

“ You hear that, father? Momsy says I’m old enough to get married. I’ll marry the man that brings me the fox’s brush the day after Christmas. And momsy shall bake the cake, and she’ll burn it just as the cake is burning now.”

Miss Lou lifted her nose in the air. “ I declare, if old Dilsey has gone to sleep and left that fruit-cake to burn, I’ll send her to the overseer ! ”

Whereupon she skipped from the room, and soon after the colonel and Mary heard her laughing at something the fat old cook had said. Miss Lou’s temper was all on the surface.

The colonel looked at his daughter over his spectacles and smiled. “ I reckon you know, precious, that we’ll have to catch the fox before your beau can give you the brush. But we’ll have some good dogs here. So you’d better tell your sweetheart to stir his stumps. Maybe the wrong chap will get the brush.”

“ Why, you won’t let me have one little joke, father,” cried Mary. “ Of course I won’t marry the man that gives me the brush ” — she paused, went to the long mir-