# CHAPTER II

SATURDAY morning was come, and all the summer world was bright and

fresh, and brimming with life. There was a song in every heart; and if

the heart was young the music issued at the lips. There was cheer in

every face and a spring in every step. The locust-trees were in bloom

and the fragrance of the blossoms filled the air. Cardiff Hill, beyond

the village and above it, was green with vegetation and it lay just far

enough away to seem a Delectable Land, dreamy, reposeful, and inviting.

Tom appeared on the sidewalk with a bucket of whitewash and a

long-handled brush. He surveyed the fence, and all gladness left him and

a deep melancholy settled down upon his spirit. Thirty yards of board

fence nine feet high. Life to him seemed hollow, and existence but a

burden. Sighing, he dipped his brush and passed it along the topmost

plank; repeated the operation; did it again; compared the insignificant

whitewashed streak with the far-reaching continent of unwhitewashed

fence, and sat down on a tree-box discouraged. Jim came skipping out at

the gate with a tin pail, and singing Buffalo Gals. Bringing water from

the town pump had always been hateful work in Tom's eyes, before, but

now it did not strike him so. He remembered that there was company at

the pump. White, mulatto, and negro boys and girls were always there

waiting their turns, resting, trading playthings, quarrelling, fighting,

skylarking. And he remembered that although the pump was only a hundred

and fifty yards off, Jim never got back with a bucket of water under an

hour--and even then somebody generally had to go after him. Tom said:

“Say, Jim, I'll fetch the water if you'll whitewash some.”