

**MARM LISA**

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Marm Lisa by Kate Douglas Wiggin

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# MARM LISA

BY

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

The eternal-womanly  
Ever leadeth us on,  
*Goethe's Faust.*



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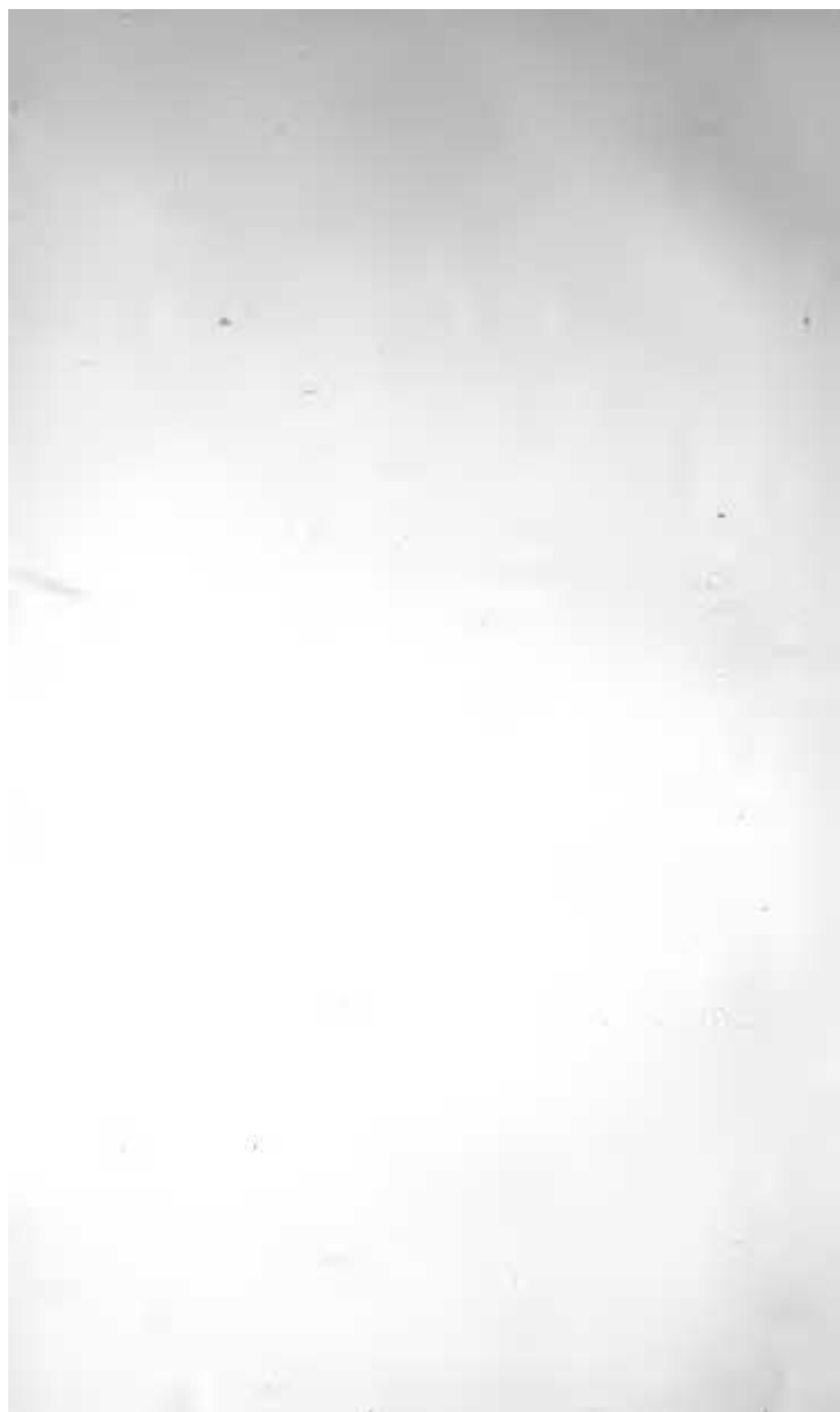
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## MARM LISA.

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### I.

#### EDEN PLACE.

EDEN PLACE was a short street running at right angles with Eden Square, a most unattractive and infertile triangle of ground in a most unattractive but respectable quarter of a large city. It was called a square not so much, probably, because it was triangular in shape as because it was hardly large enough to be designated as a park. As to its being called "Eden," the origin of that qualifying word is enveloped in mystery; but it is likely that the enthusiastic persons who projected it saw visions and dreamed dreams of green benches under umbrageous trees, of a green wire fence, ever green, and of plots of blossoming flowers filling the grateful air with unaccustomed fragrance.

As a matter of fact, the trees had always been stunted and stubby, the plants had

never been tended, and all the paint had been worn off the benches by successive groups of workmen out of work. As for the wire fence, it had been much used as a means of ingress and egress by the children of the neighborhood, who preferred it to any of the gateways, which they considered hopelessly unimaginative and commonplace, offering no resistance to the budding man of valor or woman of ambition.

Eden Place was frequented mostly by the children, who found it an admirable spot to squabble, to fight, and to dig up the hapless earth, and after them, by persons out of suits with fortune. These (generally men) adorned the shabby benches at all times, sleeping, smoking, reading newspapers, or tracing uncertain patterns in the gravel with a stick, — patterns as uncertain and aimless as themselves. There were fewer women, because the unemployed woman of this class has an old-fashioned habit, or instinct, of seeking work by direct assault; the method of the male being rather to sit on a bench and discuss the obstacles, the injustices, and the unendurable insults heaped by a plutocratic government in the path of the honest son of toil.

The corner house of Eden Place was a little larger than its neighbors in the same row. Its side was flanked by a sand-lot, and a bay window, with four central panes of blue glass, was the most conspicuous feature of its architecture. In the small front yard was a microscopic flower-bed; there were no flowers in it, but the stake that held up a stout plant in the middle was surmounted by a neat wooden sign bearing the inscription, "No Smoking on these Premises." The warning seemed superfluous, as no man standing in the garden could have put his pipe in his mouth without grazing either the fence or the house, but the owner of the "premises" possibly wished to warn the visitor at the very threshold.

All the occupied houses in Eden Place were cheerful and hospitable in their appearance, and were marked by an air of liveliness and good-fellowship. Bed linen hung freely from all the windows, for there was no hard-and-fast law about making up beds at any special hour, though a remnant of superstition still existed that it was a good thing to make up a bed before you slept in it. There were more women on their respective front steps, and fewer in