

NOW
is the time to plant
Bulbs and Perennials
for Spring Blossoming
A. N. Kinsman

Ancient Sacrifices.
Many Roman and Greek epicures were very fond of dog flesh. Before Christianity was established among the Danes on every ninth year ninety nine dogs were sacrificed. In Sweden each ninth day ninety-nine dogs were destroyed. But later on dogs were not thought good enough, and every ninth year ninety-nine human beings were immolated, the sons of the reigning tyrant among the rest, in order that the life of the monarch might be prolonged.

The Dead Larks.
In Baluchistan even the wolves go mad. In his book, "The Frontiers of Baluchistan," G. P. Tate writes: "The shepherds give a strange reason for the epidemic of rabies. According to them, it was caused by the wild beasts eating dead larks. In some years, they said, the larks develop extraordinary vitality and pour forth such a flood of songs as they rise on the wing that they become suffocated and fall to the ground dead. A wild animal which eats one of those dead birds invariably develops rabies. This is a widespread superstition and seems not unfamiliar to the natives of India who were with me."

Chicago, Great Western.
Arrive from Fort Dodge, Mason City and Omaha—6:24 p. m.; 4:26 a. m.
Arrive from St. Paul, Minneapolis, Chicago, Kansas City—12:12 p. m.; 11:48 p. m.
Leave for St. Paul, Minneapolis, Chicago, Kansas City—6:24 p. m.; 4:28 a. m.
Leave for Omaha, Mason City, Fort Dodge—12:12 p. m.; 11:48 p. m.
Thru coach on trains between Austin and Minneapolis.

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Leave for—5:30 a. m.; 8:55 a. m.; 2:55 p. m.
Arrive from—11:35 a. m.; 7:00 p. m.; 10:20 p. m.

LACROSSE.
Leave for—11:12 a. m.; 8:55 p. m.
Arrive from—12:20 a. m.; 3:20 p. m.
CALMAR.
Leave for—11:55 a. m.; 7:30 p. m.
Arrive from—6:30 a. m.; 2:41 p. m.

MASON CITY.
Leave for—12:01 p. m.; 7:25 p. m.
Arrive from—6:40 a. m.; 2:47 p. m.
JACKSON.
Leave for—6:50 a. m.; 3:30 p. m.
Arrive from—11:00 a. m.; 6:25 p. m.

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The Story of Waitstill Baxter

By KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

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Waitstill's heart beat faster as she neared the Boynton house. She had never so much as seen Ivory's mother for years. How would she be met? Who would begin the conversation and what direction would it take? What if Mrs. Boynton should refuse to talk to her at all? She walked slowly along the lane until she saw a slender, gray clad figure stooping over a flower bed in front of the cottage. The woman raised her head with a fawn-like gesture that had something in it of timidity rather than fear, picked some loose bits of green from the ground, and, quietly turning her back upon the on-

coming stranger, disappeared through the open front door.
There could be no retreat on her own part now, thought Waitstill. She wished for a moment that she had made this first visit under Ivory's protection, but her idea had been to gain Mrs. Boynton's confidence and have a quiet friendly talk, such one as would be impossible in the presence of a third person. Approaching the steps, she called through the doorway in her clear voice: "Ivory asked me to come and see you one day, Mrs. Boynton. I am Waitstill Baxter, the little girl on Town House hill that you used to know."

Mrs. Boynton came from an inner room and stood on the threshold. The name "Waitstill" had always had a charm for her ears, from the time she first heard it years ago until it fell from Ivory's lips this summer, and again it caught her fancy.
"Waitstill!" she repeated softly.
"Waitstill! Does Ivory know you?"

"We've known each other for ever so long—ever since we went to the brick school together when we were boy and girl. And when I was a child my stepmother brought me over here once on an errand, and Ivory showed me a humming bird's nest in that lilac bush by the door."

Mrs. Boynton smiled. "Come and look!" she whispered. "There is always a humming bird's nest in our lilac. How did you remember?"
The two women approached the bush, and Mrs. Boynton carefully parted the leaves to show the dainty morsel of a home thatched with soft gray green and lined with down. "The birds have flown now," she said. "They were like little jewels when they darted off in the sunshine."

Her voice was faint and sweet, as if it came from far away, and her eyes looked not as if they were seeing you, but seeing something through you. Her pale hair was turned back from her paler face, where the veins showed like blue rivers, and her smile was like the fitting of a moonbeam. She was standing very close to Waitstill.



"Waitstill! Does Ivory know you?"
"Ivory has never seen you, but she has heard of you for many years, and she studied her a little, wistfully yet courteously, as if her attention was attracted by something fresh and winning. She looked at the color ebbing and flowing in the girl's cheeks, at her brows and lashes, at her neck as white as swansdown.

CHAPTER XIII.
Ivory's Mother.
"HAD a daughter once," she said. "My second baby was a girl, but she lived only a few weeks. I need her very much, for I am a great care to Ivory. He is son and daughter both, now that Mr. Boynton is away from home. You did not see any one in the road as you turned in from the bars, I suppose?"
"No," answered Waitstill, surprised and confused, "but I didn't really notice. I was thinking of a cool place for my horse to stand."

"I sit out here in these warm afternoons," Mrs. Boynton continued, shading her eyes and looking across the fields, "because I can see so far down the lane. I have the supper table set for my husband already, and there is a surprise for him, a saucer of wild strawberries I picked for him this morning. If he does not come I always take away the plate and cup before Ivory gets here. It seems to make him unhappy."

"He doesn't like it when you are disappointed, I suppose," Waitstill ventured. "I have brought my knitting, Mrs. Boynton, so that I needn't keep you idle if you wish to work. May I sit down a few minutes? And here is a cottage cheese for Ivory and Rodman and a jar of plums for you preserved from my own garden."

Mrs. Boynton's eyes searched the face of this visitor from a world she had almost forgotten and, finding nothing but tenderness there, said, with just a trace of bewilderment: "Thank you. Yes, do sit down. My work-basket is just inside the door. Take that rocking chair. I don't have another one out here because I have never been in the habit of seeing visitors."

"I hope I am not intruding," stammered Waitstill, seating herself and beginning her knitting to see if it would lessen the sense of strain between them.

"Not at all. I always loved young and beautiful people, and so did my husband. If he comes while you are here do not go away, but sit with him while I get his supper. If Elder Cochrane should be with him you would see two wonderful men. They went away together to do some missionary work in Maine and New Hampshire, and perhaps they will come back together. I do not welcome callers because they always ask so many difficult questions, but you are different and have asked me none at all."

"I should not think of asking questions, Mrs. Boynton."
"Not that I should mind answering them," continued Ivory's mother, "except that it tires my head very much to think. You must not imagine I am ill; it is only that I have a very bad memory, and when people ask me to remember something or to give an answer quickly it confuses me the more. Even now I have forgotten why you came and where you live, but I have not forgotten your beautiful name."

"Ivory thought you might be lonely, and I wanted so much to know you that I could not keep away any longer, for I am lonely and unhappy too. I am always watching and hoping for what has never come yet. I have no mother, you have lost your daughter; I thought—I thought—perhaps we could be a comfort to each other." And Waitstill rose from her chair and put out her hand to help Mrs. Boynton down the steps, she looked so frail, so transparent, so prematurely aged. "I could not come very often, but if I could only smooth your hair sometimes when your head aches or do some cooking for you or read to you or any little thing like that as I would for my own mother, if I could, I should be so glad!"

Waitstill stood a head higher than Ivory's mother, and the glowing health of her, the steadiness of her voice, the warmth of her handclasp must have made her seem like a strong refuge to this storm tossed derelict. The deep furrow between Lois Boynton's eyes relaxed a trifle, the blood in her veins ran a little more swiftly under the touch of the young hand that held hers so closely. Suddenly a light came into her face and her lip quivered.

"Perhaps I have been remembering wrong all these years," she said. "It is my great trouble, remembering wrong. Perhaps my baby did not die as I thought; perhaps she lived and grew up; perhaps—her pale cheek burned and her eyes shone like stars—perhaps she has come back!"

Waitstill could not speak. She put her arm round the trembling figure, holding her as she was wont to hold Patty and with the same protective instinct. The embrace was electric in its effect and set altogether new currents of emotion in circulation. Something in Lois Boynton's perturbed mind seemed to beat its wings against the barriers that had heretofore opposed it and, freeing itself, mounted into clearer air and went singing to the sky. She rested her cheek on the girl's breast with a little sob. "Oh, let me go on remembering wrong!" she sighed from that safe shelter. "Let me go on remembering wrong! It makes me

so happy!"
Waitstill gently led her to the rocking chair and sat down beside her on the lowest step, stroking her thin hand. Mrs. Boynton's eyes were closed, her breath came and went quickly, but presently she began to speak hurriedly as if she were relieving a surcharged heart.

"There is something troubling me," she began, "and it would ease my mind if I could tell it to some one who could help. Your hand is so warm and so firm! Oh, hold mine closely and let me draw in strength as long as you can spare it! It is flowing, flowing from your hand into mine, flowing like wine. My thoughts at night are not like my thoughts by day these last weeks. I wake suddenly and feel that my husband has been away a long time and will never come back. Often at night, too, I am in sore trouble about something else, something I have never told Ivory, the first thing I have ever hidden from my dear son, but I think I could tell you if only I could be sure about it."

"Tell me if it will help you. I will try to understand," said Waitstill brokenly.

"Ivory says Rodman is the child of my dead sister. Some one must have told him so. Could it have been I? It haunts me day and night, for unless I am remembering wrong again I never had a sister. I can call to mind neither sister nor brother."

"You went to New Hampshire one winter," Waitstill reminded her gently, as if she were talking to a child. "It was bitter cold for you to take such a hard journey. Your sister died and you brought her little boy, Rodman, back, but you were so ill that a stranger had to take care of you on the stagecoach and drive you to Edgewood next day in his own sleigh. It is no wonder you have forgotten something of what happened, for Dr. Perry hardly brought you through the brain fever that followed that journey."

"I seem to think now that it is not so," said Mrs. Boynton, opening her eyes and looking at Waitstill despairingly. "I must grope and grope in the dark until I find out what is true and then tell Ivory. God will punish false speaking! His heart is closed against lies and evildoing!"

"He will never punish you if your tired mind remembers wrong," said Waitstill. "He knows, none better, how you have tried to find him and hold him through many a tangled path. I will come as often as I can, and we will try to frighten away these worrying thoughts."

"If you will only come now and then and hold my hand," said Ivory's mother, "hold my hand so that your strength will flow into my weakness, perhaps I shall puzzle it all out and God will help me to remember right before I die."

"Everything that I have power to give away shall be given to you," promised Waitstill. "Now that I know you and you trust me you shall never be left so alone again—not for long, at any rate. When I stay away you will remember that I cannot help it, won't you?"

"Yes, I shall think of you till I see you again. I shall watch the long lane more than ever now. Ivory sometimes



"If you will only come now and then and hold my hand."

takes the path across the fields, but my dear husband will come by the old road, and now there will be you to look for!"

At the Baxters the late supper was over, and the girls had not sat at the table with their father, having eaten earlier by themselves. Patty had retired to the solitude of her bedroom almost at dusk, quite worn out with the heat, and Waitstill sat under the peach tree in the corner of her own little garden, tating and thinking of her interview with Ivory's mother. She sat there until nearly 8 o'clock, trying vainly to put together the puzzling details of Lois Boynton's conversation, wondering whether the perplexities that vexed her mind were real or fancied, but warmed to the heart by the affection that the older woman seemed instinctively to feel for her. "She did not know me, yet she cared for me at once," thought Waitstill tenderly and proudly, "and I for her, too, at the first glance."

quickly went through the side yard and lifted the latch of the kitchen door. It was fastened. She went to the front door, and that, too, was bolted, although it had been standing open all the evening so that if a breeze should spring up it might blow through the house. Her father supposed, of course, that she was in bed, and she dreaded to bring him downstairs for fear of his anger. Still there was no help for it, and she rapped smartly at the side door. There was no answer, and she rapped again, vexed with her own carelessness. Patty's face appeared promptly behind her screen of mosquito netting in the second story, but before she could exchange a word with her sister Deacon Baxter opened the blinds of his bedroom window and put his head out.

"You can try sleepin' outdoors or in the barn tonight," he called. "I didn't say anything to you at supper time, because I wanted to see where you was intendin' to prove this evenin'."

"I haven't been 'prowling' anywhere, father," answered Waitstill. "I've been out in the garden cooling off. It's only 8 o'clock."

"Well, you can cool off some more," he shouted, his temper now fully aroused, "or go back where you was this afternoon and see if they'll take you in there! I know all about your deceitful tricks. I come home to grid the cythes and found the house and barn empty. Cephas said you'd driven up Saco hill and I took his horse and followed you and saw where you went. Long's you couldn't have a feller callin' on you here to home you thought you'd call on him, did yer, you boldfaced hussy?"

"I am nothing of the sort," the girl answered him quietly. "Ivory Boynton was not at his house. He was in the bayfield. You know it, and you know that I knew it. I went to see a sick, unhappy woman who has no neighbors. I ought to have gone long before. I am not ashamed of it, and I don't regret it. If you ask unreasonable things of me you must expect to be disobeyed once in a while."

"Must expect to be disobeyed, must I?" the old man cried, his face positively terrifying in its ugliness. "We'll see about that. If you wa'n't callin' on a young man you were callin' on a crazy woman, and I won't have it, I tell you, do you hear? I won't have a daughter o' mine consortin' with any o' that Boynton crew. Perhaps a night outdoors will teach you who's master in this house, you impudent, shameless girl! We'll try it anyway!" And with that he banged down the window and disappeared, gibbering and jabbering impotent words that she could hear, but not understand.

CHAPTER XIV.
Locked Out.
WAITSTILL was almost stunned by the suddenness of this catastrophe. She stood with her feet rooted to the earth for several minutes and then walked slowly away out of sight of the house. There was a chair beside the grindstone under the Porter apple tree, and she sank into it, crossed her arms on the back and, bowing her head on them, burst into a fit of weeping as tempestuous and passionate as it was silent, for, although her body fairly shook with sobs, no sound escaped.

The minutes passed, perhaps an hour; she did not take account of time. The moon went behind clouds, the night grew misty, and the stars faded one by one. There would be rain to-morrow, and there was a great deal of hay cut, so she thought in a vagrant sort of way.

Meanwhile Patty upstairs was in a state of suppressed excitement and terror. It was a quarter of an hour before her father settled himself in bed, then an age it seemed to her before she heard his heavy breathing. When she thought it quite safe she slipped on a print wrapper, took her shoes in her hand and crept noiselessly downstairs, out through the kitchen and into the shed. Lifting the heavy bar that held the big doors in place, she closed them softly behind her, stepped out and looked about her in the darkness. Her quick eye espied in the distance near the barn the bowed figure in the chair, and she flew through the wet grass without a thought of her bare feet till she reached her sister's side and held her in a close embrace.

"My darling! My own, own poor darling!" she cried softly, the tears running down her cheeks. "How wicked, how unjust, to serve my dearest sister so! Don't cry, my blessing, don't cry! You frighten me! I'll take care of you, dear. Next time I'll interfere. I'll scratch and bite, yes, I'll strangle anybody that dares to shame you and lock you out of the house—you, the dearest, the patientest, the best!"

"If you will only come now and then and hold my hand."

takes the path across the fields, but my dear husband will come by the old road, and now there will be you to look for!"

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She heard her father lock the barn and shed and knew that he would be so long upstairs immediately, so she

Waitstill wiped her eyes. "Let us go farther away where we can talk," she whispered.

"Where had we better sleep?" Patty asked. "On the hay, I think, though we shall stifle with the heat," and Patty moved toward the barn.

"No, you must go back to the house at once, Patty, dear. Father might wake and call you and that would make matters worse. It's beginning to drizzle or I should stay out in the air. Oh, I wonder if father's mind is going and if this is the beginning of the end! If he is in his sober senses he could not be so strange, so suspicious, so unjust."

"He could be anything, say anything, do anything!" exclaimed Patty. "Perhaps he is not responsible and perhaps he is; it doesn't make much difference to us. Come along, blessed darling! I'll tuck you in and then I'll creep back to the house if you say I must. I'll go down and make the kitchen fire in the morning; you stay out here and see what happens. A good deal will happen, I'm thinking, if father speaks to me of you! I shouldn't be surprised to see the fur flying in all directions. I'll seize the first moment to bring you out a cup of coffee and we'll consult about what to do. I may tell you now I'm all for running away!"

Waitstill's first burst of wretchedness had subsided and she had recovered her balance. "I'm afraid we must wait a little longer, Patty," she advised. "Don't mention my name to father, but see how he acts in the morning. He was so wild, so unlike himself, that I almost hope he may forget what he said and sleep it off. Yes, we must just wait."

"No doubt he'll be far calmer in the morning if he remembers that, if he turns you out, he faces the prospect of three meals a day cooked by me," said Patty. "That's what he thinks he would face; but, as a matter of fact, I shall tell him that where you sleep I sleep, and where you eat I eat, and when you stop cooking I stop! He won't part with two unpaid servants in a hurry, not at the beginning of haying." And Patty, giving Waitstill a last hug and a dozen tearful kisses, stole reluctantly back to the house by the same route through which she had left it.

Patty was right. She found the fire lighted when she went down into the kitchen next morning, and without a word she hurried breakfast on to the table as fast as she could cook and serve it. Waitstill was safe in the barn chamber, she knew, and would be there quietly while her father was feeding the horse and milking the cows, or perhaps she might go up in the woods and wait until she saw him driving away.

The deacon ate his breakfast in silence, looking and acting very much as usual, for he was generally dumb at meals. When he left the house, however, and climbed into the wagon, he turned around and said in his ordinary gruff manner: "Bring the lunch up to the field yourself today, Patience. Tell your sister I hope she's come to her senses in the course of the night. You've got to learn, both of you, that my 'say so' must be law in this house. You can fuss and you can fume if it amuses you any, but 'twon't do no good. Don't encourage Waitstill in any whinin' or blubberin'. Jest tell her to come in and go to work and I'll overlook what she done this time. And don't you give me any more of your eye snappin' and lip poutin' and head in the air impudencin'! You're under age, and if you don't look out you'll get somethin' that's good for what ails you! You two girls jest aid an' abet one another—that's what you do, aid and abet one another—an' if you carry

it any farther I'll find some way o' separatin' you, do you hear?"

Patty spoke never a word nor fluttered an eyelash. She had a proper spirit, but now her heart was cold with a new fear, and she felt, with Waitstill, that her father must be obeyed and his temper kept within bounds until God provided them a way of escape.

She ran out to the barn chamber and, not finding Waitstill, looked across the field and saw her coming through the path from the woods. Patty waved her hand and ran to meet her sister, joy at the mere fact of her existence, of being able to see her again and of hearing her dear voice almost choking her in its intensity. When they reached the house she helped her upstairs as if she were a child, brought her cool water to wash away the dust of the haymow, laid out some clean clothes for her and finally put her on the lounge in the darkened sitting room.

(To be continued)

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