DALTONS AND THEIR LEGACY

The Story of What Happened When the Only Called and the Question Called Back Again.

By ELEANOR PORTER

Author of "Pollyanna," "Just David," Etc.

Copyright by Eleanor H. Porter.

"Oh, I'm so excited to see Boston," said Sarah, and coming as it did after a little shown, scarcely remembered feature it seemed even more marvel than the man who had been talking it.

"Now, we can leave the farm," exclaimed Mrs. Dalton.

"Why, Sarah, do—do you think that is quite—wise?" asked her husband.

"Wise? Of course it is!" she returned decidedly. "Why, Caleb, don't you know?—we've always wanted to go to the city; and Cousin John said he'd give you a place in his store any time, so you'll earn *something* to start with right away. We never dared to before, you know, for you wn'e't sure how you'd do; but now we've got all this money we shan't have to worry a mite. Oh, isn't it just splendid, Caleb?"

"Yes; but—" he hesitated.

"But there isn't any 'but,' Caleb," laughed Sarah, and turned to a boy of twelve and a girl of fourteen who entered the room at that moment. "We've got it all settled, children. We're going to Boston, sure, this fall."

"Oh, mother!"—Ethel's hands came together in ecstasy, while Fred whooped in glee.

"There, Caleb, I told you how it would be," smiled Mrs. Dalton as the door banged behind Fred; then, anxiously: "You wouldn't want to spoil it all, now, would you?"

"N-no; but—no, no, of course not," stammered Caleb.

This was in August. By the middle of September such household goods as the Daltons had planned to take with them were packed, burlapped, crated and labeled. It had been Mrs. Dalton's idea to sell the rest of the furniture on the farm at auction, but

"Oh Come, Now, That Ain't Going to Do, You Know."

just here she encountered an unexpected but stubborn resistance from her husband. Consequently, the remainder of the goods were stored in the attic, and the farm was rented until the first of May.

"Cousin John" in Boston had received the news of their intended coming with cordial interest, and had already procured for them a six-room apartment in Roxbury, and it was in his thriving market and grocery store on Warren avenue that Caleb was to have a position as clerk.

Some weeks later when Mrs. Dalton saw her new home, she didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Why, Caleb, I—I can't breathe—the rooms are so small," she gasped.

Getting settled was a wonderful experience.

At last the tiny "parlor" with its gaudily-adorned mantel and showy gas fixtures was the pride of Sarah's heart—complete in order; and, after that, Sarah did each day that dared o'clock found her dressed in her best and sitting in solemn state in that shiny parlor waiting for the calls that were sure, she knew, to come.

They came, and her patience was rewarded. Save for a sharp sing from a sewing machine agent and an order from a book canvasser, Sarah could not understand it. Surely, her neighbors in the block must know of her arrival even if those in the immediate vicinity on the street did not. Meeting a tall, slender woman with whom she had already seen three times, she spoke.

"Don't you live here?" she began pleasantly.

The tall woman stared, threw a [illegible] over her shoulder, then, with a [illegible] glance at the neighbors' windows, stepped for herself.

"Indeed, I do," she retorted, then hurried along through the mill.

Sarah stood looking after her with [illegible] eyes.

"Why, how funny!" she murmured.

Three days later the two ladies again met at the outer door.

"Oh, how d'ye do? Nice day, ain't it?" began Sarah, hurriedly. "You—you live here, don't you?"

"Why—yes," said the woman, smiling a little.

"I do, too—on the top floor.

"I—I'm all settled, now," announced Sarah, stumbling over the words a little.

"Is that so?" returned the woman politely, but without enthusiasm.

Sarah nodded.

"Yes, all ready for callers. I—I hope you'll come soon," she finished with sudden courage.

"Thank you; you are very kind," murmured the woman, as she smiled and turned away.

The tall woman did not call, and Sarah never asked her again. A few words from Cousin John's wife at about this time opened Sarah's eyes, and taught her not to expect to become acquainted with her neighbors.

Sarah was not the only member of the family who had found trials by the way. Ethel and Fred had entered school, and at first they came home each afternoon with woeful faces. New methods of study, recitation, discipline, and even of recreation puzzled and frightened them.

To Caleb, the city was a thing of noise, hurry and more people than he had thought existed. Early and late he worked in the store.

"I don't like it," he would say sometimes to his wife; "I don't like it, Sarah."

December, January, February, and March passed; and the first of April brought a letter from the lessee of the farm asking if he was to have the place through the summer.

"Of course he can have it," declared Sarah. "Just as if we wanted it again!"

"Yes, yes, of course," murmured Caleb. "I—I'll write later on.

It was an early, and a wonderfully beautiful spring that year.

Sarah grew restless indoors.

Downstairs, on each side of the big front door was a square yard patch of puny, straggling grass, and it was these two bits of possibilities that put a happy thought into Sarah's head. She bought a trowel and some flower seeds and set resolutely to work. She had dug the trowel into the earth four times, and was delightedly sniffing the odor from the moist earth when the janitor appeared.

"Did ye lose something, ma'am?" he asked suspiciously.

"Lose something?" laughed the woman. "Of course not! I've found something, William. I've found a flower bed. I'm going to have the prettiest one ever was."

"T won't do, ma'am,—'t won't, really, now. I'm sorry, but the boss won't stand it."

It was that night that Caleb brought out the paper and pen to write the letter which would lease the farm for another six months. Twice he dipped his pen in the ink, and paused with no word written. Finally he spoke.

"I—I'm going to give him some hints, Sarah. He won't know how to run some of the things, I'm sure. If he should plant the meadow lot to potatoes, now, it——"

"And, Caleb," cut in Sarah, "be sure and send word to his wife about the roses; if she don't spray 'em real early, the bugs and worms will get an awful start.

There was another long silence, broken this time by the children's entrance.

"Mother," began Fred discontentedly, "don't they ever go fishing down here, or swimming, or anything?"

Sarah sprang to her feet with a nervous little laugh.

"Caleb, we—we might go up home just for—for a visit," she said.

"Hurrah!—let's!" crowed Fred, and Ethel clapped her hands.

It was a jubilant four that left the North station a few days later, and it was a still more jubilant four that arrived in the village at the foot of the green hills.

"Oh, don't it look splendid and roomy?" cried Sarah, as they reached the turn where they could see the farm-house. "And don't the air smell good?"

Just at dusk on the third day Caleb found his wife in the old summer-house. Wrapped in shawls, she was listening vision to the trains.

"Well, Sarah, I—I s'pose I'd better settle up with West, now. I hadn't yet, you know."

Sarah nodded, without speaking.

"Things look first-rate, now, but—I've got my doubts of West. I—I wish I could handle them myself."

Sarah threw a quick glance at his upturned face.

"Well—why—don't you?" she ventured.

"Sarah, would you—would you come back?" [illegible] "Oh, Caleb, I'm so happy I'm—I'm—I'm—