should* happen to make this mistake, and pop her in his cart some day, Alice would make one of her celebrated Indian "yoops," as she calls it, and I rather think he would pop her out, quicker than she went in.

When September had come, Helen returned home; and soon after, the mother said, "Lillie, there is a young lady in town, who wishes to make your acquaintance. She is quite grand and fashionable in her ideas, so we must make a little flourish for her. What do you think of having a party to receive her?"

"A party!" screamed Lillie, clapping her hands with delight; "I would like that *very* much; and oh! please have candy, and oranges, and oh! mottoes – lots of snapping mottoes for the party! That would be most delightful! And please ask Nattie, and Kittie, and Lina, and Emily, and oh! everybody."

"You must ask them yourself. See, here is a quantity of pretty buff and pink note paper, and here is a nice new pen: sit down and write your invitations."

This was a tremendous business! and Lillie, spreading herself in great grandeur, with her head on one side, took the pen and wrote very nicely, *for her*, all the notes, in this way:

"Miss Lillie B – wishes you To Come to A party to-morrow to Meet A young Lady. Her name Is – i Don't Know Yet. Please Come At Seven-o-Clock.
Lillie."

Then she doubled them up into little squares, and put them into the envelopes; and Margery, the maid, who loved Lillie dearly, and *would* have rode off with the notes on a broomstick to Jerusalem, if her little lady had wanted her to – trotted about all the morning, leaving them at the children's houses, telling the waiters who answered the doors, on no account to stop a single moment, but rush right up stairs with them, as they were of the greatest importance.

The next morning, Lillie got all the answers. I should think there were about twenty little notes, all directed to her. Was ever anything known to equal it? A lady getting so many letters at once! It was almost too much happiness. They did not all come at once, which was very lucky; for I do believe Lillie would have gone crazy with delight. She opened the first with trembling eagerness, dancing up and down the whole time, and read these enchanting words:

"dear lillie —
"i will come. i shall wear my best frock – what a funny name the young lady has. miss don't know yet
*"good bye. yours,
Nattie."*

"Oh, mamma," she cried, laughing, "Nattie thinks the young lady's name is 'Miss Don't Know Yet!' How funny! But really, what is her name, mamma?"

"She will tell you that herself, when she comes. She wants to surprise you."

"Oh!" said Lillie; and just then another note was handed to her, and she read this:

"Dear Lillie: – Mamma is writing this note for me, and she says – I accept your invitation with much pleasure. So I do, certainly. What delightful fun it is to go to a party! I wish you would have one every week.
"Your loving friend, Kitty."

"Oh, mamma" – Lillie was just going to ask her mother to let her have a party every week – when Maggie brought another note. This was from a young gentleman, and was as follows:

"Master Russell is coming to Your Party; and I will Eat all the plum Cake, and bring A pack of Crackers In my pocket – to fire off in honor Of Miss Doughnut.
*"Yours affectionately,
Sam Russell."*

Lillie thought this was a splendid idea! It would be such an honor to the young lady to receive her with popping a pack of crackers at her, just as they fire off cannon at the President when he comes to town.

"Oh, how enchanting it is!" she cried, and she jumped up on a chair and jumped down again three times running, she was so happy.

Everybody was coming, and all wrote notes very like those I have told you. The weather was beautiful, and, for a wonder, everything went just right.

Long before seven o'clock, Lillie was dressed and in the parlor waiting for her little friends. She got very impatient, and was just beginning to think they never meant to come; or had all been naughty, and were sent to bed instead of going to a party, when the door bell rang – then again – then again – and a moment after a little troop of laughing, lovely children skipped into the room, all talking together, and all running to kiss Lillie at once; so that not a quarter of them could find a place on her sweet, happy face, and had to wait for their turn.

Then some nice little boys came in, with their faces scrubbed so clean they fairly shone, and their hair parted down the middle behind so very even that the seam looked like a streak of white chalk. They went up to Lillie very bashfully, and shook hands; and then all got together in a corner, because you see they were afraid of the girls, and imagined that they were making fun of them.

But after a little while this fear seemed to fly up the chimney, for boys and girls were playing "turn the platter," and "hunt the ring," and the larger ones were dancing; and everybody was having the most delightful time possible.

Dear little rosebud Maggie was the happiest of any, for she was to sit up until every scrap of the party was over; so everybody kissed her, and played with her, and showed her how to turn the platter, and she skipped and danced; and that dear little chuckling, singing laugh of hers was heard in every corner of the room. The fact is, Little Maggie is one of my particular darlings. Don't tell anybody.

But where was the young lady all this time?

Lillie had scarcely thought of her, she was so happy with the dear little friends she knew and loved. Of course a stranger could not expect to have the same place in her loving heart, especially as she had not yet had even the first peep at her.

Her sister Mary had gone out of the room a little while before, and Lillie was wondering why she did not return, when there came a tremendous ringing at the bell.

"She's coming!" whispered Lillie to herself, and her heart beat fast as the door opened; and there marched gravely in – not a young lady – but a little old gentleman, whose hair was perfectly white, though he seemed to have a great deal of it, for his head was about the size of a half peck measure. He wore a very long-tailed coat, buttoned up very tight; his pantaloons only reached down to his knees; but to make up for that his stockings came up to meet them, and were fastened with perfectly beautiful garters, with a big silver buckle shining in the very middle; shoes, also flourishing large silver buckles, adorned his feet. So you see he was quite an old dandy.

Leaning on his arm was a little old lady. Her hair was also as white as snow; and she too had so much, and it was so fuzzy, that it looked for all the world like a pound of cotton batting. She was dressed in the most gorgeous array, perfectly elegant to behold! white satin, and flowers, and furbelows; and was so very dignified and stiff in her manners that Lillie thought she must have fallen into a kettle of starch.

Another tremendous ring at the bell! and the servant who answered it came into the parlor and said the little old gentleman and lady were wanted out in the hall immediately.

They made each a low bow and marched out of the room, while the children's bright eyes grew larger and larger, and they asked each other, with a little hop and skip apiece, what in the world was coming next.

As to Lillie, the lovely pink roses deepened on her cheeks; her eyes shone like diamonds, and two dimples kept playing hide and seek with the smiles that were chasing them every instant.

It was a breathless moment! All were waiting – their eyes fastened on the door. The knob turned – it slowly opened – and in marched the little old lady and gentleman, holding between them by the hands, the most perfectly beautiful young lady that was ever seen in the whole world!!

She had on a white tarleton dress, with two skirts trimmed with cherry-colored blond lace. The waist was gathered in at the belt, and finished round the neck with a beautiful lace berthe. She wore a sash of cherry-colored satin ribbon, and in her belt was an elegant chatelaine, from which hung a tiny gold watch exactly the size of a five cent piece. A necklace was round her neck, and a wreath of flowers upon her head. She had fine open-worked stockings and morocco shoes. In her right hand was the cunningest little fan that ever was seen! and altogether she was quite the belle of the evening.

All the children drew a long breath! and gazed with admiration as the three strangers marched all round the room. Then they stopped in the very middle, and Lillie's mother, stepping up beside them, gracefully waved her hand and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, let me present to you Mr. and Mrs. Grey, and Miss Florence Grey."

The little old gentleman put his hand on his heart, and made such a low bow to the company that they saw the back of his bushy white head, and his long coat tails stuck out behind like a pennon in a high breeze; and the little old lady put her hand on *her* heart, and dropped such a low courtesy that the children thought she meant to sit down on the carpet; but Miss Florence looked straight before her, and never took the slightest notice of anybody.

Just then a queer little laugh was heard; a kind of a smothered, bursting laugh. The children stared! and there was the little old gentleman stuffing his pocket handkerchief into his mouth, and perfectly shaking with laughter!! What conduct in an aged person!! But worse was coming! The little old lady began to laugh; then she screamed with laughter, and shook so that a most dreadful thing happened! She laughed all the hair off her head! It first tumbled over sideways, and then fell on the carpet all in a bunch!

"Sister Mary!! sister Mary!!" cried Lillie, running up to the little old lady, who, strange to tell! had another crop of beautiful golden brown hair under the other, smoothed down very close to her head.

"Why, it's a wig!" screamed the children, all laughing and running up. Was there ever anything so funny: "It's nothing but Miss Mary in a wig."

At this very moment Master Sam Russell stepped slyly behind the little old gentleman, and twitched at his bushy white hair. It all came off in his hand amid roars of laughter; and underneath was the brown head of Harry, one of the greatest fellows for fun you ever saw, and a dear cousin of Lillie's.

But Miss Florence stared at it all with a simpering smile on her face; till Lillie, looking close at her, caught her up in her arms, and hugging her to her breast screamed joyfully out – "It's a new doll! a new doll!! Miss Florence is a new doll!!" and began running round the whole length of the two rooms, all the children scampering after her, laughing and shouting, till they threw themselves down on the sofas and chairs, perfectly breathless.

Yes, Miss Florence was a splendid wax doll; and the children gathered round Lillie, after just one second of rest, for they could not possibly be expected to sit still longer than that; and admired and kissed the stranger; and "Oh, what a darling! what lovely eyes! what pretty boots! how big she is! and so on," was heard on all sides.

A tremendous ring at the bell! Why! were wonders never to cease? In came Margery saying there was a trunk in the hall left by the expressman, who said Miss Florence Grey must pay him twenty-five cents, and he would not stir a step till she did.

Here was a difficulty! Lillie's money never had a chance to burn a hole in *her* pocket, because she spent it the very moment her mamma or papa gave her any; and she did not know where twenty-five cents were to come from.

"Suppose you feel in Miss Florence's pocket," said her mother.

"Ah! let's see!" cried Lillie; so she poked two of her little fingers in the pocket, and sure enough! there was a bright, new quarter of a dollar. She rushed out and gave it to the expressman, who hardly waited to say, "thank you," but was on his wagon with a bound, and round the corner like a flash of lightning.

Well, there in the hall was a beautiful new trunk! two of the boys brought it in very politely. But it was locked. What was to be done now?

"Feel in Miss Florence's pocket," advised the good mother again.

Lillie poked in two little fingers as before, and said that way down in the bottom there was certainly something. She caught it at last, and when it was fished out, it proved to be a small key.

All the children crowded round as the trunk was unlocked; and then you would have given a hundred dollars, only to see their faces, and hear them clap their hands, and exclaim with delight as dress after dress, and petticoats all tucked up, pantalettes with the most beautiful embroidery round the legs, and a round straw hat, and two French bonnets, and all sorts of things; and everything else besides, was taken out. Oh, it was almost too good to believe!

Down sat the darlings on the carpet, and spread all the articles out. The boys looking on very much pleased.

"Let's try all the dresses on," said one of the little girls.

No sooner said, than done! and before Miss Florence could say "Jack Robinson," off came the dress she was wearing.

Did you ever! To be trying on a lady's dress at a party!! Who ever heard of such a thing? I never did! But the best of it was, that Miss Florence did not seem to care a button; she smiled and simpered, and allowed herself to be tumbled over on her nose, and never squealed an atom when pins were run into her back. But no doubt she came to the conclusion that it was the custom of the country. At any rate, she could not help loving Lillie; and for my part, I don't know who could.

In the middle of the dressing, supper was announced! which was joyful news, as all the romping and playing had made the children as hungry as hunters; and, at the sight of a great table perfectly loaded down with cakes, oranges, and mottoes, instead of gravely marching in, looking as solemn as owls – as grown people do – they skipped and danced with delight: and such a little, laughing, joyous party was worth all the grum old grown-up balls from now to never. I wish all the children would invite me to their parties; I think it is *such* fun! The sight of so many happy little faces takes nearly all the sad look out of my face, and quite all the sad thoughts out of my heart.

They all ate just as much as they wanted of the nice things, and the little boys pulled the snapping mottoes with the girls; and very politely gave the motto papers, all crammed full of "love and dove," and "bliss and kiss," to those they liked best.

Then they played games and danced, and were so perfectly happy, that when the servants came to take them home, they one and all declared that they would not go, as their mammas had said they might stay till ten o'clock; when, would you believe it? Lillie's mother said it was ten minutes after ten then!

Where in the world had all the time gone to, this evening? Just the very evening, of all others, when they wanted it to last three times longer than usual! It really was too bad; and was very unkind in the hands of the clock to scabble over such delightful hours so fast. But there was no help for it now; and they put on their coats, cloaks, caps, and hats, and, after kissing Lillie and Miss Florence, who was going to live there, they all went home.

And that was the end of Miss Florence's party. I mean the party that was given in her honor. If you should like to see her, just come to me, and I will whisper in your ear were she lives now; for they have moved away from Clinton Place. She and Lillie have become great friends, and have never been separated since that celebrated evening, at the party, when the children tried on all her dresses.

Oh! I forgot one thing. The white wigs, you know. Well, the boys picked them up to examine them; and, what do you think the queer old things were made of? Why, nothing but a sheet of white wadding.

How they did laugh! and how surprised they were! for they looked so respectable! just like the bushy horse hair wigs you see hanging in Mr. Isabeau the hair dresser's windows; and I, for one, the very next time I go to a fancy party, mean to make a wig of white wadding, for three cents, for that was all Henry's and Mary's cost.

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