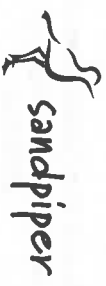


P. L. TRAVERS

Mary Poppins
COMES BACK

ILLUSTRATED BY
Mary Shepard



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Boston New York



"They saw before them their own pictured faces"

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Summary: Mary Poppins comes back on the end of a kite string, stays with the Banks family for a while, and then disappears on a merry-go-round horse.

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TO PIP, THIS KEPSAKE

TOPSY-TURVY

KEEP CLOSE to me, please!" said Mary Poppins, stepping out of the Bus and putting up her umbrella, for it was raining heavily.

Jane and Michael scrambled out after her.

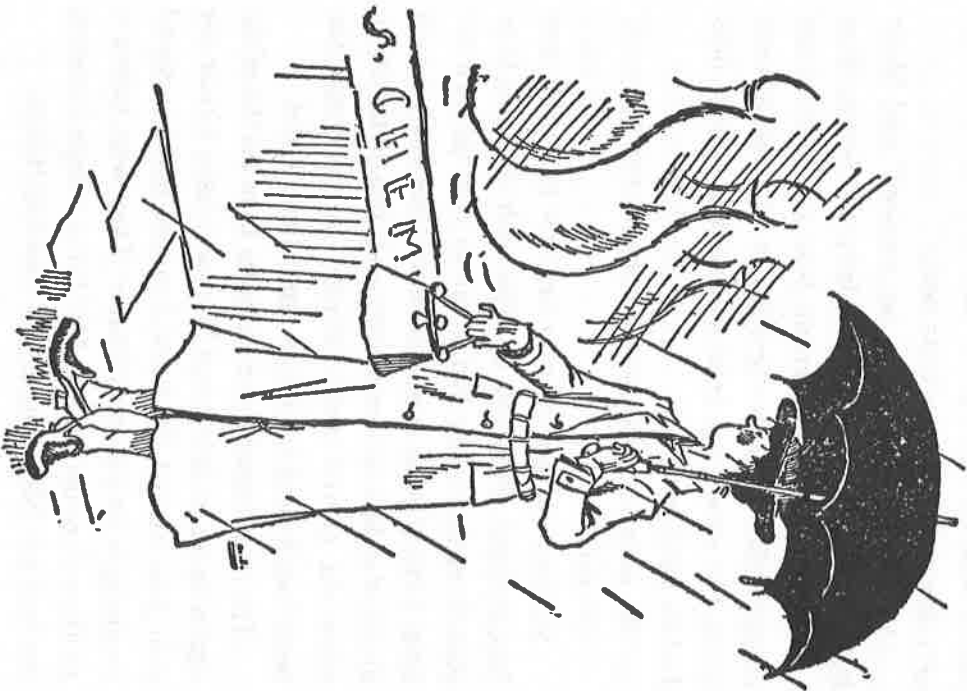
"If I keep close to you the drips from your umbrella run down my neck," complained Michael.

"Don't blame me, then, if you get lost and have to ask a Policeman!" snapped Mary Poppins, as she neatly avoided a puddle.

She paused outside the Chemist's shop at the corner so that she could see herself reflected in the three gigantic bottles in the window. She could see a Green Mary Poppins, a Blue Mary Poppins and a Red Mary Poppins all at once. And each one of them was carrying a brand-new leather hand-bag with brass knobs on it.

Mary Poppins looked at herself in the three bottles and smiled a pleased and satisfied smile. She spent some minutes changing the hand-bag from her right

hand to her left, trying it in every possible position to see how it looked best. Then she decided that, after all, it was most effective when tucked under her arm. So she left it there.



Jane and Michael stood beside her, not daring to say anything but glancing across at each other and sighing inside themselves. And from two points of her parrot-handled umbrella the rain trickled uncomfortably down the backs of their necks.

"Now then—don't keep me waiting!" said Mary Poppins crossly, turning away from the Green, Blue and Red reflections of herself. Jane and Michael exchanged glances. Jane signalled to Michael to keep quiet. She shook her head and made a face at him. But he burst out——

"We weren't. It was you keeping us waiting——!"
"Silence!"

Michael did not dare to say any more. He and Jane trudged along, one on either side of Mary Poppins. Sometimes they had to run to keep up with her long, swift strides. And sometimes they had to wait about, standing first on one leg and then on the other, while she peered into a window to make sure the hand-bag looked as nice as she thought it did.

The rain poured down, dancing from the top of the umbrella on to Jane's and Michael's hats. Under her arm Jane carried the Royal Doulton Bowl wrapped carefully in two pieces of paper. They were taking it to Mary Poppins' cousin, Mr. Turvy, whose business, she had told Mrs. Banks, was mending things.

"Well," Mrs. Banks had said, rather doubtfully, "I hope he will do it satisfactorily, for until it is mended I shall not be able to look my Great-Aunt Caroline in the face."

Great-Aunt Caroline had given Mrs. Banks the bowl when Mrs. Banks was only three, and it was well-known that if it were broken Great-Aunt Caroline would make one of her famous scenes.

"Members of *my* family, ma'am," Mary Poppins had retorted with a sniff, "*always* give satisfaction."

And she had looked so fierce that Mrs. Banks felt quite uncomfortable and had to sit down and ring for a cup of tea.

Swish!

There was Jane, right in the middle of a puddle.

"Look where you're going, please!" snapped Mary Poppins, shaking her umbrella and tossing the drips over Jane and Michael. "This rain is enough to break your heart."

"If it did, could Mr. Turvy mend it?" enquired Michael. He was interested to know if Mr. Turvy could mend all broken things or only certain kinds.

"Could he, Mary Poppins?"

"One more word," said Mary Poppins, "and Back Home you go!"

"I only asked," said Michael sulkily.

"Then don't!"

Mary Poppins, with an angry sniff, turned the corner smartly and, opening an old iron gate, knocked at the door of a small tumble-down building.

"Tap-tap-tappity-tap!" The sound of the knocker echoed hollowly through the house.

"Oh, dear," Jane whispered to Michael, "how awful if he's out!"

But at that moment heavy footsteps were heard tramping towards them, and with a loud rattle the door opened.

A round, red-faced woman, looking more like two apples placed one on top of the other than a human being, stood in the doorway. Her straight hair was scraped into a knob at the top of her head and her thin mouth had a cross and peevish expression.

"Well!" she said, staring. "It's you or I'm a Dutchman!"

She did not seem particularly pleased to see Mary Poppins. Nor did Mary Poppins seem particularly pleased to see her.

"Is Mr. Turvy in?" she enquired, without taking any notice of the round woman's remark.

"Well," said the round woman in an unfriendly voice, "I wouldn't be certain. He may be or he may not. It's all a matter of how you look at it."

Mary Poppins stepped through the door and peered about her.

"That's his hat, isn't it?" she demanded, pointing to an old felt hat that hung on a peg in the hall.

"Well, it is, of course—in a manner of speaking." The round woman admitted the fact unwillingly.

"Then he's in," said Mary Poppins. "No member of *my* family ever goes out without a hat. They're much too respectable."

"Well, all I can tell you is what he said to me this morning," said the round woman. 'Miss Tartlet,' he said, 'I may be in this afternoon and I may not. It is quite impossible to tell! That's what he said. But you'd better go up and see for yourself. I'm not a mountaineer.'

The round woman glanced down at her round body and shook her head. Jane and Michael could easily understand that a person of her size and shape would not want to climb up and down Mr. Turvy's narrow rickety stairs very often.

Mary Poppins sniffed.

"Follow me, please!" she snapped the words at Jane and Michael, and they ran after her up the creaking stairs.

Miss Tartlet stood in the hall watching them with a superior smile on her face.

At the top landing Mary Poppins knocked on the door with the head of her umbrella. There was no reply. She knocked again—louder this time. Still there was no answer.

"Cousin Arthur!" she called through the key-hole.

"Cousin Arthur, are you in?"

"No, I'm out!" came a far-away voice from within.

"How can he be out? I can hear him!" whispered

Michael to Jane.

"Cousin Arthur!" Mary Poppins rattled the door-handle. "I know you're in."

"No, no, I'm not," came the far-away voice. "I'm out, I tell you. It's the Second Monday!"

"Oh, dear—I'd forgotten!" said Mary Poppins, and with an angry movement she turned the handle and flung open the door.

At first all that Jane and Michael could see was a large room that appeared to be quite empty except for a carpenter's bench at one end. Piled upon this was a curious collection of articles—china dogs with no noses, wooden horses that had lost their tails, chipped plates, broken dolls, knives without handles, stools with only two legs—everything in the world, it seemed, that could possibly want mending.

Round the walls of the room were shelves reaching from floor to ceiling and these, too, were crowded with cracked china, broken glass and shattered toys.

But there was no sign anywhere of a human being. "Oh," said Jane in a disappointed voice. "He is out, after all!"

But Mary Poppins had darted across the room to the window.

"Come in at once, Arthur! Out in the rain like that, and you with bronchitis the winter before last!"

And to their amazement Jane and Michael saw her grasp a long leg that hung across the window-sill and pull in from the outer air a tall, thin, sad-looking man with a long drooping moustache.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said Mary Poppins crossly, keeping a firm hold of Mr. Turvy with one hand while she shut the window with the other. "We've brought you some important work to do and here you are behaving like this."

"Well, I can't help it," said Mr. Turvy apologetically, mopping his sad eyes with a large handkerchief.

"I told you it was the Second Monday."

"What does that mean?" asked Michael, staring at Mr. Turvy with interest.

"Ah," said Mr. Turvy turning to him and shaking him limply by the hand. "It's kind of you to enquire. Very kind. I do appreciate it, really." He paused to wipe his eyes again. "You see," he went on, "it's this way. On the Second Monday of the month everything goes wrong with me."

"What kind of things?" asked Jane, feeling very sorry for Mr. Turvy but also very curious.

"Well, take to-day!" said Mr. Turvy. "This happens to be the Second Monday of the month. And because I want to be in—having so much work to do—I'm automatically out. And if I wanted to be out, sure enough, I'd be in."

"I see," said Jane, though she really found it very difficult to understand. "So that's why——?"

"Yes," Mr. Turvy nodded. "I heard you coming up the stairs and I did so long to be in. So, of course, as soon as that happened—there I was—out! And I'd be out still if Mary Poppins weren't holding on to me." He sighed heavily.

"Of course, it's not like this all the time. Only between the hours of three and six—but even then it can be very awkward."

"I'm sure it can," said Jane sympathetically.

"And it's not as if it was only In and Out——" Mr. Turvy went on miserably. "It's other things, too. If I try to go up stairs, I find myself running down. I have only to turn to the right and I find myself going to the left. And I never set off for the West without immediately finding myself in the East."

Mr. Turvy blew his nose.

"And worst of all," he continued, his eyes filling

again with tears, "my whole nature alters. To look at me now, you'd hardly believe I was really a happy and satisfied sort of person—would you?"

And, indeed, Mr. Turvy looked so melancholy and distressed that it seemed quite impossible he could ever have been cheerful and contented.

"But why? Why?" demanded Michael, staring up at him.

Mr. Turvy shook his head sadly.

"Ah!" he said solemnly. "I should have been a girl." Jane and Michael stared at him and then at each other. What *could* he mean?

"You see," Mr. Turvy explained, "my Mother wanted a girl and it turned out, when I arrived, that I was a boy. So I went wrong right from the beginning—from the day I was born you might say. And that was the Second Monday of the month."

Mr. Turvy began to weep again, sobbing gently into his handkerchief.

Jane patted his hand kindly.

He seemed pleased, though he did not smile.

"And, of course," he went on, "it's very bad for my work. Look up there!"

He pointed to one of the larger shelves on which were standing a row of hearts in different colours and sizes, each one cracked or chipped or entirely broken.

"Now, those," said Mr. Turvy, "are wanted in a great hurry. You don't know how cross people get if I don't send their hearts back quickly. They make more fuss about them than anything else. And I simply daren't touch them till after six o'clock. They'd be ruined—like those things!"

He nodded to another shelf. Jane and Michael looked and saw that it was piled high with things that had been wrongly mended. A china shepherdess had been separated from her china shepherd and her arms were glued about the neck of a brass lion; a toy sailor whom somebody had wrenched from his boat, was firmly stuck to a willow-pattern plate; and in the boat, with his trunk curled round the mast and fixed there with sticking-plaster, was a grey-flannel elephant. Broken saucers were riveted together the wrong way of the pattern and the leg of a wooden horse was firmly attached to a silver Christening mug.

"You see?" said Mr. Turvy hopelessly, with a wave of his hand.

Jane and Michael nodded. They felt very, very sorry for Mr. Turvy.

"Well, never mind that now," Mary Poppins broke in impatiently. "What is important is this Bowl. We've brought it to be mended."

She took the Bowl from Jane and, still holding Mr.

Turvy with one hand, she undid the string with the other.

"H'm," said Mr. Turvy. "Royal Doulton. A bad crack. Looks as though somebody had thrown something at it."

Jane felt herself blushing as he said that.

"Still," he went on, "if it were any other day, I could mend it. But to-day——" he hesitated.

"Nonsense, it's quite simple. You've only to put a rivet here—and here—and here!"

Mary Poppins pointed to the crack and as she did so she dropped Mr. Turvy's hand.

Immediately he went spinning through the air, turning over and over like a Catherine wheel.

"Oh!" cried Mr. Turvy. "Why did you let go? Poor me, I'm off again!"

"Quick—shut the door!" cried Mary Poppins. And Jane and Michael rushed across the room and closed the door just before Mr. Turvy reached it. He banged against it and bounced away again, turning gracefully, with a very sad look on his face, through the air. Suddenly he stopped but in a very curious position. Instead of being right-side up he was upside down and standing on his head.

"Dear, dear!" said Mr. Turvy, giving a fierce kick with his feet, "Dear, dear!"



But his feet would not go down to the floor. They remained waving gently in the air.

"Well," Mr. Turvy remarked in his melancholy voice. "I suppose I should be glad it's no worse. This is certainly better—though not *much* better—than hanging outside in the rain with nothing to sit on and no overcoat. You see," he looked at Jane and Michael, "I want so much to be right-side up and so—just my

luck!—I'm upside down. Well, well, never mind. I ought to be used to it by now. I've had forty-five years of it. Give me the Bowl!"

Michael ran and took the Bowl from Mary Poppins and put it on the floor by Mr. Turvy's head. And as he did so he felt a curious thing happening to him. The floor seemed to be pushing his feet away from it and tilting them into the air.

"Oh!" he cried. "I feel so funny. Something most extraordinary is happening to me!"

For by now he, too, was turning Catherine wheels through the air, and flying up and down the room until he landed head-first on the floor beside Mr. Turvy.

"Strike me pink!" said Mr. Turvy in a surprised voice, looking at Michael out of the corner of his eye.

"I never knew it was catching. You, too? Well, of all the—Hi! Hi, I say! Steady there! You'll knock the goods off the shelves, if you're not careful, and I shall be charged for breakages. What *are* you doing?"

He was now addressing Jane whose feet had suddenly swept off the carpet and were turning above her head in the giddiest manner. Over and over she went—first her head and then her feet in the air—until at last she came down on the other side of Mr. Turvy and found herself standing on her head.

"You know," said Mr. Turvy staring at her solemnly. "This is all very odd. I never knew it to happen to any one else before. Upon my word, I never did. I do hope you don't mind."

Jane laughed, turning her head towards him and waving her legs in the air.

"Not a bit, thank you. I've always wanted to stand on my head and I've never been able to do it before. It's very comfortable."

"H'm," said Mr. Turvy dolefully. "I'm glad somebody likes it. I can't say *I* feel like that."

"I do," said Michael. "I wish I could stay like this all my life. Everything looks so nice and different."

And, indeed, everything *was* different. From their strange position on the floor Jane and Michael could see that the articles on the carpenter's bench were all upside down—china dogs, broken dolls, wooden stools—all standing on their heads.

"Look!" whispered Jane to Michael. He turned his head as much as he could. And there, creeping out of a hole in the wainscoting, came a small mouse. It skipped, head over heels, into the middle of the room and, turning upside down, balanced daintily on its nose in front of them.

They watched it for a moment, very surprised. Then Michael suddenly said,

"Jane, look out of the window!"

She turned her head carefully for it was rather difficult and saw to her astonishment that everything outside the room, as well as everything in it, was different. Out in the street the houses were standing on their heads, their chimneys on the pavement and their doorsteps in the air and out of the doorsteps came little curls of smoke. In the distance a church had turned turtle and was balancing rather top-heavy on the point of its steeple. And the rain, which had always seemed to them to come down from the sky, was pouring up from the earth in a steady soaking shower.

"Oh," said Jane. "How beautifully strange it all is! It's like being in another world. I'm so glad we came to-day."

"Well," said Mr. Turvy, mournfully, "you're very kind, I must say. You do know how to make allowances. Now, what about this Bowl?"

He stretched out his hand to take it but at that moment the Bowl gave a little skip and turned upside down. And it did it so quickly and so funnily that Jane and Michael could not help laughing.

"This," said Mr. Turvy miserably, "is no laughing matter for me, I assure you. I shall have to put the rivets in wrong way up—and if they show, they show. I can't help it."

And taking his tools out of his pocket he mended the Bowl, weeping quietly as he worked.

"Humph!" said Mary Poppins, stooping to pick it up. "Well, that's done. And now we'll be going."

At that Mr. Turvy began to sob pitifully.

"That's right, leave me!" he said bitterly. "Don't stay and help me keep my mind off my misery. Don't hold out a friendly hand. I'm not worth it. I'd hoped you might all favour me by accepting some refreshment. There's a plum cake in a tin up there on the top shelf. But, there—I'd no right to expect it. You've your own lives to live and I shouldn't ask you to stay and brighten mine. This isn't my lucky day——" He fumbled for his pocket-handkerchief.

"Well——" began Mary Poppins, pausing in the middle of buttoning her gloves.

"Oh, do stay, Mary Poppins, do!" cried Jane and Michael together, dancing eagerly on their heads.

"You could reach the cake if you stood on a chair!" said Jane, helpfully.

Mr. Turvy laughed for the first time. It was rather a melancholy sound, but still, it *was* a laugh.

"*She'll* need no chair!" he said, gloomily chuckling in his throat. "She'll get what she wants and in the way she wants it——*she* will."

And at that moment, before the children's astonished eyes, Mary Poppins did a curious thing. She

raised herself stiffly on her toes and balanced there for a moment. Then, very slowly, and in a most dignified manner she turned seven Catherine wheels through the air. Over and over, her skirts clinging neatly about her ankles, her hat set tidily on her head, she wheeled up to the top of the shelf, took the cake and wheeled down again, landing neatly on her head in front of Mr. Turvy and the children.

"Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!" shouted Michael delightedly. But from the floor Mary Poppins gave him such a look that he rather wished he had remained quiet and said nothing.

"Thank you, Mary," said Mr. Turvy sadly, not seeming at all surprised.

"There!" snapped Mary Poppins. "That's the last thing I shall do for you to-day."

She put the cake-tin down in front of Mr. Turvy. Immediately, with a little wobbly roll, it turned upside down. And each time Mr. Turvy turned it right-side up it turned over again.

"Ah," he said despairingly, "I might have known it! Nothing is right to-day—not even the cake-tin. We shall have to cut it open from the bottom. I'll just ask——"

And he stumbled on his head to the door and shouted through the crack between it and the floor.

"Miss Tartlet! Miss Tartlet! I'm so sorry to trouble

you, but could you—would you—do you mind bringing a tin-opener?"

Far away downstairs Miss Tartlet's voice could be heard grimly protesting.

"Tush!" said a loud croaky voice inside the room.

"Tush and nonsense! Don't bother the woman! Let Polly do it! Pretty Polly! Clever Polly!"

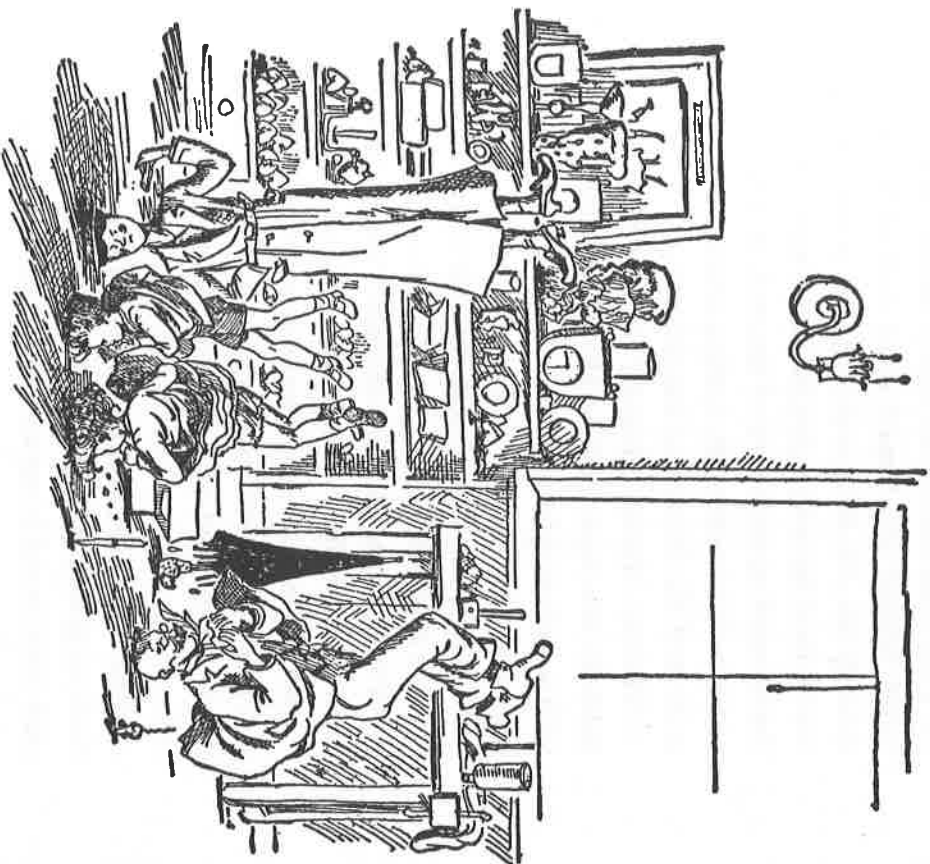
Turning their heads, Jane and Michael were surprised to see that the voice came from Mary Poppins' parrot-headed umbrella, which was at that moment Catherine-wheeling towards the cake. It landed head-downwards on the tin and in two seconds had cut a large hole in it with its beak.

"There!" squawked the parrot-head conceitedly, "Polly did it! Handsome Polly!" And a happy self-satisfied smile spread over its beak as it settled head-downwards on the floor beside Mary Poppins.

"Well, that's very kind, *very* kind," said Mr. Turvy in his gloomy voice, as the dark crust of the cake became visible.

He took a knife out of his pocket and cut a slice. He started violently, and peered at the cake more closely. Then he looked reproachfully at Mary Poppins.

"This is your doing, Mary! Don't deny it. That cake, when the tin was last open, was a plum cake and now——"



Mary Poppins landed neatly on her head
in front of Mr. Turvy and the children

"Sponge is much more digestible," said Mary Poppins, primly. "Eat slowly please. You're not starving savages!" she snapped, passing a small slice each to Jane and Michael.

"That's all very well," grumbled Mr. Turvy bitterly, eating his slice in two bites. "But I do like a plum or two, I must admit. Ah, well, this is not my lucky day!" He broke off as somebody rapped loudly on the door. "Come in!" called Mr. Turvy.

Miss Tartlet, looking, if anything, rounder than ever and panting from her climb up the stairs, burst into the room.

"The tin-opener, Mr. Turvy——" she began grimly. Then she paused and stared.

"My!" she said, opening her mouth very wide and letting the tin-opener slip from her hand. "Of all the sights I ever did see this is the one I wouldn't have expected!"

She took a step forward, gazing at the four pairs of waving feet with an expression of deep disgust.

"Upside down—the lot of you—like flies on a ceiling! And you supposed to be respectable human creatures. This is no place for a lady of *my* standing. I shall leave the house this instant, Mr. Turvy. Please note that!"

She flounced angrily towards the door.

But even as she went her great billowing skirts blew against her round legs and lifted her from the floor.

A look of agonised astonishment spread over her face. She flung out her hands wildly.

"Mr. Turvy! Mr. Turvy, Sir! Catch me! Hold me down! Help! Help!" cried Miss Tartlet as she, too, began a sweeping Catherine wheel.

"Oh, oh, the world's turning turtle! What shall I do? Help! Help!" she shrieked, as she went over again.

But as she turned a curious change came over her. Her round face lost its peevish expression and began to shine with smiles. And Jane and Michael, with a start of surprise, saw her straight hair crinkle into a mass of little curls and ringlets as she whirled and twirled through the room. When she spoke again her gruff voice was as sweet as honeysuckle.

"What can be happening to me?" cried Miss Tartlet's new voice. "I feel like a ball! A bouncing ball! Or perhaps a balloon! Or a cherry tart!" She broke into a peal of happy laughter.

"Dear me, how cheerful I am!" she trilled, turning and circling through the air. "I never enjoyed my life before but now I feel I shall never stop. It's the loveliest sensation. I shall write home to my sister about it, to my cousins and uncles and aunts. I shall tell them

that the only proper way to live is upside down, upside down, upside down——”

And, chanting happily, Miss Tartlet went whirling round and round. Jane and Michael watched her with delight and Mr. Turvy watched her with surprise, for he had never known Miss Tartlet to be anything but peevish and unfriendly.

“Very odd! Very odd!” said Mr. Turvy to himself, shaking his head as he stood on it.

Another knock sounded at the door.

“Anyone here name of Turvy?” enquired a voice, and the Post Man appeared in the doorway holding a letter. He stood staring at the sight that met his eyes.

“Holy smoke!” he remarked, pushing his cap to the back of his head. “I must-a come to the wrong place. I’m looking for a decent quiet gentleman called Turvy. I’ve got a letter for him. Besides, I promised my wife I’d be home early and I’ve broken my word and I thought——”

“Ha!” said Mr. Turvy from the floor. “A broken promise is one of the things I can’t mend. Not my line. Sorry!”

The Post Man stared down at him.

“Am I dreaming or am I not?” he muttered. “It seems to me I’ve got into a whirling, twirling, skirling company of lunatics!”

“Give me the letter, dear Post Man! Give the letter to Topsy Tartlet and turn upside down with me. Mr. Turvy, you see, is engaged!”

Miss Tartlet, wheeling towards the Post Man, took his hand in hers. And as she touched him his feet slithered off the floor into the air. Then away they went, the Post Man and Miss Tartlet, hand in hand and over and over, like a pair of bouncing footballs. “How lovely it is!” cried Miss Tartlet happily. “Oh, Post Man dear, we’re seeing life for the first time. And such a pleasant view of it! Over we go! Isn’t it wonderful?”

“Yes!” shouted Jane and Michael, as they joined the wheeling dance of the Post Man and Miss Tartlet. And presently Mr. Turvy, too, joined in, awkwardly turning and tossing through the air. Mary Poppins and her umbrella followed, going over and over evenly and neatly and with the utmost dignity. There they all were, spinning and wheeling, with the world going up and down outside and the happy cries of Miss Tartlet echoing through the room.

“The whole of the Town
Is Upside Down!”

she sang, bouncing and bounding.

And up on the shelves the cracked and broken hearts twirled and spun like tops, the shepherdess

and her lion waltzed gracefully together, the grey-flannel elephant stood on his trunk in the boat and kicked his feet in the air, and the toy sailor danced a hornpipe, not on his feet but his head, which bobbed about the willow-pattern plate very gracefully.

"How happy I am!" cried Jane as she careered across the room.

"How happy I am!" cried Michael, turning somersaults in the air.

Mr. Turvy mopped his eyes with his handkerchief as he bounced off the window-pane.

Mary Poppins and her umbrella said nothing but just sailed calmly round, head-downwards.

"How happy we *all* are!" cried Miss Tartlet. But the Post Man had now found his tongue and he did not agree with her.

"'Ere!" he shouted, turning again. "'Elp! 'Elp! Where am I? Who am I? What am I? I don't know at all. I'm lost! Oh, 'elp!"

But nobody helped him, and firmly held in Miss Tartlet's grasp he was whirled on.

"Always lived a quiet life—I have!" he moaned. "Behaved like a decent citizen, too. Oh, what'll my wife say! And 'ow shall I get 'ome? 'Elp! Fire! Thieves!"

And making a great effort, he wrenched his hand violently from Miss Tartlet's. He dropped the letter



into the cake-tin and went wheeling out of the door and down the stairs, head over heels, crying loudly—

"I'll have the law on them! I'll call the Police! I'll speak to the Post Master General!"

His voice died away as he went bounding further down the stairs.

"Ping, ping, ping, ping, ping, ping!"

The clock outside in the Square sounded six.

And at the same moment Jane's and Michael's

feet came down to the floor with a thud and they stood up feeling rather giddy.

Mary Poppins gracefully turned right-side up, looking as smart and tidy as a figure in a shop window.

The Umbrella wheeled over and stood on its point. Mr. Turvy, with a great tossing of legs, scrambled to his feet.

The hearts on the shelf stood still and steady and no movement came from the shepherdess or the lion, or the grey-flannel elephant or the toy sailor. To look at them you would never have guessed that a moment before they had all been dancing on their heads.

Only Miss Tartlet went whirling on, round and round the room, feet over head, laughing happily and singing her song.

"The whole of the Town

Is Upside down,

Upside down,

Upside down!"

she chanted joyfully.

"Miss Tartlet! Miss Tartlet!" cried Mr. Turvy, running towards her, a strange light in his eyes. He took her arm as she wheeled past and held it tightly until she stood up on her feet beside him.

"*What* did you say your name was?" said Mr. Turvy, panting with excitement.

Miss Tartlet actually blushed. She looked at him shyly.

"Why, Tartlet, sir. Topsy Tartlet!"

Mr. Turvy took her hand.

"Then will you marry me, Miss Tartlet, and be Topsy Turvy? It would make up to me for so much. And you seem to have become so happy that perhaps you will be kind enough to overlook my Second Mondays."

"Overlook them, Mr. Turvy? Why, they will be my Greatest Treats," said Miss Tartlet. "I have seen the world upside down to-day and I have got a New Point of View. I assure you I shall look forward to the Second Mondays all the month!"

She laughed shyly and gave Mr. Turvy her other hand. And Mr. Turvy, Jane and Michael were glad to see, laughed too.

"It's after six o'clock, so I suppose he can be himself again!" whispered Michael to Jane.

Jane did not answer. She was watching the Mouse. It was no longer standing on its nose but hurrying away to its hole with a large crumb of cake in its mouth.

Mary Poppins picked up the Royal Doulton Bowl and proceeded to wrap it up.

"Pick up your handkerchiefs, please—and straighten your hats," she snapped.

"And now——" she took her umbrella and tucked her new bag under her arm.

"Oh, we're not going yet, are we, Mary Poppins?" said Michael.

"If *you* are in the habit of staying out all night, I am not," she remarked, pushing him towards the door.

"Must you go, really?" said Mr. Turvy. But he seemed to be saying it out of mere politeness. He had eyes only for Miss Tartlet.

But Miss Tartlet herself came up to them, smiling radiantly and tossing her curls.

"Come again," she said, giving a hand to each of them. "Now, do. Mr. Turvy and I——" she looked down shyly and blushed—— "will be in to tea every Second Monday——won't we, Arthur?"

"Well," said Mr. Turvy, "we'll be in if we're not out——I'm sure of that!" And he laughed and Jane and Michael laughed.

And he and Miss Tartlet stood at the top of the stairs waving good-bye to Mary Poppins and the children, Miss Tartlet blushing happily and Mr. Turvy holding Miss Tartlet's hand and looking very proud and pompous. . . .

"I didn't know it was as easy as that," said Michael to Jane as they splashed through the rain, under Mary Poppins' umbrella.

"What was?" said Jane.

"Standing on my head. I shall practise it when I get home."

"I wish *we* could have Second Mondays," said Jane dreamily.

"Get in, please!" said Mary Poppins, shutting her umbrella and pushing the children up the winding stairs of the bus.

They sat together in the seat behind her, talking quietly about all that had happened that afternoon.

Mary Poppins turned and glared at them.

"It is rude to whisper," she said fiercely. "And sit up straight. You're not flour-bags!"

They were quiet for a few minutes. Mary Poppins, half-turning in her seat, watched them with angry eyes.

"What a funny family you've got," Michael remarked to her, trying to make conversation.

Her head went up with a jerk.

"Funny? What do you mean, pray——funny?"

"Well——odd. Mr. Turvy turning Catherine wheels and standing on his head——"

Mary Poppins stared at him as though she could not believe her ears.

"Did I understand you to say," she began, speaking her words as though she were biting them, "that my cousin turned a Catherine wheel? And stood on——"

"But he did," protested Michael nervously. "We saw him."

"On his head? A relation of mine on his head? And turning about like a firework display?" Mary Poppins seemed hardly able to repeat the dreadful statement. She glared at Michael.

"Now this——" she began, and he shrank back in terror from her wild darting eyes. "This is the Last Straw. First you are impudent to me and then you insult my relations. It would take very little more—— Very Little More—to make me give notice. So—I warn you!"

And with that she bounced round on her seat and sat with her back to them. And even from the back she looked angrier than they had ever seen her.

Michael leaned forward.

"I—I apologise," he said.

There was no answer from the seat in front.

"I'm sorry, Mary Poppins!"

"Humph!"

"*Very* sorry!"

"And well you might be!" she retorted, staring straight ahead of her.

Michael leant towards Jane.

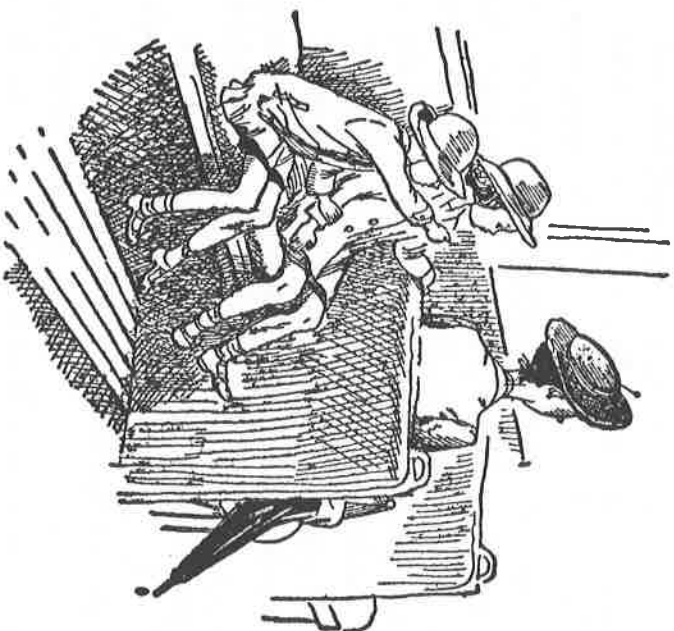
"But it was true—what I said. Wasn't it?" he whispered.

Jane shook her head and put her finger to her lip. She was staring at Mary Poppins' hat. And presently,

when she was sure that Mary Poppins was not looking, she pointed to the brim.

There, gleaming on the black shiny straw, was a scattering of crumbs, yellow crumbs from a sponge-cake, the kind of thing you would expect to find on the hat of a person who had stood on their head to have tea.

Michael gazed at the crumbs for a moment. Then he turned and nodded understandingly to Jane.



They sat there, jogging up and down as the bus rumbled homewards. Mary Poppins' back, erect and angry, was like a silent warning. They dared not speak to her. But every time the bus turned a corner they saw the crumbs turning Catherine wheels on the shining brim of her hat . . .

CHAPTER

5

THE NEW ONE

BUT *WHY* must we go for a walk with Ellen?" grumbled Michael, slamming the gate. "I don't like her. Her nose is too red."

"Sh!" said Jane. "She'll hear you."

Ellen, who was wheeling the perambulator, turned round.

"You're a cruel, unkind boy, Master Michael. I'm only doing my duty, I'm sure! It's no pleasure to me to be going for a walk in this heat—so there!"

She blew her red nose on a green handkerchief.

"Then why do you go?" Michael demanded.

"Because Mary Poppins is busy. So come along, there's a good boy, and I'll buy you a pennorth of peppermints."

"I don't want peppermints," muttered Michael. "I want Mary Poppins."

Plop-plop. Plop-plop. Ellen's feet marched slowly and heavily along the Lane.

"I can see a rainbow through every chink of my hat," said Jane.