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## CONOVER & CONOVER

TILLAMOOK, OREGON

# MARY MARIE

By Eleanor H. Porter

Illustrations by R. H. Livingstone

It seems so funny to hear her talk such a lot about Father as she does, when before she never used to mention him—only to say how afraid she was that I would love him better than I did her, and to make me say over and over again that I didn't. And I said so one day to her—I mean, I said I thought it was funny, the way she talked now.

She colored up and bit her lip, and gave a queer little laugh. Then she grew very sober and grave, and said: "I know, dear. Perhaps I am talking more than I used to. But, you see, I've been thinking quite a lot, and I—I've learned some things. I'm trying to make you forget what I said—about your loving me more than him. That wasn't right, dear. Mother was wrong. She shouldn't try to influence you against your father. He is a good man; and there are none too many good men in the world—No, no, I won't say that," she broke off.

But she'd already said it, and, of course, I knew she was thinking of the violinist. I'm no child.

She went on more after that, quite a lot more. And she said again that I must love Father and try to please him in every way; and she cried a little and talked a lot about how hard it was in my position, and that she was afraid she'd only been making it harder, through her selfishness, and I must forgive her, and try to forget it. And she was sure she'd do better now. And she said that, after all, life wasn't just being happy yourself. It was in how much happiness you could give to others.

Oh, it was lovely! And I cried, and she cried some more, and we kissed each other, and I promised. And after she went away I felt all upraised and holy, like you do when you've been to a beautiful church service with soft music and colored windows, and everybody kneeling. And I felt as if I'd never be naughty or thoughtless again. And that I'd never mind being Mary now. Why, I'd be glad to be Mary half the time, and even more—for Father.

But, alas!

Listen. Would you believe it? Just that same evening Mother stopped me against laughing too loud and making too much noise playing with Lester; and I felt cross. I just boiled inside of me, and said I hated Mary, and that Mother was getting to be just like Aunt Jane. And yet, just that morning—

Oh, if only that hushed, stained-window-soft-music feeling would last!

JUNE

Well, once more school is done, my trunk is all packed, and I'm ready to go to Andersonville. I leave tomorrow morning. But not as I left last year. Oh, no. It is very, very different. Why this year I'm really going as Mary. Honestly, Mother has turned me into Mary before I go. Now, what do you think of that? And if I've got to be Mary there and Mary here, too, when can I ever be Marie? Oh, I know I said I'd be willing to be Mary half, and maybe more than half, the time. But when it comes to really being Mary out of turn extra time, that is quite another thing.

And I am Mary.

Listen:

I've learned to cook. That's Mary. I've been studying astronomy. That's Mary.

I've learned to walk quietly, speak softly, laugh not too loudly, and be a lady at all times. That's Mary.

And now, to add to all this, Mother has had me dress like Mary. Yes, she began two weeks ago. She came into my room one morning and said she wanted to look over my dresses and things; and I could see, by the way she frowned and bit her lip and tapped her foot on the floor, that she wasn't suited. She said:

"I think, my dear, that on Saturday we'll have to go in town shopping. Quite a number of these things will not do at all."

And I was so happy! Visions of new dresses and hats and shoes rose before me, and even the pink beaded silk came into my mind—though I didn't really have much hope of that.

Well, we went shopping on Saturday, but—did we get the pink silk? We did not. We did get—you'd never guess what. We got two new gingham dresses, very plain and homely, and a pair of horrid, thick, low shoes. Why, I could have cried! I did "most cry" as I exclaimed:

"Why Mother, those are Mary things!"

"Of course, they're Mary things," answered Mother, cheerfully. "That's what I meant to buy—Mary things, as you call them. Aren't you going to be Mary just next week? Of course, you are! And didn't you tell me last year, as soon as you got there, Miss Anderson objected to your clothing and bought new for you? Well, I am trying to see that she does not have to do that this year."

And then she bought me a brown serge suit and a hat so tiresomely sensible that even Aunt Jane would love them, I know. And tomorrow I've got to put them on to go in.

Do you wonder that I say I am Mary already?

CHAPTER VII

When I Am Neither One.

ANDERSONVILLE

Well, I came last night. I had on the brown suit and the sensible hat, and every turn of the wheels all day had been singing: "Mary, Mary, now you're Mary!" Why, Mother even called me Mary when she said good-by. She came to the junction with me just as she had before, and put me on the other train.

"Now, remember, dear, you're to be

very hard to be a joy and a comfort to your father—just the little, Mary that he wants you to be. Remember, he has been very kind to let you stay with me so long."

She cried when she kissed me just as she did before; but she didn't tell me this time to be sure and not love Father better than I did her. I noticed that. But, of course, I didn't say anything, though I might have told her easily that I knew nothing could ever make me love him better than I did her.

When we got to Andersonville, and the train rolled into the station, I stepped down from the cars and looked over to where the carriages were to find John and Aunt Jane. But they weren't there. There wasn't even the carriage there; and I can remember now just how my heart sort of felt sick inside of me when I thought that even Aunt Jane had forgotten, and that there wasn't anybody to meet me.

There was a beautiful big green automobile there, and I thought how I wished that had come to meet me; and I was just wondering what I should do, when all of a sudden somebody spoke my name. And who do you think it was? You'd never guess it in a month. It was Father. Yes, Father!

Why, I could have hugged him, I was so glad. But of course I didn't, right before all those people. But he was so tall and handsome and splendid, and I felt so proud to be walking along the platform with him and letting folks see that he'd come to meet me! But I couldn't say anything—no anything, the way I wanted to; and all I could do was to stammer out:

"Why, where's Aunt Jane?"

And that's just the thing I didn't want to say; and I knew it the minute I said it. Why, it sounded as if I'd missed Aunt Jane, and wanted her instead of him, when all the time I was so pleased and excited to see him that I could hardly speak.

He just kind of smiled, and looked queer, and said that Aunt Jane—couldn't come. Then I felt sorry; for I saw, of course, that that was why he had come; not because he wanted to, but because Aunt Jane couldn't, so he had to. And I could have cried, all the while he was fixing it up about my trunk.

He turned then and led the way straight over to where the carriages were, and the next minute there was John touching his cap to me; only it was a brand-new John looking too sweet for anything in a chauffeur's cap and uniform. And what do you think? He was helping me into that beautiful big green car before I knew it.

"Why, Father, Father!" I cried. "You don't mean—" I just couldn't finish; but he finished for me.

"It is ours—yes. Do you like it?"

"Like it? I guess he didn't need to have me say any more. But I did say more. I just raved and raved over that car until Father's eyes crinkled all up in little smile wrinkles, and he said:

"I'm glad. I hoped you'd like it."

"I guess I do like it!" I cried. Then I went on to tell him how I thought it was the prettiest one I ever saw, and "way ahead of even Mr. Easterbrook's."

"And, pray, who is Mr. Easterbrook?" asked Father then. "The violinist, perhaps—eh?"

Now, wasn't it funny he should have remembered that there was a violinist? But, of course, I told him no, it wasn't the violinist. It was another one that took Mother to ride, the one I told him about in the Christmas letter; and he was very rich, and had two perfectly beautiful cars; and I was going on to tell more—how he didn't take Mother now—but I didn't get a chance, for Father interrupted, and said, "Yes, yes, to be sure."

And he showed he wasn't interested, for all the little-smile wrinkles were gone, and he looked stern and dignified, more like he used to. And he went on to say that, as we had almost reached home, he had better explain right away that Aunt Jane was no longer living there; that his cousin from the West, Mrs. Whitney, was keeping house for him now. She was a very nice lady, and he hoped I would like her. And I might call her "Cousin Grace."

And before I could even draw breath to ask any questions, we were home; and a real pretty lady, with a light-blue dress on, was helping me out of the car, and kissing me as she did so.

Now, do you wonder that I have been rubbing my eyes and wondering if I was really I, and if this was Andersonville?

ONE WEEK LATER

It isn't a dream. It's all really, truly true—everything: Father coming to meet me, the lovely automobile, and the pretty lady in the light-blue dress, who kissed me. And when I went downstairs the next morning I found out it was real, specially the pretty lady; for she kissed me again, and said she hoped I'd be happy there. And she told me to amuse myself any way I liked, and said, if I wanted to, I might run over to see some of the girls, but not to make any plans for the afternoon, for she was going to take me to ride.

Now, what do you think of that? Go to see the girls in the morning, and take a ride—an automobile ride!—in the afternoon. In Andersonville! Why, I couldn't believe my ears. Of course, I was wild and crazy with delight—but it was all so different. Why, I began to think almost that I was Marie, and not Mary at all.

And it's been that way the whole week through. I've had a beautiful time. I've been so excited! And Mother is excited, too. Of course, I wrote her and told her all about it right

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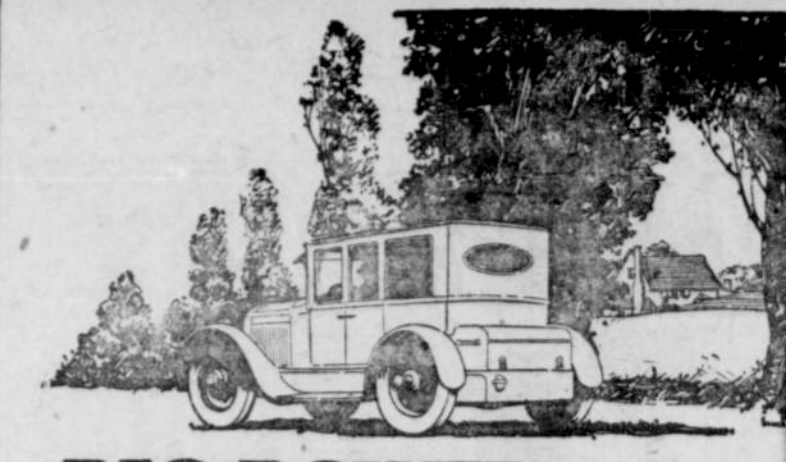
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