

The first thing she did when she looked across and saw how busy we had been, was to put her arms round both of us together, and give us ever so many kisses, and squeeze us quite close up to her for a long time,—she seemed so pleased. And really our little house did look very pretty. The morning sun was shining down, darting glancing lights and shadows through the leaves upon the floor, and making the brook as it rippled along look like netted silver threads, all sparkling and glistening. And the flowers that grew in the mossy sides of the hollow seemed to know that it was somebody's birthday, for they had come out in all their bravery of pink and purple and gold, harebells, wild geraniums, speedwells, daisies, meadow sweet; and nearer to the water's edge the rich yellow spikes of the wild iris, which might have been sceptres for a fairy queen, so proudly they held themselves aloft over the flag-leaves and forget-me-nots.

We took aunt Mary over the bridge, and made her sit down in the chair of state. Then she found the nosegay and the pincushion and the book-marker which we had made for her birthday, and