

Through the Postern Gate
A ROMANCE IN SEVEN DAYS

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"The Following of the Star," etc

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**TO
MY MOTHER**

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THE STORY OF LITTLE BOY BLUE

"But it was not your niece! It was always you I wanted," said the Boy.

He lay back, in a deep wicker chair, under the old mulberry-tree. He had taken the precaution of depositing his cup and saucer on the soft turf beneath his chair, because he knew that, under the stress of sudden emotion, china—especially the *best* china—had a way of flying off his knee. And there was no question as to the exquisite quality of the china on the dainty tea-table over which Miss Christobel Charteris presided.

The Boy had watched her pouring the tea into those pretty rose-leaf cups, nearly every afternoon during the golden two weeks just over. He knew every movement of those firm white hands, so soft, yet so strong and capable.

The Boy used to stand beside her, ready to hand Mollie's cup, as punctiliously as if a dozen girls had been sitting in the old garden, waiting to be quickly served by the only man.

The Boy enjoyed being the only man. Also he had quite charming manners. He never allowed the passing of bread-and-butter to interfere with the flow of conversation; yet the bread-and-butter was always within reach at the precise moment you wanted it, though the Boy's bright eyes were fixed just then in keenest interest on the person who happened to be speaking, and not a point of the story, or a word of the remark, was missed either by him or by you.

He used to watch the Aunt's beautiful hands very closely; and at last, every time he looked at them, his brown eyes kissed them. The Boy thought this was a delightful secret known only to himself. But one day, when he was bending over her, holding his own cup while she filled it, the Aunt suddenly said: "Don't!" It was so startling and unexpected, that the cup almost flew out of his hand. The Boy might have said: "Don't *what?*" which would have put the Aunt in a difficulty, because it would have been so very impossible to explain. But he was too honest. He at once *didn't*, and felt a little shy for five minutes; then recovered, and hugged himself with a fearful joy at the thought that she had *known* his eyes had kissed her dear beautiful hands; then stole a look at her calm face, so completely unmoved in its classic beauty, and thought he must have been mistaken;

only—what on earth else could she have said "Don't!" about, at that moment?

But Mollie was there, then; so no explanations were possible. Now at last, thank goodness, Mollie had gone, and his own seven days had begun. This was the first day; and he was going to tell her everything. There was absolutely nothing he would not be able to tell her. The delight of this fairly swept the Boy off his feet. He had kept on the curb so long; and he was not used to curbs of any kind.

He lay back, his hands behind his head, and watched the Aunt's kind face, through half-closed lids. His brown eyes were shining, but very soft. When the Aunt looked at them, she quickly looked away.

"How could you think the attraction would be gone?" he said. "It was always you, I wanted, not your niece. Good heavens! How can you have thought it was Mollie, when it was *you*—YOU, just only you, all the time?"

The Aunt raised her beautiful eyebrows and looked him straight in the face.

"Is this a proposal?" she asked, quietly.

"Of course it is," said the Boy; "and jolly hard it has been, having to wait two whole weeks to make it. I want you to marry me, Christobel. I dare say you think me a cheeky young beggar to suggest it, point blank. But I want you to give me seven days; and, in those seven days, I am going to win you. Then it will seem to you, as it does to me, the only possible thing to do."

His brown eyes were wide open now; and the glory of the love shining out from them dazzled her. She looked away.

Then the swift colour swept over the face which all Cambridge considered classic in its stern strong beauty, and she laughed; but rather breathlessly.

"You amazing boy!" she said. "Do you consider it right to take away a person's breath, in this fashion? Or are you trying to be funny?"

"I have no designs on your breath," said the Boy; "and it is my misfortune, but not my fault, if I seem funny." Then he sat forward in his chair, his elbows on his knees, and both brown hands held out towards her. "I want you to understand, dear," he continued, earnestly, "that I have said only a very little of all I have to say. But I hope that little is to the point; and I jolly well mean it."

The Aunt laughed again, and swung the toe of her neat brown shoe; a habit she had, when trying to appear more at ease than she felt.

"It is certainly to the point," she said. "There can be no possible doubt about that. But are you aware, dear boy, that I have been assiduously chaperoning you and my niece, during the past two weeks; and watching, with the affectionate interest of a middle-aged relative, the course of true love running with satisfactory and unusual smoothness?"

The Boy ignored the adjectives and innuendoes, and went straight to the point. He always had a way of ignoring all side issues or carefully introduced irrelevancy. It made him a difficult person to deal with, if the principal weapon in your armoury was elaborate argument.

"Why did you say 'Don't'?" asked the Boy.

The Aunt fell at once into the unintentional trap. She dropped her calmly amused manner and answered hurriedly, while again the swift colour flooded her face: "Boy dear, I hardly know. It was something you did, which, for a moment, I could not quite bear. Something passed from you to me, too intimate, too sweet, to be quite right. I said 'Don't,' as involuntarily as one would say 'Don't' to a threatened blow."

"It wasn't a blow," said the Boy, tenderly. "It was a kiss. Every time I looked at your dear beautiful hand, lifting the silver teapot, I kissed it. Didn't you feel it was a kiss?"

"No; I only felt it was unusual; something I could not understand; and I did not like it. Therefore I said 'Don't.'"

"But you admit it was sweet?" persisted the Boy.

"Exactly," replied the Aunt; "quite incomprehensibly sweet. And I do not like things I cannot comprehend; especially with amazing boys about!"

"Didn't you know it was love?" asked the Boy, softly.

"No," replied the Aunt, emphatically; "most certainly, I did not."

The Boy got up, and came and knelt beside the arm of her chair.

"It was love," he said, his lips very close to the soft waves of her hair.

"Go back to your seat at once," said the Aunt, sternly.

The Boy went.

"And where does poor Mollie come in, in all this?" inquired the Aunt, with some asperity.

"Mollie?" said the Boy, complacently. "Oh, Mollie understood all right. She loves Phil, you know; intends to stick to him, and knows you will back her. The last part of the time, I brought her notes from Phil, every day. Don't be angry, dear. You would have done it yourself, if Mollie and Phil had got hold of you, and implored you to be a go-between. You remember the day we invaded the kitchen to see how Martha made those little puffy buns—you know—the explosives? You pinch them in the middle, and they burst into hundreds and thousands of little pieces. Jolly things for a stiff stand-up-in-a-crowd-and-all-hold-your-own-cups kind of drawing-room party; what we used to call 'a Perpendicular' in my Cambridge days. I suppose they still keep up the name. Fancy those little buns exploding all over the place; and when you try to pick up the fragments, they go into simply millions of crumbs, between your agitated fingers and anxious thumb!"

The Boy slapped his knee in intense enjoyment, and momentarily lost the thread of the conversation. The Aunt's mind was not sufficiently detached to feel equal to a digression into peals of laughter over this vision of the explosive buns. She wanted to find out how much Mollie knew. When the Boy had finished rocking backwards and forwards in his chair, she suggested, tentatively: "You went to the kitchen—?"

"Oh, yes," said the Boy, recovering. "We went to the kitchen to watch Martha make them, and to get the recipe. You see Mollie wanted them for her father's clerical 'at homes.' Oh, I say—fancy! The archdeacons and curates, the rectors and vicars, all standing in a solemn crowd on the Bishop's best velvet-pile carpet; then Mollie, so demure, handing round the innocent-looking little buns; and, hey presto! the pinching begins, and the explosions, and the hopeless attempts to gather up the fragments!"

The Boy nearly went off again; but he suddenly realized that the Aunt was not amused, and pulled himself together.

"Well, we stopped on the way to the kitchen for mutual confidences. It was not easy, bounded as we were by you on the one side, and Martha on the other. We had to whisper. I dare say you thought we were kissing behind the door, but we jolly well weren't! She told me about Phil; and I told her—oh, I told her *something* of what I am trying to tell you. Just enough to make her understand; so that we could go ahead, and play the game fair, all round. She was awfully glad, because she said: 'I have long feared my dear beautiful Aunt would marry an ichthyosaurus.' I asked her what the—"

what the—I mean, what on earth the meaning of that was? And she said: 'An old fossil.'

Again the swift flush swept over the calm face. But this time the Aunt went off, intentionally, on a side issue.

"I have heard you say 'What the deuce' before now, Boy. But I am glad you appear to realize, judging by your laboured efforts to suppress them, that these expressions shock me."

She looked at him, quizzically, through half-closed lids; but the Boy was wholly earnest.

"Well, you see," he said, "I am trying most awfully hard to be, in every respect, just what you would wish the man who loves you should be."

"Oh, you dear boy," said Christobel Charteris, a flood of sudden feeling softening her face; "I must make you understand that I cannot possibly take you seriously. I shall have to tell you a story no one has ever heard before; a tender little story of a long-ago past. I must tell you the story of my Little Boy Blue. Wait here a few moments, while I go indoors and give orders that we are not to be disturbed."

Rising, she passed up the lawn to the little white house. The Boy's eyes followed her, noting with pride and delight the tall athletic figure, fully developed, gracious in its ample lines, yet graceful in the perfect swing of the well-poised walk. During all his college years he had known that walk; admired that stately figure. He had been in the set which called her "Juno" and "The Goddess"; which crowded to the clubs if there was a chance of watching her play tennis. And now, during two wonderful weeks, he had been admitted, a welcomed guest, to this little old-world oasis, bounded by high red-brick walls, where she dwelt and ruled. Quiet, sunny, happy hours he had spent in the hush of the old garden, strolling up and down the long narrow velvet turf, beneath the spreading trees, from the green postern gate in the right-hand corner of the bottom wall, to the flight of stone steps leading up to the garden-door of the little white house.

The Boy knew, by now, exactly what he wanted. He wanted to marry Christobel Charteris.

He must have been rather a brave boy. He looked very youthful and slim as he lay back in his chair, watching the stately proportions of the woman on whom he had set his young heart; very slight and boyish, in his silver-grey suit, with lavender tie, and buttonhole of violas. The Boy was very particular about his ties and buttonholes. They always matched. This

afternoon, for the first time, he had arrived without a buttonhole. In the surprise and pleasure of his unexpected appearance, the Aunt had moved quickly down the sunlit lawn to meet and greet him.

Mollie had departed, early that morning. Her final words at the railway station, as her impish little face smiled farewell from the window of her compartment, had been: "Mind, Auntie dear, no mistake about Guy Chelsea! He's a charming fellow; and thank you ever so much for giving me such a good time with him. But you can report to Papa, that Guy Chelsea, *and* his beautiful properties, *and* his prospective peerage, *and* his fifty thousand a year, *and* his motor-cars, *and* his flying-machines, are absolutely powerless to tempt me away from my allegiance to Phil. Beside, it so happens, Guy himself is altogether in love with SOME ONE ELSE."

The train having begun to move at the words "You can report to Papa," Mollie finished the remainder of the sentence in a screaming crescendo, holding on to her hat with one hand, and waving a tiny lace pocket-handkerchief, emphatically, with the other. Even then, the Aunt lost most of the sentence, and disbelieved the rest. The atmosphere of love had been so unmistakable during those two weeks; the superabundant overflow had even reached herself more than once, with an almost startling thrill of emotion.

The Boy had been so full of vivid, glowing *joie-de-vivre*, radiating fun and gaiety around him.

In their sets of tennis, played on her own court across the lane at the bottom of the garden, when she could beat him easily were he handicapped by partnership with Mollie; but in genuine singles, when Mollie had tactfully collapsed on to a seat and declared herself exhausted, his swift agility counterbalanced her magnificent service, and they were so evenly matched that each game proved a keen delight——

In the quiet teas beneath the mulberry tree, where the incomprehensible atmosphere of unspoken tenderness gilded the light words and laughter, as sunlight touches leaf and flower to gold——

At the cosy dinners, to which they sometimes asked him, sitting in the garden afterwards in the moonlight; when he would tell them thrilling tales of aviation, describing his initial flights, hairbreadth escapes; the joys of rapid soaring; the dangers of cross-currents, broken propellers, or twisted steering-gear——

On all these occasions, the Boy—with his enthusiasm, his fun, and his fire—had been the life of the happy trio.

During those evenings, in the moonlight, when he started off on airships, one heart stood still very often while the Boy talked; but it stood still, silently. It was Mollie who clasped her hands and implored him never to fly again; then, in the next breath, begged him to take her as a passenger, on the first possible occasion.

Happy days! But Mollie was the attraction; therefore, with Mollie's departure, they would naturally come to an end.

The Boy had not asked if he might come again; and, for the moment, she forgot that the Boy rarely asked for what he wanted. He usually took it.

She had a lonely luncheon; spent the afternoon over letters and accounts, picking up the dull threads of things laid aside during the gay holiday time.

It was not the Professor's day for calling. She was alone until four. Then she went out and sat under the mulberry. The garden was very quiet. The birds' hour of silence was barely over.

Jenkins, the butler, had been sent into the town, so Martha brought out tea; as ample, as carefully arranged, as ever; and—cups for two!

"Why two cups, Martha?" queried Miss Charteris, languidly.

"Maybe there'll be a visitor," said Martha in grim prophetic tones. Then her hard old face relaxed and creased into an unaccustomed smile. "Maybe there is a visitor," she added, softly; for at that moment the postern gate banged, and they saw the Boy coming up the garden, in a shaft of sunlight.

The Aunt walked quickly to meet him. His arrival was so unexpected; and she had been so lonely, and so dull.

"How nice of you," she said; "with the Attraction gone. But Martha seems to have had a premonition of your coming. She has just brought out tea, most suggestively arranged for two. How festive you are, Boy! Why this wedding attire? Are you coming from, or going to, a function? No? Then don't you want tennis after tea—a few good hard sets; just we two, unhandicapped by our dear little Mollie?"

"No," said the Boy; "talk, please, to-day; just we two, unhandicapped by our dear little Mollie. Talk please; not tennis."

He paused beside the border, full of mauve and purple flowers. "How jolly those little what-d'-you-call-'ems look, in the sunshine," he said.

Then the Aunt noticed that he wore no buttonhole, and that his tie was lavender. She picked four of her little violas, and pinned them into his coat.

"Boy dear," she said, "you are a dandy in the matter of ties and buttonholes; only it is so essentially *you*, that one rather enjoys it. But this is the first day I have known you to arrive without one, and have need to fall back upon my garden."

"It *is* a first day," said the Boy, dropping into step with her, as she moved toward the mulberry tree. "It starts a new régime, in the matter of buttonholes, and—other things. I am going to have seven days, and this is the first."

"Really?" smiled the Aunt, amused at the Boy's intense seriousness. "I am flattered that you should spend a portion of 'the first day' with me. Let us have tea, and then you shall tell me why seven days; and where you mean to pass them."

The Boy was rather silent during tea. The Aunt, trying to read his mind, thought at first that he regretted his flannels, and the chance of tennis; then that he was missing Mollie. Whereupon the Aunt repeated her remark that it was nice of him to come, now the Attraction was no longer there.

This gave him the cue for which he waited. His cup was empty, and safely on the grass. The floodgates of the Boy's pent-up love and longing burst open; the unforgettable words, "It was always you I wanted," were spoken; and now he waited for her, under the mulberry tree. She had something to tell him; but, whatever it might be, it could not seriously affect the situation. *He* had told *her*—that was the great essential. He would win her in seven days. Already she knew just what he wanted—a big step for the first day. He looked up, and saw her coming.

She had regained her usual calm. Her eyes were very kind. She smiled at the Boy, gently.

She took her seat in a low basket-work chair. He had leapt to his feet. She motioned him to another, just opposite hers. She was feeling rather queenly. Unconsciously her manner became somewhat regal. The Boy enjoyed it. He knew he was bent upon winning a queen among women.

"I am going to tell you a story," she said.

"Yes?" said the Boy.

"It is about my Little Boy Blue."

"Yes?"

"*You* were my Little Boy Blue."

"I?"

"Yes; twenty years ago."

"Then I was six," said the Boy, quite unperturbed.

"We were staying at Dovercourt, on the east coast. Our respective families had known each other. I used to watch you playing on the shore. You were a very tiny little boy."

"I dare say I was quite a nice little boy," said the Boy, complacently.

"Indeed you were; quite sweet. You wore white flannel knickers, and a little blue coat."

"I dare say it was quite a nice little coat," said the Boy, "and I hope my womenfolk had the tact to call it a 'blazer.'"

"It was a dear little coat—I should say 'blazer,'" said the Aunt; "and I called you my 'Little Boy Blue.' You also had a blue flannel cap, which you wore stuck on the back of your curls. I spoke to you twice, Little Boy Blue."

"Did you?" he said, and his brown eyes were tender. "Then no wonder I feel I have loved you all my life."

"Ah, but wait until you hear my story! The first time I spoke to you, it happened thus. Your nurse sat high up on the beach, in the long line of nurses, gossiping and doing needlework. You took your little spade and bucket, and marched away, all by yourself, to a breakwater; and there you built a splendid sand castle. I sat on the breakwater, higher up, and watched you. You took immense pains; you overcame stupendous difficulties; and every time your little cap fell off, you picked it up, dusted off the sand with the sleeve of your little blue coat, and stuck it on the back of your curly head again. You were very sweet, Little Boy Blue. I can see you now."

The Aunt paused, and let her eyes dwell upon the Boy in appreciative retrospection. If he felt this something of an ordeal, he certainly showed no

signs of it. Not for a moment did his face lose its expression of delighted interest.

"Presently," continued the Aunt, "your castle and courtyard finished, you made a little cannon in the centre of the courtyard, for defence. Then you looked around for a cannon-ball. This was evidently a weighty matter, and indeed it turned out to be such. You stood your spade against the breakwater; placed your bucket beside it; readjusted your little cap, and trotted off almost to the water's edge. Your conception of the size of your castle and cannon must have become magnified with every step of those small sturdy feet, for, arrived at the water, you found a huge round stone nearly as large as your own little head. This satisfied you completely, but you soon found you could not carry it in your hands. You spent a moment in anxious consideration. Then you took off your little blue coat, spread it upon the sand, rolled the cannon-ball upon it, tied the sleeves around it, picked up the hem and the collar, hoisted the heavy stone, and proceeded slowly and with difficulty up the shore. Every moment it seemed as if the stone must fall, and crush the bare toes of my Little Boy Blue. So I flew to the rescue.

"'Little Boy Blue,' I said, 'may I help you to carry your stone?'

"You paused, and looked up at me. I doubt if you had breath to answer while you were walking. Your little face was flushed and damp with exertion; the blue cap was almost off; you had sand on your eyebrows, and sand on your little straight nose. But you looked at me with an expression of indomitable courage and pride, and you said: 'Fanks; but I always does my own cawwyng.' With that you started on, and I fell behind—rebuffed!"

"'Surly little beast!'" ejaculated the Boy.

"Not at all," said the Aunt. "I won't have my Little Boy Blue called names! He showed a fine independence of spirit. Now hear what happened next.

"Little Boy Blue had almost reached his castle, with his somewhat large, but otherwise suitable, cannon-ball, when his nurse, glancing up from her needlework, perceived him staggering along in his shirt-sleeves, and also saw the use to which he was putting his flannel coat. She threw aside the blue over-all she was making, rushed down the shore, calling my Little Boy Blue every uncomplimentary compound noun and adjective which entered her irate and flurried mind; seized the precious stone, unwound the little jacket, flung the stone away, shook out the sand and seaweed, and straightened the twisted sleeves. Then she proceeded to shake the

breath out of my Little Boy Blue's already rather breathless little body; put on the coat, jerked him up the shore, and plumped him down with his back to the sea and his castle, to sit in disgrace and listen, while she told the assembled nurses what a 'born *himp* of *hevil*' he was! I could have slain that woman! And I knew my little Boy Blue had no dear mother of his own. I wanted to take him in my arms, smooth his tumbled curls, and comfort him. And all this time he had not uttered a sound. He had just explained to me that he always did his own carrying, and evidently he had learned to bear his childish sorrows in silence. I watched the little disconsolate blue back, usually so gaily erect, now round with shame and woe. Then I bethought me of something I could do. I made quite sure he was not peeping round. Then I went and found the chosen stone, and it was heavy indeed! I carried it to the breakwater, and deposited it carefully within the courtyard of the castle. Then I sat down behind the breakwater, on the other side, and waited. I felt sure Little Boy Blue would come back for his spade and bucket.

"Presently the nurses grew tired of bullying him. The strength of his quiet non-resistance proved greater than their superior numbers and brute force. Also his intelligent little presence was, undoubtedly, a check upon their gossip. So he was told he might go; I conclude, on the understanding that he should 'be a good boy' and carry no more 'nasty heavy stones.' I saw him rise and shake the dust of the nurses' circle off his little feet! Then he pushed back his curls, and, without looking to the right or to the left, trotted straight to his castle. I wondered he did not glance, however hopelessly, in the supposed direction of the desired stone. But, no! He came gaily on; and the light of a great expectation shone in his brown eyes.

"When he reached the breakwater, and found his castle, there—safely in the courtyard—reposed the mighty cannon-ball. He stood still a moment, looking at it; and his cheeks went very pink. Then he pulled off his little cap, and turned his radiant face up to the blue sky, flecked with fleeting white clouds. And—'Fank de Lord,' said my Little Boy Blue."

There were unconcealed tears in the Aunt's kind eyes, and she controlled her quiet voice with difficulty. But the glory of a great gladness had come over the Boy. Without as yet explaining itself in words, it rang in his voice and laughter.

"I remember," he said. "Why, of course I remember! Not you, worse luck; but being lugged up the shore, and fearing I had lost my cannon-ball. And, you know, as quite a tiny chap, I had formed a habit of praying about all

my little wants and woes. I sometimes think, how amused the angels must have been when my small petitions arrived. There was a scarecrow, in a field, I prayed for, regularly, every night, for weeks. I had been struck by the fact that it looked lonely. Then I seriously upset the theology of the nursery, by passing through a course of persistent and fervent prayer for Satan. It appeared as an obvious logical conclusion to my infant mind: that if the person who—according to nurse—spent all his time in going about making everybody naughty, could himself become good, all naughtiness would cease. Also, that anybody must be considered as 'past praying for,' was an idea which nearly broke my small heart. With rage and misery, when it was first crudely forced upon me. I think the arch-fiend must have turned away, silent and nonplussed, if he ever chanced to pass by, while a very tiny boy was kneeling up in his crib, pleading with tearful earnestness: 'Please God, bless poor old Satan; make him good an' happy; an' take him back to heaven.' But it used to annoy nurse considerably, when she came into the same prayer, with barely a comma between."

"Oh, my Little Boy Blue!" cried the Aunt. "Why was I not your mother!"

"Thank goodness, you were not!" said the Boy, imperturbably. "I don't want you for a mother, dear. I want you for my wife."

"So you had prayed about the stone?" remarked the Aunt, hurriedly.

"Yes. While seated there in disgrace, I said: 'Please God, let an angel find my cannon-ball, which howwid old nurse fwowed away. An' let the angel cawwy it safe to the courtyard of my castle.' And I was not at all surprised to find it there; merely very glad. So you see, Christobel, you were my guardian angel twenty years ago. No wonder I feel I have known and loved you, all my life."

"Wait until you hear the rest of my story, Little Boy Blue. But I can testify that you were not surprised. Your brown eyes were simply shining with faith and expectation, as you trotted down the shore. But—who said you might call me 'Christobel'?"

"No one," replied the Boy. "I thought of it myself. It seemed so perfect to be able to say it on the first of my seven days. And, if you consider, I have never called you 'Miss Charteris.' You always seemed to me much too splendid to be 'Miss' anything. One might as well say 'Miss Joan of Arc' or 'Miss Diana of the Ephesians.' But of course I won't call you 'Christobel' if you would rather not."

"You quite absurd boy!" said the Aunt, laughing. "Call me anything you like—just for your seven days. But you have not yet told me the meaning or significance of these seven days."

The Boy sat forward, eagerly.

"It's like this," he said. "I have always loved the story of how the army of Israel marched round Jericho during seven days. It appeals to me. The well-garrisoned, invincible city, with its high walls and barred gates. The silent, determined army, marching round it, once every day. Apparently nothing was happening; but, in reality, their faith, enthusiasm, and will-power were undermining those mighty walls. And on the seventh day, when they marched round seven times to the blast of the priestly trumpets; at the seventh time, the ordeal of silence was over; leave was given to the great silent host to shout. So the rams' horns sounded a louder blast than ever; and then, with all the pent-up enthusiasm born of those seven days of silent marching, the people shouted! Down fell the walls of Jericho, and up the conquerors went, right into the heart of the citadel.... / am prepared to march round in silence, during seven days; but on the seventh day, Jericho will be taken."

"/ being Jericho, I conclude," remarked the Aunt, dryly. "I cannot say I have particularly noticed the silence. But that part of the programme would be decidedly dull; so we will omit it, and say, from the first: 'little Boy Blue, come blow me your horn!'"

"I shall blow it all right, on the seventh day," said the Boy, "and when I do, you will hear it."

He got up, came across, and knelt by the arm of her chair.

"I shall walk right up into the heart of the citadel," he said, "when the gates fly open, and the walls fall down; and there I shall find you, my Queen; and together we shall 'inherit the kingdom.' O dear unconquered Citadel! O beautiful, golden kingdom! Don't you wish it was the seventh day *now*, Christobel?"

His mouth looked so sweet, as he bent over her and said "*Christobel*," with a queer little accent on the final syllable, that the Aunt felt momentarily dizzy.

"Go back to your chair, at once, Boy," she whispered.

And he went.

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