

## CHAPTER XXXI

### SAFE HOME

"To me," said Uncle John, as he stood on the deck and pointed proudly to the statue of Liberty in New York harbor, "that is the prettiest sight I've seen since I left home."

"Prettier than the old masters, Uncle?" asked Patsy, mischievously.

"Yes, or the cathedrals!" he retorted.

When they reached the dock there was the Major waiting to receive Patsy in a new checked suit with a big flower in his button-hole and a broad smile on his jolly face.

And there was Mrs. Merrick, too, with Arthur Weldon beside her, which proved to Louise that he had succeeded in making his peace with her mother. Also there were the stern-featured custom-house officials in their uniforms, and the sight of them sent the cold chills flying down Uncle John's spine.

There was no one present to receive Beth, but her uncle tucked her arm underneath his own with a proud gesture and kept her close beside him. For the girl had quite won his loving old heart on this trip, and she

seemed to him more mature and far sweeter than when they had left home.

But the greetings and the "brigandage" were soon over, and in good time they were all assembled in the Doyle flat, where the joyous Major had prepared an elaborate dinner to celebrate the return of the wanderers.

"We've a million pipes and pocket-books for you, daddy," whispered Patsy, hugging him for the twentieth time; "and I've got a thousand things to tell you about our adventures in strange lands."

"Save 'em till we're alone," said the Major; "they're too good to waste on a crowd."

Mr. Merrick was placed at the head of the table to make a speech. It was brief and to the point.

"I promised these young ladies to give them time of their lives," he said, "Did I do it, girls?"

And in a lively chorus they answered:

"You did, Uncle John!"