

"Now let me
put your collar
on and slick
your hair"



A Little Boy of Long Ago

By GRANT SHOWERMAN

Author of "A Country Chronicle"

Illustrations by George Wright

LETTIE

MY mother says: "Now, you must be home by nine. You know that 's always your bedtime, and I don't s'pose Lettie's mother lets *her* stay up later than that."

I say: "All right. I will."

My mother says: "Come here. Now let me put your collar on and slick your hair."

I say: "Oh, I do' want to put a collar on. I s'pose you 'll want me to put my boots on next."

My mother says: "No, you can go bare-foot if you want to, but you can't go up to play with a nice little girl like Lettie without your collar and coat on. And, then, her ma would n't like it. 'T ain't too warm. Come!"

My mother gets out one of my paper collars and puts it on me and then puts on my necktie. It fastens with a loop of elastic, and is always hard to get on. I don't like to wear a collar. I always feel as if I could n't move my head.

Lettie lives up near Tip's and the school-house. They moved here last sum-

mer. She has n't any father, only her mother and her Uncle Harry.

Lettie's Uncle Harry is always laughing and joking. When he meets me on the road going to school, he almost always stops and says: "Good morning, young man. Does your mother know you 're out?" Then he takes hold of me and throws me up, or whirls me around till I almost fall down. Tip and I both like him.

Lettie's real name is Aletta. She takes her slate and books to school in a kind of bag. It has A. C. on it in red and black yarn. She writes crooked, and reading and spelling are harder for her than for Gertie and the rest. But I like her better than any one else, and I like to go and play with her. Tip likes her, too. Teacher scolded her so hard once about missing words that she cried. I felt sorry for her. Teacher did, too, afterward.

I look at Tip's house when I go by. I know he had to go down to Newbecker's after pie-plant, so I don't yell. Anyway, I like to play with Lettie by ourselves.

I go around to the woodshed door and go in. It is so dark I can hardly see to find the kitchen door. Lettie's mother hears me, and comes and opens it. It has a latch that clicks instead of a knob like their other doors.

I say, "Is Lettie home?"

Lettie's mother says: "Oh, how do you do? Come in, come in. Yes, she 's here. Let-ti-i-ie!" She is always good to me that way.

Lettie comes running in from the other room. Her apron flies up and down, and her hair, too. She says: "Hello! Have you come up to play? How long can you stay?"

I say, "Ma says I got to be home by nine."

Lettie's mother says for us to go into the parlor. We sit and look at picture-

books until we get tired, and then try to play games with cards. Then we make tents and houses of the cards.

Their house is n't anywhere near as big as ours. The organ and the chairs and the stand take up so much room that you can hardly sit down. The bedroom next to the sitting-room is so little that the door hits the bed when you open it. They have n't any up-stairs at all.

Lettie has a white apron on. It buttons behind. Where it goes over her shoulders it has a crinkly border that sticks up. There is a little green in it. It always makes her look fresh and cool even when it is a hot day. It comes up almost to her chin, and then goes around her neck. I like to have her look at me. I like it when she sits close to me or leans on the table with me to look at things.



"Good morning, young man. Does your mother know you're out?"



"We sit and look at picture-books until we get tired"

Lettie says: "Now see! I've got my palace all built, and I'm going to play there 's a big wind comes and blows it down. Now look!" She makes sure I am looking. She says: "Now!" She puffs her cheeks out and gets all ready. Her

cheeks are round and smooth. Her eyes and mouth don't look so pretty that way. She blows, and the cards all tumble down.

I hear their clock make a little clicking sort of noise.

Lettie says: "There goes that naughty



"Lettie's mother comes in with two little basins full"

old clock! It always makes me think of our hen clucking to her little chickens."

In a few minutes it will be half-past eight. Their clock always strikes once at half-past.

I say: "I must n't forget. When it 's ten minutes to nine I got to go."

Lettie says, "Oh, do you have to go then?"

I say: "M-m-m. I always have to be in bed by nine."

Lettie jumps up. She says, "I 'm going to ask mama if she 'll pop some corn." She always says "mama." Tip says that 's all right for girls, but he likes "ma" and "pa" better.

Lettie runs out into the other room. She comes back and says: "Why, mama 's got it all ready to pop now. The frying-pan all hot, and everything." We always say "spider" at our house.

After a while we hear the corn popping, and then begin to smell it. Lettie's mother comes in with two little basins full. She says: "I s'pose I ought to have begun sooner, but you 'll have ten min-

utes, and then you can get home soon enough. You 'll have plenty of time." She goes and gets another little basin for herself. She says, "I wish your Uncle Harry was here to have some."

We eat and talk. The pop-corn tastes so good that we have it all eaten up by the time I have to go.

When I get to the door that opens into the woodshed, Lettie's mother brings the lamp and holds it. She says: "It 's terribly dark out there. Let me hold the light for you till you get outdoors."

I turn around and say good night to Lettie. She stands away over by the other door, looking at me. She says, "Good-by." Her voice sounds nice and clear.

Lettie's mother says, "Are n't you going to shake hands with him, or anything?"

Lettie looks at me. She starts and runs across the floor to where I am. Her apron and her hair fly up and down. She stretches out her arms while she is coming, and when she gets to me she puts them around my neck and gives me a kiss on the cheek. I can smell her apron. It always smells sprinkled and ironed. Then



"She stretches out her arms while she is coming, and when she gets to me she puts them around my neck and gives me a kiss on the cheek"

she runs back to where she was. She turns around and says, "Come again, won't you?"

Lettie's mother laughs. She says to me, "I'm sure you ought to be satisfied with *that* invitation."

My face feels warm. I liked it when Lettie ran up and kissed me, but I don't know what to do. I say: "M-m-m! I'll come. Good night." I go out through the woodshed and the yard to the road.

When I get to the bottom of the hill

there is a long piece before I get home. The big maple-tree is just half-way, and there is a bush. I always imagine the bush is a bear. I hope I am not going to meet anybody. If I do, I'll have to cross over to the other side.

I run as fast as I can. My feet make slapping noises on the path, because the ground is flat and smooth and damp. Just as I come jumping on to the veranda the clock begins to strike. I come in all out of breath. My mother says, "Just in time."

THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

TEACHER says: "You may have twice as long for recess to-day if you want to, seeing it's the last day." She says, "Dismissed!" We all get up and go out.

Some of us are in our Sunday suits. I have my paper collar and necktie on, and it makes me feel awfully stiff. The girls have their best dresses on, and nice, clean aprons. Lettie's apron is crinklier than ever around the edge, and she has a new blue ribbon around her hair.

We stand on the steps awhile, and then go out under the maple-trees. We don't feel like playing the way we do when we have our regular clothes on.

Georgie says: "I don't like to be dressed up. Do you?"

I say: "No. I never feel as if I could move when I have to wear a collar. If I had my way, I'd *never* dress up."

Lije says, "What do you do it for, then?"

I say, "'Cause ma makes me."

The girls all stand together under the big basswood-tree. Gertie is saying something to them. Pretty soon she comes run-

ning over to where we are. She says: "Say, let's all run over to the woods and get teacher some more flowers. We've got time enough. Shall we?"

We all start and run up the road. The little Dutch boys can't keep up with us.

Lettie and I run along together. Her hair and apron flutter up and down. She says: "I wisht teacher 'd 'a' had speaking for the last day. Don't you?"

I say: "Na-aw. I don't like to speak."

Lettie then says, "Why?"

I say, "'Cause I don't like to get up in front of 'em."

Lettie says, "Oh, that's nothing to be 'fraid of." We get all out of breath.

When we get in to the woods Gertie

says: "Now we must pick as fast as we can and go right back. You know 't ain't like noon, when there's a whole hour."

The lilies and violets are about all gone, but there are some other kinds. We don't know what their names are. They are pink or white or purple, and shaped like a round cup, and have lots of leaves. Our bouquets are greener than the ones we got for teacher before.



"Her hair and apron flutter up and down"

The Dutch boys and girls have hardly got started with theirs before we start back. They are afraid they will be late, so they stop picking, and run along behind us with what they have.

We run into the school-house and put our flowers on the desk. They make such a big pile we can hardly see teacher when she sits down. We don't go out again, but stand around and talk. Some of us sit down in our seats.

Teacher has her best dress on. When she goes down the aisle to ring the bell she makes a loud, rustling noise. There are only a few outside. When she comes back, we are all in our seats, and it is still all over the room.

We feel sure there are n't going to be any lessons. Our slates and books and everything are packed up on our desks. We did that before recess. We did n't really need to, but we did n't feel satisfied until we had them all ready the way we wanted to carry them home.

Teacher goes up to her desk and stands there. The blackboard behind her is all clean and ever so much blacker than it was. That makes her look more dressed up than ever. She waits a minute until she is sure we won't make any more noises, and says: "We 'll not have any recitations. I thought I 'd let you go home a little earlier the last day."

We knew that was how it would be. Now we wonder what kind of cards we are going to get.

Teacher reaches down under her desk and gets a package. There is n't room on the desk, on account of the flowers, so she lays the register on top of the bouquets and puts the package on top of it. She undoes the string. We can see the pile of nice, clean cards. They have gilt edges, and when she lifts one up we can see pretty colors. She takes them in her hand and comes down and begins to give them to us. She has them all arranged according to where we sit.

The cards have our names written on them, and under that it says, "From his Teacher." Then there is teacher's name. The pictures are different. My card has two little boys with red and yellow clothes



"Teacher says: 'You may have twice as long for recess to-day'."

on. One of them is playing a drum, and the other a fife. On top it says in gold letters, "Reward of Merit." My father can play a fife. He can play "The Girl I Left behind me," and another tune without a name. He says the fifers used to play them in the army.

and run to the shelves for our dinner-pails. Some of the boys yell: "School 's out! School 's out!" Two or three say, "Good-by, Teacher!" We all start for outdoors.

I get almost to the road. Then all of a sudden I remember what my mother said



"Some of the boys yell: 'School 's out! School 's out!' Two or three say, 'Good-by, Teacher!' We all start for outdoors"

When the cards are all passed around, teacher goes up and stands by the desk. She says, "Well, I guess that is all." She waits a minute. She says: "I hope you 'll have a real good time this vacation. And I hope you 'll be happy all your lives." She smiles at us. She says: "All right. Now you may go."

We all jump up and grab our books

this morning just before I started to school. She said: "Now, you must n't forget to go up to your teacher the last thing and say good-by real nice. Don't go and run off the way most of 'em do, and not say a word."

I run back. I meet some of the girls coming out. Lettie is crying. It makes me feel sorry. Jennie says: "What 's the

matter? Forget something?" I go in without answering.

Teacher is sitting there behind the desk, thinking. I go up the aisle and around to where she is. She stops thinking, and looks at me. I say, "Good-by, Teacher!"

Teacher says, "Oh, is *that* it?" She

Lettie and Gertie. We look at each other's cards. We talk about the new school-house they say we are going to have next winter. We wonder who will be teacher.

Lettie goes in. She says, "Will you come up and play with me some time?"



"Teacher has her head down on her hands on top of the desk"

puts her arms around me and says, "Good-by, little boy!" I turn around and start down the aisle. When I get to the door I look around a little. Teacher has her head down on her hands on top of the desk. I am afraid she is tired or has the headache or something.

I run as fast as I can and catch up with

I say: "M-m-m. I will."

Tip is sitting on their steps with his books on his legs. He yells: "Yah-oo! You know! Come on up to-morrow. Don't forget the Fourth o' July picnic next Monday."

Gertie says: "I 'm goin' to catch up with the girls. Come on! Run!"



" 'Come, let us reason together, Aurora' "

Aurora the Magnificent

By GERTRUDE HALL

Author of "The Truth about Camilla," etc.

Illustrations by Gerald Leake

Chapter XX

AURORA of the excellent three-times-a-day appetite, Aurora of the good sound slumbers, picked at her food and slept brokenly for part of a week at that period, such was her impatience at the dragging length of time, the emptiness of time, undiversified and unenhanced by the presence in her house of any man devoted to her. No odor of tobacco smoke in the air, no cane in the corner; Tom on his way to America, Gerald hurt or cross or both. But, the ladies agreed, when Aurora had told Estelle the latest about Gerald, her refusal could not possibly occasion a cessation of relations, since his offer, chivalrous and unpremeditated, had been at most a cute and endearing exhibition of character. His sensitiveness could not be long recovering, and everything would be as before.

Aurora was one of those healthy sleepers who have no care to guard themselves against the morning light. Her windows stood open, her bed was protected from winged intruders by a veil of white netting gathered at the top into the great overshadowing coronet.

She was in the fine midst of those sweetest slumbers that come after a pearly wash of dawn has cleaned sky and hill-tops from the first smoke-stain of the night when a sense of some one else in the room startled her awake. There stood near the door of her dressing-room an unknown female, wearing intricate gold ear-pendants and a dingy cotton dress without any collar.

"*Chi è voi?*" inquired Aurora, lifting her head.

"I am the Ildegonda," answered the

woman, whose smile and everything about her apologized, and deprecated displeasure. She must be the kitchen-maid, fancied Aurora, engaged by Clotilde, and not supposed to show her nose above the subterranean province of the kitchen.

"There is the *signorino* down in the garden," Ildegonda acquitted herself of the charge laid upon her by the donor of the silver franc still rejoicing her folded fingers, "who says if you will have the amiability to place yourself one moment at the window he would desire to say a word to you."

"All right." Aurora nodded to the Ildegonda, inviting her by a motion of the hand to go away again.

Aurora rose, and softly closed the door which, when open, made an avenue for sound from her room to Estelle's. She slipped her arms into a sky-blue dressing-gown, and with a heart spilling over with playful joy, eyes spilling over with childish laughter, went to look out of the window, the one, naturally, farthest from Estelle's side of the house.

"Good morning! Good morning!" came on the instant from the waiting, up-turned face below. "Forgive me for rousing you so early," was said in a voice subdued so as to reach, if possible, no other ears, "but you promised you would go with me one day to Vallombrosa, and one has to start early, for it is far. Will you come?"

"Will I come? Will I come? Wait and see! Got your horses and carriage?"

"Standing at the gate. How long will it take you to get ready?"

"Oh, I 'll hurry like anything.