

THE BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

THE MARCH BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

THE PAY STREAK

Who has not thought of one day striking it—The Pay Streak. Usually it lies at the end of the rainbow and the weary searcher tires before he comes to that goldenspot. It is of a very different Pay Streak, however, of which William Wallace Cook writes in the complete novelette he contributes to THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE for March. Those who remember Mr. Cook's earlier stories—"The Testing of Noyes" and "Montana," both of which appeared complete in the issues of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE containing them—will hail with delight the present announcement. William Wallace Cook never tries to tell a story when he has no story to tell, and in The Pay Streak it is an especially fascinating yarn that he sets himself to spin. A story of the West that he knows as well, if not better, than any other writer of stories, we prophesy that The Pay Streak will prove one of the most successful novels THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE has ever published. There are thrills in it—and touches of tenderness, too—in a word, its reality will convince the reader that it is true.

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The Punishment of the Twins

L. M. Montgomery

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The Punishment of the Twins

I

Billy Carr—nobody but Great-aunt Jane ever called him William—was waiting in the hall for Priscilla. He was ready for Sunday-school; he had a cent in one pocket for the Sunday-school collection; he carried his Bible in one hand and his Sunday-school quarterly in the other; he knew his lesson and his golden text and the catechism question. Had he not studied them perfect the whole preceding Sunday afternoon? Billy, therefore, should have been in a placid frame of mind. As a matter of fact, despite text and catechism, he was inwardly as a ravening wolf.

A defiant scowl darkened his brow as he muttered:

“I *hate* Sunday here.”

Billy glanced around in terror after this outburst. Suppose the floor opened and swallowed him up for his wickedness! Or, worse still, suppose Aunt Jane heard him! But nothing happened, and after a moment Billy went on, finding a certain relief in uttering his stormy thoughts:

“I hate going to Sunday-school in Meadowby worse’n castor-oil—and I hate going to church in Meadowby worse’n poison—and I hate writing out a s’nopsis worse’n ’em both!”

The stairs creaked and Billy’s heart quaked within him. Nobody appeared, but Billy thought he had had a narrow escape, and he buttoned the rest of his rebellious feelings tightly up in his soul. Certain things might be disagreeable and a fellow might have his own private opinions concerning them; but a two months’ sojourn in Aunt Jane’s household had convinced Billy that it was safer to keep said private opinions to himself. Aunt Jane did not believe in liberty of thought, and you did not get any pudding for dinner or anything but plain bread and milk for your tea if you persisted in claiming it. As for liberty of action, the very cat in the kitchen would have grinned at you in scorn if you mentioned it.

Presently Aunt Jane did come down the stairs, leading Priscilla by the hand. Billy glared up at both as they came. He thought he had never seen Aunt Jane grimmer or Priscilla more like the picture of the angel in the chromo over the parlor mantelpiece.

Priscilla was garbed in spotless white, crisp and fluted and ruffled. She had on white silk gloves and a lingerie hat. Her golden hair hung in a deep long fleece to her

waist and her eyes were blue and limpid and innocent. A cherubic expression wreathed her delicate spiritual face. Priscilla's appearance always confused Billy's theology terribly. He could not understand how anybody could look so like an angel on the outside and be the very—well, the very opposite inside. Billy knew that the more saintly Priscilla looked the worse, as a rule, she was feeling.

"She must be mad clear through just now," he reflected.

Aunt Jane surveyed the twins over her spectacles with her usual frown.

"Now be sure you are good children," she warned them. "I can't go to church this morning because my rheumatism is troubling me. But I expect you to behave yourselves properly in every respect. Don't walk in the dust. Don't stop in the porch to talk to the other children. Don't squirm or wriggle in your places. Don't whisper. Don't forget your golden-texts. Don't forget to put in your collection. And don't forget to pay especial attention to the sermon. I shall expect you both to write out a synopsis of it as usual this afternoon and I want to see a better result than I had last Sunday."

Billy watched Priscilla's face with a fascinated gaze as they went down the garden-path. At the gate Priscilla put her quarterly up before her and twisted her countenance into such an unearthly and terrific contortion that Billy, although he knew her gifts in this respect, was honestly alarmed that she would never in the world be able to get it straightened out again. When the quarterly went down, however, there was Priscilla looking as meek and saintly as before and she comported herself with dignity as far along the road as was within view of Aunt Jane.

Billy said nothing but held his breath in a not unpleasant suspense. He knew something was coming, and as soon as they had turned the corner of the spruce-grove it came.

Not in words at first, however; words were too weak a vehicle of expression just then for Priscilla's stormy soul. In grim, deliberate silence she stepped off the green grass of the roadside ankle deep into the fine dust that four weeks of rainless weather had made on the road and marched along in it, shuffling her feet viciously until she was enveloped in a hazy cloud.

Billy watched her delightedly. He would never have dared to do it himself but it was splendid to see Priscilla doing it.

Finally, when she was dust from head to foot, Priscilla came back to the grass.

"That's the beginning," she exploded triumphantly. "And I'm going to stop in the porch and talk as long as there is anybody to talk to. I'm going to squirm and wriggle and whisper. I'm going to say I don't know the golden-text and I'm going to

throw away both of my collections *right now!*”

And Priscilla hurled cent and dime over Jacob Millar’s fence with a fierce gesture.

“Oh!” breathed Billy, partly in horror, partly in admiration. “And are you going to write the s’nopsis?”

“I suppose I’ll have to,” conceded Priscilla gloomily, “because if I don’t, I daresay Aunt Jane would keep me shut up until I did. I used to love going to church at home. But how can anybody like it here when you have to write a s’nopsis? Isn’t it bad enough to be shut up all the week and kept at lessons just as if it wasn’t vacation and never allowed to play with a single soul without having to spend all Sunday afternoon writing a s’nopsis? It’s a darned shame!”

“Oh, Priscilla, don’t swear,” said Billy, rather shocked but still admiring.

“‘Darned’ isn’t swearing and I don’t care much if it should be,” said Priscilla recklessly. “Aunt Jane will drive me to swearing in right good earnest yet, Billy Carr. I can’t imagine why father didn’t send us to Aunt Nora’s when she wanted us to go. And Aunt Nora is our own aunt while Aunt Jane is only father’s aunt. Just think how splendid it would have been there! We wouldn’t have to be respectable one minute—only on Sundays and then it would have been really nice for a change. We could wear comfortable clothes and go barefoot, and fish, and slide down the sheephouse roof and eat anything that came handy. Think of Aunt Nora’s little plum-pies.”

Billy groaned. It was agonizing to hear Priscilla thus recounting the delights they might have enjoyed at Aunt Nora’s and contrast them with the bitter realities at Aunt Jane’s.

“Instead of which,” went on Priscilla witheringly, “we’ve got to wash our faces and brush our teeth four times a day and keep our toes in position and live on health-foods. If I thought it would be a bit of use I’d write to father and ask him to let us go to Aunt Nora’s yet. But I know he wouldn’t. He’d be afraid of hurting Aunt Jane’s feelings. *Her* feelings! She hasn’t got any.”

II

A piercing whoop broke in on Priscilla's wrathful speech. Looking up Priscilla and Billy saw a row of Dixons sitting on the board-fence behind the Dixon house. Dave Dixon was there, and Pete Dixon, likewise Tommy and Adolphus Dixon. They were all freckle and snub-nosed, bareheaded and barefooted. As for clothes, they had on no more than strict decency required.

But they did look so jolly and carefree. The cockles of Priscilla's heart warmed to them as she smiled radiantly at Dave, doubly incited thereto by the fact that Aunt Jane would have been horrified if she had known it. Aunt Jane would not let Billy and Priscilla play with any of the Meadowby children, but she had sternly forbidden them even to speak to the Dixons. Therefore, Billy and Priscilla had long hankered to do it.

Dave lost his head under the dazzling influence of Priscilla's smile and could only grin sheepishly back; but Pete cheerfully demanded:

"Where are you going?"

"Sunday-school," said Billy briefly.

"We mostly goes to Sunday-school, too," said Pete, "but pa and ma's away to-day and Dave and me has to look after the baby and Tom and 'Dolphus can't go 'cause there's nobody to dress 'em. So we're just going to stay home and have a riproaring time. We're going fishing."

"Yeh'd better come, too," said Dave, suddenly recovering his powers of speech.

Billy sighed.

Alluring as the prospect was, it was scarcely a temptation, so utterly out of the question was it. Fishing and such dear joys were for happy, irresponsible creatures like the Dixons; as for him, he must tread the thorny path of respectability and synopsis.

"Thank you, we will," said Priscilla calmly.

Billy's mouth fell open and stayed open but no words came forth from it. He *could* not have heard aright. The Dixons thought so, too, and stared like four graven images of amazement.

"We can't climb over that fence, so we'll have to go up the lane and in at the gate," Priscilla went on. "You'd better meet us there because I'm afraid of your dog."

The Dixons, convinced, tumbled off the fence with a simultaneous shriek of exultation and could be heard scampering through the yard. Priscilla walked onward, head erect.

"Priscilla, you don't really mean it?" gasped Billy, swayed betwixt hope and fear.

"I do mean it. I'm going to have a good time for once in Meadowby."

"But wont Aunt Jane be furious?"

"Of course she will. But what can she do? She doesn't believe in whipping children and I'm very sure," with superlative scorn, "we haven't any pleasures she can take from us. She'll likely give us no dinner and send us to bed, but that wont be any worse than writing a s'nopsis. I'm going anyhow. I haven't had a spark of fun all Summer, but there's a chance for it now. We couldn't get home from church until half-past one so we have four hours to celebrate. Yes. I'm going. You can come or not, just as you please."

"Oh, I'll come, of course," said Billy resignedly.

Secretly he felt a fearful joy. Priscilla's courage infected him and he cast dread and conscience to the winds.

"I suppose it is wrong," said Priscilla, "but I'm tired of being good. I've had to be good so long that there's an awful lot of wickedness bottled up in me. At home it used to dribble away a little every day, so it wasn't very noticeable, but now it's got to come all at once or I shall burst. Now, Billy, you take my advice and go into this thing with all your heart if you go at all. There's no use being bad if you spoil your fun by wishing you were good all the time. We'll have to repent afterwards, I suppose, but there's no use in mixing the two things together."

Dave had the gate wide open when they reached it and the four Dixons stood behind it in an admiring line as Priscilla and Billy marched through. The Dixon dog was sitting peaceably on one side and the Dixon baby was wallowing delightedly in a dust-pie on the other.

The yard was full of splendid possibilities, as Priscilla saw at a glance.

"Where are you going fishing?" she demanded.

"Down at the brook—it's just below that bush," responded Dave; "but it's awful muddy down there. You'll spoil your clothes."

"You don't suppose we're going fishing in these clothes do you?" said Priscilla scornfully. "You must lend us some of yours."

The four Dixons gasped. Tommy and Adolphus giggled, but Dave scowled at them so furiously that they stopped at once and looked preternaturally solemn instead.

"We—we can lend Billy some, of course," said Dave doubtfully, "but there aint any girls in our family and ma's dresses would be too big for you."

"What's the matter with some of yours?" said Priscilla calmly. "You've got some

besides what you have on, haven't you?"

Dave whistled. Then he rose to the situation.

"Oh, o' course; you can have a suit of Pete's. I guess mine would be too big. Billy can have mine. Come into the house."

Dave led the way into the Dixon kitchen and dived into the small bedroom off of it.

Reappearing presently he gave Priscilla to understand that a suit of Pete's was laid out on the bed and she might go in and don it.

"Billy and us'll go up to the loft and change there," he said.

III

When the boys came down from the loft Priscilla was waiting for them. She wore Pete's trousers and she had discarded boots and stockings and lingerie hat. Pete's jacket was buttoned up to her neck and her golden hair fell over it.

Dave surveyed her admiringly.

"You look just as pretty in those things as in dresses," he said.

Priscilla put her hands in Pete's pockets and tossed her head.

"I'm very comfortable in them and that's the main thing," she said. "You boys don't know how well off you are, never having to fuss with skirt and frills. Billy, don't you just wish Aunt Jane could see me now? Well, we mustn't waste any time. We've only got four hours and I'm bound to make the most of them. If we're going fishing what's the first thing to be done?"

"Go out behind the henhouse and dig wums," said Pete blithely.

"Ow!"

It was a little shriek that came from Priscilla. Sex has its limitations after all. Priscilla could wear masculine garments undauntedly but her feminine soul recoiled from worms.

"I can't dig them. Billy, you'll have to dig mine."

"I'll dig them for you," said Dave gallantly, "and I'll put them on the hook for you, too."

"Oh, thank you," said Priscilla gratefully. "I'll look after the baby while you're digging them."

When enough worms had been dug Dave announced that they would have to draw lots to see who would take charge of the baby.

"Why can't you leave him here?" said Priscilla. "Would he cry?"

"Naw, he never cries," said Pete, "but he's a terrible crawler and he'd be sure to get into mischief if we left him. He crawled into the pigpen the other day and next day he nearly fell down the well."

"If he wont cry why don't you put him in the hen-coop?" said Priscilla.

Dave and Pete looked at each other in speechless admiration of this clever girl. Often they had tried to devise some safe disposal of the baby but no such brilliant idea as this had ever dawned upon them. With a shout Pete pounced on the hencoop and turned out the brooding hen Mrs. Dixon had incarcerated therein. The next minute the Dixon baby was shut in it, laughing and gurgling with delight.

"That's a bully place," said Dave rapturously. "He'll get lots of fresh air and he can see plenty to amuse him and nothing can get at him. If he does yell a bit it wont

hurt him. Come on, now.”

A glorious two hours of sport followed—fishing, wading, paddling, jumping. Priscilla might not be able to put worms on her hook but she could catch fish after they were put on. She was high-line when they stopped; and as for jumping the brook, none of them could compare with her. Billy himself was surprised at her prowess.

When the possibilities of the brook were exhausted they trooped back to the yard where the baby was fast asleep in the hencoop. They had a hilarious game of tag, and then they all climbed to the top of the barn-roof and cut their names on the ridgepole. A flat-roofed stable and a huge straw-pen beneath it gave Priscilla another exhilarating idea, and they spent a splendid hour climbing to the stable-roof and diving off it into the straw below.

Up to this point all had been peace and good will. Now trouble brewed. Dave had taken Billy around to the barn to show him a pet calf when their conference was unpleasantly interrupted by the breathless arrival of Adolphus, who burst into the barn gasping:

“Oh, Pete and Priscilla’s fighting—and she’s killing Pete—and come quick and stop her.”

Dave and Billy set off at full speed for the straw-pen. In the center were the combatants writhing to and fro in anything but loving embrace. If the battle had, according to Adolphus, been going in Priscilla’s favor the tide turned with the arrival of Billy and Dave, for just as they burst into the pen Pete got his hands on Priscilla’s curls and yanked them mercilessly. Priscilla’s shriek wakened the echoes.

Dave and Billy hurled themselves into the *mêlée*. Billy flung his arms around his sister and dragged her back; but Dave with one vindictive blow sent the unhappy Pete sprawling and then stood over him threateningly.

“You’re a beauty, oh, aint you!” said Dave fiercely. “To be fighting with a lady and her visiting you! Oh, aint you a nice one!”

“She hit me first,” vociferated Pete.

“He dropped a caterpillar down my neck,” shrieked Priscilla.

“Oh, I’ll settle you by and by, Pete Dixon,” promised Dave.

“I only did it for fun,” whimpered Pete. “She was such a sport in everything else I didn’t s’pose she’d mind that.”

“*You* s’posing!” said Dave with withering scorn.

“Anyhow, I gave him a black eye,” said Priscilla triumphantly.

“Oh, *do* remember what day it is,” implored Billy in agony.

“That’s so,” agreed Priscilla. “I dare say it isn’t just the thing to be fighting on

Sunday. You can let Pete up, Dave, and I'll forgive him."

Harmony being thus restored and Dave having somewhat reluctantly promised to forego vengeance on Pete, the next proposition was dinner. They all adjourned to the pantry.

The Dixons might be very low down, in the Meadowby social scale but Mr. Dixon was a good "provider" and his wife an excellent cook. The pantry was well stored with pies, cakes, and preserves. To the Carr twins, who had been nourished for two months on a strictly hygienic diet, it was as a feast of fat things and they did it full justice. Priscilla pounced on a jar of pickles with a shriek of delight.

"I haven't had a pickle since I left home. Can I eat all these, Dave?"

"Sure," said hospitable Dave, confident that, though such a dose of pickles would probably kill any ordinary girl, Priscilla was perfectly safe since she was no ordinary girl. Priscilla ate those pickles straight, scorning all other viands.

"Aint this bully?" sighed Billy, ecstatically tucking away doughnuts. "Aunt Jane says fried things aint healthy. Priscilla, why are the nicest things never healthy?"

"Hush—don't bother me," said Priscilla absently.

With the last pickle poised forgotten on her fork she was bending over a big book she had just discovered on a shelf.

Billy craned his neck to see what it was and was as much amazed as disgusted to find that it was a volume of sermons.

Presently Priscilla looked up with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"Dave, whose book is this?"

"What—that? The Flying Roll? Oh, I guess it's ma's. She bought it from a book-agent two years ago and pa's been laughing at her ever since. He said there was two things sold in that affair—the book and ma."

"Can I have the loan of it for awhile? I'll be just as careful of it."

"Course," said Dave.

Billy gasped.

It was now time to go. Priscilla sorrowfully retreated into the bedroom and came out white and frilled and angelic again.

"We've had a splendid day of it and we'll come another time if ever Aunt Jane has Sunday rheumatism again," she promised—recklessly, Billy thought, for it was unlikely Aunt Jane would trust them out of her sight the rest of the Summer? "Good-by, boys. A bit of raw meat would be just the thing for your eye, Pete. You'd better wake the baby up and take him out of the coop or he'll be sunburned in stripes. Come, Billy."

On the road home Priscilla drew a long regretful breath.

“Wasn’t it jolly, Billy? I’ve always wanted to know if I was really able to fight with a boy and now I know I can, for sure. Of course, I’ve often licked you, but I was always scared you were just giving in to me because you thought it polite. Just think, if father had let us go to Aunt Nora’s we could have fun like that all the week without having to break any of the commandments for it.”

“And without having to settle up with Aunt Jane afterwards,” said Billy mournfully.

“Aunt Jane isn’t going to know a thing about it,” said Priscilla triumphantly. “I’ve got a plan, Billy. This Flying Roll book is full of sermons. I struck a dandy one. I’m going to smuggle it into the house and we’ll write a s’nopsis from it and Aunt Jane will never know the difference.”

“I don’t think it’s fair that you should have got all the brains in our family, Priscilla,” said Billy, more admiringly than enviously when he had digested the idea.

“Well, you see, I had to have some advantages to make up for being a girl,” said Priscilla.

The way of those two transgressors seemed unscripturally easy.

III

Aunt Jane suspected nothing and after dinner—if you think that they ate nothing you are vastly mistaken—they were sent to the library to write the usual report of the sermon. Billy's opinion was that writing a "s'nopsis" with the printed sermon before you was a snap. When Aunt Jane came in they were ready for her, and she took the unusually copious sheets with a grim smile.

Alas, very speedily that smile was changed to a frown.

"Surely—surely Mr. Thorne never preached such stuff as this!"

"What's the matter with it?" Priscilla gasped.

"Matter? It's heresy—rank heresy. Why, the man must be a second adventist. I never read such doctrines."

Aunt Jane rushed out of the room in burning indignation.

"What do you suppose was wrong?" whispered Billy miserably.

"I'm sure I can't imagine," said Priscilla dejectedly. "The text was out of the Bible all right enough and goodness knows the sermon seemed awfully religious. It said all the wicked were to be burned up in a thousand years, too. What would you call orthodox doctrine if that isn't? But never mind," brightening up, "it's Mr. Thorne she's angry with, not us. Maybe she'll forget all about it before she sees him."

Alas for delusive hopes! Mr. Thorne, hearing of Miss Carr's rheumatic indisposition, called the very next afternoon and was shown into the library where that excellent lady was drilling her charges in dictation and spelling. Billy's cold hand reached over and clutched Priscilla's under the table.

"She'll be sure to pitch into him—and he'll say he didn't preach it—and it'll all come out. She'll be madder than if we had owned right up that we hadn't been to church. What will we do?" he whispered agitatedly.

"Hush! Sit still and say nothing," was Priscilla's advice.

Miss Carr cut Mr. Thorne's suave inquiries after her health severely short.

"Yes, I was prevented from going to church, Mr. Thorne, and I very much regret it, for I should certainly not have allowed such doctrines as you preached yesterday to pass without a protest. I cannot express how amazed I am to discover that you hold such and would dare to proclaim them in a Presbyterian pulpit."

"I—I don't understand you, Miss Carr," exclaimed the unfortunate young man.

"Will you deny that you made the statements contained in my grandniece's report of your sermon?" demanded Miss Carr. She produced the incriminating manuscript from the table drawer. "Is the whole substance of your sermon expressed in the

simple if somewhat disconnected words of an innocent child?"

Mr. Thorne took the paper and glanced over it. His lips twitched a little. Then he raised his hand and looked across the room at the two scared, appealing faces, with guilt written on their every lineaments. Mr. Thorne had called at the Dixons' before coming to Miss Carr's and the putting of two and two together is by no means a hard arithmetical problem.

He coolly folded up the "s'nopsis" and put it in his pocket.

"I—I am sorry I have incurred your displeasure, Miss Carr," he said solemnly. "I—ahem—promise you that I shall never preach such a sermon—again."

"That will not alter the fact that you hold such doctrine," said Miss Carr inexorably. "I must tell you plainly that I can no longer countenance you as my minister, Mr. Thorne. In future you may spare yourself the trouble of calling here."

Mr. Thorne rose. He was quite pale and he did not glance at the children; but his voice was quiet and steady.

"I am sorry, Miss Carr. Good-afternoon," and bowed himself out.

Aunt Jane watched him down the path grimly.

"That settles it. Not another penny do I pay to the salary-fund as long as that man contaminates the Meadowby pulpit," she said decisively, as she went out.

"Aint he a brick? He never told!" whispered Billy exultantly.

But Priscilla's face was white and tragic.

"A brick! He's a *Christian*, Billy Carr! And to think we've got him in such a scrape! Well, we can get him out again."

"What scrape? What difference does it make if Aunt Jane is mad at him?"

"Billy Carr, didn't you hear her say she wouldn't pay another cent to his salary? Don't you understand what that means? I know all about it. The church here is dreadfully weak. Aunt Jane pays as much as all the rest put together. If she stops, Mr. Thorne can't stay here. And he's going to marry that sweet Miss Sinclair—Dovie Nicholson told me so. If he has to leave here goodness knows when he can be married. Billy Carr, we've just got to go and own up the whole thing to Aunt Jane."

"Oh, I'd never dare," protested Billy. "If she'd ever had forgiven us for running away to play with the Dixons she'll never forgive us for fooling her with a fake-sermon and getting her into a fuss with the minister. Let things alone. Maybe she'll find out from someone else that he didn't preach it."

"She never will. You know she never associates with anybody in Meadowby. She'll just tell the collector that Mr. Thorne doesn't preach sound doctrine and she

wont condescend to explain anything about it. It's got to be done, Billy. I can't have the minister suffering for my faults. I'm going straight to her now. But you needn't come if you are scared."

"I'm scared but I'm coming. You don't suppose I'm going to leave you do it alone, do you?" said Billy chivalrously.

IV

Half an hour later the twins were sitting on the floor of an unfurnished upstairs room. The fatal interview was over and it had not been a pleasant one, to state it mildly. Aunt Jane had ordered them to the north room, there to stay until she had decided on their punishment. She also added that they had disgraced their father's name and that it was a judgment on him for marrying beneath him.

"What do you suppose she'll do to us?" said Billy. The subject had a grewsome fascination.

"I don't know," snapped Priscilla wrathfully, "but I do know one thing: she'd dearly love to whip us if it wasn't against her principles. She'll likely keep us shut up here and feed us on bread and milk for a week. She hasn't enough imagination to invent anything else. Did you hear what she said about father? I guess our mother was ten times better than she is and anyway she's dead and I'm not going to stand having things said about her. I just gave Aunt Jane a *look* when she said that."

It was nearly dark when Aunt Jane came to pass sentence on the culprits of the north room. Billy tried to look as defiant as Priscilla did. Standing before them, a rigid figure of outraged majesty, Aunt Jane pronounced the doom of fate.

"When your father was summoned abroad he talked of sending you to your Aunt Nora's. I did not feel like assuming the responsibility of your guidance and training but I considered it my duty to do so. I did it for your sakes. I knew you would be unhappy at your Aunt Nora's. She is a poor woman with a small house and a family of romping, inconsiderate children. Her scanty table and lack of conveniences would have seemed unbearable to you after the luxuries and dainty appointments to which you have been accustomed. I wished to save you from such discomforts. I was mistaken in this. You needed just such discipline to teach you to appreciate your blessings. I have reflected much concerning the punishment best suited to your scandalous conduct. It seemed to me that no ordinary measures would be severe enough. I have finally decided—"

Aunt Jane paused, to give due weight to her decree.

Billy and Priscilla held tight to each other.

Billy was quaking.

What fiendish punishment had Aunt Jane devised?

Even Priscilla lost a little of her dauntless bearing.

"I have decided," concluded Aunt Jane, "to send you both straightway to your Aunt Nora's."

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation and contractions has been retained.

The original really did have two section IIIs, we have chosen not to correct it.

[The end of *The Punishment of the Twins* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]