THE CHILDREN'S CORNER

THE LOST SISTER—PART II.

"What shall we do for a school?" was the all-absorbing question, and where will we find a teacher?

Some of the public-spirited men of influence and wealth by subscription secured enough money to erect a schoolhouse, which was soon in process of erection. Every man in the neighborhood seemed to consider himself a committee to procure a teacher. After much consultation and many suggestions and a vast deal of advice, a young man from the village was elected. He refused to take the school till a stated amount was guaranteed. Then it came that my father was required to subscribe three pupils, though he had only two children—myself and a sister three years younger than I, who had been under my mother's care and teaching.

On the day before school opened the teacher came to board with us. He and father talked over the subject of Fannie's studying Latin. She has a head for it, said the teacher, running his fingers through her soft golden hair, always brushed so carefully.

Are you anything of a phrenologist? No, I'm not, answered father bluntly. I don't believe anybody can tell me what kind of a mind I have by feeling the bumps and knots on my head. Well, we won't discuss that, but Fannie has language developed unusually large. The possession of this faculty will enable the party to invent, learn, remember and apply with facility the signs that represent ideas. Allow her to study Latin and see if she does not acquire it with facility. Now, sir, I don't propose to send my child to school to learn tom-foolery. I hope you don't call the noble Latin "tom-foolery." It would be that to her. It might do for teachers and preachers, but what good would it do that child? Mother spoke up decidedly and said: Fannie can study Latin without any additional expense. You have subscribed three scholars and she may as well as not have the advantage of it.

What makes people most respected in society? What makes our neighborhood the most elevated in all this part of the state? You may scold as much as you please, but it don't alter the fact that learning increases people's respectibility. You know the world thinks well of a good scholar.

Father made some show to fight the matter further, but as I knew it would be, mother carried her point as usual, and it was decided that Fannie would study Latin.

It had never before entered my mind that Fannie was my superior in talent. Little, wee, shy, delicate thing that she was, mother had often said: "Poky," considering your ages, your little sister surpasses you. Oh, that's because you are her teacher. Then she often spelled words that I failed on, but this only occasioned momentary embarrassment. I had never cherished any feeling of envy or looked on her as a rival, but from the moment it was decided that she should study Latin I became envious of my sister. That night I lay awake a long time for a little girl. Fannie was about to enter a strange, mysterious land, which to me was blockaded. They are going to make a great character of my sister. They considered her more capable; they thought more of her.

The next morning I was turning the grindstone for father to sharpen his axe and I ventured to say: Is Fannie going to study Latin? I suppose so. Your mother will have her way.

I wish I could, too. I'm the oldest. What good will it do you? I want you to hurry through with school and teach. Then Fanny can go to school to you. I can't be paying out money always for schooling.

The suggestion of being a school teacher was a stinging taunt for a Southern girl and was always resented with defiance.

As Fannie and I walked to school on the first morning I watched her narrowly to see if she gave herself any airs, but the little thing walked demurely along in her green gingham sunbonnet and blue checked apron, keeping close by my side, now and then stumping her toe against a grub in the new cut road. On such occasions she would look up with an apology, then drop her eyes and be more careful.

We entered the new white framed school house with great interest. My life had been so narrow that commonplace things seemed to me romantic.

The classes were arranged and I was engaged in study. When the class in Latin was called I looked up and there was my little sister in a large class of boys and girls twice her size, looking shy and half frightened, waiting to recite.

When I think of that nervous, frightened child for the first time in a schoolroom, with her thin, sunny hair parted and combed carefully, and with that pitifully timid look in her honest blue eyes, there surges through my heart a wild regret, such a restless grief, such remorse.

Oh, could I but relieve that period—how I would shelter that tender, sensitive plant. It would be very happiness to lay the dear, timid little child in my arms and sooth her as I would my own darling baby.

TWO—CHILDREN' CORNER

I was envious of my little sister. I cared nothing for others who studied Latin. I took no interest in any others but she, for whom I should be more concerned than anyone else. I was envious. My attetion was turned to the recitation bench. There was Fannie amid a crowd of big boys and girls, a wee, nine-year-old child, and she was called on first. I wished she would fail, but she went right through the task forward and backward. Every eye was turned on her, for the language was a novel revelation to Beechwood Seminary. The teacher gave her litera to decline backward, beginning at the ablative plural. I expected her to fail, but she went right through. Then she was cross-questioned, going from singular to plural. She went through without balk or hesitation. Very well, very well, said the teacher. Murmurs of applause went up all over the room. I alone sat in sullen silence. The class was excused and she came and sat down beside me, and looking up sweetly in my face said: We take the second declension, Poky. Shut up, I said snappishly, and turned my back upon her. About an hour later I ventured to turn and look at her as she brought her face up close to mine and whispered: Poky, I've learned my lesson now. Won't you please let me have your slate and pencil? I'll draw your picture and make you a fine lady with a parasol. No, I won't. My slate has my sums on it. With a weary, tired look on her face, she said pleasantly: "Is algebra nice, Poky?" Mind your own business. There was no relenting in my ill humor so long as I saw "Mordecai sitting in the king's gate." Noon came. We went out with our lunch and sat down in the shade to eat. I wish you could study Latin, Poky; it's fun, and it makes me hungry, she said, looking at the dinner I was laying out. I felt like shaking her dizzy, but I thought I'll punish her for throwing her Latin in my face. I said: Fannie, I'm older than you. I'll eat first. I remember the lunch today. How good it was. So I picked out the choice part and ate; then throwing the basket down I ran off to join the girls at play, regardless of the look of entreaty the poor child gave me. It was the first time she was ever away from her mother's side.

(To be continued)

AUNT HANNAH.

QUESTIONAIRE TO GET NEWS

HAS ANYONE

Died
Eloped
Divorced
Left town
Embezzled
Had a fire
Had a baby
Had a party
Sold a farm
Been arrested
Come to town
Had twins or colic
Sold a cow or lost an auto
Committed suicide—or murder
Fallen from an airplane
Fallen into a well
Fallen into a legancy.

Well, then,
THAT'S NEWS
So phone or mail it
TO US
We make our troubles known.