

won't be able to git back ? I got this young un to see to...What good dat lil piece of paper goin to do *me* ?» All the way home she was cross, and grumbled under her breath : little ole meany...little ole scare-cat...gret big baby...never go nowhere...never see nothin...come on here now, hurry up - always ruin everything for othah folks...won't let anybody rest a minute, won't let anybody have any good times...come on here now, you wanted to go home and you're going there..snatching Miranda along, vicious but cautious, careful not to cross the line where Miranda could say outright : «Dicey did this or said this to me...» Dicey was allowed a certain freedom up to a point.

The family trooped into the house just before dark and scattered out all over it. From every room came the sound of chatter and laughter. The other children told Miranda what she had missed : wondeful little ponies with plumes and bells on their bridles, ridden by darling little monkeys in velvet jackets and peaked hats...trained white goats that danced...a baby elephant that crossed his front feet and leaned against his cage and opened his mouth to be fed, *such* a baby !...more clowns, funnier than the first one even...beautiful ladies with

bright yellow hair, wearing white silk tights with red satin sashes, had performed on white trapezes ; they also had hung by their toes, but how gracefully, like flying birds ! Huge white horses had lolloped around and round the ring with men and women dancing on their backs ! One man had swung by his teeth from the top of the tent and another had put his head in a lion's mouth. Ah, what she had not missed ! Everybody had been enjoying themselves while she was missing her first big circus and spoiling the day for Dicey. Poor Dicey. Poor dear Dicey. The other children who hadn't thought of Dicey until that moment, mourned over her with sad mouths, their malicious eyes watching Miranda squirm. Dicey had been looking forward for weeks to this day ! And then Miranda

asked the other, and then they smiled pityingly on Miranda...

Then too, it had been a very important occasion in another way : it was the first time Grandmother had ever allowed herself to be persuaded to go to the circus. One could not gather, from her rather generalized opinions, whether there had been no circuses when she was young, or there had been and it was not proper to see them. At any rate for her usual sound reasons, Grandmother had never appro-



ved of circuses, and though she would not deny she had been amused somewhat, still there had been sights and sounds in this one which she maintained were, to say the least, not particularly edifying to the young. Her son Harry, who came in while the children made an early supper, looked at their illuminated faces, all the brothers and sisters and visiting cousins, and said, «This basket of young doesn't seem to be much damaged.» His mother said, «The fruits of their present are in a future so far off, neither of us may live to know whether harm has been done or not. That is the trouble,» and she went on ladling out hot milk to pour over their buttered toast. Miranda was sitting silent, her underlip drooping. Her father smiled at her. «You missed it, Baby.» he said softly, «and what good did that do you ?»

brought up to her. Dicey was exasperated and silent. Miranda could not eat. She tried, as if she were really remembering them, to think of the beautiful wild beings in white satin and spangles and red sashes who danced and frolicked on the trapezes ; of the sweet little furry ponies and the lovely pet monkeys in their comical clothes. She fell asleep, and their invented memories gave way before her real ones, the bitter terrified face of the man in blowsy white falling to his death - ah,

the cruel joke ! - and the terrible grimace of the unmiling dwarf. She screamed in her sleep and sat up crying for deliverance from her torments.

Dicey came, her cross, sleepy eyes half-closed, her big dark mouth pouted, thumping the floor with her thick bare feet. «I *swear*,» she said, in a violent hoarse whisper. «What the matter with you ? You need a good spankin, I *swear* ! Wakin everybody up like this...» Miranda was completely subjugated by her fears. She had a way of answering Dicey back. She would say, «Oh, hush up, Dicey.» Or she would say, «I don't have to mind *you*. I don't have to mind anybody but my grandmother,» which was provokingly true. And she would say, «You don't know what you're talking about.» The day just past

had changed that. Miranda sincerely did not want anybody, not even Dicey, to be cross with her. Ordinarily she did not care how cross she made the harassed adults around her. Now if Dicey must be cross, she still did not really care, if only Dicey might not turn out the lights and leave her to the fathomless terrors of the darkness where sleep could overtake her once more. She hugged Dicey with both arms, crying, «Don't, don't leave me. *Don't* be so angry ! I c-c-can't b-bear it !»

Dicey lay down beside her with a long moaning sigh, which meant that she was collecting her patience and making up her mind to remember that she was a Christian and must bear her cross. «Now you go to sleep,» she said, in her usual warm being-good voice. «Now you jes shut yo eyes and go to sleep. I ain't going