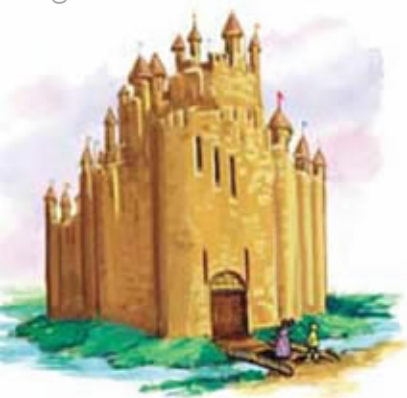


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Clara Barton



“Rock-a-bye,” sang a little girl, as she held a struggling kitten tightly against her and rocked it back and forth. The kitten mewed, but Clara only hugged it tighter and continued with her songs.


She had never had a doll. Her parents thought it very foolish for children to have

Words to Watch For

gratitude

enable


carriages



toys. She had, instead, many pets of all kinds—kittens, dogs, ducks, chickens, colts, and calves. She lived on a farm and could spend her playtime in loving them and playing with them. There was not a horse that she could not ride, even though she had taken many a tumble in learning to do so.

Clara had been born on Christmas day, and was the youngest of five children. She had two big brothers and two sisters. Three of them were teachers. They took great delight in teaching the baby of the family. Before she was three years old, she could read. Soon after this her big brother took her to school with him, carrying her most of the way on his shoulder. She learned very rapidly, not only reading, but also spelling, arithmetic, and geography.

When she was still a little girl, her father moved to a large farm. On this place were



three barns. What fun she had there! She soon learned to walk along the big beams that went from one side to the other above the hay. Often, halfway across a beam, she would pretend that she was a bird and go flying to the soft hay beneath.

Through the meadows ran a deep river. A short way up this river was a mill. Here she often played alone. Playing so much by herself made her very quiet when she was with others, but she grew strong and rosy.

One day when she was eleven years old, her brother fell from the top of a barn and was hurt. It was thought that he would not live. He wanted Clara to stay beside him, and she proved to be such a good nurse that the doctor would allow no one else to care for him. It was two years before he was well. Even though Clara missed school during this time, she was ahead of the other pupils of her own age when she went back.