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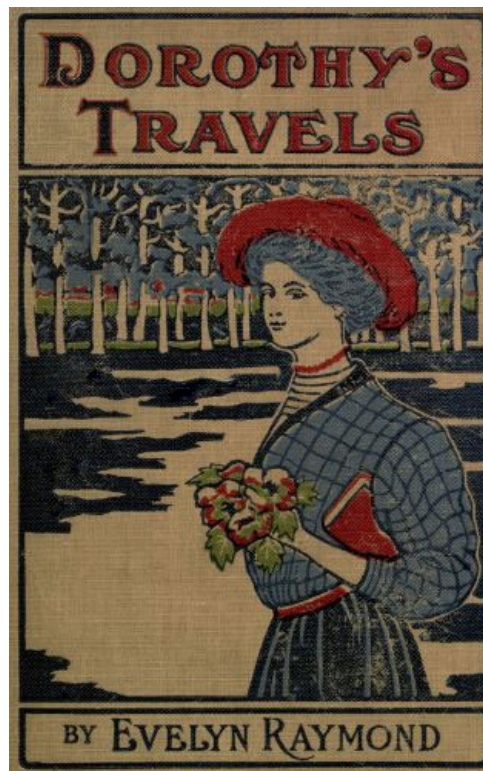
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DOROTHY'S TRAVELS ***



Dorothy's Travels

BY

EVELYN RAYMOND

Illustrations by S. Schneider



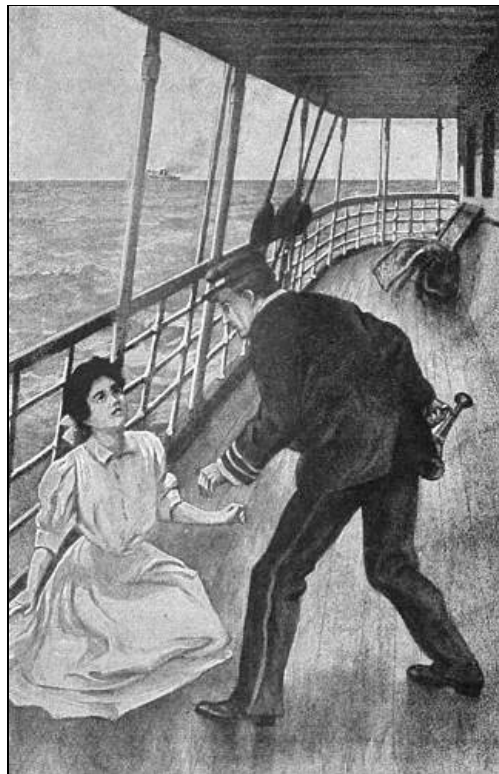
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**"ALLOW ME! AND HELPED
MOLLY UP."
*Dorothy's Travels.***

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. SAILING DOWN THE HUDSON

PAGE

[9](#)

II. A RACE AND ITS ENDING	24
III. ADRIFT IN THE GREAT CITY	40
IV. ON BOARD THE "PRINCE"	57
V. MOONLIGHT AND MIST ON THE SEA	73
VI. SAFE ON SHORE	89
VII. FINNAN HADDIE IN A GARDEN	106
VIII. DOROTHY AND THE BASHFUL BUGLER	124
IX. AN OX-OMOBILE AND A SAILBOAT	142
X. WHAT BEFELL A "DIGBY CHICKEN"	158
XI. IN EVANGELINE LAND	171
XII. SIGHT SEEING UNDER DIFFICULTIES	187
XIII. A MESSAGE FOR THE CAMP	202
XIV. HOW MOLLY CAME TO CAMP	217
XV. MRS. CALVERT PLANS AN INFAIR	234
XVI. WHEN JOURNEYS END IN WELCOME	249

DOROTHY'S TRAVELS

CHAPTER I

[Pg 9]

SAILING DOWN THE HUDSON

"All aboard—what's goin'! All ashore—what ain't!"

The stentorian shout of the colored steward, so close to Dorothy's ear, made her jump aside with a little scream. Then as she saw that the boat hands were about to draw the gang plank back to the steamer's deck, she gave another little cry and fairly pushed Alfaretta toward it.

"Never mind hugging me now, girlie, you must go or you'll be left!"

But the lassie from the mountain only smiled and answered:

"I don't mind if I am. Look a-here!" and with that she pulled a shabby purse from the front of her blouse and triumphantly displayed its contents.

"Oh! Alfy! How'll you ever get back?"

"Easy as preachin'. I—"

But Dorothy had no further time to waste in argument. Here were Jim Barlow and Monty Stark shaking either hand and bidding a hasty good-by, while Molly Breckenridge was fairly dancing up and down in her anxiety lest the lads should also be left on board, as Alfaretta was likely to be.

[Pg 10]

But they were not. Another second they had bounded down the stairs from the saloon to the lower deck, a workman had obligingly caught Monty by his coat collar and laughingly flung him over the plank to the dock beyond, while Jim's long legs strode after and made their last leap across a little chasm of water.

"Good-by, good-by, good-by!"

Handkerchiefs waved, kisses were tossed across the widening water, the bell rang, the whistle tooted, and Dorothy's travels had begun. Then as the group of schoolmates watching this departure from the shore grew more indistinct she turned upon her old mountain friend with the astonished question:

"But Alfaretta! Whatever made you do this? What will become of you, alone in that great city of New York?"

"I didn't say anything about Ne' York, did I? Should think you'd be glad to have me go along with you a little bit o' way. Course, I shall get off the boat

when it stops to Cornwall landing. And I thought—I thought—Seems if I *couldn't* have you go so far away, Dolly. It's terrible lonesome up-mounting now-a-days. And I—I don't see why some folks has everything and some hasn't nothin'!"

There was more grief than grammar in this speech and a few tears sprang to the girl's eyes. But Alfie boasted that she was not a "crier" and as she heard the stewardess announcing: "Tickets, ladies and gentlemen," she dashed the moisture away and stared at the woman.

[Pg 11]

After her usual custom, "Fanny" was collecting money from the various passengers and would obligingly procure their tickets for those not already provided. As she made her way through the throng, which on that summer morning crowded the upper deck of the pretty "Mary Powell," the three young friends watched her with surprised interest.

Apparently she took no note of the amount anybody gave her, carrying bills of all dimensions between her fingers and piles of specie on her broad palm.

"How can she tell how much she's taken from anybody? How can she give them their right change?" wondered Dorothy.

"I give it up! She must be a deal better at arithmetic than I am. I should make the mixedest mess of that business;" answered Molly, equally curious.

"Yet you will see that she makes no mistakes. I've been traveling up and down the river on this same boat for many years and I've given her all sorts of sums, at times, on purpose to try her. But her memory never fails," said Miss Greatorex who was in charge of the party. She sat quite calmly with the amount of three fares in her hand but with a most forbidding gaze at Alfaretta.

Who that young person was or why she had thrust herself into their company she did not understand. She had herself but known of this trip on the day before, when Miss Penelope Rhineland had been obliged to give it up, on account of the extreme illness of a near relative.

[Pg 12]

However, here she was with her two pupils, whom she taught at the Rhineland Academy, bound for a summer's outing in—to her and them—unknown lands. Also, as there may be some who have not hitherto followed the fortunes of Dorothy, it may be well to explain that she was a foundling, left upon the doorstep of a man and wife, in a quiet street in Baltimore. That he had lost his health and his position as a letter-carrier in that city and had removed to his wife's small farm in the Hudson Highlands. That among their friends there was somebody who had taken an interest in the orphan girl and had burdened himself—or herself—with the charge of her education. That she had passed the last school year at the Academy and had been in some most exciting episodes detailed in "Dorothy's Schooling;" and that now, at the beginning of the long vacation, she was traveling with her closest school friend and a teacher, whose life she had been the means of saving at the time of the Academy fire, toward New York; and from thence to Nova Scotia—there to grow strong for another year of study.

Alfaretta Babcock's home was near to her home upon the mountain; and though unlike, there was a sincere affection between this untaught country girl and the dainty Dorothy, and Alfie had begged a ride in a neighbor's wagon going to Newburgh, that she might bid her friend good by and watch her set sail on what seemed must be the most wonderful of journeys.

[Pg 13]

She was to have returned home as she had come; but when the steamer was on the point of leaving an impulse had seized her to travel thus herself, if only for the brief distance between this landing and the one nearer her own home. She had a few cents in her purse and hoped they would be enough to pay her fare; and now when they were already moving down the stream and her familiar mountain-top came into view, she made a wild dart toward the stewardess, shouting:

"Ma'am, please, ma'am, take mine! I've got to get off the next place and—"

and—I mustn't be left!"

Fanny picked up the camp-chair Alfie had stumbled over, remarked in a soothing voice, "Plenty of time, little gal, oceans of time, oceans of time," and glanced at the money so suddenly thrust into her already crowded palm.

"Four cents, little gal? Hardly enough. Fifteen is the regular fare. All you got, sissy? Look and see."

The tone was kind but the statement sounded like a knell in poor Alfaretta's ears. Thousands of times she had watched the many boats pass up and down the river, but only once had she been upon any and that was a row-boat. It had been the dream of her life to voyage, as she was doing now, far and away beyond those Highlands, that seemed to meet and clasp hands across the mighty stream, and see the wonderful world that lay beyond. For the boats always disappeared around that projecting point of rock and forest, and so she knew that the mountains did not meet but merely seemed so to do. Well, of course, she wasn't to find out about them to-day. She knew that quite well, because her own landing was on this side the "Point" and she could go no further. Indeed, could she now go even so far?

[Pg 14]

"Fifteen cents! My heart!—I—I—What can I do? Will the captain drop me—in the—river? Will—"

The stewardess was very busy. People were watching her a little anxiously because of her indifferent handling of her money and the tickets she had not hurried to bring; and the sudden terrified clutch at her skirts which Alfie gave set her tripping among the crowded chairs and made her answer, crossly:

"For goodness sake, girl, keep out from under foot! If you haven't the money go to your friends and get it!"

"Friends! I haven't got any!" cried Alfaretta, and flung her skirt over her face and herself down upon the nearest seat.

From their own place Molly and Dolly watched this little by-play for a moment, then darted forward themselves to see what was the matter.

[Pg 15]

"Why, Alfie dear, what's happened? Won't the woman get your ticket for you? Never mind. I'll ask her. Maybe she will for me."

"You needn't, Dolly girl! There ain't enough and I'm afraid they'll drop me off into the water! She—she—"

"Alfie! How silly! Nobody would do such a thing. It would be murder. But you shouldn't have come unless you had the money and I'll go ask Miss Greatorex for some. She has our purses in her satchel, taking care of them for us. Wait a minute. You stay with her, Molly, while I go get it. How much, Alfie?"

The girl began to count upon her fingers:

"Four—that's what I have and it was meant for candy for the children—five, six—How many more'n four does it take to make fifteen I wonder? I'm so scared I can't think. And I wish, I—wish—to—goodness—knows I'd ha' said good-by back there to the dock and not let myself get carried off down river to nobody knows where. If they dassent to drop me off the boat they might keep me here till I paid—"

"Alfaretta Babcock! I certainly am ashamed of you. That's a hard thing to say, just at parting, but it's the truth. The idea! First you fancy a decent human being will drown you because you haven't a little money, and then you can't reckon fifteen! What would dear Mr. Seth say, after teaching you so faithfully? Never mind. Don't act so foolish any more and I'll go get the money."

[Pg 16]

This was not so easy as she fancied. The boat was already nearing the next landing where Alfaretta must go ashore, or be carried on to a much greater

distance from her home, but it seemed difficult to make Miss Greatorex understand what was wanted and why. The poor lady's deafness had increased since her fright and exposure at the time of the fire and, now that she had been put into a position of greater trust than ever before, her sense of responsibility weighed heavily upon her. At parting, her principal, Miss Rhinelander, had enjoined:

"Take particular care of the girls' finances, Cousin Isobel. It is important that they should learn to be wise in their small expenditures so that they may be equally prudent when they come to have the handling of larger sums—if that should ever be. Make them give a strict account of everything and check any foolishness at the beginning."

The subordinate promised. She was a "poor relation" and knew that she was an unpopular teacher with many of the pupils of the fine school, though she had modified her sternness altogether in the case of Dorothy who had saved her from the fire. But the mandate of her superior was fresh in her mind. She had been touched by the rarely familiar "Cousin Isobel," and determined to do her duty to the utmost. Yet here was Dorothy already screaming into her deafest ear:

"My purse, please, Miss Greatorex! I want some money right away! Quick, quick, please, or it'll be too late!"

[Pg 17]

The girl's voice was so highly pitched that people around began to stare and some of them to smile. Like most afflicted persons the lady was sensitive to the observation of others and now held up her hand in protest against the attention they were attracting.

"Softly, Dorothy. Better write what you wish if you cannot speak more distinctly;" and a small pad with pencil was extended.

But Dorothy did not take them. The satchel upon Miss Greatorex's lap was open, her own and Molly's purses lay within. To snatch them both up and rush away was her impulsive act and to scamper back across the deck, wherever she could find a passage, took but a moment longer. But she was none too soon.

Down below the steward was again crying:

"All aboard what's goin'! All ashore what ain't! All who hasn't got deir tickets, please step right down to de Cap'n's office and settle."

While another loud voice ordered:

"Aft gangway for Cornwall! All ashore—all ashore! Aft gangway—all ashore!"

Some were hurrying down the stairs to that "aft gangway," others speeding up them in equal haste with that excitement which always marks the infrequent traveler, and poor Alfaretta caught the same fever of haste. Without a word of real farewell, now that she had come thus far at so much risk to speak it, she dashed ahead, slipped on the brass-tipped stair and plunged headlong into the space below.

[Pg 18]

For an instant there was silence even in that busy scene, people halting in their ascent and porters turning their skids aside with angry exclamations, lest the trunks they wheeled should fall upon her as she seemed bent to fall upon them.

Yet only one thought now possessed the terrified girl—escape! She had bumped her head till she was dizzy, but she mustn't stop for that. Yonder yawned that open space in the deck-rail which they called the "aft gangway" and toward that point she propelled herself regardless of all that impeded her way.

Down the plank, out upon the boards of the board dock, into the medley of stages and yelling drivers she hurried, very much as James Barlow and Montmorency Stark had done at that other, upper landing. But when she felt the solid quay beneath her feet she paused, clapped her hands to her

dizzy head and—felt herself grasped in a wild and fierce embrace.

Then both upon that dock and the deck of the outgoing steamer rang a shout of merriment, which made anger take the place of fear as she whirled about in the arms of whoever held her and shook her fist at the boat and its passengers.

“Well! That was a short trip but it was full of incident!” remarked one passenger, near to Molly and Dorothy. They had run to the rail to see what followed Alf’s disappearance, and if she were carried away injured. “I saw her come aboard and depart and she managed to get a deal of action into those few minutes. Friend of yours, young ladies?”

[Pg 19]

They faced about, wondering why this man should speak to them. He looked like a gentleman though a rather shabby one. Montmorency would have termed him “seedy.” His coat had seen better days and his hat, lying on the bench beside him, was worn and discolored, and his thin white hair told that he, also, was old. This made the girls regard him kindly, for both of them had a reverence for age.

More than that, a crutch rested against his knee and this made an instant appeal to Dorothy’s sympathy. She had seen nobody with a crutch since she had said farewell to Father John; and now in pity for this other cripple she lingered near answering his many questions most politely.

“Yes, she is a friend. She—I guess she ran away to sail a short distance with us. We shan’t see each other again this summer. She forgot her money. I mean she didn’t have any to forget; and—Sir? What did you ask me to find?”

“To buy a morning paper for me, my dear. You see, being lame—Did you ever know anybody who was lame?” asked the old man, with a smile.

“Ah! yes. The dearest man in all the world; my father.”

Thereupon Dorothy huddled down beside the stranger and gave a history of her father’s illness, his wonderful patience, and the last effort he was making to regain his health.

[Pg 20]

She did not know that it is often unsafe to talk with unknown people upon a journey; and in any case she would not have feared such a benignant old gentleman as this. She ended her talk with the inquiry:

“Where will I find the paper, Mr.—Mr.—I mean, sir?”

“Smith my name is. John Smith of Smithville. You’ll find all the papers and books at a news-stand on the lower deck. There’s a candy-stand there, too, such as will interest you two more than the papers, likely;” he answered with another smile.

They started down the stairs leading from the main saloon to the lower part of the boat, and not until they had reached the news-stand did either of them remember that she hadn’t brought her purse nor asked which paper their new acquaintance desired.

“Oh! dear! Wasn’t that silly of us! And we’re almost to West Point, where my cousin Tom’s a cadet! He promised to be on the lookout for us, if he could get leave to go to the steamboat landing. I wrote and told him about our trip and he answered right away. He’s Aunt Lucretia’s only child and she adores him. Hasn’t spoiled him though. Papa took care about that! If I go back after our pocket-books I may lose the chance to see him! So provoking! I wish now we hadn’t bothered ourselves about that old man. If he was able to come aboard the boat and go up those stairs to the deck he was able to buy his own old papers. So there!” cried Molly, stamping her little foot in her vexation.

[Pg 21]

West Point cadets are given few permissions to leave their Academy for social visits, so that Tom had never been to the Rhinelander school where rules were also so strict that Molly had been but once to see her cousin in his own quarters. Until he went to the Point and she to school in the hill-

city a few miles further up the river, they had lived together in her father's house and were like brother and sister. The disappointment now was great to the loving girl and Dorothy hastened to comfort, by saying:

"Never mind, Molly, you stay right here. See! they're fixing that gang-plank again, at this very part of the deck. You stand right outside, close against the rail but where you won't be in the men's way and, if he's there, you'll surely see him.

"I'll go back and get the purses. Where did you lay them?"

"Hum. I don't know. I can't exactly think. You handed me yours, I remember, when you stooped to pick up his crutch he'd knocked down. Ah! Now I know. My hands got so warm and your pocketbook was red and I thought it would stain my new gloves. So I just laid them down on the bench beside him. You'll find them right there beside him. You can ask him which paper, then, and I say, Dolly Doodles, what right had that hindering old thing to expect us—us—to buy his papers for him? Why didn't he give us the money, himself? Seems if we'd been sort of—sort of goosies, doesn't it?"

[Pg 22]

"Oh! Molly! That's not nice of you to think about that dear, lame old man! And why he didn't was, I suppose, because he didn't think. We don't always think ourselves, dearie. Never mind. I'll hurry and be right back."

"Yes, do—do hurry! I've said so much about you in my letters I'm just suffering to have you two meet. Just suffering! Hark! They're whistling and ringing the bell and we'll be there in a minute! Do, do hurry—for I believe I see him now—that tall one at the end of the wharf—Hurry—or, better still—Wait! Wait!"

But long before the excited Molly had finished speaking Dorothy had run up the stairs, along the long passage to the aft deck where she had left her lame acquaintance waiting for her to do his simple errand.

He was not in the spot where she had left him. He was not in the big saloon, or parlor. He was not upon the forward deck; not yet amid the crowd pressed to the deck's rail, to watch for whatever might be seen at this historic landing place. Flying to the rail she scanned the few departing passengers and he was not among them. She saw, but scarcely realized that she did, a group of three cadets who had come as near the steamer as the wharf permitted and were gaily chattering with her chum, during the short stop that was made.

[Pg 23]

"Could he have fallen overboard? And if he did why did he take our purses with him?" she wondered. Then reflected that it would be a difficult thing to explain this affair to Miss Greatorex; and also that the missing pocket-books contained a full month's "allowance" for both Molly and herself.

CHAPTER II

[Pg 24]

A RACE AND ITS ENDING

Dorothy's search for the missing old man and, to her, the more important missing purses brought her to the lower deck and Molly. The latter was still leaning upon the rail, gazing a little sadly into the water, for the brief glimpse she had had of her cousin Tom had recalled their happy days in their old southern home. There were even a few tears in her bright blue eyes as she raised them toward her friend; but she checked them at once, frightened by the expression of Dorothy's own.

"Why, honey, what's the matter?"

"Our pocket-books are lost!"

"Lost? Lost! They can't be. You mustn't say so. We can't, we daren't lose them. Weren't they on that bench beside the old man?" demanded Molly.

"No, they were not. They were not anywhere—any single where. He wasn't either."

"Pooh! He must be. He probably wanted to change his seat and was afraid to leave them lying on the bench, lest somebody might be tempted to pick them up. Somebody to whom they didn't belong, I mean."

"Molly, what shall we do? What will Miss Greatorex say?"

[Pg 25]

"Humph. She'll probably scream out her disgust as if we were deaf too like herself. That's the way she always does: when there's something to be said you don't want anybody else to hear she just talks her loudest; and when there's something you're longing to know she merely whispers. That's the way all deaf people do, Miss Penelope says. And—you're the one that lost them, so you'll be the one to tell her, Dorothy girl."

"Why, child, I don't see how I lost them any more than you did! I'm sorry as I can be. Sorrier about yours than mine even, though I'd planned so many nice things to do with the money. Five dollars! Think of it! I never before had five whole dollars at a time, never in my life!" said Dolly, mournfully.

"Well, what's the use staying down here and just worrying about the thing? Let's go and look again for the man. When we find the man we shall find the purses; but—whether he'll give them back to us is another matter."

"Molly, what a dreadful thing to say! As if you thought he—he stole them, a nice old gentleman like that!"

"Pooh! Once my Aunt Lucretia had her little handbag snatched out of her hand, right on Broadway street in New York city. She did so; and all she could remember about the snatcher was that he was a handsome young man with an eyeglass in one eye. A regular dandy he was, if the thief was the fellow who brushed against her so rudely. Anyhow, after he'd brushed, her bag was gone and all her shopping money in it. Papa told her it served her right. That to carry a purse, or a bag, that way was a temptation to any rogue who happened to pass by. He said the snatcher was smarter than Auntie and he hoped it would teach her a lesson. Aunt Lu thought Papa was almost as horrid as the thief; and what will either of them say to us for being so careless?"

[Pg 26]

"I suppose we'll have to tell them!" reflected Dorothy, in sad perplexity.

"Course we will. Aren't they both to meet us at the steamer? Aren't they going with us all the way to Halifax? Why, I should want to tell the very first thing. How else would I get any more money?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. Lucky you! As for me there's nobody to replace my five dollars, so far as I know."

"Oh! come on. Don't let's stand moping. I'll tell you. Let's begin right here at this spot. You go one side this lower place, all along that passage beside the engine-rooms and things and I'll go the other. Then if we don't see him anywhere here we'll meet at the foot of the stairs and search the upper floor just the same way. Out on both ends of the boat, poke into closets and barber-shop and captain's office—everywhere there is a chance a man, a passenger man, might be."

It seemed a fine scheme and they promptly separated to put it into execution. But when they met at the foot of the stairway, leading to the upper saloon, neither had any success to report. Nor did they meet with any better fortune when they had made a prolonged examination of the whole steamer, even climbing to the hurricane deck and questioning the officer upon the bridge.

[Pg 27]

As they slowly descended to the place where Miss Greatorex awaited them, alarmed by their absence and equally afraid to move from the spot lest somebody else should confiscate their three comfortable camp-chairs and, possibly, their hand luggage, Dorothy suggested:

"Let's write it. That'll save other people, strangers, from hearing. Miss G.

always carries a pad and pencil with her and I'll do it myself, since you think I'm most to blame. But I'm afraid even my writing won't stop her talking when she finds out! Oh! dear! I wish Alfie Babcock had never come on this boat! Then I shouldn't have gone to watch her and seen him."

"Huh! I don't think it's quite fair to blame poor Alfie for our own fault. We'd no business to be so careless, either one of us. I had a bright notion that maybe that stewardess or some official had picked up the pocket-books, so I asked every single one of them, big and little, black and white, and not a soul knew a thing about it. No, Dolly Doodles, the blame's our own and—the man's," said Molly, with conviction.

Miss Greatorex was vastly relieved to see her charges returning to her side. She had become anxious over their prolonged absence and in her nervousness had imagined all sorts of accidents which might have befallen them. Yet the same nervousness had prevented her questioning any employee of the steamer, who had come near, she shrinking from the observation this would attract to her deafness.

[Pg 28]

Therefore, it was with a much brighter smile than ordinary that she welcomed the truants, and was disappointed to have her greeting so dejectedly returned.

"I began to worry over you, my dears, I cannot call either of you really mischievous, yet I hope you won't leave me in suspense so long again. Anywhere, so that you are in my sight all of the time, you are free to move about. But—Why, my dears! What has happened to make you so sober?"

It certainly was vexing, when the lady was making such extra effort to be agreeable and to adapt herself to young people's ideas, to have these efforts so disregarded; and it was a strange thing that Dorothy should without permission take the notebook and pencil from her teacher's lap and begin to write.

Miss Isobel had set forth upon her travels with the firm intention of making notes about everything along the way and it disturbed her methodical soul to have anybody else "messing" with this neat little record. It was only a trifle better that the girl should have turned to the very back of the book and chosen a fly leaf there to scribble on. Scribbling it seemed, so rapidly was it done, and after a brief time the book was returned to its owner and she silently requested to examine what had been written in it. This is what she read:

[Pg 29]

"We've lost our pocket-books. Or, maybe, I lost them both. We've lost the man, too. He was a little, shiny old man, with a fringe of white hair around his head. When he put his hat on he had two foreheads under its rim, one before and one behind. His coat was shiny. His hat was shiny and had a hole in it. He—he seemed to shine all over, especially in his smile. That was perfectly lovely. Have you seen him? Because if you know where he is I'd like to ask him for our purses. That is if he has them as Molly and, maybe, I think. Else how could we buy his paper for him without any money and how can we give him the paper if he—*isn't*?"

Poor Dorothy fancied that she had made everything most explicit yet, at the same time, very gently broken the news of the lost purses. She was unprepared for the expression of confusion that settled upon Miss Greatorex's austere features as she read this communication once, then more carefully a second time.

Leaning forward, eagerly observant of "how she'll take it" Molly perceived that Dorothy's explanation hadn't been sufficient; or else that it had not dawned upon Miss Isobel's comprehension that her girls had really been so careless, that the loss was genuine. As the lady looked up, after this second reading, with a question but no anger in her expression, the observer exclaimed:

[Pg 30]

"Dolly, I don't believe you've told her all. Give me the book, please, Miss G. and I'll see what it says."

Then after a rapid perusal of the message Molly turned upon her chum with an amused indignation:

"You've said more about your 'shiny old man' with his adorable smile than our own trouble. Here, I'll write and I guess there won't be any mistake this time."

So she also possessed herself of the cherished notebook and made her own brief entry:—

"We laid our purses down on a bench and a man stole them. The same man D. described. Now somebody must have stolen *him* 'cause he isn't on the boat."

"Laid your purses down on a bench and left them there?" demanded Miss Greatorax in her most excited tones. Tones so loud that all the passengers sitting near turned their heads to look and listen; thereby calling attention to the two blushing girls, in a manner most unpleasant.

All they could do to avert this audible upbraiding was to point to the notebook and mutely beg that she would do her scolding by that silent channel. Not she, however. Never in all the years of her drudgery of teaching had she felt her responsibility so great as now. To be entrusted with the charge of Miss Rhineland's most indulged pupils—all the school knew that—had, at first seemed a burden, and next a most delightful honor. But, after all, they were just like other girls. Just as careless, just as disrespectful and annoying; for the sensitive old gentlewoman had considered the use of her notebook a presumption and their long absence from her side a proof that they were inconsiderate. However, these were mere matters of sentiment, but the loss of ten good dollars was a calamity.

[Pg 31]

"Well, young ladies, all I have to say, and you may note that it is my final word, is: *Those pocket-books must be found*. You cannot leave this steamer until they are. I have promised especial care over your expenditures and I shall do my duty. I am now going to read my history of Hendrik Hudson. While I am reading you can seek your purses. We have still a long time before reaching New York and the better you employ it the better for—all of us."

Every syllable was as distinctly uttered as if she were dictating to a secretary, but she ignored all the curious glances turned her way and resumed her reading with an air of great dignity.

Molly and Dolly exchanged dismayed glances; then giggled, perceiving amused expressions upon the faces of many travelers near them. The whole affair began to seem more absurd than serious, and, finally, unable to longer restrain their rather hysterical mirth, they rose and walked away arm in arm.

[Pg 32]

But they did no more searching. Had they not already looked everywhere? Besides, as Molly declared:

"We're more apt to see that man somewhere if we sit right still in one place. Papa told me that was the way to do, if I were ever lost anywhere. I was once, in a big store in New York, but I remembered, I sat right down by the door and just waited and prayed all the time that Auntie Lu would come and find me there. I was a little tacker then, not bigger'n anything. And she came. I don't know how much the praying did 'cause all I knew then was 'Now I lay me;' or how much the waiting. Anyhow she found me. So, maybe, if we keep still as still, the 'shiny man' will get around past us sometime. *He's* the lost one in the case, isn't he? And did you ever see how restless the people all do seem? I guess they're tired of the long sail and anxious to be off the boat."

"I guess so, too. Let's do something to pass the time. Count how many girls and women we can see in white shirt-waists—seems if it had rained them, seems if! Or how many people go trapesing up and down the deck. Make up stories about them, too, if you like, and fit names to them. I always do give a name to anybody I see and don't know. Let's call that nice looking man

yonder 'Graysie.' He's all in gray clothes, hat, gloves, tie, and everything. There's another might be what Monty'd say was a 'hayseed.' I think that's not a nice name, though, but just call him 'Green Fields.' He's surely come from some farm up the river and looks as if he were enjoying every minute of this sail. I'm beginning to enjoy it too, now; only I'm getting dreadfully hungry. If I had my purse I think I'd go down to that stand in the corner and buy us some sandwiches;" said Dorothy, in response.

[Pg 33]

Cried Molly, indignantly:

"Don't talk about sandwiches to a poor, starving girl! Sailing does make a body ravenous, just ravenous, even though we did have a 'vacation-breakfast' with something besides cereals and milk. When Miss Rhinelander does 'treat' us she does it thoroughly. But, what shall you order when we get to New York and meet Papa and Auntie Lu? You know we're all to dine at a big hotel, for the Nova Scotia boat doesn't sail till two o'clock. Two o'clock sharp! Not a minute before nor a minute after, Papa says; and he goes out to that country every year. Sometimes in the hunting season and now just to camp out and fish and get—get fat, I tell him. It's dreadful wearing to be a Judge. Judge of the Supreme Court. That's what my father is. He's a bank president, too, and has lots to do with other people's money. But he's something to do with a railway besides, and all these things and his taking care of Aunt Lucretia's 'property' wears him out. She hasn't any property, really, except the little tumble-down house where she and Papa were born. Papa says it isn't worth the cost of powder to blow it up; but Auntie loves it and makes more fuss over it than Papa does over all his own things."

[Pg 34]

"A Judge is a man that can send a person to jail or not, isn't he?"

"Worse than that! He can send one to the gallows or the electric chair—if he has to. That's the wearing part; having to be 'just' when he just longs to be 'generous.' If it wasn't that he has the same power to set a person free, too, I guess he'd give up Judging. If he could. I don't know about such things. What I do know is that he and some other Judges and some more bankers and such men have the greatest fun ever, summer times. They hunt up old clothes and wear them right in the woods. Auntie says she doesn't know where they find such duds 'cause they certainly never owned them at any other time. Then they sleep on the ground, and cook over a fire they make themselves, and fish and tell stories. 'Just loaf' Papa says, and to hear him tell makes me sorrier than ever I'm not a boy. If I were I could go too. But a girl—Pshaw! Girls can't do a single thing that's worth while, seems to me!"

"I'm afraid I shall be afraid of a real Judge, Molly. I'm afraid I—"

"The idea! You'll forget all those 'afraids' the minute you see my darling father! But you didn't say what you'd order for your dinner."

"How can I order anything if I haven't the money to pay for it? Or does that all go in with the expenses of the whole trip, that Miss Greatorex has to take care of?" asked Dorothy, who was in real ignorance of some most practical matters, having merely been told that she was to take this journey under Miss Greatorex's charge.

[Pg 35]

"I don't know what goes in or out; but I do know that my father wouldn't let ladies pay for their dinners when he was along. A pretty kind of a gentleman that would be! And Judge Schuyler Breckenridge is a Perfect Gentleman, I want you to understand," answered Molly, proudly.

"So is my Father John," said Dorothy with equal decision; and for a few minutes there was silence while each loyal daughter reflected upon the astonishing merits of their respective fathers.

Afterward they interested themselves in watching the people near them; so that it was with some surprise they heard "Diamond," the steward, announcing:

"New Yawk! Twenty-third street landin'! Fo'wa'd gangway fo' Twen-ty—"

thir-d-st-r-e-et!!”

Then followed a little scurry as they sought Miss Greatorex to inquire if this were where they would leave the boat. However she said not; that they were to remain on board until the steamer landed at Desbrosses street, lower down the city. There she had been informed that Judge Breckenridge and Mrs. Hungerford would meet them. After dining together they would cross the city to the other East River and take the steamer for Yarmouth. It was all very simple and yet very exciting.

Both Miss Isobel and her pupils had “read up” on Nova Scotia and felt as if the short ocean trip would land them in a foreign country. Whether the entire vacation should be passed in that Province or they to travel further afield had not yet been decided.

[Pg 36]

However, New York was sufficiently exciting, even to Molly who had been there many times, and far more so to Dorothy, who had passed through it but once. They could scarcely keep their feet from dancing as they gathered with the rest of the downtown passengers to await the landing of the “Powell” and their going ashore.

“See! See! Papa! Darling Auntie Lu! There they are, there they are!” almost shrieked Molly, frantically waving her handkerchief to somebody on the wharf.

There were many answering wavings of handkerchiefs from expectant friends to those still on board, and Dorothy peered eagerly among them trying to decide which was the pair to whom her chum belonged. Turning her head to beg information on this point she suddenly perceived her “shiny old man.” He was on the edge of the crowding passengers, holding back and yet apparently in haste to get forward, by watching for little breaks in the ranks and dodging swiftly through them. His crutch was under his arm, he was not using it. His hat-brim had been lowered over his face, his coat collar pulled high about his ears and securely buttoned. There was none of that benign appearance about him now which had so won Dorothy’s sympathetic heart and if he were lame he admirably disguised the fact.

[Pg 37]

It was her chance! In another moment he would have left the boat and she would miss him. She would run up to him and ask him if he remembered about the purses—Quick, quick! He must have forgotten—

He was going. Everybody was going. She kept her eyes fixed upon him, unmindful of the fact that somebody else was crowding her apart from Molly and Miss Greatorex, or that, as the throng pressed outward, they were getting further and further away.

The “shiny man” wasn’t three feet ahead of her when they at last gained the gang-plank and surged forward to the wharf. She could almost touch his shoulder—she would in a minute—she was gaining—

No she wasn’t! He had slipped aside and was hurrying away with the agility of youth! It couldn’t be the cripple and yet—there was the point of his crutch sticking out behind! Well, she reckoned she could run as fast as he did and she promptly set out to try!

It was a strange race in a strange place. West street in New York is a very crowded, dirty thoroughfare. An endless, unbroken line of drays, beer-wagons, vehicles of every sort, moves up one side and down the other of the hurrying street cars which claim the centre roadway. The pavement is always slippery with slime, the air always full of hoarse shouts, cries and distracting whistles. Car bells jangle, policemen yell their warnings to unwary foot passengers, hackmen screech their demands for patronage, and hurrying crowds move to and fro between the ferries and the city. A place that speedily set Dorothy’s nerves a-tingle with fear, yet never once diverted her from her purpose.

[Pg 38]

As she had once followed poor Peter Piper in a mad race over the fields, “just for fun,” so now she followed her “shiny man,” to regain her lost property. She had become convinced that he had it. He looked, at last,

exactly like a person who would rob little girls of their last five dollars! Their own whole monthly allowance and a most liberal one.

"But he shall not keep it! He—shall—not!" cried Dorothy aloud, and redoubling her speed, if that were possible.

He darted between wagons where the horses' noses of the hinder one touched the tail-boards of the forward; so did she. He bobbed under drays; so did she. He seemed bent upon nothing but escape; she upon nothing but pursuit and capture. She believed that he must have seen her though she had not caught him turning once around to look her way.

They had cleared the street; they were upon the further sidewalk; a policeman was screaming a "halt" to her but she paid no attention. In that medley of sounds one harsh cry more or less was of small account. What was of account, the only thing that now remained clear in her eager brain was the fact that the fugitive had—turned a corner! A corner leading into a street at right angles with this broad one, a street somewhat narrower, a fraction quieter, and even dirtier. She followed; she also flashed around that dingy, saloon-infested corner, bounded forward, breathless and exultant, because surely she could come up to him here. Then she paused for just one breath, dashed her hand across her straining eyes, and peered ahead.

[Pg 39]

The "shiny man" had disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up; and there Dorothy stood alone in the most unsavory of alleys, with a sudden, dreadful realization of the fact that—she was lost.

CHAPTER III

[Pg 40]

ADRIFT IN THE GREAT CITY

"My darling! My darling!" cried Judge Breckenridge, clasping his daughter close to his breast, then holding her off at arm's length, the better to scan her beloved face and to observe the changes a few months of absence had wrought. "My darling Molly! More like the other Molly than ever! Now my vacation has indeed begun!"

"Papa, Papa! You sweetest, dearest, beautifullest Papa ever lived! How good it is to see you! And, yes Auntie Lu, you're dear too; but a body's father—Why, he's her father and nobody like him, nobody!"

In her enthusiastic greeting of and by her relatives Molly forgot everything and everybody else. She had crossed the gang-plank as swiftly as the people crowding behind and before her would permit, her feet restlessly dancing up and down in the limited space; and now that she was upon the solid wharf to which the steamer was moored she bore them along with her by an arm linked to each, eager to be free of that throng and in some quiet spot where she could perch upon her father's knee and talk, talk, talk!

[Pg 41]

Had any of the trio thought about it for a moment they would have observed Miss Greatorex lingering close to the plank and staring at everyone who crossed it, searching for Dorothy.

"Strange! She certainly was right here a minute ago! I thought she had gone off the boat ahead of me, but she couldn't have done so, for she's nowhere in sight;" she murmured to herself.

When all had crossed and still Dorothy did not appear, the anxious teacher returned to the boat and renewed her search there: asking of all the employees she met if they had seen her missing charge. But one of them had noticed the girl at all; that was a workman who had helped to drag the gang-plank into place upon the wharf and against whom Dorothy had rudely dashed in her pursuit of the "shiny man."

He remembered her excited manner, her swift apology to himself for the

accident, and her frantic rush across the wharf. He had looked after her with curiosity and had remarked to a bystander:

“That little passenger is afraid she’ll get left! Maybe she doesn’t know we lie alongside this dock till mid-afternoon.”

Then he had gone about his own affairs and dismissed her from his mind till, thus recalled by Miss Greatorex’s question, he wished he had watched her more closely. He was afraid she might have been hurt among the heavy wagons moving about, and that was the poor comfort which he expressed to the now thoroughly frightened lady.

[Pg 42]

Meanwhile the Breckenridge party had crossed the street, under conveyance of a waiting policeman, and had paused upon the further curb while Molly explained:

“Miss Greatorex is dreadful slow, Papa dear. But she’ll be here in a minute. She’s sure to be and Dolly with her. Oh! she is the very sweetest, dearest, bravest girl I ever knew! If I had a sister I should want her to be exactly like Dorothy. I wonder what does keep them! And I’m so hungry, so terribly hungry and we lost our purses—couldn’t be she’d linger to search for them again when we’ve already ransacked the whole boat! Why, Papa, look! Miss Greatorex is on the boat again, herself. Running, fairly running around the deck and acting as if she, too, had lost something. How queer that is!”

Both the gentleman and lady now fixed their attention upon the teacher, until that moment unknown to them. She certainly was conducting herself in a strange, half-bewildered manner and the Judge realized that there was something wrong. Bidding his sister and child:

“Stay right here on this corner. Don’t leave it. I’ll step back to the steamer and see what’s amiss;” and to the hackman he had summoned, he added: “Keep your rig right on the spot and an eye upon these fares! I’ll be back in a minute.”



“ARE YOU A POLICEMAN?”
Dorothy’s Travels.

But he wasn’t. When he did come, after Mrs. Hungerford and Molly had had ample time to grow anxious themselves, it was with a woe-begone Miss Greatorex upon his arm and a very disturbed expression on his own face.

[Pg 43]

“Why, Papa, where’s Dolly? Why didn’t she come, too?” cried Molly, darting to meet him.

"That, my dear, is exactly what this lady and I would like to know. I was in hopes she might have seen you standing here and crossed to join you. Well, she's been in too great haste, likely, and started by herself to go—I wonder where! Anyway, the best thing to be done is for you three to get into this carriage and drive to the Astor House and order dinner for all of us. It's an old-time hotel where my father and I used to go when I was a boy myself, and I patronized it for old association's sake. You, small daughter, had fixed your mind on nothing less than the Waldorf-Astoria, I expect! Never mind; you'll get as good food in one place as the other."

"But, Papa, aren't you coming with us?"

"Not just yet. I'll stop behind a bit and set a few policemen or small boys in search for Miss Dorothy. Tell me something by which we can recognize her when found. New York is pretty full of little girls, you know, and I might miss her among so many."

The Judge tried to make his tone a careless one but there was real anxiety in it as his sister promptly understood; but she also felt it best to treat the matter lightly, for already poor Miss Isobel was on the point of collapse. So she answered readily enough:

"Very well, brother, so we'll do. I reckon I know your tastes so that I can cater for you and—is there any limit to what we may order? I'm a bit hungry myself and always do crave the most expensive dishes on the menu. Good-by, for a little while."

The Judge bade the driver: "To the Astor House;" lifted his hat to those within the carriage, and it moved away.

Then he summoned a policeman and asked that scouts be sent out all through that neighborhood, to search for a "thirteen-year-old girl, in a brown linen dress, dark curly hair, brown eyes, and—'Oh! just too stylish for words!'" which was the description his daughter had given him. Indeed, he felt that this very "stylishness" might be a clue to the right person; since denizens of that locality, girls or women, are not apt to have that characteristic about them.

He was a weary man. He had been up late the night before, and previous to his journey hither had been extremely busy leaving matters right in his southern home for a prolonged absence. He had counted upon the hour or two before sailing in which to procure some additions to his sportsman's outfit, and sorely begrudged this unexpected demand upon his time. Yet he could do no less than try to find the runaway, and to make the search as thorough as if it had been his own child's case.

It was more than an hour later that he appeared in the dining-room of the hotel where his family awaited him. They had still delayed their own dinner, though Molly's hunger had almost compelled her to enjoy hers. Only the thought of "eating with Papa," had restrained her, because she had little fear that Dorothy would not be promptly found, or that she had done more than go a few blocks out of the way. She had often been in that city before, though only in its better parts, and it all seemed simple enough to her. It had been explained that the upper part was laid out in squares, with the avenues running north and south, the cross-streets easily told by their numbers. How then could anybody who could count be lost?

"No news, Schuyler?" asked Aunt Lucretia.

"Not yet. Not quite yet. But there will be, of course there will be. I've set a lot of people hunting that extremely 'stylish' young maiden, so I thought I'd best come down and get my dinner and let you know that all's being done that can be. Don't worry, Miss Greatorex. A capable girl like Dorothy isn't easy to lose in a city full of policemen, if she'll only use her tongue and ask for guidance. Probably she has gone back to the 'Powell' already, hoping to find us all there. Before I eat I'll telephone again and inquire, although I did so just a little while ago, as I came in."

The more he talked the less he convinced his listeners that it would be that

"all right" he had so valiantly asserted. Even Molly's hunger suddenly deserted her and she pushed away a plate of especially enticing dessert with a shake of her head and an exclamation:

[Pg 46]

"Papa's talking—just talking! Like he always does when he takes me to the dentist's! His voice doesn't ring true, Auntie Lu, and you know it. You needn't smile and try to look happy, for you can't. Dorothy is lost! My precious Dolly Doodles is lost—is LOST!"

For a moment nobody answered. Miss Greatorex echoed the exclamation in her own sinking heart, realizing at last how fully she had depended upon the Judge's ability to find the girl, until he had once more appeared without her. He had promptly sent a messenger to telephone again and awaiting the reply made a feint of taking his soup. Mrs. Hungerford kept her eyes fixed upon her plate, not daring just then to lift them to Miss Greatorex's white face; and altogether it was a very anxious party which sat at table then instead of the merry one which all had anticipated.

When their pretence of a meal was over and they rose, the Judge looked at his watch. Then he said:

"We have only time left to reach the 'Prince' in comfort. It is a long way up and across town to the dock on East river. You three must start for it at once. I'll step into a store near by for a few things I need and follow you. Of course, Dorothy knew all about her trip, the steamer she would sail by, and its landing place. Even if she didn't know that most of the officers would know and direct her.

"I now think that having missed us at the 'Powell' she has gone straight to the other boat and you will find her there. I'll follow you in time for sailing and till then, good-by. A hack is ready for you at the door."

[Pg 47]

Then he went hastily out, and Mrs. Hungerford said:

"Brother is wise. We certainly shan't find Dolly here, and we may at the 'Prince.' Have you all your parcels, both of you? Then come."

They followed her meekly enough but at the street entrance Miss Greatorex rebelled. Her anxiety gave a more than ordinary irritation to her temper and harshness to her voice, and her habitually ungracious manner became more repellent than ever as she announced:

"That's all very well, Mrs. Hungerford, and Molly. But I shan't go one step toward Nova Scotia till I've found my little girl. You three are all right, *you've got yourselves* and of course other people don't matter. But Dorothy saved my life and I'll not desert her to nobody knows what dreadful fate! No, I will not, and you needn't say another single word!"

As nobody had interrupted her excited speech this last admonition seemed rather uncalled for, but Molly waxed indignant thereat, though her Aunt Lucretia merely smiled compassionately. Then as they still stood upon the sidewalk, hesitating to enter their carriage, Miss Isobel waved her umbrella wildly toward another hack, and when it had obeyed her summons sprang into it and was whirled away.

[Pg 48]

Where was Dorothy all this time? Little she knew of the commotion she had caused. Indeed, for a long time, her only thought was for herself and her unfortunate predicament. She had never been so frightened in her life. Nothing had ever looked so big, so dismal, and so altogether hopeless as this wretched side street where her fugitive had disappeared. There was not a policeman in sight. She didn't know which way to go, but promptly realized that she should not stay just there in that degraded neighborhood. Even the wider street from which she had diverged, with its endless lines of wagons and people, was better. But—she must go somewhere!

She set out forward, resolutely, and as it proved eastward toward that famous Broadway which threads the city from its north to south, but that was yet many blocks removed. Indeed, it seemed an endless way that stretched beyond her; and it was not until she had run for some distance

that her common sense awoke with the thought:

"Why, how silly I am! I must go back to the boat. That's where I'll be missed and looked for. Of course, Miss Greatorex wouldn't go on and leave me, and oh! dear! I reckon I've made her wait till she'll be angry. I'll ask the first nice looking gentleman I see, if no policeman comes, the way to the 'Mary Powell.' Here comes one now—"

A busy man came speeding toward her, whose coat skirt she tried to clutch; but he didn't even hear the question she put. He merely waved her aside, as he would any other street beggar with the passing remark: "Nothing. Get away!"

[Pg 49]

The second person to whom she applied was German and shook his head with a forcible negative. So he, too, moved on and she stopped to think and recover some portion of that courage which had almost deserted her.

"Of course. I couldn't be really lost, not really truly so, right in the broad daylight and a city full of people. But I am ashamed to have stayed so long. Oh! good! There comes a man in uniform—a policeman, a policeman!"

Quite at rest now she darted forward and caught at the hand of the uniformed person who stared at her in surprise but not unkindly.

"Well, little maid, what's wanted?"

"O, sir! Are you a policeman? Will you take me to where I belong?"

"Sorry to say 'no' to both your questions, but I'm only a railway conductor, in a hurry to catch my outgoing train. Wait a minute, child, and a real police officer will come and will look out for you."

The blue-coated, much brass-buttoned man snatched his hand from her clinging grasp and strode westward in desperate haste. He had calculated his time to the last second and even this trifling delay annoyed him.

But he had prophesied aright. A policeman was coming into view, leisurely sauntering over his beat, and on the lookout for anything amiss. Dorothy hurried forward, planted herself firmly in this man's path and demanded again:

[Pg 50]

"Are you a policeman?"

"Sure an' 'tis that same that I be! Thanks for all mercies! Me first day alone at the job, an' what can I do for ye, me pretty colleen?"

"Tell me, or take me, back to the 'Mary Powell,' please. I—I've lost my way."

"Arrah musha! An' if I was after doin' that same I'd be losin' mine! The 'Mary Powell' is it? Tell me where does she be livin' at. I'm not long in this counthry and but new app'inted to the foruss. Faith it's a biggish sort of town to be huntin' one lone woman in."

To anybody older or wiser than Dorothy Chester the very fact of his loquacity would have betrayed his newness to the "foruss." There wasn't a prouder nor happier man in the whole great city, that day, than Larry McCarthy, as he proceeded to explain:

"First cousin on me mother's side to Alderman Bryan McCarthy, as has helped me over from Connemara, this late whiles, and has made me a free-born Amerikin citizen, glory be."

"That must be very nice. I suppose an alderman is some sort of a very high-up man, isn't he? But—"

"High is it, says she. Higher 'an I was when I was carryin' me hod up wan thim 'sky-scrapers' they do build in this forsaken—I mane blessed—counthry, says he. Sure it's a higher-up Bryan is, the foine lad."

[Pg 51]

"Please, please, will you take me to the 'Mary Powell'?"

"How can I since ye've not told me yet wherever she lives?"

"Why she isn't a—she! She's a boat!"

"Hear til the lass! She isn't a she isn't she? Then she must be a he, and that'd beat a priest to explain;" and at his own joke the newly-fledged officer indulged in a most unofficial burst of laughter. So long and so loud was this that Dorothy stamped her foot impatiently and another uniformed member of "the force," passing by on the other side of the street, crossed over to investigate.

At whose arrival officer Larry straightened himself like a ramrod, squared his shoulders, and affected to be intensely angry with the small person who had delayed him upon his beat. But he could not deceive the keen eyes of the more experienced policeman and his superior in rank.

With a swift recognition of the newcomer's greater intelligence, Dorothy put her inquiry to him, breathlessly stating her whole case, including the loss of her purse and her regret over it.

"'Cause now, you see, sir, I haven't any money to pay for being taken back. Else I would have called a carriage, like people do sometimes, and got the carriage man to take me. That is, *if* there was any carriage, and any man, and I—I had any money. Oh! dear! That isn't what I wanted to say, but I'm so tired running and—and—it's dreadful to be lost in a New York city!"

[Pg 52]

Her explanation ended in a miserable breakdown of sobs and tears. Now that help had come—she was sure of it after one glance into this second officer's honest face—her courage collapsed entirely. The sergeant allowed her a moment to compose herself and then said, as he took out a notebook and prepared to write in it:

"Now, once more. Tell me exactly, or listen if I have the facts right. You are a pupil at the Rhinelander Academy in Newburgh. You are starting upon a trip for your summer vacation. You are under the care of Miss Greatorex, a teacher. You ran away from the steamer 'Mary Powell' in pursuit of a man whom you think carried off your own and a friend's purse. Very well. I will send you to the boat and if your story is true you will be restored to your friends and nothing more will come of it. If it isn't true, you will be sent to a station-house to await developments. McCarthy, proceed upon your beat."

Larry shrugged his shoulders more snugly into his new uniform, assumed the bearing of a drum major and duly proceeded. The superior officer put a whistle to his lips, and like the genii in Arabian Nights, his servant instantly appeared.

"Call a cab. Take this young person to the 'Mary Powell,' foot of Desbrosses street. If her guardian is not there, drive to the other landing at Twenty-third street and inquire if the girl has been sought for there. If this is a false story, report to me at the station and, of course, bring the girl with you."

[Pg 53]

The words "station house" sounded ominous in Dorothy's ears. During her Baltimore life she had learned all that was necessary about such places to infect her with fear, having with other children sometimes watched the "police patrol wagons" make their dreary rounds. She had peered at the unhappy prisoners sitting within the van and had pitied them unspeakably, despite the fact that they must have been wicked. A picture of herself thus seated and despairing flashed before her mind, but she put it resolutely aside and with great humility stepped into the cab which her new protector had summoned.

This was one of those then new electric cabs and instantly riveted her attention. To move through the streets so swiftly without visible means of locomotion was as delightful as novel; and the skill with which the driver perched up behind twisted around corners and among crowding vehicles seemed fairly wonderful.

It was a most charming ride, despite the fact that she was a lost person seeking her friends, and it came all too soon to an end at the dock she had

named. She recognized the place at once and was out of the cab, hurrying along the wharf, calling back to her guide:

"Here she is! This is the 'Mary Powell!' See?"

He was promptly at her side again, his duty being not to lose sight of her until that "report" had been duly made when and where ordered. Also, the recognition of her by "Fanny" and the other boat hands proved that thus much of her tale was true. She had come down the river on that steamer's last trip and people had been back upon it, frantically seeking news of her.

[Pg 54]

"You oughtn't to have run away like that, little girl, and scare them people into forty fits. That nice Judge—somebody, he said his name was—he hired no end of people to go searching for you and now you've come and he hasn't. Like enough they've gone to the other landing, up-town, to seek you. Better drive there, policeman, and see."

"All right. But, stewardess, if anybody comes again to inquire, say that she'll be taken to the 'Prince' steamship, East river, and be held there till the boat sails. Afterward at station number —."

There is no need to follow all of Dorothy's seeking of her friends. Already, as has been told, they had made a fruitless search for her; and when at length fully convinced that she was telling a "straight case" the official who had her in charge, failing to find Miss Greatorex at that "up-town landing"—though a dock-hand said that she had been there and again hurried away "as if she was a crazy piece"—the cab was turned toward that east-side dock whence the voyage to Nova Scotia was to be made.

Here everything was verified. Dorothy's luggage marked with her name was in the baggage-room, having been sent down the day before in order to prevent mischance. With it was the luggage of Molly Breckenridge and Miss Greatorex. Also upon the steamer's sailing list was her name and the stateroom to which she had been assigned. To this point then must all the rest of the party come if they were to sail by that vessel. Obviously, it was the safest place for her to await her friends, and she was promptly permitted to go aboard and watch for them.

[Pg 55]

She had expected to see a much larger craft than the "Prince." Why, it wasn't half as large, it seemed to her, as some of the boats which passed up and down the Hudson. It had but one deck, high up, so that to reach it she had to climb a ladder, or gang-plank almost as steep as a roof. But she climbed it with a feeling of infinite relief and security. Sitting close to the rail upon one of the many steamer chairs she found there, herself almost the only passenger who had yet come aboard, she leaned her weary head against the rail, and, despite the hunger which tormented her, fell fast asleep. She knew nothing more; heard none of the busy sounds of loading the luggage, now constantly arriving, and was peacefully dreaming, when a girlish voice from the dock pierced through the babel and the dream:

"Why, Papa Breckenridge! There she sits—asleep! *That runaway!* Dorothy—Dorothy! how came you here? How dared you scare us so?"

She sprang to her feet and looked down, answering with a rapturous cry. There they were, Molly, Auntie Lu and the Judge! But—and now she rubbed her eyes the better to see if they deceived her—where was Isobel Greatorex.

[Pg 56]

Alas! That was the question the others were all asking:

"Where is Miss Greatorex? Only two minutes to sailing—but where is Miss Greatorex?"

CHAPTER IV

[Pg 57]

ON BOARD THE "PRINCE"

There wasn't an instant to waste in questions. The captain of this steamship prided himself upon his exceeding punctuality, and had often declared that if he delayed for one passenger one day he would have to do so the next; that somebody was always late; that it might be that delinquent's misfortune if he were left but was not Captain Murray's fault.

Knowing this fact Judge Breckenridge handed his sister her ticket and Molly's, hastily bade her:

"Go aboard, Lucretia, while I claim our luggage. Miss Greatorex may already be there."

"Step lively, please!" requested a sailor in a blue uniform as the lady began to slowly mount the almost upright ladder. Other sailors were speeding up and down it, between the ascending passengers and an air of great bustle and haste pervaded the whole scene.

Then the blue-coat gallantly put his hand under Mrs. Hungerford's arm and fairly shoved her up the plank. Molly sprang lightly after, caught her foot in one of the little cross-pieces nailed across the plank to prevent people slipping and sprawled her length, hindering everybody a deal more than if she had climbed more slowly.

[Pg 58]

However, they gained the deck and Dorothy's side in safety, and took their stand against the rail to watch the Judge and many another passenger hurriedly identifying their baggage ranged under the wharf shed; and, as each piece was claimed, to see it swiftly tossed upon a skid and rolled into the lower part of the ship.

Captain Murray stood at the foot of the ladder, chronometer in hand, a picture of calm decision; while another uniformed official faced him from the other side the plank, to scan the tickets presented. Judge Breckenridge finished his task and also climbed to the deck, while a sigh of relief escaped Aunt Lucretia's lips.

"That's all right! I got so worried lest we should miss the steamer and there isn't another sailing for three days. I'm so glad to get our things! I never do feel comfortable until I see my trunks aboard my train or steamer."

"Yes, indeed! A woman bereft of her 'things' is a forlorn creature!" laughed the Judge, in gentle sarcasm, but his sister disdained reply. She merely reflected how much greater annoyance her brother would have felt had his sporting outfit been delayed and this was the very first piece of luggage he had identified—her trunk the last. However, there was the utmost good nature in their jesting intercourse, and both now turned their attention to the wharf where the "very last" passenger was hurrying to the ladder.

[Pg 59]

After him ascended the two officers, and the boat and dock hands seized the ropes to haul the plank aboard. The whistle was blowing, wheels were turning, passengers crowded the rails to wave farewells to friends ashore who had come to see them off, and at this very last second a cab came dashing furiously down the street and up to the steamer's side.

A woman leaped out, and rushed to the spot where the ship had been moored. She was almost past speaking from haste and excitement as she scanned the groups upon the deck, then with a look of satisfaction at sight of the Judge's party, clasped her hands imploringly toward the captain and the mate.

"Don't leave her, Captain Murray! I know her—she belongs to us—it isn't her fault—throw the ladder out again, even if—" shouted the Judge.

There was no withstanding the sight of so many clasped, entreating hands, even by such a rigid disciplinarian as this fine skipper. For not only Miss Greatorex upon the wharf, but the two girls and Mrs. Hungerford had clasped theirs, also, begging a brief delay.

Then the officer waved his hand, down went the plank again, and a couple of sailors sprang forward to the teacher's assistance. They had fairly to drag her up the now slippery incline, and almost to toss her upon the deck,

[Pg 60]

where the Judge's arm shot out for her support and the captain himself helped her to a chair.

Another instant they had put a stretch of water between them and the land, and a fresh uproar of whistles and bells announced that the steamer "Prince" had sailed.

But those near her had thought now only for Miss Greatorex. Her face was at first intensely red and she leaned back in her chair, with closed eyes and gasping breath. Indeed, so difficult her breathing that it seemed as if after each respiration she would never breathe again. Mrs. Hungerford made haste to hold a smelling bottle to the sufferer's nostrils, but it was feebly waved aside as if it hindered rather than helped.

Then the color faded from the crimson face and all that terrible gasping ceased, so that those watching thought for a moment that life itself had ended.

"Fainted!" said the captain, tersely. "Get her to bed. Number Eight, take her ticket to the purser, get her stateroom key, and send the stewardess. Prompt, now."

Fortunately, the room engaged for Miss Greatorex and Dorothy was on that deck and very near; and thither the dignified lady was quickly conveyed, very much as a sack of corn might have been. But as for Dorothy's thoughts during this brief transit there is nothing comforting to say.

"Oh, I've killed her, I've killed her! If I hadn't been so careless and left the purses, and if I hadn't chased that 'shiny man' and made all this trouble, she wouldn't have—I can't bear it. What shall I do!" she wailed to Molly, as they followed hand in hand, where Miss Greatorex was carried.

[Pg 61]

"You can stop saying 'if' and worrying so. You didn't do anything on purpose and she's to blame herself. If she hadn't gone off mad from the hotel and left Auntie and me, maybe she wouldn't have run too hard and hurt herself. If—if—if! It isn't a very happy beginning of a vacation is it? Even though we have got Papa and Auntie Lu and everything. And I don't know yet what you did after you ran away from the boat. We can't do a thing here to help. Let's go to Papa, there and you tell us the whole story. He took a lot of trouble to find you and paid a lot of money to men to seek you, and he looks awful tired and—and disgusted. I guess he wishes he'd just brought Auntie and me and not bothered himself with you and Miss Greatorex. And that's my fault, too. If I hadn't asked him to do it he would never have thought of it. Seems if things never do go just as you plan them, do they?"

Under other circumstances Dorothy might have replied to her friend's unflattering frankness by some reproaches of her own, but not now. She realized the truth but was too humble to resent it. So she merely glanced once more through the door of the little stateroom at Miss Greatorex stretched upon the bed and Mrs. Hungerford with the stewardess attending her, and followed Molly.

The Judge met them with an encouraging smile and the command:

[Pg 62]

"Shorten up your countenances, little maids! This is a holiday, did you know? Folks don't go holiday-ing with faces as long as your arm. Here, cuddle down beside me and watch the sights. Tell me too, Miss Dorothy, all that befell you after you disappeared. I'm as curious as Molly is, and she's 'just suffering' to know. Don't worry about Miss Greatorex, either. She's simply over-exerted herself and allowed herself to get too anxious about this one small girl. The idea! What's one small girl more or less, when the world's chock full of them?"

But the affectionate squeeze he gave to the "girl's" shoulders as she sat down beside him, while Molly sat herself upon his knee, told her that he had already forgiven any annoyance she had caused him. He was too warm hearted to hold a grudge against anybody; least of all against as penitent a child as Dorothy.

She related her adventures and the Judge laughed heartily over her mimicry of Larry McCarthy, the "new policeman." Nor did he make any criticisms when the story was ended. She had been sufficiently punished, he considered, for any lapses from prudence and the lessons her experience had taught would be far more valuable than any word of his. So he merely called their attention to the scenery before them.

"This beautiful, green spot that we are passing is Blackwell's Island, where the city's criminals and other unfortunates are sent. Doesn't seem as if wicked people could be hidden behind those walls, does it? Well keep out of mischief and don't go there!"

[Pg 63]

"Soon we'll be going up Long Island Sound, and you'll get a glimpse of some handsome homes. Hello! What's this? My little bugler, as I live! Good day to you, Melvin; and what is this present 'toot' for, if you please?"

A fair-faced boy came rather shyly forward and accepted the hearty hand grasp which the Judge extended, but he seemed to shrink from the keen observation of the two girls; though a flush of pleasure dyed his smooth cheeks, which were as pink-and-white as blond Molly's own.

"My respects, Judge Breckenridge, and glad to see you aboard again, sir. To get your table seats, sir, if you'll remember."

"Thank you, lad, and good enough! Come on, lassies, let's go down and scramble for best places and first table, when eating time comes."

All over the deck people were beginning to rise and make their way toward a further door, from which a flight of stairs descended to the dining-room, and these three followed the crowd. The very mention of "eating" had brought back to Dorothy a sensation of terrible hunger. She had eaten nothing since her breakfast at the Academy, and her sail had sharpened her appetite beyond ordinary. During her late experiences in the city and her terror concerning Miss Greatorex she had forgotten this matter, but now it came back with a positive pang. Suddenly Molly, too, remembered the fact and exclaimed:

[Pg 64]

"Why, you poor girlie! Talk about eating—you can't have had a bit of dinner! Papa, Dorothy hasn't had her dinner this livelong day!"

Her tone was so tragic that people behind her smiled, as her abrupt pause upon the stairs arrested their own progress, and she was promptly urged forward again by her father's hand.

"Heigho! That's a calamity—nothing less! But one that can be conquered, let us hope. Now, fall into line close behind me and watch this interesting proceeding."

From the earnestness depicted upon the countenances of the passengers, this securing of good seats at the first table, in a room which would not allow the serving of all at one time, was a vital matter. The purser stood at the entrance of the saloon and assigned a seat to each person upon the examination of a ticket presented. His office was not a pleasant one. There were the usual grumblers and malcontents, but he preserved his good nature amid all the fault-finding and selfishness; and the Judge had the good fortune to secure five places at the Captain's table, which was significant of "first call to meals."

This accomplished he led his charges out of line, carefully deposited his "meal tickets" in an innermost pocket, and crossed an ante-room to where there were plates of ship's biscuits and slices of cheese.

[Pg 65]

"Take all you want, all you can eat, both of you youngsters. Sorry to say no regular meal will be served, not even for Dorothy's benefit, till the six o'clock dinner. Unless she choses to get seasick; when she would have tea and toast sent to her and wouldn't be able to touch it! Enough? Take plenty. There's no stinting on Captain Murray's good ship though a lot of cast-iron rules that one must never break. Hark! There's Melvin's toot again! There must be a great crowd on board, if all haven't come to get their seats here

yet. Now we'll interview our women folk and see how they're faring."

Munching their crackers and cheese the girls hurried to "Number Thirteen," the only stateroom on the promenade deck which Miss Rhinelanders had been able to secure for her cousin Isobel and Dorothy; and though she had held her peace concerning it Miss Greatorex had inwardly revolted against this "unlucky" number.

But it was in fact among the very best on that small steamship. Its door opening directly upon the deck so that after retiring one could lie and watch the stars and breathe the pure air of the sea. Also, her short sojourn in it was to do her much good physically. Even now, when Molly and Dorothy peeped in they saw her sitting upright, drinking a cup of tea and chatting with the stewardess as calmly as usual.

At sight of Dorothy, however, she promptly dismissed the attendant and bade the girl enter and explain everything that had happened after her disappearance from the "Mary Powell."

[Pg 66]

Molly made a grimace, and Dolly sighed. Repetition of unpleasant things made them doubly disagreeable, and she now longed to enter into the Judge's spirit and feel that this was happy holiday. She cut the tale as short as she could; listened meekly to Miss Isobel's reproofs; waited upon that fidgety person with admirable patience; and with equal patience received all the many instructions as to "suitable conduct" during their whole journey. When the final word had been said, and she had been told that no other "allowance" could be hers until "advices" had been received from Miss Rhinelanders, and that she must report every cent expended, she ventured to cut the "lecture" also short, by kneeling in the little aisle between their berths and kissing her guardian's hand with the petition:

"Please forgive me, dear Miss Greatorex, for all the worry I gave you. I will be good. I will be 'prudent,' I will remember—everything—if only you'll say you'll love me just the same again!"

Miss Isobel was touched. In her heart she was very fond of Dorothy and grateful to her, on account of her bravery that night of the fire. But she felt it beneath her dignity to show this fondness openly, and answered more coldly than she felt:

"Certainly, it would be unworthy in me to harbor ill will against anybody. But I trust you will give me no further annoyance. Rise, please; and there is Molly. Thank you, Miss Breckenridge, I am much better. It was but a momentary weakness to which I yielded. Please make my regards to your father for his courteous messages of regret. Yes, Dorothy, you may go with your friend for a walk on the deck. I will join you very soon."

[Pg 67]

"Hope she won't, mean old thing!" grumbled Molly, under her breath. "She's one of the plans that didn't go right. Instead of darling Miss Penelope with her sweet mother-ways to have the 'Grater' forced on us this way is too bad. I know Papa and Auntie Lu aren't pleased with her either, though they're too polite to say so."

"O, Molly, don't! I was bad, I can't deny it and I deserve to have her stiff and cross with me. I don't believe she's half so vexed as she seems but she doesn't think it's 'proper' to let me know how thankful she is I wasn't really lost. Folks can't help being themselves, anyway; else I'd be a perfectly angelic sort of a girl, and be it quick! Hark! Those bells!"

"Yes, honey, let me tell you! Papa just told me. That's four o'clock, 'eight bells.' In half an hour it'll strike once. At five will strike twice. Every half hour one more stroke till at the end of four hours it'll be eight bells again. That's the beginning and the end of a 'watch.' A 'watch' is four hours long and the sailors change off then, one lot comes from 'duty' and another lot 'stand' theirs. Isn't it odd and interesting? Oh! I think being on shipboard is just too lovely for words! And aren't we going to have a glorious time after all?"

[Pg 68]

"Oh! Molly, I hope so. Course I think it's splendidly interesting, too, if I

could get over feeling so ashamed of myself and my foolishness. I don't like to go near your father for he must think I have been horrid. I don't know how I can ever pay him back the money he spent hiring folks to hunt for me, and the trouble I gave him—oh! dear! Why didn't I let that old 'shiny man' go and not try to follow him!"

"Give it up Dolly Doodles. Reckon you happened to value that five dollars more than you did us, just about then. And you might as well have 'let him go' since he went anyhow and our precious purses with him. Now, honey, you quit. Don't you say another single word of what *has* happened but let's just think of all the nice things that *are going* to happen. Ah! Hold up your head, put on all your 'style,' make yourself as pretty as you can, for here comes that adorable young bugler and he's perfectly enchanting! Oh! I do so love boys! Don't you?"

"Molly Breckenridge, stop making me giggle. He'll think we're laughing at him and I don't like to hurt anybody's feelings."

"My dear innocent! You couldn't hurt his. Why, Papa says that all the passengers try to make a pet of that sweet youth, so he knows he's all right no matter who laughs. The trouble is he'll never speak to anybody if he can help it and unless it happens to be his duty. Sailors are great for 'duty,' you know. But did you ever see such funny clothes?"

[Pg 69]

The girls continued their walk around the deck, the bugler passed them by, unseeing—apparently; and quoth mischievous Molly:

"I'm going to get acquainted with that Melvin before we leave this ship, see if I don't! I believe he has a lot of fun in him, if he wasn't afraid of his 'duty.' Papa said he was the only son of his mother and their home is at Yarmouth. Papa met her last summer when he stopped there for a few weeks' fishing. I'll make him understand I'm my father's daughter; you see!"

"Molly Breckenridge, you'll do nothing to disgrace that father, understand me too. Here comes 'Number Eight.' Isn't he funny?"

To their unaccustomed eyes the sailor's clothing did look odd. The Judge had explained to Molly that these "numbered" officials were recognized by their numbers only. That they acted in various capacities; as table-waiters, and especially as "chamber maids." Each "number" had his own section of staterooms to attend, each one his especial table to serve in the dining saloon.

In a natural reaction from their anxiety of the earlier day the spirits of both girls had risen proportionately. They were ready to see humor in everything and poor Number Eight came in for his share of absurd comment, when he had passed out of hearing.

[Pg 70]

"He's such a big, red-faced, red-haired man, and his jacket is so little. Looks as if his arms and shoulders had just been squeezed into it by some machine. Did you notice his monstrous trousers? Enough in them to piece out the jacket, I should think, and never be missed. All these Numbers are dressed alike; little bit o' coaties, divided skirts for panties, and such dudish little caps! Who wouldn't be a sailor on the bright blue sea, if he could wear clothes cut that fashion? 'A life on the ocean wave,'" she quoted. "'A home on the rolling deep—'"

"'Where the scattered waters rave. And the winds their revels keep. The wi-i-inds their r-r-r-ev-el-s-s k-e-e-e-ep!'" A rich voice had caught the burden of Molly's song and finished it with an absurd flourish.

"Now, Papa!" cried the girl, facing suddenly about. So suddenly, indeed, that she collided with an unseen somebody, slipped on the freshly washed boards, and fell at her victim's feet. A bugle shot out from under his arm and banged against the deck-rail; but before he recovered that Melvin had stooped, said "Allow me!" and helped Molly up again. Then he lifted his cap, picked up his bugle, and proceeded on his way without so much as another word.

Molly stared after him, blushing and mortified, shaking her tiny fist toward his blue-uniformed back, and remarking:

[Pg 71]

"Huh! Master Melvin! I'd just declared I'd get acquainted with you but I didn't mean to do it in quite that way!"

Maybe, too, her chagrin would have been deeper could she have seen the amused expression of the young bugler's face; and again she observed—to Dorothy as she supposed:

"Anyhow, if you'd been a gentleman, a real gentleman-boy, you'd have stopped to ask if I was hurt. Huh! you're terribly 'sot up' and top-lofty, just because you wear a uniform and toot-ti-ti-toot on little tin-horn kind of a thing that I could play myself, if I wanted to. Don't you think so, Papa and Dolly? Wasn't it horrid of him to trip me up that way and make me look so silly? Why don't you answer, one of you?"

She turned the better to see "why," and found herself gazing into the stern countenance of Captain Murray. That strict gentleman had recently been annoyed by the "skylarking" of girlish passengers who had tried "flirting" with his "boys" and was bent upon preventing any further annoyance of that sort.

"Your father has gone forward to meet your ailing friend and the little girl is with him. I would advise you to join them."

That was all the reproof he administered, but it was sufficient to make Molly Breckenridge flush scarlet again, and this time with anger against the skipper. She hurried to "join" the others who had met Miss Greatorex and exclaimed with great heat:

[Pg 72]

"I just detest that horrid stiff Captain! He looked—he believed I tumbled against that precious bugler of his just on purpose! I wish I need never see either one of them again or hear that wretched thing toot!"

She could not then foresee how important a part in her own life that "toot" was yet to play; nor was the laughter with which her outburst was received very comforting.

CHAPTER V

[Pg 73]

MOONLIGHT AND MIST ON THE SEA

However and despite her declaration to the contrary it was a most welcome "toot" which sounded along the deck and announced to the hungry voyagers that dinner was served; and Molly was among the first to spring up and hurry her father tableward.

"Seems as if I'd never had anything to eat in all my life!" she exclaimed. "Come on, Dolly Doodles, *you* must be actually famished."

"I am pretty hungry," admitted Dorothy; but mindful now of her recent resolve to do everything as Miss Greatorex would have her, she waited until that lady rose from her steamer chair, gathered her wraps about her, and anxiously inquired of Mrs. Hungerford:

"Will it be safe to leave my rug behind? or should I carry it with me to table?"

"Oh! leave it, by all means. There's none too much room below and I never worry about my things. Lay it on your chair and that will prove to anybody who comes along that your especial seat is 'reserved.' I'm leaving mine, you see;" answered the more experienced traveler, wondering if Miss Isobel's nervousness would not prove a most unpleasant factor in their vacation fun. Also thinking that she had too readily given consent to Molly's written plea: that Dorothy and a teacher should be invited to join them on this trip.

[Pg 74]

Because there had been some question as to where the girl should pass the long vacation. Deerhurst would not be open, even if Mrs. Calvert had expressed any desire for a visit from Dorothy, which she had not. The old gentlewoman was to spend that season at the White Sulphur Springs, whither she had been in the habit of going during many years; and where among other old aristocrats she queened it at their own exclusive hotel.

The mountain cottage would, of course, be in the hands of the Martin family, and Mother Martha had not approved Dorothy's coming to Baltimore and passing the heated term there with herself. Indeed, deep in the little woman's heart was a resentment against the unknown benefactor who was now supporting her adopted child and sending her to such an expensive school. As she complained to the aged relative with whom she now lived:

"I feel, Aunt Chloe, that I've been meanly treated. I've had all the care of Dorothy through her growing up and having the measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, and all the other children's diseases. I've sewed for her, and washed and ironed for her, and taught her all the useful things she knows; yet now, just as she is big enough to be some company and comfort—off she's snatched and I not even told by whom. I doubt if John knows, either, though he won't say one way or other, except that 'it's all right and he knows it.' So I say I shan't worry; and I wouldn't think it right, anyway, for her to come down south if only this far after being north for so long."

[Pg 75]

Seth Winters had not come back to his beloved mountain, so that she could not go to him; and the only thing that was left was to go to her father at his Sanitorium or remain with Miss Rhinelander.

Neither of these plans was satisfactory. Father John did not want her to pass her holidays in an atmosphere of illness; and Miss Rhinelander craved freedom and rest for herself. There were still extensive repairs to be made to the Academy and she wished to superintend them.

Finally, Molly Breckenridge had taken the matter in hand with the result related; and with the one unlooked for feature, the presence of Miss Greatorex where Miss Penelope had been desired.

However, here they all were at last; a few hours outward bound on their short ocean trip and looking forward to the most enjoyable of summers in lovely Nova Scotia. They were to make a complete tour of the Province, then settle down in some quiet place near the fishing and hunting grounds where the Judge would go into camp.

Molly was thankful that her table-seat was well removed from that of Captain Murray at its head. But she soon found that she need not have worried, and that the closer she could be to him—when he was off duty—the better she would like it. This wasn't the austere officer in command! who told such amusing tales of life at sea, who kept his guests so interested and absorbed, and who so solicitously watched his waiters lest anybody's wants should be unsupplied! No, indeed. He was simply a most courteous host and delightful talker, and before that first meal was over she had forgotten her dislike of him, and, after her impulsive manner had "fallen in love" with him.

[Pg 76]

Then back to the deck, to watch the moon rise and to settle themselves comfortably for a long and happy evening; and after awhile, begged Molly:

"Now, Papa darling, if your dinner's 'settled,' please to sing. Remember I haven't heard you do so in almost a year."

"Now, my love, you don't expect me to make an orchestra of myself, I hope? I notice they haven't one aboard this little steamship. Nobody but Melvin to make music for us. I must tell you girls about that lad. He—"

"Never mind *him* now, Papa. He will keep. He can wait. But I do want you to sing! Dorothy, go take that chair on Papa's other side; and here comes Number Eight with more rugs. Wouldn't think it could be so cool, almost cold, would you, after that dreadful heat back there in New York? Now, sir,

begin!" and the Judge's adoring "domestic tyrant" patted his hand with great impatience.

[Pg 77]

"Very well, Miss Tease. Only it must be softly, so as not to disturb other people who may not have as great fancy for my warbling as you have."

Mrs. Hungerford leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes in great content. Like his daughter she thought there was no sweeter singer anywhere than her beloved brother; but the too-correct Miss Isobel drew herself stiffly erect with an unspoken protest against this odd proceeding. She was quite sure that it wasn't good form for anybody to sing in such a public place and under such circumstances. Least of all a Judge. A Judge of the Supreme Court! More than ever was she amazed when he began with a college song: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean," in which Molly presently joined and, after a moment, Dorothy also.

But even her primness could not withstand the witchery of the gentleman's superb tenor voice, with its high culture and feeling; because even into that humdrum refrain he put a pathos and longing which quite transformed it.

People sitting within hearing hitched their chairs nearer, but softly—not to disturb the singers; who sang on quietly, unconsciously, as if in their own private home. Drifting from one song to another, with little pauses between and always beginning by a suggestive note from Molly, the time passed unperceived.

Evidently, father and child had thus sung together during all their lives; and long before her that "other Molly," her dead mother, of whom his child was the very counterpart, had also joined her exquisite tones to his. Into many melodies they passed, college songs left behind, and deeper feelings stirred by the words they uttered; till finally perceiving that his own mood was growing most un-holiday like, the Judge suddenly burst forth with "John Brown's Body."

[Pg 78]

Then, indeed, did mirth and jollification begin. Far and near, all sorts and conditions of voices caught up the old melody and added their quota to the music; and when their leader began mischievously to alter the refrain by dropping the last word, and shortening it each time by one word less, delight was general and the fun waxed fast and furious.

The abrupt termination left many a singer in the lurch; and when the last verse was sung and ended only with "John—," "John—," "John," there were still some who wandered on into "the grave" and had to join in the laugh their want of observation had brought upon them.

By this time also Miss Isobel Greatorex had become quite resigned to a proceeding which no other passenger had disapproved and which, she could but confess, had added a charm to that never-to-be-forgotten evening. Moonlight flooded the sea and the deck. The simplicity and good-fellowship of Judge Breckenridge and his sister had brought all these strangers into a harmony which bridged all distinctions of class or interest and rendered that first night afloat a most happy one for all.

[Pg 79]

Until—was the moonlight growing clouded? Did those six strokes of the bell actually mean eleven o'clock? So late—and suddenly so—so—so *queer!*

Even if the little concert had not already ended nobody could have sung just then.

"I guess we've left the Sound and struck the ocean;" remarked one gentleman, in a peculiar tone. "Good night all," and he disappeared.

A lady next Miss Greatorex made an effort to extricate herself from her rugs and chair and observed:

"I've such a curious feeling. So—so dizzy. My head swims. Is—is there a different—motion to the boat? Have you noticed?"

Yes, Miss Greatorex had noticed, but she couldn't reply just then. Nor was this because of her "stiffness" toward a person who had not been properly

"introduced." It was simply that—that—dear, dear! She felt so very queer herself. She would try and get to her stateroom. In any case it was very late and everybody was moving.

A petulant cry from Molly expressed her own desires exactly.

"Papa, dear Papa! What makes the folks go wobbling around the way they do? I wish they wouldn't! I wish they would—would keep real—perfectly—still! I wish! Oh! dear!"

The Judge rose at once and, despite her size, caught up his daughter and marched off with her toward Mrs. Hungerford's stateroom, whither that experienced voyager had as suddenly preceded him. When he came back, a few minutes later, he found that Miss Greatorex had vanished, and that Dorothy sat alone on the deserted deck wondering what in the world was the matter to make everybody rush off at once, or almost everybody. Wondering whether she should follow, and if her guardian would return and need her rugs again; yet placidly thinking over the delightful evening she had spent and how strange it was for her, "just plain Dorothy," to be having such a splendid trip in such charming company.

[Pg 80]

"Well, lassie, are you all right? Don't *you* feel a 'little queer,' too?"

"Yes, thank you, Judge Breckenridge. I'm right enough but I don't know whether Miss Greatorex wants me to come to our room now or whether she'll need her things again. She went away in a great hurry, seems if; and so—so did 'most everybody else. Funny for them all to get sleepy just in a minute so."

The old traveler laughed and patted Dorothy's shoulder.

"A 'fog swell' is what we've struck. That explains the darkness and the hasty departure of our neighbors. Seasick, poor creatures! and no suffering worse, while it lasts. Sure you aren't yourself, Dorothy?"

"No. I don't feel any different from ever, yet, Judge Breckenridge."

[Pg 81]

"Good enough. I'm mighty glad for you. Poor little Moll will be apt to have a sorry time of it until we reach Yarmouth and land. By the way, lassie, I observe that you've been well trained to give a person their name and title when you speak to them. But we're on our holiday now, you know, and mustn't work more than we can help. So, my dear, suppose you call me Uncle Schuy, or simply Uncle, while we are together. 'Judge Breckenridge' is considerable of a mouthful for a small maid who, I hope, will have to address me a great many times. I shall find it pleasant to be 'Uncled' for I greatly miss our boy, Tom."

He did not add, as he might, that some pity mingled in this desire. Coming unobserved upon the little figure sitting alone in the steamer-chair, amid a pile of rugs which almost hid her from sight, deserted, and possibly also in the throes of illness, he had resolved to make her time with him and his as happy as he could. He would have done this under any circumstances; but Molly's fervid description of Dorothy's orphanage and ignorance of her real parentage had touched him profoundly.

Loving his own little daughter beyond all others in the world he loved this deserted child for Molly's sake; and felt that he should promptly love her for her own.

Sitting down again beside her he covered himself with rugs and begged permission to smoke; remarking:

[Pg 82]

"It's a shame to keep you up longer but I fancy that your stateroom wouldn't be very pleasant just now. It's next to my sister's, you know, and I saw Number Eight coming out of it with considerable haste. Miss Greatorex is probably ill, but should be better once she gets settled in bed. Then you must go and also get to rest. Quite likely you'll be the only little girl-companion I'll have for the rest of the trip. I was afraid Molly would make a poor sailor, and she's proving me correct. My sister, though, never suffers from seasickness and is a charming traveling companion as you'll find."

He relapsed into silence and a great drowsiness began to overpower Dorothy. Her day had been long and most eventful and the sea air was strong. Presently, her head drooped against the back of her chair, the Judge grew indistinct in her sight, and she fell asleep.

He considered then what was best to do; and presently decided that, if she wasn't sent for, she might well and safely pass the night on deck as he intended to do.

Indeed, so often had he voyaged on that ship that its employees had learned his wishes without telling; and now there came to him one Number Seven, his own room attendant, bringing a pillow and more rugs. He was dispatched for another pillow and between them they gently lowered the back of Dorothy's chair, placed a pillow under her unconscious head and tucked her warmly in. Then he settled himself to rest and neither of them knew distinctly anything more until the daylight came and the sunshine struggled with the enwrapping fog.

[Pg 83]

She, indeed, had had vague dreams of what went on about her. Had heard muffled bells and passing footsteps, but these had mingled only pleasantly with her sense of rest and happiness; and it was a very surprised young person who at last opened her eyes upon a gray expanse of mist-covered ocean and a gray-haired man asleep on a chair beside her.

Sitting up, she stared about her for a moment till she realized what had happened; then smiled to think she had actually slept out of doors. Afterward, she wondered with some anxiety if Miss Greatorex had sent for her during the night, or if she were still too ill to care about anybody save herself.

"Anyhow, I must go and see. My! how damp these rugs are and yet I am as warm as can be. That's what dear Miss Penelope said she meant to do—sleep on deck. But she didn't come and I've done it in her stead. What a queer world it is and how things do get twisted round! Now I must be still as still and not wake that dear Judge—'Uncle', who's so lovely to me!"

With these thoughts she slipped softly out of her rugs and tiptoed away, having some slight trouble to locate "Number Thirteen" stateroom; and, having done so, discovered its door ajar, fastened against intrusion by a chain.

[Pg 84]

She peeped through the opening. Miss Isobel lay with her eyes closed, but whether asleep or not Dorothy couldn't decide. She was very pale and perfectly motionless, and a too-suggestive tin basin was fastened to the railing of her berth.

"Ugh! I can't go in there and wake her, if she's asleep; or to go any way. I'll slip around to this other side the boat where there are such heaps of chairs and nobody in them. My! It's cold and I haven't anything to put over me here. Never mind, I'll stay. If I go back to where I was I might wake Judge Breckenridge, and I shouldn't like to do that. I don't wonder Molly called him a handsome man. He looked better than handsome to me, sleeping there, he looked *noble*."

Thus reflecting she settled herself on a chair against the inner wall and watched the men at work mopping the wet decks and putting the steamer generally "ship-shape" against the day's voyage. It was a forlorn outlook into the world of fog, through which the sound of the bells rang strangely. Also, there was an almost continuous blowing of whistles and a look of some anxiety on the faces of such of the crew as passed by.

Finally, out of some far-off stairway, young bugler Melvin came tripping and hurried along the deck in her direction. She fancied a look of surprise in his eyes as he perceived her and that he would pass on without further notice. Yet, just as he reached a point opposite her chair, he flashed one glance toward her; and almost as quickly turned about to retrace his steps. Shivering and rather miserable she watched him idly, and now the surprise was her own.

[Pg 85]

He returned and still without speaking, yet with an almost painful flush on his face, tossed two heavy rugs into her lap and instantly passed on. She had no chance to thank him, but readily answered a laugh from a deck-hand near by who had witnessed the little incident and enjoyed it. The "Bashful Bugler" was Melvin's shipboard nickname and no lad ever better deserved such. Yet he had been well "raised" and there was something very appealing to the chivalry of any lad in the look of Dorothy's just now sad eyes; though commonly their brown depths held only sunshine.

The sweeper on the deck moved the chairs near her and even her own, though without her leaving it, the better to clear off the moisture which the fog had deposited. She had echoed his laugh and he remarked:

"Nice boy, 'Bashful' is; but no more fitted to go round 'mongst strangers'n a picked chicken."

Both the sailor and Dorothy were glad to speak with anybody, and she asked:

"Will this fog last long? Is it often so cold right in the summer time?"

"Cold enough to freeze the legs off an iron pot, slathers of times. This is one of 'em! As for fogs lastin', I reckon, little Miss, there won't be no more sunshine 'twixt here and Yarmouth harbor. If you're cold out here though, and don't want to go to your room, you'll find things snug down yonder in that music-room, or what you call it."

[Pg 86]

"Oh! is there a place? Under shelter? Will you show me?"

"Sure. If 'tis open yet. Sometimes it's shut overnight but likely not now. I'll take them rugs for you, Sissy, if you like."

"Thank you. Thank you so much. How nice everybody is on a steamship! Is it living all the time on the water makes you kind, I wonder?"

"Give it up!" answered this able seaman, not a little flattered by Dorothy's appreciation of his service, and in Molly's own frequent manner. With another smile at this memory, Dorothy followed as he walked ahead, dragging his mop behind him and leaving a shining streak in his wake.

They found the little saloon, music-room, writing-room, or "what you call it," closed, but the door opened readily enough, and Dorothy was delighted to creep within the warmth and comfort of the place. It was dark inside but the man turned on the electric light, and, doffing his cap, went out, shut the door behind him, and left her to her solitary enjoyment.

"What a pretty room! How cozy and warm! I'm going to cuddle down in this easy chair and take another nap. There's nobody stirring much and I heard one man say to another that there were more folks sick this trip than had been all summer. I wonder if poor Molly is yet! I'd go and see only I don't want to disturb Mrs. Hungerford."

[Pg 87]

"Now, Dorothy girl, shut your eyes and don't open them again till breakfast time. I am awfully disappointed. I'd counted upon watching the sun rise over the ocean and was going to get up so early to do it: Huh! I'm early enough, but the poor sun is taking a bath and can't be seen."

Artificial heat had been turned into the room which accounted for the warmth she found so grateful. This, succeeding her shivering fit, made her drowsy and she shut her eyes "just for forty winks." But a good many times "forty" had passed before she opened them once more and found herself still alone. She got up and looked about her, thinking that she must go to "Number Thirteen" and bathe her face and hands, though not much more than that could be accomplished in such limited quarters. She'd go in just a minute. Meanwhile there was a piano. She'd like to try it, though her lessons on that instrument had been but few. However—

"Oh! joy! There's a violin case on the shelf yonder! I'm going to look at it. If there's a violin inside—There is! I'd love, just love to try that, far more than a jingling piano. I wonder would anybody hear me? I don't believe so. It's so

far away. I'm going to—I am!"

With a fiddle once more under her chin Dorothy forgot all but that happy fact. Delicately and timidly at first, she drew her bow across the strings, fearing an interruption; but when none came she gathered boldness and played as she would have done in Herr von Peter's own helpful presence.

[Pg 88]

How long she stood there, swaying to her own music, enwrapped in it and no longer lonely, she didn't know; but after a time the minor chords of her last and "loveliest lesson" were rudely broken in upon by other strains which cut short her practicing and set her face toward the door.

There stood the "Bashful Bugler" tooting his "first call to breakfast" directly toward her, and her response was a crash of discord from the violin. The effect upon Melvin was to make him lower his bugle and flash out of sight as if propelled by a hurricane.

CHAPTER VI

[Pg 89]

SAFE ON SHORE

The bad weather continued. So did the illness of Miss Greatorex and Molly Breckenridge. Neither of them left their stateroom again till that day and another night had passed and the "Prince" came to her mooring in Yarmouth harbor.

Both Mrs. Hungerford and Dorothy spent much of their time with one or other patient, yet were often alone together on deck or in the music-room and became very well acquainted, indeed, during their hours of loneliness. From the girl Auntie Lu drew many details of her short life, and was especially interested when she found that Mrs. Betty Calvert was a friend of them both; exclaiming:

"Why, my dear, I've known Mrs. Betty Calvert all my life! She was my mother's dearest correspondent. They had been girls together, though Mrs. Calvert was older than mother. Their homes were near each other in Maryland; and—why, the Calverts, or Somersets, were as intimate as it is possible for families to be with our folks—the Breckenridges! This is most interesting. Most certainly interesting. I must tell my brother. Schuyler is so loyal to all our old Marylanders; he thinks there are no people like them anywhere, though for my part I find human nature's pretty much the same all the world over."

[Pg 90]

"Yes, Mrs. Hungerford, I've heard Mrs. Calvert say that there was no gentleman so fine as a southern one. Mr. Seth laughs at her and says that's a 'hobby,' and she's 'mistaken.' He says 'gentlemen don't grow any better on one soil than another,' but are 'indigenous to the whole United States,' though Mr. Winters is a Marylander himself." Then she naively added in explanation, and in a little vanity about her botanical lore: "'Indigenous' means, maybe you don't know, a plant that belongs to, is a native of, some particular region. Mr. Seth taught me and Father John. They both know lots about botany, though father hasn't lived in the country as long as our 'Learned Blacksmith,' who does know, seems if, all there is worth knowing in this world. For a man, I mean."

Aunt Lucretia smiled and nodded, but in an absent sort of manner as if she had scarcely heard what Dorothy had said. Then as the girl rose, remarking: "I'll go now and sit a while with Molly if she's awake. Funny! She says she feels all right as long as she lies down and so horrid when she tries to get up and dress;" the lady's gaze followed her little figure with a keenly critical interest. Also, she eagerly greeted the Judge, who now came to her, with the ambiguous exclamation:

"Schuyler Breckenridge, the most marvellous thing! I've discovered—or I believe I have—what that remarkable likeness is which has so perplexed

[Pg 91]

me. Blood always tells, always crops out!"

"Exactly. Especially in cases like this. Having nothing else to do I've tried whittling—with this result. Tie it up, Lu, and explain yourself—if you can," he answered, whimsically holding out a finger he had cut and that was slightly bleeding.

"Oh! you poor dear!"

"Yes. Am I not! Wait. Here's a bit of court-plaster. Forgot I had it or wouldn't have troubled you. Now, talk ahead."

"Schuyler, a man like you shouldn't trifle with edged tools. You have no gift for anything but—lawing. It wouldn't be any laughing matter if you should develop blood-poison—"

"It certainly would not, and as I like to laugh I shan't do it. Now, what is this marvellous thing you've discovered, please? I'm getting tired of fog, no newspapers, and chess with a stranger; so welcome even a woman's gossip with delight!"

She paid no heed to his chaffing but began:

"I believe I know who that Dorothy's parents were. I'm as positive as if I'd been told; and I'm perfectly amazed at Mrs. Betty Calvert. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Apparently—to you. Not yet to me. I've understood that two and two makes four; but how your 'belief' and poor old Betty Calvert make sensible connection I fail to comprehend. I await instruction."

"Stop jesting and you shall have it. Then tell me if I haven't given you better food for thought than you'd find in to-day's paper—if you could get it here at sea."

[Pg 92]

Thereupon, hitching her chair a little nearer to her brother's and glancing about to see no stranger overheard, the lady began a low toned conversation with him. This proved, as she had foretold, far more entertaining than the day's news; and when it was over, when there was nothing more to be said, he rose, pulled his traveling cap over his eyes, thrust his hands into his capacious pockets and walked away "to think it over." Adding, as he left:

"Well, if you're right everything is wrong. And if you're wrong everything's right."

Over which eminent legal opinion Mrs. Hungerford smiled, reflecting:

"He's convinced. There's nobody I know so well versed in Maryland genealogy as Schuyler Breckenridge. It's been his pastime so long he'll be keen on this scent till he proves it false or true. And if it is true—what a shame, what a shame! That horrid, lonely old woman to take such an outrageous course. Poor, dear, sweet little Dorothy!"

The result to Dorothy of this conversation was a greater kindness than ever on the part of Molly's people; who now seemed to take her into their hearts as if she were of kin to them. She often found them looking at her searchingly, trying to trace that "likeness" which one of them had discovered. But no word of what was in their minds was said to her. She was merely invited to call Mrs. Hungerford "Aunt" as she was to call the Judge "Uncle."

[Pg 93]

So despite the dullness of the fog, which prevented her seeing much of the ocean, the day passed very well. When she was asked if she could play and to give her new friends a little music, she took the violin from its shelf and gave them her simple best. To please them who were so kind to her was a delight to herself and her readiness to oblige was instantly construed by Aunt Lucretia as a fresh proof of her "discovery."

"Only a well-born child has that easy grace of manner, Schuyler, as you must often have observed," she remarked with pleased conviction.

To which he replied by warning:

"Take care you don't build up a romance that will fall to pieces like a house of cards at the first breath of reality. But as to birth, be it high or low, Dorothy is a most winning little maid and I'm thankful to have her along with us on our holiday. Thankful, also, that impulsive Molly chose just such an unselfish, ingenuous girl for her 'chum.' My poor little lass! Her first ocean voyage will be a dreary memory for her!"

"Oh! not so bad. She's perfectly comfortable when she lies still. She has plenty of attention and sleeps a deal. She's not losing much fun out here in this weather and will be no more glad to step onto solid land again than I shall. Except that, but for this enforced close companionship with little Dorothy I might not have thought out her story as I have."

[Pg 94]

"There you go again! Well, the suggestion haunts me, too. I'll investigate promptly; and—what I shall do after that I haven't yet decided. I hate a meddler and am not anxious to become one. Heigho! No matter how hard a tired man tries to mind his own business he can't do it! Here comes that young Melvin Cook, and he's a lad with a pedigree, let me tell you, as long as any oldest Marylander of all. He and I have a bit of business to discuss, so I'll walk the deck with him awhile. Dorothy, I suppose, will sleep in her own stateroom to-night, since Miss Greatorex is comfortable. Good night, and sleep well."

The deserted deck and the quiet gloom were a forcible contrast to the radiance and hilarity of the evening before, so that Mrs. Hungerford did not linger long after the Judge had left her, to pace up and down in earnest conversation with the "Bashful Bugler." Yet her thought was now upon the lad and his name which her brother had mentioned.

"Cook! Cook, from Yarmouth. Why, that's the same as that quaint old fellow brother took into his private office. He came from Nova Scotia, too, and called himself a typical Bluenose. Feared he was liable to consumption and left home for our milder climate. Wonder if he is a relative of the blond bugler! After all, as Molly so often exclaims, 'what a little bit o' world it is! Everybody you know turning up everywhere you go!' Quite a keen observer is my flighty little niece, in spite of all her nonsense; and bless her heart! I must go and see how she is and send small nurse Dorothy to her own slumbers."

[Pg 95]

So she too walked forward, and was seen no more till the grating sounds and the shouted orders told that the good ship "Prince" was docked and her goodly company had reached that safe "haven where they would be."

Then as if by magic the decks filled with a merry company, even those who had suffered most from seasickness the gayest of all.

"So good to go ashore! Too early for breakfast? Of course; but I'll take a walk on dry—or fog-wet ground before I take mine!" said the gentleman who had been first to succumb to the "fog swell," and stepped down the ladder, whistling like a happy lad.

Miss Greatorex and Molly emerged from their staterooms a little pallid, rather shaky on their feet, but quite as happy as their neighbors. Not the less pleased, either, because the Judge promptly announced:

"We'll not bother for breakfast here. Some of us don't remember the 'Prince's' dining-room with great affection, eh?" and he playfully pinched Molly's wan cheek. "We're going to stop in Yarmouth for a few days, and the hotel carriage will take the rest of you up to it at once. You'll find your rooms all ready for you. I'll see to our luggage and have that sent up, then follow in time to join you at table. All right, everybody? All your small belongings in hand? Then driver, pass on."

[Pg 96]

Already the fog was lifting, and the urbane old man upon the box leaned down and informed his fares:

"Going to be a fine day, ladies. You'll see Ya'mouth at her purtiest. Ever

been here before, any of you?"

Miss Greatorex's propriety began to return. A sure sign, Mrs. Hungerford thought, that she was feeling better; and she watched in secret amusement the sudden stiffening of the angular figure and the compression of the thin lips as the "instructress" looked fixedly out of the carriage window and vouchsafed no other reply.

But Aunt Lu always adapted herself to the habits of any country of the many she had visited and replied, with an eagerness that was half-mischievous and for Miss Isobel's benefit:

"No, indeed! and we're anxious to see and learn everything new. So please point out anything of note, and thank you."

"Hmm. I should suppose there could be nothing 'of note' in a place like this," murmured Miss Isobel, severely, as she scornfully observed the dingy streets and dwellings of that neighborhood.

But the hackman was gratified by Mrs. Hungerford's interest and a chance for his own garrulity, and promptly informed them:

"'Tain't never fair to judge no town by its water-front. Course not. Stands to reason that shipyards and docks and sailorses' saloons ain't laid out for beauty. But just you wait till we get up the hill a speck and then you'll see somethin' worth seein'. True. There ain't a nicer town in the whole Province o' Novy Scoshy 'an Ya'mouth is. Now we're a gettin'. *Now!* See there?"

[Pg 97]

"Ah! how lovely!" "Oh! Auntie Lu!" "Oh! my heart, my heart! If only darling Father John could see that hedge? What is it, Auntie Lu, can you tell?" cried Dorothy in rapture; for, indeed, the hedges of this old town by the sea are famous everywhere the name of Yarmouth is heard.

The driver didn't wait for Mrs. Hungerford to reply, even if she could have done so. He received every question and exclamation as personal and proudly answered:

"Ha'tho'n, them are, this side. Then yonder is spruce. And our gardens! If you women-folks love posies as most females does, you'd ought to be here a spell later. Roses ain't out yet but cherries is in flower."

"Roses not in bloom? Why, they're past it with us!" responded Auntie Lu, surprised.

"Hmm, ma'am. And where might that be, if I c'n make so bold?"

"The vicinity of New York, I was recalling."

"Hmm. Exactly. A poor kind of country, New York is, even though they do call it the 'Empire State' and try to bolster up its failin's with a lot of fine talk. Now our Province o' Novy Scoshy, and this Ya'mouth, don't need to do no talkin'. All's necessary for us and them is just to—BE! Once a feller comes and gets a good square look at us—no water-front way—" he interpolated, with a shrewd glance toward Miss Isobel's averted face and an absurd wink to Mrs. Hungerford—"he just sets right down and quits talkin' of his own places. Fact. I've lived here all my life and that's the reason I know it."

[Pg 98]

The man's good nature and self-satisfaction were vastly amusing to Aunt Lucretia, who ignored what seemed impertinence to the more formal Miss Greatorex, while the former inwardly delighted in this to her "new type" of liveryman, and was already anticipating the Judge's entertainment when the story of this ride was told him.

But Molly waxed indignant over his disparagement of her native land and exclaimed:

"I wish you'd not talk that way! We're Americans. I don't like it!"

"American, be you? So'm I."

"Oh! well. Course it's all America, but I mean we're from—from the States,"

as she chanced to recall an expression she had heard.

"From the States, hey? So be I."

"Yet you say you've lived here all your life. If you hadn't you'd have been more—more liberal—like travel makes people. If you'd once seen New York you wouldn't think that little Yarmouth was so mighty pretty. A right smart you know about it, anyway!"

"Huh! Gid-dap!" was the scornful rejoinder, as Jehu whirled about on his seat and touched his team to a gallop.

[Pg 99]

Mrs. Hungerford gave Molly a warning tap, though she was inwardly pleased to find the child so far recovered as to take an interest in defending her own home.

It was rather startling to have an ensuing silence broken by the old driver's facing about once more and declaring with great glee:

"You ain't no New Yorker, so you needn't be touchy about that little village. You're from down south."

"How do you know?"

"Yorkers don't say 'mighty pretty' and 'right smart,' as the Johnny Rebs do. I know. I've druv a power of both lots. As for me, I'm a Yankee, straight descent. My forbear, Sealed Waters, was one the first settlers here. A Yankee I claim to be, and the 'wa' ain't over yet, 'pears like. Ha, ha, ha!"

His mirth was contagious and they all joined in it; even Miss Greatorex emitting a faint little cackle, which was all her dignity permitted. Also, by that time the carriage had been halted before a fine hotel, into which other passengers from their steamer were already passing; and they were duly helped to alight and enter, their loquacious Jehu calmly extending his card with his name and number and, after a most business-like fashion, requesting their patronage during the rest of their stay.

"Show you the purtiest little town in the world, and'll live to hear you admit it, Ma'am. Thank you, ma'am, and good-day to you."

[Pg 100]

The Judge had secured their rooms long in advance of their arrival, and it was well that he had. The Province had come greatly to the fore as a summer pleasure ground and less thoughtful travelers did not always obtain such quarters as they preferred.

"Oh! this is fine!" exclaimed Mrs. Hungerford, as she entered her chamber with its neat appointments and refreshing bath. But Miss Greatorex was not enthusiastic. She was disappointed in the inn as she had been in the steamer, having anticipated something much larger and finer. The exaggerated term of "palatial," which the proprietors had attached to both, had deceived her and it was no great comfort to have her companion explain:

"Of course, one can't find Broadway hostleries nor European 'liners' in this part of the world; but brother has often stayed in this house and knows it well. There is a larger, newer hotel, but he likes this little inn. The fare is excellent, the place is safe and quiet, and the landlord becomes your actual host. That's the charm of the Canadians; they are all so simple and so courteous. Try and ignore the disadvantages, dear Miss Isobel, and get all the fun out of our trip you can. If you'd seen some of the places I've slept in you'd think this is really 'palatial.'"

The girls were out of hearing and Mrs. Hungerford felt herself justified in thus much of admonition to her traveling mate, whose ideas had been too highly raised by the circulars and descriptions she had read. Fortunately, Miss Greatorex was so thankful to be once more on land that she really tried to forget minor annoyances and to look upon whatever happened as so much further "education." Her little notebook was promptly put to use and she filled several pages with memoranda of the old seaport which she had so despised at first and found so historically instructive afterward. Indeed,

[Pg 101]

as Molly declared:

"You'll have to buy a good many books to hold all you want to write, even in that fine hand, dear Miss Greatorex; and what a lot of things you'll have to tell the girls at our 'twilight talks!'"

Nor could any inexperienced traveler have found better companions than Judge Breckenridge and his sister. They were so simple, so friendly, and such keen observers. Everywhere they went they met and mingled with the people exactly as if they were old and familiar friends; and in the gentleman's case this was quite true. He had been in the Province many times, as has been said, and he had the happy gift of a good and *willing* memory. He never forgot an acquaintance nor recalled one unkindly, and it surprised even Mrs. Hungerford to see how many faces brightened at his approach and how often the greeting came: "Welcome, welcome, friend!"

"Why, Judge, you back again? Well, I'm certain glad to see you? 'Tourists' like you are the sort we welcome heartiest to Ya'mouth. Fact, ain't it? The more folks know, the more they've traveled, the more they find to admire and enjoy even in such a place as this!" cried one old seaman, whom they met on their morning walk.

[Pg 102]

For having enjoyed a most excellent breakfast and the sun now shining brilliantly, they set out for a stroll through the pretty streets and past the charming gardens of the town; and finally brought up at the postoffice where there were letters for everybody, even for Dorothy.

Hers was from Jim Barlow, and full of news of the mountain and old friends there; saying, also, that he had been invited to join his tutor, the Rev. Mr. Sterling, who was sometimes called the "tramping parson," on a walking tour through the northern part of the Empire State. It was overflowing with enthusiasm over the places he would visit and the wonderful "good luck" which had so changed the life of the truck-farm lad; "and I mean to make the whole 'tramp' a part of my education. I tell you, Dolly girl, if there's much gets past me without my seeing and knowing it, it'll be when I'm asleep. Mr. Sterling's a geologist, and likes to take his vacation this way, so's he can find new stones, or hammer old ones to his heart's content.

"Whilst he's a hammering I'll be hunting things in the woods. I mean to make a regular list of every bird I see, and every animal, and study all their little habits and tricks. I'll carry some old newspapers and a book, too, so that if I come across any new kind of flower or plant I'll press it for you. That way my vacation'll be considerable of a help to you too.

[Pg 103]

"Try and learn all you can, Dorothy child, whilst you have the chance. There's nothing so perfectly grand in all this world as learning things. I've noticed you were getting a little flighty, along back, and setting more store by your clothes than you used to, or that a girl who'll have to teach for her living had ought to. Needn't get mad with me for reminding you. I can write it easier than I could say it to your face, some way; and amongst all the good times you're having don't forget to write to me once in a while, for we've been so like brother and sister this long time that I want to hear. So no more at present from your affectionate

"JAMES BARLOW.

"P. S.—I had a letter from Mrs. Cecil Somerset-Calvert. She wrote I was to call to Deerhurst and get Peter and Ponce, her two Great Danes, and take them with me on my tour. She'd already written to Mr. Sterling, because she knew he was a dog-lover, and he was pleased to have them on the trip. Good-by.

"JIM."

"Well, this changes our plans somewhat," remarked the Judge, looking up from one of his letters, with an expression of some disappointment. They had all paused outside the postoffice building to hastily scan their news, and now grouped about him in interest, as Mrs. Hungerford rather anxiously asked:

[Pg 104]

"Why, Schuyler, what's happened?"

"Oh! nothing unpleasant. Not at all. Only this is from Ihrie, and the boys will be on hand earlier than expected. So, to get around to all the places we want to see and yet be at our rendezvous in time we'll have to cut our stay here short. I wouldn't like to fail the boys."

"Not on any account!" exclaimed Aunt Lu, merrily; and then explaining to Miss Greateorex: "Let me tell you, Miss Isobel, that these 'boys' range anywhere from fifty to seventy-five years in age! and that one of them is a college president, another a world-famous surgeon, and the third an equally notable merchant. Old class-mates under their president, whom it is their glory to have with them on these annual trips."

"Why, I—I think that is beautiful!" returned the teacher, with so much enthusiasm that the others reflected how she was "waking up." "Beautiful," she added again, after a pause in which she had looked with new interest upon her own young pupils.

"Yes, we must get on. So let's plan our day the best we can, and take the evening express for Digby. How does this suit? To call a carriage and have you ladies driven all around, to 'do' Yarmouth as thoroughly as possible in so short a time. Don't wait dinner for me—for us. I have a visit to make which must not be postponed, since it concerns the interests of other people. I'll take the girls with me and give them a chance to see the inside of a Yarmouth cottage. Also, if we're invited, to taste a bit of native Yarmouth cookery. We'll get around back to the inn in time for collecting our traps and making the train. Eh?"

[Pg 105]

"Suits me well enough;" answered Mrs. Hungerford, and Miss Isobel nodded acquiescence, saying to the surprise of the others: "That descendant of 'Sealed Waters' might impart the most information of any driver, possibly."

"But—Molly! Why, Molly, what are you acting that way for?" demanded Dorothy, smiling at the antics of her mate. For the girl had hastily scanned two of her letters and having saved "the best to the last" was now prancing all over the sidewalk, waving the missive overhead and crying:

"Splendid! Splendid! SPLENDID!"

CHAPTER VII

[Pg 106]

FINNAN HADDIE IN A GARDEN

As Molly's excitement seemed pleasurable they did not tarry for its explanation but promptly separated; the ladies returning to their hotel to order their carriage and repack the few articles they had taken from their valises.

The Judge set off down the street, still examining his mail and bidding the girls to follow; and, as they did so, Molly exclaimed:

"It's just too lovely for words! Monty's coming, Monty's coming!"

Dorothy almost lost sight of the Judge as he turned a corner into a side street, so long she paused and so disgusted she felt.

"That boy! What's he coming for? I hope not to be with us!"

"Exactly what he is, then! We laid a little plan that last morning when we started. His mother was in Newburgh, you know, and hadn't decided where she would pass her vacation. So I suppose he went right to her and asked and she always does just what he wants. He writes that she'd never visited Nova Scotia nor Canada and was simply delighted to come. She wouldn't force their society upon our party, oh! no, not for anything! But she'll

[Pg 107]

manage to take the first steamer out from Boston and will go straight to Digby. We'll meet there; and if Aunt Lucretia doesn't think a Stark is good company for a Breckenridge, I'll know the reason why. Oh! fine, fine."

"Oh! nuisance, nuisance! But come on! Your father is ever so far ahead and we'll have to hurry to catch up."

They set off upon a run and for a few minutes neither spoke. Molly was disappointed that Dolly didn't "enthuse," and the latter felt that a boy—such a boy—would effectually spoil the good times she and her mate might have had together, alone. Finally, Molly asked:

"Who was your letter from?"

For answer and with considerable pride Dorothy drew James Barlow's epistle from its envelope and held it toward her friend, saying:

"You can read and see."

Molly read and returned the letter, with a little sniff of contempt and the remark:

"Huh! The only interesting part of that is the post-script. It will be just fine to have those dogs along. I suppose Mrs. Calvert sent them up from Baltimore to Deerhurst. But if I were you, Dolly Doodles, I wouldn't let that ignoramus preach to me like he does to you in that letter. He's a prig, that's what he is, and I hate a prig. So there."

"No, he isn't. Mr. Seth would say that he had only 'lost his head' for a minute. You see poor Jim can't get over the wonder of his getting his 'chance.' He's simply crazy-wild over learning—now. He believes it's the only thing in the world worth while. He didn't mean to scold me. I—I guess. If he did I don't mind. He's only Jim. He just knows I'll have to take care of my father and mother, some day, if our mineral spring and mine don't pay better than now. He's afraid I'll waste my 'chance,' that's all. Dear, faithful old Jim!"

[Pg 108]

"Pooh! Horrid, pokey old Jim, I say. But Monty'll have some fun in him; unless—he thinks two girls are poor company."

"I hope he will. I hope he'll coax your father and those old 'boys' to take him with them into the woods. That might do him some good and take the nonsense out of him."

"Well, Dorothy, I think that's not a nice thing for you to say. You must have forgotten the night of the fire and what he did to help you. There wasn't any 'nonsense' about Montmorency Vavasour-Stark then, if you please!"

Instantly touched by this reminder and fully regretful for her sarcasm—though still sorry that he was coming—Dolly returned:

"That's true, Molly, honey. I did forget, just for a minute. He's not half bad, Monty isn't; and I guess he'll be useful to climb trees and pick cherries for us, or get flowers that we can't reach. Anyhow, we're fairly dawdling and almost quarreling, and all the time your father is getting further away. See! He's stopping before that house? I'll race you to the gate!"

[Pg 109]

"All right. One—two—three—go!"

It was a charming little cottage before which they brought up at the Judge's side. Its front yard was small, so that the bay-windows one upon each side the door, came almost to the white paling before the grounds; but one could catch a glimpse of a deep garden behind and Dorothy's flower-loving soul was enchanted by it, even as by the contents of the windows.

"Oh! look! How lovely! Did you ever see such Gloxinias and Cyclamens? And that Weeping Fuschia in the other window! It is gorgeous, simply gorgeous! But how queer, too, to keep plants indoors as late as this! and their lace curtains up, right in the summer-time! Are we going in here, Judge Breckenridge?"

"Yes, indeed. I paused only to let your rhapsody have vent, though I really wish the little mistress of this home could have heard such a spontaneous tribute to her skill as a florist. You'll notice that peculiarity all through the Province. Window plants remain in the windows all the year round and there is scarcely a home that hasn't its share of them and its tiny conservatory, such as is here.

"Curtains? I hadn't thought why they're up, but maybe it's to keep out the prying gaze of too eager 'tourists.' A fine scorn the native always has for the average 'tourist'—though he has no scorn for the tourist's cash. Ah! Here she comes!"

[Pg 110]

At that instant his summons upon the tiny knocker was answered by the soft footfall of a woman, and the opening of the door a narrow way. Then it was as instantly flung wide and a dainty little housemistress, white-capped and white-haired, extended two small, toil-worn hands in greeting.

"Oh! Judge Breckenridge! You did give me such a start! But I'm so glad to see you! So more than glad. Do step right in, please. All of you step in."

"Thank you, Mrs. Cook, for your welcome and your invitation; but we'd rather step right out if you don't mind?"

"Why—sir!"

"No lack of appreciation, believe me. But I've a young lady here who is 'plumb crazy' over posies and, coming along on the steamer, I promised her a glimpse of some of Yarmouth's garden 'cosy corners.' I know none lovelier than your own; and as for your window-plants—I'm afraid if we don't take her away from temptation she'll break the glass and 'hook' one of your 'Gloxamens' or 'Cyclaglinias' or—"

The lady laughed as merrily as a girl and patted Dorothy's shoulder with appreciation of the Judge's joke. Then started to lead the way around the cottage into that inviting greenery behind, when a curious voice hindered her by a pathetic appeal:

[Pg 111]

"Mamma! Oh! Mamma! Don't go and leave poor Mum! Quisanthemum must go with Mamma!"

The visitors turned in surprise, toward this querulous "child" as the girls fancied it, though the Judge was already smiling his understanding of the matter. Then there appeared in the doorway a parrot, of wonderful plumage and exaggerated awkwardness; who waddled from side to side, climbed one side of its mistress's gown to her shoulder and walked head-first down the other, rolling its eyes and emitting the most absurd moans till the two girls were convulsed with laughter.

Then Mrs. Cook held out her wrist, the parrot settled on it, and they proceeded to the garden; the lady explaining:

"This little Miss Chrysanthemum is a spoiled baby. She's only a few months old, was brought to me by one of my sailor friends, and about rules the house now. Especially when my boy is away."

As she mentioned her "boy" the tiny woman looked rather anxiously into the Judge's face; and Dorothy noticed that her own was really quite young, despite the white hair and widow's cap which crowned it. She thought the lady charming, she was so small, so delicate and quaint. Yet there was the real "English color" on her still fair cheek and her eyes were as bright a blue as Molly's own.

"Son told me you would call. Also, Ephraim wrote me in his last letter; but I had not expected you to-day. I thought you were to be in Yarmouth for a week or more and didn't anticipate so prompt a kindness."

[Pg 112]

Then opening a little bag which hung fastened to her waist, the cottager drew from it a pair of blunt-pointed scissors and gave them to Dorothy, saying:

"It's you I see, who has the keenest eyes for flowers. Cut all you want of anything you fancy;" and she swept her hand rather proudly toward the hedges of sweet-peas, just coming into bloom, and the magnificent roses which were earlier in her protected garden than elsewhere in the town.

Had Dorothy known it, this was a rare privilege that had been accorded her. Mrs. Cook loved her flowers as she did her human friends and had a fancy that cutting them was almost as cruel as wounding a person she loved. Until they faded she never cut them for her own enjoyment; and only now and then nerved herself to clip them for the cheer of some ailing neighbor. She was therefore greatly pleased when the girl returned the scissors, after one questioning glance toward Molly, as to her possible disappointment.

"Thank you, Mrs. Cook, but I don't like to do that. They are so lovely and look so happy in this beautiful garden, I'd hate to. We shall be going, I'm told, and they'll only be ruined for nothing. But, if you please, I'd like to sit down on these steps and enjoy them. Wouldn't you, Molly? While your father talks with Mrs. Cook."

The steps belonged to a sort of lean-to, or outdoor kitchen. The little addition was covered with vines in leaf and more sweet-peas clambered about its base. Behind it was the living-room with its open door and table already set for dinner. A savory odor issued thence and set the girls to thinking how remarkably hungry they were, despite their late and substantial breakfast. Also, to wondering if Nova Scotia air was to whet their appetites this way all the time.

[Pg 113]

Thought Molly, in especial: "If it is I shall buy me a little bag to wear at my waist, as Auntie does, and fill it with crackers."

Then, thinking of food, she "pricked up her ears," hearing her hostess inviting:

"But, Judge Breckenridge, I would take it the highest honor if you would share our dinner with us. Of course, it isn't what I'd have liked to have, had I known. But my husband used to say, 'Welcome is the best sauce.' Besides, if you're to leave so soon I'll be glad to talk over that matter of which I just spoke. I am really so perplexed as to what is best. You've been so kind to my brother-in-law, Ephraim, that—"

She interrupted herself to laugh and observe:

"Yet that's presumptuous of me, too. The fact that you've been a kind adviser to one of the family doesn't form a precedent for all the rest of us. But, business aside, cannot you and your daughters join us?"

"Thank you. We will be most happy; though I must set you right on that point—of relationship. One is my daughter, the blonde, not the flower-lover; and one is my temporarily 'adopted.' Molly and Dolly their names; and two dearer little maids you'll travel far to find."

[Pg 114]

"Aye, they're fair bonny, and so unlike. Now, sit you down, please, while I dish up; and tell me, if you will, how does the man, Ephraim? He was ever in fear of his health but a better one never lived. After my sister died—the pair of us married brothers—he grew lost and finical. Nought we could do for him just suited the man. It was the grief, I knew. So, after he'd mumbled along more years than he'd ought, fending for himself, he crossed over to the States and drifted south to Richmond and you. 'Twas a sad pity he'd neither son nor daughter to cheer him in his widower life, but so was his Providence. Mine has been better. Son is my hope and—and my anxiety. He's not found his right niche yet, poor lad. There's a love of the sea in him, like his sailor father; but he's never got over that tragedy of his father's death."

"Where did that happen, Mrs. Cook? Ephraim told me he was drowned," asked the visitor, sympathetically.

"Off Pollock Rip Shoals. A bad and fearsome place that, where many an

honest fellow has sunk to his last sleep." She dashed a tear from her eye, and laid her hand for an instant upon her widow's cap. Then she went on more cheerfully, as if time had taught her resignation: "But that's a gone-by. Son's future isn't. It's laid upon me by the Lord to be both father and mother to the boy and I must study what's for *his* best, not mine. Ephraim wrote I was to consult you who are a Judge and wise. He said in his letter that he hadn't been a sort of general-utility-man in your office thus long without knowing it wasn't your best paying clients that got your best advice. That, wrote Ephraim, came out of your heart for the widows and orphans. We're that, son and I, and—What a garrulous creature I am!"

[Pg 115]

All the time the little woman had been talking she had also been preparing for the meal; and it now being ready to serve she stepped to the rear door, opening on the place where the girls were sitting, and announced:

"Our finnan haddie and greens are ready, young ladies, if you will come and partake of it. Also, lest you be disappointed, I'll say that there's a 'John's Delight' in the 'steamer,' and a dish of the best apples in the Province for the sweeties. Eh? What, my dear?"

To Dorothy's utter amazement Molly was doing a very rude thing. She had risen and made her very prettiest courtesy, but had supplemented this act of respect by the petition:

"Please, Mrs. Cook, may we have ours out here, on these steps?"

"Why, Molly!" cried her chum, in reproof. "The idea of giving all that trouble!"

"No trouble whatever, but a pleasure," replied the hostess, although she, also, was surprised.

Molly wheeled upon Dorothy, demanding:

[Pg 116]

"Wouldn't you like it here? Could you find a lovelier place to eat in? As for making trouble, I don't want to do that. I—if Mrs. Cook will just put it on one plate I'll fetch it here for us both. It would be like a picnic in a garden; and you could stay here and—and watch."

"Watch? What am I to watch, except these beautiful flowers?" asked Dolly, even further surprised.

Fortunately for Molly her father had not overheard her odd request or she would have received reproof far more effectual than Dorothy's. Also, Mrs. Cook was hospitality itself, and this meant wishing her guests to enjoy themselves after the manner they liked best.

As swiftly as either of the girls could have moved, she was back in the pleasant living-room, arranging a tray with a portion of the palatable dinner she had provided; saying in response to the Judge's inquiring expression:

"We thought it would be a fine thing, and one the lassies will long remember, to have their Bluenose dinner in a Bluenose garden. For all their lives long they can think of this summer day and my greenery yon; and, maybe, too, of the first time they ever ate 'finnan haddie' and 'John's Delight.' More than that, it will give us the freedom of speech with son, as it wouldn't were they sitting by. He's aye shy, is my laddie."

Then she carried out a little table, set it beside the steps and placed the tray thereon. After which she "Begged pardon!" and lifted up her gentle voice in an appeal that sounded almost pathetic in its entreaty.

[Pg 117]

"Son! Dear son Melvin! Come now to dinner with your mother! Son! SON!"

The last word was spoken in a tone he rarely disobeyed, and low-toned though it was, it was so distinctly uttered that people passing on the street beyond heard it. So also must he have heard who was summoned, if he was anywhere upon those premises—as he had been when these guests arrived.

However, he did not appear; and Mrs. Cook and the Judge sat down alone, while "Son" for whom that "home dinner" had been specially prepared was

"fair famished" for want of it.

Out upon the steps of that lattice-covered, vine-enwrapped summer-house, the two girls enjoyed their dinner greatly. In particular did mistress Molly. Her eyes sparkled, her dimples came and went, her smiles almost interfered with her eating, and her whole behavior was so peculiar that Dorothy stared. She was puzzled and began to be slightly disgusted, and at last remarked:

"Why, honey, I never saw you get so much—so much fun out of your food. I've heard about gourmands. I think I can guess now what they are and act like. Hark! What's that noise? Kind of a crackle, as if a cat or something was overhead among those vines. I hope it isn't. Cats love fish. I always have to shut up Lady Rosalind when Mother Martha has it for dinner. Isn't 'finnan haddie' a queer name?"

[Pg 118]

"Yes. I've heard Papa tell of it before. It's haddock smoked, some sort of queer way. But this is nice—My! How nice this is! Umm, umm, umm!" giggled Molly, as if she found something most amusing in the food she smacked her lips over in such a very strange manner.

"Well, Molly Breckenridge, one thing I can say for you. That is: it's a good thing Miss Rhineland is here to see you now. You—you act like a little pig. Excuse me, but you really do."

"Cats do like fish. Maybe it's a cat. Let's call it a cat, anyway," answered Molly, in no wise offended by her chum's plain speech. Then lifting her voice she began to call: "Kitty! Kitty! Kitty—kitty—kitty—kitty—kitty—come!" as fast as she could speak.

Just then Mrs. Cook came out to them to remove their plates and bring them generous portions of "John's Delight," a dessert which Molly declared was "first cousin to a Christmas plum pudding," and over which she was tempted to smack her lips in earnest, not pretence. A momentary soberness touched her merry face, however, when the hostess observed with keen regret:

"I am so sorry Son isn't here to do the honors of this little picnic. I don't see where he can have gone. His dinner on shore is always such a pleasure to him and besides—I wanted him to meet you all in a private fashion, not as a bugler aboard-ship."

[Pg 119]

"Maybe—maybe he is—*is* doing the honors!" said Molly, half choking over the strange remark. "Maybe he's—he can see—he's rather shy, isn't he? The sailor said they called him the 'Bashful Bugler.' But he—he bugles beautifully, especially first calls to meals which a seasick girl can't eat. I—"

Then she stopped abruptly. Mrs. Cook was looking at her with much the same expression Dorothy's mobile face had worn; and again from overhead came that ominous crackle of breaking twigs. Also, a few crushed leaves fluttered to the ground and caused Dorothy to exclaim:

"Must be a pretty big cat to tear things like that. Did you see it? Do you suppose it's a wildcat? Don't they have all sorts of creatures in the Nova Scotia woods? Do you suppose it's wild—"

"It certainly is. It's about the wildest thing I ever met—of its size. Isn't this pudding delicious? If I was a hungry, a sea-starved cat how angry I should be to be kept out of my share of it just by a couple of girls. Girls are cats' natural enemies. Sometimes girls eat cats—if they're nice, purry, pussy-cats! Some cats have blue eyes, and some—Why, Papa! Are you ready? Going so soon?"

"Yes, dear. I can't wait any longer. I am greatly disappointed in not seeing Melvin again; but possibly he may run up to the station before the train starts. I'll try to be there early. As early as I can, though I have some little affairs here still to attend to. Good-by, Mrs. Cook. I think the plan we have discussed is the best all round. It will be a test, so to speak. There is nothing like life in the woods together to break down all barriers of shyness

[Pg 120]

or reserve.

"Thank you, cordially, for your hospitality. I haven't enjoyed a dinner so much in many a day. I will see you again, if we return this way, and I will keep you informed of my address if our plan falls through and we have to try some other."

Deeply moved, the little mother began to utter her own profuse thanks; for what the listening girls did not know. But these were promptly suppressed by the Judge's manner of saying:

"Don't do that, yet, my dear lady. Wait and prove Ephraim's words are true. And now good-by again. I had hoped to have you and my sister meet, but our unexpected departure has prevented that until some more fortunate future day."

He raised his hat, bowed profoundly, and walked away; the girls making their adieus and expressing their own thanks for hospitality received in a manner which did credit to Miss Rhineland's training. Only Molly's cheek burned with an unusual blush, and she did not lift her eyes to Mrs. Cook's as readily and affectionately as Dorothy did.

The latter, indeed, was to receive a rare tribute; for the lady followed her to the street and slipping inside the front door broke from her beautiful Gloxinias a handful of blossoms and gave them to the girl, saying:

[Pg 121]

"My dear, I'm sure you will appreciate these; and I'm equally sure you and I have much in common. Good-by. May all good things attend you." Then she kissed the red lips which had impulsively kissed her and watched them all out of sight.

But she did not kiss Molly; and though that young person would not have expected such a caress, she was for an instant jealous of that bestowed upon Dorothy.

The Judge waited for them to join him and taking a hand of each, in his fatherly fashion, remarked:

"I find that sailor's widow a very charming woman and a perfect hostess. No apologies for what she had to offer, though in her heart a slight regret that it was not of some sort more expensive. A pity Melvin didn't appear. I would have liked to study him in his mother's presence. One can always tell what a boy is by the way he treats his mother; and I wasn't pleased that he so disregarded her call to dinner, because she said he had been there when I knocked and after we had entered the garden itself."

A sudden comprehension of the state of things flashed through Dorothy's mind, and she turned her eyes inquiringly toward Molly, who flushed, hesitated, and finally burst forth:

"He couldn't come, Papa dear, because—because I wouldn't let him! He got caught in the trap of his own horrid bashfulness."

Somehow Molly was no longer giggling, as she had been at intervals ever since they reached the cottage. Things didn't look as "funny" as they had a few minutes before; nor was she pleased to have the Judge stop short on the path and demand:

[Pg 122]

"Explain yourself, daughter."

"Why it's easy enough. When that Melvin boy, that bugler, saw us coming to that porch he was scared stiff. He just looked at us a second, then scrambled up that lattice-work to the top of that arbor or whatever it is, and—course he had to stay there. That's why I sat down on those steps. Why I wanted my dinner out there. Oh! it was the funniest thing! A great big boy like him to stay up on such an uncomfortable place just because two girls whom he'll never see again had sat down beneath him. Of course, he'd have to pass us to answer his mother's call to dinner; and he'd rather go without that than do it. Oh! it was too funny for words! And when the leaves fell Dolly thought it was the 'cat.' She wondered if it was a 'wildcat,' and I said

'yes, it was wild!' Oh! dear! I was so amused!"

Dorothy laughed. To her the affair had also its "too funny" side, now that she understood it. But the Judge did not laugh. If he felt any secret amusement at the girlish prank he did not betray it in his expression, which was the sternest his daughter had ever seen when bent upon her idolized self.

"Well, Molly, you certainly have distinguished yourself. The joke which might have been harmless under some circumstances was an abominable rudeness under these. I am ashamed of you. I shall expect you to write a note of apology to Mrs. Cook, before you leave Yarmouth. And as for never seeing Melvin again, let me set you right. I have invited the lad to join us for our entire summer vacation. Understand?"

[Pg 123]

Alas! She understood but too well. Yet if a bomb had exploded at her feet she could hardly have been more astonished.

CHAPTER VIII

[Pg 124]

DOROTHY AND THE BASHFUL BUGLER

The main street of pretty Digby runs close to the water. The bluff is crowned by a grassy sward and a row of well-grown trees, with a driveway between these and the buildings on the further side.

"Oh! how lovely and how different from our own seaside places, with their hot sands, board walks, and cityfied shops. I hope no board walk will ever spoil this charming boulevard!" exclaimed a lady, who stood at a hotel window overlooking Annapolis Basin, on whose shore nestles the little town.

"Yes, Mamma! Aren't you glad you came?" asked Monty Stark, entering the room and joining her at the window.

"I hope I shall be, dear. I'm a little anxious about your friends. I should greatly object, myself, to having people force themselves upon a touring party I had organized. But you must understand, Montmorency, that if I discover the slightest sign of objection to us, I shall go on my own way and you will have to go with me. I—I am not accustomed to being patronized or—no matter. I came to please you, my precious boy, and I hope it will be all right. Let me see if you are quite correct. I suppose the guests wear evening dress for dinner as in other civilized places. Though—it looks more like a country village yonder, than a real watering place."

[Pg 125]

"But, Mamma, it is a country village. Nothing else, the Judge says. And somehow I feel rather silly in this rig. I saw the Judge a moment ago and he wasn't in evening clothes, but he's a 'brick' all right!"

"Montmorency! How can you use such dreadful expressions?"

"Easy as preaching, *chere Maman!*"

"I'm afraid your associates at Brentnor are not all of them as refined and exclusive as I had supposed. I've observed other phrases that I do not like. One of them was, I think, 'Shucks!'"

"Yes, I reckon you did. I didn't catch that from a Brentnor, though, but from Jim Barlow."

"Who is he, pray?"

"Blest if I can tell or he either. He hails from a poorhouse. He was 'bound out' to a woman truck farmer. He's been 'taken up' by Mrs. Cecil Somerset-Calvert, of Baltimore, and lots of other places. A lady that's so rich she has homes in ever so many different parts of the country. But better than that he's a 'trump,' a life-saver, a scholar, and—a gentleman! One of 'Nature's'

you know. Would like to have you meet him because he's my present chum; that is, he would be if—if we lived in the same house and could be. But unfortunately, he has agreed to do 'chores' for a parson in payment for his instruction in Greek and all the 'ologies.' He's off on a tramp now, 'hoofing it,' as he elegantly expresses it, for a vacation. He's taken the parson and a couple of dogs along for company. The parson's a trotting tramper, too. Maybe you've read some of his delightful articles in the magazines. Eh? What? Too much for you, Mamma? Well, never mind. I'll quit now, for there goes the last bell for dinner. Allow me?"

[Pg 126]

Bowing and offering his arm Monty conducted his richly clad mother toward the dining-room, whither a crowd of tourists were hastening. These were garbed in any sort of comfortable traveling clothes, the women mostly in white shirt-waists such as Mrs. Stark would have disdained even for morning wear at home. The men looked as if they had just come from a dusty train, a too-fragrant fishing boat, or a rough camp in the woods; and at the foot of the stairs the fashionable Mrs. Stark paused in a sort of dismay.

For an instant, too, she had an odd feeling as if it were she who had made a mistake, not those groups of merry, hungry holiday-makers, who elbowed one another good naturedly, in order to find a seat at the crowded tables. Mrs. Stark wasn't used to elbowing or being elbowed, and she gathered her silken train in her hand to preserve it from contact with the oil-cloth covered floor of the lobby, while her face gathered an expression of real alarm.

"Why, my dear son! We can't stay here, you know! It is simply impossible to hobnob with such—such queer persons. We must seek another hotel at once. I'll step into that room yonder which is the 'parlor' probably, and you summon the proprietor. I—I am not accustomed to this want of courtesy and—indeed, dear, I am greatly displeased with you. You painted the trip in such glowing colors I—"

[Pg 127]

"But, Mamma, don't the colors glow? Did you ever see anything in your life lovelier than this glimpse of the Annapolis Basin, with the moonlight on it, the great peaks and cliffs beyond? I'm sorry if you're disappointed but you didn't seem to be up in your room, looking out. As for changing hotels we'd simply 'hop out of the frying pan into the fire,' since this is the best one in the town. Else Judge Breckenridge wouldn't have come here."

"Monty, dear! Such phrases again! Is that another lesson learned from the poorhouse boy?"

"No, indeedy! I caught that from Alfaretta Babcock. She of the *retroussé* nose and simple speech. A royal sort of girl, too, is Alf; first of the alphabetical Babcock sisters. The second is—But come, Mamma. We're in for it and I don't want to go to bed hungry, even if you do. I'm afraid, Mother mine, that there's been too much 'de luxe' in your life and I shall have to reconstruct you."

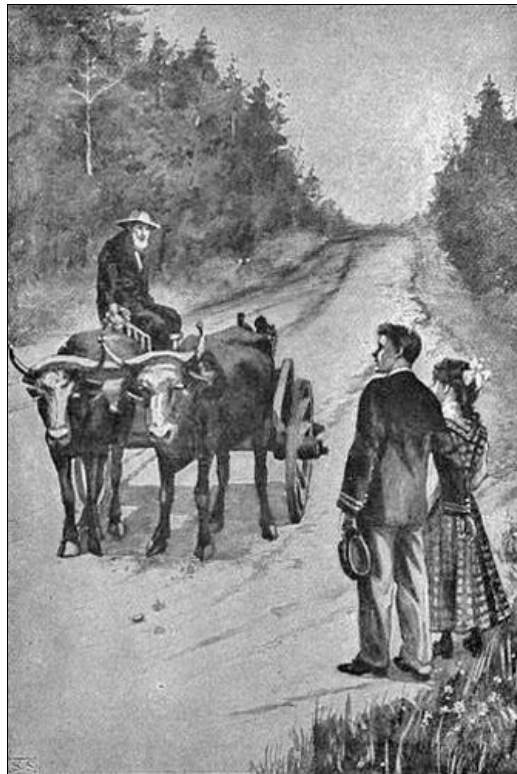
His mirthful face provoked her to laughter despite her real vexation and fortunately, at that moment, Mrs. Hungerford entered the room and advanced to Mrs. Stark with extended hand and the warmest of greetings.

[Pg 128]

"This is Monty's mother, I'm sure. I am Molly's Auntie Lu. We exist I fancy, for our respective youngsters and mine discovered you through the doorway of the dining-room and commissioned me to fetch you. We've had seats reserved for you at our table in the corner and I apologize for not hunting you up earlier. The truth is we were out driving until the last moment and were greatly hurried ourselves. So, of course, we were none of us here when the train came in and I did not know you had arrived. Shall we go now? You will find that people grow desperately hungry when they first come into this bracing air, and with the best intentions in the world, the proprietor isn't always able to provide enough for such clamorous appetites. My brother says that explains the rather rude crowding to get 'first table,' and that our remedy lies in doing a bit of crowding ourselves. I rather enjoy it, already, though we only came here yesterday. Did you have

a pleasant trip?"

"No, I did not. I was never on such a poor steamer before. Fortunately I wasn't ill and it's not a long sail from Boston across. Is it really true, as Montmorency tells me, that there is no better hotel than this?" returned the other, rising to follow Auntie Lu.



**"HELLO SNACKENBERG! HERE
AM I! GIVE ME A RIDE?"
*Dorothy's Travels.***

Since Monty had said that he was hungry, of course, she would stay for that one meal and let him get comfortable. Afterward—she would follow her own judgment.

[Pg 129]

But she, also, was gently bred and born, and despite a lack of plain common sense was an agreeable person in the main. She had responded to Mrs. Hungerford's greeting with a correct society manner; and now, as she followed toward the dining-room, she bestowed upon that lady's back a keenly critical survey. She saw that Aunt Lucretia was well but simply gowned in white. She was immaculately fresh, and fragrant from her bath with a faint odor of violets about her that pleased rather than offended nostrils which habitually objected to "perfumery" as something common and vulgar.

Her gown might have been expensive but did not look so and was eminently more fit for an evening dinner in a tourists' hotel than the elaborate costume of Mrs. Stark.

Though she had been but twenty-four hours in the place, Auntie Lu had already adapted herself to it completely, and smiled away the services of a rather frightened head-waitress new to her business, as she threaded her way toward that distant corner of the crowded room where her own table overlooked the water.

A little hush fell over the adjoining tables as Mrs. Stark's elegance bore down upon them in her majestic way. She was portly and heavy-motined, as poor Monty was apt to be when he should arrive at her age; and chairs had to be drawn in closer, feet tucked under them, and heads bent forward as she passed by.

[Pg 130]

As for the youth in her train misery and mortification shone on his chubby countenance. For a boy he had been absurdly fond of dress, but he had also a keen sense of what was fit and he knew his present costume was not that.

However, all this trivial unpleasantness passed, as the entering pair were greeted by the rest of the party. The Judge still wore a business suit but his manner, as he rose to be presented to Mrs. Stark was so polished and correct that her spirits revived, thinking:

"Well, the people are all right, if the place isn't."

She acknowledged Miss Isobel's greeting with a slight haughtiness, such as she felt was due a social inferior. Upon Molly she bestowed an admiring smile and glance; and upon Dorothy a rather perfunctory one. The girl might also be "poorhouse born" for aught anybody knew, and from contact with such her "precious lamb" was to be well protected. She intended to see to it that further intercourse between her son and that "tramp," Jim Barlow, should be prevented also; and while she marvelled that "the Breckenridges" should make much of the girl, as apparently they did, it wasn't necessary that she should do the same. Monty had told her all about each member of the party so that Dorothy's story was familiar to her. The lad had concluded his recital with the words:

"She's the bravest, sincerest girl in the world. She's braver than Molly Breckenridge, and I like her immensely. All the boys at Brentnor think she's fine, and we all hope some grand romance will come out of the facts of her parentage. She doesn't come of any illiterate, common stock, Mamma. You may be sure of that. So I hope you'll be nice and not—not too *Stark-ish* toward her, please!"

[Pg 131]

So this was the girl who had saved life. Of that grim teacher opposite and, later, of a farmer's son out of a tree where he was hanging. Very creditable, of course, though it couldn't affect herself, Mrs. Ebenezer Vavasour-Stark, and she fixed her attention elsewhere.

It was due to the Judge that she altered her opinion of her present quarters so far as to decide upon remaining in them; and to make the best of the whole trip, "which you know is but a prolonged picnic. As for air and health and strength, you could find nothing better the world over, my dear Madam," he had said.

After that first dinner also she had a talk with her son; which resulted in his displaying a common sense that did him credit.

"Look here, Mamma. Let's just pack all these over-fine togs in the trunks and leave them here to be sent to us when wanted. All we shall need, I fancy, is a suit-case a-piece with the plainest things we own. Even that 'fancy' hunter's suit I bought is ridiculous. The Judge uses the oldest sort of things—'regular rags,' Molly says; and I—I may *be* a fool but I don't like to *look* like one! Do it, Mamma, to please me. And let's put our 'society' manners into the trunks with the clothes. Let's live, for these few weeks, as if we were real poor—as poor as Dolly or Miss Greatorex. I don't believe even that lady has any money to speak of and as for Dorothy, she hasn't a cent. Not a cent."

[Pg 132]

"How do you know that, Montmorency? Are you on such intimate terms with that foundling that she confides the state of her finances to you? If so, she is probably hinting for presents."

"Umm. Might be. Didn't look like it though when I proposed just now to buy her one of those Indian baskets on sale in the lobby. She wouldn't take one, though Molly took all I wanted to give—and more. *That* girl hasn't any scruples about having a good time and letting anybody pay that wants to."

"That, son, is a proof of good birth and breeding, she has always been accustomed to having her wants supplied and takes it as a matter of course. But, Monty darling, you must be good to Mamma. She doesn't feel as if she had come to a 'Paradise of a place,' as you told me I would find it. Yet if it pleases you to see your mother dressed like a servant why, of course, for your sake I'll consent. But I warn you, no skylarking with underbred people or I shall take you straight home."

This little conversation shows that Mrs. Hungerford was right when she

informed her brother on that same evening:

"We made a blunder when we allowed the Starks to join our personal party. They fit into it about as well as a round peg in a square hole. The woman—Well, she may be high-born and rich but I don't want our Molly to copy her notions. She's not nice, either, to poor Miss Isobel nor Dorothy. The result is that Miss Greatorex has grown more difficult and 'stiff' than she was in the beginning. Such a pity when she's just begun to get softer and more human!"

[Pg 133]

In his heart the Judge was not over-pleased by this untoward opening of the new association, but he wouldn't admit it to her. He merely said:

"I'm sorry if you're going to let the prejudices of silly women spoil your own vacation. Don't do it. Just remember what you often say, that human nature is the same everywhere. We have the pride of wealth to contend with on one hand and the pride of poverty on the other; but beneath each sort of pride lies an honest heart. I believe it, and that we shall yet see these two opposing elements merged in a warm friendship. Watch for it. It takes all sorts of people to make a world and another sort will be added, to-morrow, when Melvin joins us. Throw in the college Prex, the millionaire financier, and surgeon Mantler, and we shall have a miniature world of our own in our traveling mates."

"Schuyler, you haven't told me yet what part that lad Melvin is to play in this 'world.' Why did you ask him?"

"To test him, Lu, nothing else. His mother is anxious he should make a man of himself and isn't sure how best he can. She permitted him to take a bugler's place on the 'Prince' because he wanted to try a sea-faring life. Two seasons of it, even under the comfortable conditions of a passenger steamship, has sickened him of that. He fancied he could be a musician and has talent sufficient only to 'bugle.' Now he wants to see the world, though he didn't dream I was to offer him a chance. She thinks he would make a good lawyer, and so his uncle Ephraim thinks. Her pastor thinks he ought to be a minister; and the only point upon which all his friends and himself agree is that he should not spend all his days in 'Ya'mouth.' I'm going to take him to camp with me, to act as handy-man for all of us. That will give me a chance to see what stuff he's made of; and if he's worth it—if he's worth it—I'll take him down to Richmond and set him at the law."

[Pg 134]

"Molly, however, must let him alone. That girl can upset more plans than the wisest man can lay; and if she gets to teasing him on account of his strange bashfulness she'll scare him away from us and disappoint his mother's tender heart. *She* thinks that 'son' is a paragon of all the virtues. So does this other mother who's just joined us, think of her beloved Montmorency Vavasour-Stark. What a name! Between them and their 'laddies' I reckon I shall have less peace than from the wildest of tricky Molly's capers."

"Schuyler, you mustn't be hard on her. She's exactly like what you were at her age! And she is the dearest child, you know it!"

[Pg 135]

"I must have been what you call 'a sweet thing,' then! But, of course, she's my own 'crow,' therefore she's pure white," laughed the adoring father, with more earnest than jest.

"Also, brother, in all your plans for others don't forget little Dorothy's. I know you're busy but I must find out who her own people are. I *must*. It's a sin and a heartless one to keep her young heart longer in suspense. I know she often ponders the thing, in spite of her cheerfulness, even gayety."

To which he returned:

"Don't attribute more pondering to her than belongs. Of the two I fancy you do the most of that. Nor think I've forgotten her interests. Her history is already being unravelled, thread by thread, and stitch by stitch. When the thread's wound clear up I trust it may make a goodly ball."

"Oh! my dear brother, what do you mean?" cried Aunt Lucretia, eagerly.

"I mean that I set old Ephraim Cook to the task. He's already down at Annapolis, fairly burrowing in archives and genealogies, and the skeleton closets of all our old Maryland families. It's the most congenial task he ever undertook in all his generally-useful life; for back here in 'Markland' he's long ago prepared a history of the peninsula that deserve publishing. He can trace every Bluenose household to its very beginning, and claims his own came to this side the sea in the Mayflower. That's one reason he wants Melvin, the last of his race, to make a name for it. Trust me he'll forage for our Dorothy better than I could myself; but he isn't to disturb us with letters of theories or 'maybes.' When he gets his facts—hurrah for the *dénoûment*! Now, dear, to your rest. The burdens of a peacemaker rest on your shoulders but—you'll make and keep the peace. Good night."

[Pg 136]

After all, when the sun rose on the following morning and this oddly assorted traveling party met to discuss the day's plans, each was so rested and refreshed that an abnormal amiability pervaded the whole group.

"What would you like to do best?" "Oh, no! You say!" "I'm sure whatever the rest propose will be agreeable to me in the way of sight-seeing." "Or even staying quietly at the hotel and just enjoying the outlook on the sea."

Such were the remarks exchanged and with such suavity of manner that Molly clapped her hands and cried:

"I declare, you're all too sweet to be wholesome! And it happens that I know what *I* want to do, even if you don't. Let's go away down to the end, I mean the beginning, of the town where they are curing fish. I saw them from the car window, and even then they were so interesting. I mean the fish were. Or—or the things where they fixed them. And, beg pardon, Mrs. Stark, even if you looked at that water all day long you couldn't make it into a 'sea.' It's only a Basin, the fag end of Annapolis Basin. Yonder, where there are so many sails and steamers, is the Bay of Fundy, and to get to the really truly sea you must go beyond that. The reason I'm so wise, if you want to know, is that I've been here twenty-four hours longer than you and I improved my time by asking questions."

[Pg 137]

With that the little maid swept her new acquaintance a courtesy and smiled so sweetly that any presumption on her girlish part was readily forgiven. Besides she was a Breckenridge; and though Mrs. Stark had now resolved to be as "democratic" as her new friends were it was easier resolved than practiced. If it had been Dorothy who ventured to plan for her elders her suggestions would have been coolly ignored.

The Judge drew near in time to hear the end of the talk and added:

"That is a sight we won't meet elsewhere in the same proportion as here. Also, the walk will do us good, and we shall pass the postoffice on our way. I like going for my own mail to the 'general delivery' better than having it sent to the hotel. I like the mingling with the eager crowd that waits before the little window to ask: 'Anything for me?' I like to watch the faces of the people when they open their letters. One can guess the 'home' ones by the expression of joy and the merely friendly by the indifference. I like—"

"Dear Schuyler, spare us! If there's anything upon earth you *don't* like that's even half-way interesting I can't guess it." Then turning to Mrs. Stark, Mrs. Hungerford added: "Brother is like a boy when he gets leave of absence, this way. Suppose you walk along with him and find out if there is anything he *doesn't* like along the way."

[Pg 138]

Her brother gave her an arch glance. Evidently she had begun her peaceful adjustment of "assorted" temperaments by assigning himself to Mrs. Stark's escort, though she knew all the time that he wanted to be with the youngsters. She placed herself along side Miss Isobel, smiling at that lady's inquiry if she were going into a public street without a hat.

"Surely. 'When in Rome do as the Romans do,' you remember. And see. Though most of the people have on some sort of wrap very few women are

bonneted and even the men carry their hats in hand. Brother has snatched his off already."

The Judge was in front, attentively courteous and listening to Mrs. Stark's remarks, yet seemed to have eyes in the back of his head; for presently he asked:

"What are you youngsters lagging behind for? Dolly, take Melvin under your shelter and make him tell you everything you want to know about Digby. He's been here before many times, I've learned. And Molly, you and Monty walk ahead if you please. I like to keep my eye on my own and I fancy Mrs. Stark does too."

Separated from these two, who had been in the rear of the whole party, Melvin did exert himself to overcome his abnormal shyness and to talk; and when after proceeding a little way and his finding Dorothy eagerly observant of even the most trivial things that were new to her, he had an abrupt burst of courage—or was it a harmless spite against his tormentor of the day before, Molly? Whatever it was that emboldened him, he suddenly laid his hand on her arm and said:

[Pg 139]

"Wait just a minute! There comes a man I know. He's a transplanted Yarmouthian who's moved to Digby to 'haul' for his livelihood. He'll be glad to see me and hear the news from home; and won't want to waste time in doing it. I'll ask him to give us a ride. I don't believe either of you girls from the States ever did ride in such an equipage."

She had paused as he wished and was listening in surprise. As much because he talked so well and so easily as at the really joyous tone in which he hailed his uncouth acquaintance from "Home."

"Hello, Snackenber! Here am I! Give me a ride?"

"Well, well, well! Son of all the Cooks! What you doin' here? Allowed you was sailin' the 'blue and boundless' just about now!" cried the teamster and leaning forward shook the lad so heartily by his own hard hand that Melvin squealed and protested:

"Well, we can't stand here, you know. I'll just help this young lady in—she's from the States—and you can jog on."

[Pg 140]

The team was of the sort that is always willing to stop, and the "equipage" was easily entered by merely stepping into its open rear. It swung low to the ground, after the fashion of Nova Scotian carts, and for seats it had a bundle of clean straw.

In another moment the animals had been goaded to fresh effort, their owner had turned about on the chain where he balanced himself for a seat and also turned a corner into a side street that climbed the hill behind the town. Then he ordered:

"Fire ahead! Tell everything you know; and I say, Sissy, did you ever see a purtier pair of creeturs than them be? I'm prouder of 'em than I could be of the finest team o' thoroughbreds ever stepped. Gee, there! Haw, I tell ye!"

Beyond, at the postoffice, the truants had been suddenly missed; and with varying degrees of anxiety their elders were asking one another:

"What do you suppose has become of Dorothy and that queer boy?"

But Molly was more vexed than anxious and she looked upon Monty with rising disfavor. She guessed that they were having some fun from which she was shut out and which Montmorency Vavasour-Stark would never have had the originality to suggest.

"Oh! I wish I knew! Maybe they're eating each other up! Yesterday she asked if he was a 'wildcat' and I told her 'yes.' Maybe, maybe—Oh! Why did you make us walk in front, namby-pamby so, Papa dear? If we'd been with them we'd know what they are doing and what has happened. Oh! dear! If I hadn't been in front I'd have been behind!" she complained. Nor was she

[Pg 141]

CHAPTER IX

[Pg 142]

AN OX-OMOBILE AND A SAILBOAT

Even Melvin had not expected that Dorothy and he would long be away from the rest of the party, though he did not realize that he was in any wise responsible to them, since his duties as camp-helper had not yet begun. But he enjoyed his freedom from the society of so many strangers and found Dorothy a pleasant companion. She might have been just another boy, for any "nonsense" there was about her; and she was so delighted with everything he pointed out that he, also, began to find new beauties in the familiar scenery, and to grow eager to show her all he could.

For the teamster prolonged his journey to the very crest of the hill behind the town, and made it slowly. He had so many questions to ask concerning his old neighbors that he delayed all he reasonably could and rather resented Melvin's attempts to entertain Dorothy.

"That's Point Prim lighthouse, yonder. See? Yes, Joel, Reuben Smith did paint his house bright blue, just as he vowed he would to spite his neighbor. That's Digby Gap, where the two hills come so near together in the water. The boats that sail from here have to pass through it and travelers say—No. I didn't hear what price that Company did get for its last 'catch.' Lobsters haven't been running so free this year, I hear; and there's another company started canning them. If Judge Breckenridge stays long enough I hope he'll take you sailing up Bear River. It's a nice drive there, too, but the sail is better. Up yonder is the Joggin—Why, Joel, I'm sure I don't know. I hadn't heard."

[Pg 143]

Such was a sample of the talk which went on and which provoked from the lad, at last, the comment:

"Learning under difficulties!" which he said with such an amused glance toward Dorothy that she laughed and felt that Molly had been right in her belief that "that boy has some fun in him." Thought of Molly made her also exclaim:

"Oh! I do wish she were here! She would have liked this so much! I don't believe she ever rode in an ox-cart either, any more than I did before. How funny it is! And how much longer shall we be? I'm afraid I ought to have asked Mrs. Hungerford or Miss Greatorex before I came. But I didn't think. I never do think till—afterward."

"Glad of it. Glad you didn't, else likely you'd have lost the ride. Joel doesn't call this an ox-cart, though. Not by any means. This, if you please, is an 'ox-omobile,' and very proud of it he is. Guess you needn't worry. Nobody can get lost in little Digby; and—Where now, Joel? How much longer will you be?"

"Oh! I reckon not long. Just a little minute or few. Depends on folks havin' their trunks ready to haul. Some towerists have been stopping up here to one these houses and engaged me to take their luggage down to the pier. They're goin' over to St. John, I reckon, only one of 'em. She's goin' to the dee-po. When we go down hill you two may set on the trunks—if you can!" and Mr. Snackenbergh laughed at his own thoughts.

[Pg 144]

The trunks did happen to be ready. Indeed the "towerists" were even impatient to be gone and were just starting to walk to the pier when the carter arrived. They looked rather enviously at Dorothy and Melvin, so comfortably seated in the cart, but its owner did not extend an invitation to them to ride. Indeed, as he explained to his companions:

"If I was a mind I could have all Digby village a ridin' in my 'ox-omobile.'

They seem to think it's powerful cunnin', as if they'd never seen a team of oxen before. Where've they lived at, I'd like to know, that they don't know an ox when they see it. There. Them trunks is in. Now, Sissy, you just set right down and—You'll find out the rest."

The trunks did fill the cart pretty well but there was plenty of room to put one's feet in the spaces between; and Dorothy fixed herself comfortably, wondering why Melvin disdained to ride but strode along beside the teamster who also walked. Throned in solitary state all went well for awhile, until a corner was turned and the steep descent into the town began. Then the trunks slid upon the slippery hay, resting their weight against the chain at the rear, which alone prevented their falling out; and after a few efforts to maintain her seat Dorothy also sprang to the ground and joined the others.

[Pg 145]

"Ha, ha, ha! Ridin' up-hill and ridin' down is two quite different things, ain't it, Sissy? Ever been to the pier to see the boat start across the Bay to St. John's, New Brunswick? No? First time you been to the Province? All right. You stick close to me and I'll p'int out all the 'lions' there is to see. Melvin, here, can talk as glib as the next one when he gets waked up, but I know more about Digby 'an he does. One the sights towerists rave the most over is the fish-grounds. They're right adj'ining the pier and you can kill them two 'lions' at once. Ha, ha!"

"But, sir, I'm afraid I ought to go back. I mean—to where my friends are. Is the pier on the road home?" asked Dorothy.

"All roads lead home—for somebody. The pier and the fish-curin' grounds amongst 'em. Don't you vex yourself, Sissy. If you was to go from one end to the other of this little town you couldn't never get fur from where you live."

The truth was that the old teamster wanted to keep the young folks with him as long as he could. There were still numberless questions he hadn't put to Melvin and he had taken a fancy to Dorothy. If she was simply a "towerist" she was, of course, an idler and it was of no consequence her wasting her time. He hadn't learned yet why Melvin was here and if he didn't find that out he felt he "couldn't bear it." So now he asked:

[Pg 146]

"Well, son of all the Cooks, what's fetched you here this time o' day? Lost your job?"

"Not exactly. I've given it up. I'm tired of sailing back and forth over the same old route and a friend of mine wanted to take my place. I'm going to help a gentleman I know in his camping out. Cook, maybe, or whatever he wants. Now—that's all. You needn't ask me how much I earn, or what's next, or anything. You just go ahead and tell this Miss Dorothy anything you fancy; since you know so much more of things than I do."

"H'ity-t'ity! Miffed, be ye? Never mind. You'd ought to rest your tongue, 'cause I 'low it's never wagged so fast afore in your whole life. But I'm ekal to it. I'm ekal. I've growed to be a regular 'Digby chicken,' I've tarried here so long already. Ever eat 'Digby chicken,' Sissy?"

Joel was affronted in his own turn now and determined to ignore that "Miss" which Melvin had pronounced so markedly. Joel wasn't used to "Miss"-ing any girl of Dorothy's size and he wasn't going to begin at his time of life. Not he!

Meanwhile, Melvin had relapsed into utter silence. He declined to answer any of the teamster's further questions, and if his knowledge of the locality had been quite as accurate as he had boasted he would have suggested to the girl that they take a short-cut back to the hotel. Yet, he had heard that teasing Molly say they were bound for the fish-grounds. Beyond these lay, also, that notable Battery Point, with its rusty old guns; its ancient, storm-bent trees; and the Indian encampment still further along. He had seen tourists so many times that he fancied they were all alike, full of curiosity, and with ample leisure to gratify it. So, in all probability, the Judge and his

[Pg 147]

friends were still at that end of town and he had better stick to Joel till he conducted the girl and him to their presence. Then he would himself vanish until such time as the Judge might require his service.

They came to the pier and drove along its great length, the teamster pointing out all sorts of interesting things, so that Dolly forgot all else in her eager listening.

"Forty feet high the tide rises sometimes, right on this very p'int. That's why it's built so lofty. Look over the edge. See that sloping wharf clean down into the water? Well, sir, that's where folks land sometimes; and other times away up top here. My heart! The pretty creetur!"

Joel abruptly checked his team and stooped above something lying on the wide planking of the pier. Then he lifted the object and handed it to Dorothy, explaining:

"That's a poor little cobby-moddy! A little baby gull. Pity! Something's hurt it, but it's alive yet. Makes me feel bad to see any young creetur suffer; most of all to see a bird. Put it in the crook of your elbow, Sissy, and fetch it along. I'll take it home with me and see if I can't save its life."

[Pg 148]

After a moment he added, seeing her look wistful, as he thought:

"I'd give it to you, Sissy, but towering folks haven't no time nor chance to tend sick birds. It'll be better off in my house than jogglin' over railroads and steamboats."

There was sense in this as Dorothy rather reluctantly admitted, for she would have liked to keep the "cobby-moddy" and made a pet of it. With Joel, however, it would simply be cured and set free, or it would die in peace. Also she was touched by the real tenderness with which the rough-handed teamster made a nest in the straw of his cart and placed the bird upon it.

He had first deposited the trunks in the baggage-room and there was nothing to keep him longer; so with another whimsical glance at Melvin, who had sauntered behind them, he remarked:

"Right this way to the fishin'-grounds! 'Stinks a little but nothin' to hurt!'"

Then in the fatherly fashion which almost every man she met adopted toward her, he held out his hand to Dorothy C. and led her back over the pier and around to the broad field where numbers of men were salting and piling the haddock and cod they had caught. The fish were piled in circles or wheel-like heaps, after they were sufficiently dried; and the fresher ones were spread upon long frames to "cure." It was a great industry in that locality and one so interesting to Dorothy that she wanted to linger and watch the toilers despite the decidedly "fishy" odor which filled the air.

[Pg 149]

But Joel said that he must leave them then and, after pointing with his whip to a grassy plain beyond the fishing-grounds, advised:

"Best step right over to the Battery, Sissy, now you're so nigh it. I've learned in my life that things don't happen twice alike. Maybe you won't be just here again in such terr'ble agreeable company—" and he playfully touched Melvin on the shoulder—"and best improve it. And, Sissy, strikes me you're real likely. Sort of a common sense sort of little creetur without so many airs as some the girl-towerists put on. If so be 't you stop a spell in Digby just tip me the wink and I'll haul you with any load I happen to have on my 'Mobile.' Or, if so be we never meet again on earth, be sure, little Sissy, 't you meet me in Heaven. Good-by, till then."

Off he went and left Dorothy standing looking after him with something very like tears in her brown eyes. Such a quaint figure he looked in his long blue smock, his worn hat pushed to the back of his head, his sandy beard sweeping his breast; jogging beside his beloved team, doing his duty simply as he found it "in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him."

"He's a very religious man, Joel Snackenber, and never loses a chance to 'pass the word.' My mother sets great store by him and I must write her

about our meeting him. Shall we go to the Battery or back to the hotel? Your friends don't—aren't anywhere in sight, so I suppose they've gone there," remarked Melvin.

[Pg 150]

"Then we ought. Indeed, I feel afraid we've stayed too long; and yet I can't be sorry, since we've met that dear old man."

Melvin had promptly recovered his "glibness" upon the departure of the teamster; and though he looked at her in some surprise he answered:

"I don't believe many girls would call him 'dear.' I shouldn't have thought of doing so myself. That Molly wouldn't, I know; but you have a way of making folks—folks forget themselves and show their best sides to you, so I guess. Anyhow, I never talked so much to any girl before, and you're the only one in all that crowd I don't feel shy of. Even that boy—Hmm."

"Thank you. That's the nicest thing I ever had said to me. And don't you think that life—just the mere living—is perfectly grand? All the time meeting new people and finding out new, beautiful things about them? Like Mr. Snackenber asking me to meet him in Heaven. It was certainly an odd thing to say, it startled me, but it was beautiful—beautiful. Now—do you know the road home?"

"Sure. We'll be there in five minutes."

"All right. Lead the way. And say, Melvin Cook, do one more nice thing, please. Forgive my darling Molly for the prank she played on you and be the same friendly way to her you've been to me."

[Pg 151]

"Well, I'll try. But I don't promise I'll succeed."

They hurried back over the main street of the town to their inn, past the postoffice where a throng of tourists were still waiting for possible mail, past the little shops with their tempting display of "notions" representative of the locality, until they reached one window in which some silverware was exposed for sale.

Something within caught Melvin's eye, and he laughed:

"Look there, miss."

"Dorothy, please!"

"Look there, Dorothy! There's your 'Digby chicken' with a vengeance!" and he pointed toward some trinkets the dealer was exhibiting to customers within. Among the articles a lot of tiny silver fish, labeled as he had said, and made in some way with a spring so that they wriggled from the tip of a pin, or guard, in typical fish-fashion.

"Oh! aren't they cute! How I would like to buy one! Do you suppose they cost very much?" cried Dorothy, delighted.

"I'll ask," he said and did; and returning from the interior announced: "Fifty cents for the smallest one, seventy-five for the others."

She sighed and her face fell. "Might as well be seventy-five dollars, so far as I'm concerned. I have exactly five cents, and I shouldn't have had that only I found it left over in my jacket pocket. You see, once I had five dollars. How much is that in Nova Scotia money?"

[Pg 152]

"Just the same. Five dollars."

"Well, come on. I mustn't stand and 'covet,' but I would so love to have that for Alfaretta. I promised to bring her something home and that would please her to death!"

"Good thing she isn't to have it then!" he returned.

Dorothy laughed. "Course. I don't mean that. I'm always getting reprov'd for 'extravagant language.' Miss Rhineland says it's almost as bad as extravagant—umm, doing. You know what I mean. Listen. I'll tell you how I lost it, but we must hurry. I smell dinners in the houses we pass and I

reckon it's mighty late."

She narrated the story of her loss and her New York experiences in a few graphic sentences; and had only concluded when they reached the hotel piazza, bordering the street, and saw their whole party sitting there waiting the dinner summons. The faces of the elders all looked a little stern, even that of the genial Judge himself; and Molly promptly voiced the thoughts of the company when she demanded:

"Well, I should like to know where you have been! We were afraid something had happened, and I think it's mean, real mean I say, to scare people who are on a holiday. Dorothy, child, where have you been?"

"Ox-omobiling," answered poor Dorothy, meekly, and feeling as if she were confessing a positive crime.

[Pg 153]

"W-h-a-t?" gasped Molly amazed.

"Ox-omobiling. I didn't mean—"

"What in the world is that? Did you do it with that boy? Is he—where—what—do tell and not plague me so."

"No. I did it with the man who—" Here culprit Dolly looked up and caught the stern, questioning gaze of Mrs. Ebenezer Stark, and her wits fled. "With Joel, and I'm to meet him in—in Heaven—right away."

Utter silence greeted this strange answer, part of which had been made to Miss Greatorex's austere gesture. This signified on the lady's part that her ward was late and hindering the meal and was so understood by the frightened girl. She looked around for Melvin to corroborate her statement but he had vanished. Having escorted her into sight of her friends he considered his duty done and disappeared.

"Dorothy! You've been having adventures, I see, and have got things a trifle 'mixed.' Best say no more now, till we all get over our dinner-crossness and then tell us the whole story. Since you are safely back no real harm is done; and, friends, shall we go in to table? The second bell has rung," asked Mrs. Hungerford, smiling yet secretly annoyed by the delay Dorothy's absence had caused.

The Judge had received more letters from his "Boys" and even more urgent ones. That meant cutting short their stay in every town they visited; even omitting some desirable places from their list. It had been decided that they must leave Digby on Monday, the next day but one, and they wished to utilize every moment of the time between in visiting its most attractive points.

[Pg 154]

"Now, we'll take that ride. I was going to get Melvin to drive one small rig with the young folks and I would drive another surrey with us elders. He's taken himself off, though, so I'll just order a buckboard that will hold us all," said the Judge, when they had rather hastily finished their meal.

So they did, and presently the four-seated wagon with its four horses and capable driver toiled up to the entrance and the party entered it. All but Monty Stark. Much to his mother's annoyance and regret, that young gentleman firmly objected to the trip.

"I don't want to go. I hate driving. I don't care a rap for all the lighthouses or Bear Rivers in the world. I'd rather stay right here and watch the fishermen. I never had such a chance to see them so close at hand and—I—do—not want—to go."

"Montmorency, darling! Don't turn nasty and spoil all poor Mamma's pleasure, don't. I can't see what's the matter with you, dear? You have been positively disagreeable ever since we took that walk. Did you get too tired, lovey? Is Mamma's baby boy ill?"

"Oh! Mamma, please! I *shall* be ill if you don't quit molly-coddling me, as if I were an infant in arms."

[Pg 155]

They were speaking apart and in low tones, so that she caught but the word "Molly" and instantly inquired:

"Is it that girl, dearest? Has she been behaving badly to you? You mustn't mind her sharp tongue, she's only a—a Breckenridge!"

"Yes, she has been behaving outrageously. She's made me feel as cheap as two cents. Just because I couldn't think of any remarkably funny thing to do in this horrid old town—Oh! go on, and let me be. I'm not mad with you, Mamma, but I shan't go on that ride and be perched on a seat with either of those wretched girls, nor any old woman either, for the whole afternoon. Do go—they're waiting, and they'll wish no Starks had ever been born. I guess they wish it already."

Perforce, she had to go; but it wasn't a happy drive for her. If her adored Monty was disgruntled over anything she felt the world a gloomy place. She did exert herself to be agreeable to the Judge, who sat beside her, yielding his place on the driver's seat to Molly, whose manner was almost as "crisp" as Montmorency's own. But she would rather have stayed behind to look after her son; and had she known what was to happen on that sunshiny afternoon she would have been even more sorry that she had not followed her inclination.

However, at that moment there was no cloud upon the day; and no sooner had the buckboard disappeared from sight than Montmorency Vavasour-Stark performed a sort of jig on the hotel verandah, threw up his cap, gave a loud Brentnor "yell" and dashed up the stairs to his room as fast as his short fat legs could move. Thence he soon reappeared, clad in his "athletics"—of which a broad-striped blue-and-white sweater attracted much attention.

[Pg 156]

He had now become "plain boy." He had shed the "young gentleman" with vigor and completeness and was bent upon any sort of "lark" that would restore his usual good nature and complacency. He had observed whither disappeared the various bell-boys when off duty and meant "to stir up" one of them if nothing better offered.

Something better did offer, in the shape of Melvin Cook; calmly munching a slice of bread and butter in the stable-yard and as rejoiced as Monty himself to be quit for a time of women and girls and "manners" in general.

Montmorency hadn't been attracted before to this "son of all the Cooks," who was so fair of face and slender of build, but now he reflected that if he obtained permission to go into camp with the "Boys," and the Judge, Melvin would, perforce, be his daily companion. As well begin now as ever then; so he accosted the bugler with the question:

"Say, can't you get up something dandy for the rest of the day? We've shed those folks till dark, I guess, and I'm dying for anything doing. Eh?"

"I've hired a sail boat and am going out alone, except for Tommy here."

[Pg 157]

Tommy was the most juvenile of all the bell-boys, a lad of not more than ten, who tried to appear quite as old as these others and who now strutted forward announcing:

"Yes, me and him is going out in the 'Digby Chicken.' A tidy craft but we'll manage her all right, all right."

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" cried Monty, patting the child's shoulder and incidentally slipping a quarter into the little fellow's open palm; for it was a habit of the richer lad to bestow frequent tips whenever he journeyed anywhere, enjoying the popularity this gave him with his "inferiors."

"A sail-boat? Can you manage a sail-boat, Melvin Cook, by yourself without a man to help you?" he demanded in sincere astonishment.

"Feel that!" answered Melvin, placing Monty's hand upon his "muscle." "There's a bit of strength in that arm, eh, what? And you may not know that I come of a race of sailors and have almost lived upon the water all my life."

Manage a sail-boat? Huh! If you choose to come along I'll show you."

Ten minutes later they were moving out in a their frail craft from the little pier across the street from the hotel; Melvin for skipper, Tommy for mate, and Montmorency for a passenger. That was the beginning. It did not dawn upon any of the trio what the ending of that sail would be.

CHAPTER X

[Pg 158]

WHAT BEFELL A "DIGBY CHICKEN"

The second bell for the last meal of the day had again rung, and again the Breckenridge party waited on the verandah for delinquents. Mrs. Stark positively declined to enter the dining-room until she had found out what had become of Montmorency. Mrs. Hungerford as positively declined to leave Mrs. Stark, and the Judge's temper was again being sorely tried. Their twenty-mile drive and sight-seeing had sharpened appetites that already were quite sharp enough and the eminent jurist wanted his supper. To walk off his impatience, if he could, he paced up and down the long verandah at a brisk rate, which did not tend to allay that uncomfortable feeling in his "inner man."

The hotel proprietor left the dining-room, where he personally superintended the serving of his guests, and joined the Judge, advising and complaining:

"We've the usual Saturday, week-end crowd in the house and I'd like to have your party get through in yonder soon's you can, if you please. I'm driven half-crazy, nights like this, by the demands and exactions of these transient people. I need every man-jack of the help and somebody says that Tommy has gone off with your lads. Tommy is small but he's the best bell-boy in the house and—I'll trounce him well when he gets back for serving me such a trick. Best get your dinner now, Judge, or I'll not promise you'll be able to later. Excuse me for urging, it's in your own interest, and—There comes another load from somewhere! and I haven't a room to give them. Cots in the parlor, if they choose, nothing better?"

[Pg 159]

With that he hurried to meet the newcomers and the Judge said to Aunt Lu:

"We certainly should go in to table now. It does no good to sit here and wait. That doesn't bring the runaways any sooner and they'd ought to go without their suppers if they're so thoughtless of our comfort. Mrs. Stark, won't you come?"

Then he observed that the lady was weeping copiously. It was now fixed in her mind that Monty was drowned. She had been told that he had gone sailing with that other dreadful bugler-boy the Judge had picked up, and, of course, this was the only explanation of his absence. She refused to be comforted and would have gone out in a boat herself to search for her son had she felt this would be of the slightest use. Indeed, she was fast becoming hysterical, and Mrs. Hungerford shook her head negatively when her brother begged her to leave her post and come with him.

"Very well, then, sister, Miss Greatorex and the girls and I will go without you. Afterward, when the boys come, I'll try to have a special meal served for you somewhere. If I can! Come, Molly, Dolly; and I'm glad that you, Miss Greatorex, have some sense."

[Pg 160]

So they departed and finding that Mrs. Stark was attracting the attention of the other guests upon the piazza, Aunt Lucretia persuaded her to cross the street to the pavilion that stood upon the bluff above the water and that was now deserted.

"From there we can see the boat as soon as it approaches, dear Mrs. Stark, and I feel sure you've no cause for such anxiety. Doubtless the boys have

been fishing and have not realized how long. It is still bright daylight yonder and these are glorious moonlight nights. Even if they stayed out till bedtime they could see all right enough."

Mrs. Stark followed the advice to seek the pavilion; yet simply because it brought her that much nearer her lost darling. But when a tray of supper was sent out to the two ladies there she refused to touch it and her grief spoiled her companion's appetite as well.

After a little time Miss Greatorex and the girls retired to their rooms, at the Judge's advice. He too had at last become infected with the anxious mother's forebodings and felt that there was no need for Molly and Dolly to be also frightened. Then he joined the watchers in the pavilion, where the other guests refrained from disturbing them, although it was a favorite resort on pleasant evenings.

[Pg 161]

Many a boat came back to the various small piers extending from the shore into the water, here and there, but none was the little "Digby Chicken." Her owner took his place at the end of the pier and sat down to wait. Of all his boats she was the newest and prettiest. She had sailed out into the sunlight glistening with white paint, her new sail white and unstained, and on her shining hull a decoration of herring surrounding her red-lettered name. It had been the builder's conceit to omit the name, the string of painted fish answering for it to all but "foreigners;" but as it had been built for the use of these "foreigners" or "tourists" the printed words had finally been added.

Minutes passed. Quarter-hours; an hour; two of them; even three. There was no longer any moonlight. The distant cliffs and headlands became invisible. One could only guess where the Gap strove to close the entrance to an outer world. The hotel verandah became more and more deserted, and one by one the lights in the upper windows shone out for a time, then disappeared. Gradually all lights vanished save those in the lobby and a faint glimmer from a corridor above.

Though wraps has been early sent out to the anxious watchers in the pavilion, now heavy steamer rugs were brought, to keep out that penetrating chill. The Judge had on his heaviest overcoat and yet shivered, himself covering his long legs with a thick blanket. He had made several efforts to induce Mrs. Stark to go indoors but all had failed.

[Pg 162]

The fog that was slowly rising when the boat-owner took his station on the little quay below had crept nearer and nearer into shore, and finally enveloped everything and hidden it. So dense it was that from his bench on one side the circular pavilion the Judge could barely make out the white pillars on its opposite side. A lamp had been lighted in the roof but against this Mrs. Stark had vehemently protested, because it made that wall of white mist seem closer and more impenetrable, and without it she fancied that her eye could still pierce the distance, still discover any incoming craft.

About midnight the wind rose and the fog began to thin and scatter. The boatman on the pier had long ago left it, forced off by the rising tide, and now sat floating in one of the row-boats fastened there. He had put on his oilskins and set his oars in readiness for the first sign of distress on the face of the waters; but he had about given up hope of his pretty "Digby Chicken." That a couple of touring lads, even though one had protested that he was a good sailor, that these should come safely through a night like this seemed unlikely; but now that the wind was rising and the fog lifting, he drew his boat close under the pole at the pier's end and lighted the lantern which swung there. There was now a chance that its gleam might be seen from beyond and there had been none before.

Then another time of waiting, which ended with the boatman pulling out from shore. The watchers above had heard nothing, had not even seen him leave, although the lantern had faintly shown him riding upon the wave, moored to the pier by a rope.

[Pg 163]

But now, rubbing her strained eyes to clear their vision Mrs. Stark broke the long silence with a cry:

"The man! He isn't there? He's gone—to meet them!"

She was as sure of this now as she had been before that her son was drowned, and Mrs. Hungerford slipped an arm about her waist in pity. She dared not think what the result would be of a fresh disappointment.

However, their long vigil was really ended. The trained ear of the boatman had caught a faint halloo from somewhere on the water and had rowed toward the sound with all his strength and speed. At intervals he had paused to answer and to listen—and the now swiftly dispersing fog enabled him also to see—and finally to utter a little malediction under his breath. It scarcely needed the glass he raised to show him the "Digby Chicken" riding quietly on the water not more than half a league off shore. Her sail was furled, she looked taut and trim, and he could discern a figure at her prow which raised its arms and again hallooed.

"All's well that ends well." But it might not have been so well. The full story of that night's work did not transpire at once. All that Mrs. Stark knew was that she had her son once more within her close embrace; that he had been helped, even carried, up the narrow pier and placed dripping within her arms. She ascribed his soaked condition to the fact of the fog and not to the truth; and it was not until daylight came that he told her that. Then lying warm in his bed, with her hovering over him in a flutter of delight and reproof, he announced:

[Pg 164]

"I tell you, Mamma, the only folks that amount to anything in this world are the poor ones!"

"Very likely, love, very likely. Only don't distress yourself any more. I can't forgive that wretched little bugling boy for taking you out in that horrible boat and nearly killing you. You're very apt to have pneumonia or something—Don't you feel pretty ill now?"

"Mamma, *you can't forgive him?* What do you mean? Didn't anybody tell?"

"Tell what, lovey. I certainly didn't stop to ask questions. All I cared for was to get you into bed and a warm breakfast or supper or whatever it is sent up."

"Then you don't know that but for Melvin Cook I should be lying at the bottom of the Basin now, instead of in this bed?" demanded Monty, raising himself on his elbow.

The pallor that overspread his mother's face was answer enough, and he blamed himself for the question. Even without knowing the worst truth she had evidently worried herself ill. But the mischief was done and when she asked: "What do you mean?" he thought it best to tell. Moreover he was anxious that she should know of Melvin's bravery at once. So he answered:

[Pg 165]

"Well, I made a fool of myself. He had tackle and we fished along, just for nothing hardly, and I got cocky and jiggled the boat. Then when he said I'd better not but ought to lend a hand in working her and 'learn sense,' I—Well, I don't remember exactly what happened after that; only I got up on the gunwale, or edge of the 'Chicken' and the next I knew I was in the water. It all came over me in a flash that I couldn't swim and would drown and I shut my eyes and tried to say a prayer. But I couldn't think, and then I felt something grab me. It was that Melvin. He'd tossed off his jacket and dove for me and was dragging me to the surface and the boat. I tried to get hold of him tighter but he kicked me off and said if I did that we'd both go down. I thought we would, anyhow, so I did let go and then he got me to the boat, yanking me by the collar and—that was all for a good while. I—I was pretty sick I guess. I'd swallowed so much salt water and all. He and Tommy rubbed me and jounced me around and paid no attention to the boat, that kept drifting further out all the time.

"I don't remember much else. I lay on the bottom of the thing and the boys put their coats over me to stop my shivering. Melvin said afterward that I shivered from fear and shock more than from dripping, too, but he couldn't stop for that. He had to try to get back to shore and the fog was rising.

[Pg 166]

"Tommy told me a good deal, later on when I felt better. He said the fog got so thick Melvin was afraid to try and sail lest we should bump into some other craft. So we lay still till—I guess you know the rest. Now I want to hear, has anybody coddled either of those boys—heroes, both of 'em—as you've coddled me? If they haven't been treated right I'll make it lively for somebody. Anyhow, I want to get up and dress. I'm ashamed of myself. When I see how other boys act I think I've been—Well, I won't call your lovey-dovey hard names! But you hear me say: I'll be a man after this or—know the reason why!"

It certainly was a long speech for a sick boy as Mrs. Stark persisted in considering him; and it left her shaken and most undecided on various points. Upon one, however, she was fully set; she would cut this Nova Scotia trip short at once. She would telegraph her husband in Boston and follow her telegram, bag and baggage, by that afternoon's train. With this resolve in mind she left the room; merely bidding her son "lie still till I come back."

Then she descended to the hotel office and called for a telegraph blank.

This was courteously provided; also pen and ink with which to inscribe it, which she promptly did, then the following dialogue:—

"Please send this message at once, clerk."

"Sorry, Madam, but I can't do it. Not to-day."

[Pg 167]

"Why not?" haughtily.

"Office is closed. No despatches sent on Sunday. Can do it about seven A. M. Monday."

"You mean to tell me that ridiculous stuff? Where is the office? If this second-rate hotel can't accommodate its patrons I'll take it myself."

"The office is at the railway station, Madam. You will find it closed."

"Indeed? Well, when does the first train start for Yarmouth and a steamer for the States, either Boston or New York?"

"At ten o'clock Monday morning. Upon arrival at Yarmouth meets steamers for both ports, Madam."

"None, to-day?"

"None, Madam. It is a law of the Province. From Saturday night to Monday morning all traffic is suspended."

Mrs. Stark did not continue the dialogue. She couldn't. She was too astonished and too indignant. That she, Mrs. Ebenezer Stark, wife of the great banker of that name, should not be able to control a matter of this sort was simply incredible. With her head very high she left the desk and sought the Judge in his quiet corner of the piazza, where he sat, newspaper over face, trying to catch "forty winks" after his night of scant sleep.

He suppressed a yawn as he rose at the lady's call.

"Judge Breckenridge, a moment, if you please. Sorry to disturb you but it's most important. I want to send a telegram and that ridiculous clerk says I can't do it."

[Pg 168]

"Quite right. I'd like to myself and can't."

He placed a chair for her and she thoroughly aired her grievance. He sympathized but declared himself powerless to help her. She remarked:

"It is simply outrageous. A trap to keep visitors here whether or no. My husband will make it his business to alter the whole thing. I must go and take Monty away from here. I am in fear for his life. I shan't rest till I see him safe back in his father's arms."

The Judge listened courteously, but said:

"We tourists have no business to find fault with the laws the Provincials make for themselves. We'd resent their interference in the States. As for taking your son away, just because of a little accident which ended all right, aren't you making a mistake? In any case, since you cannot get away till tomorrow, anyway, wouldn't it be wise for you to rest now and recuperate from your night of anxiety? Unless you will join us in church-going. Lucretia never lets me off that duty, even if I were inclined, but I'm not. Like herself I always enjoy service in strange churches. We would be most happy to have you?"

"Thank you, but I couldn't. Not to-day. I'm too upset and weary. I couldn't leave my darling boy, either, after he's just been rescued from a—a watery grave. He's just told me that he fell, or was pushed overboard, and that the bugling boy was scared and helped him out. Oh! it makes me cold all over just to think of it!"

[Pg 169]

The Judge was no longer sleepy. His tone was sharp and judicial as he asked:

"Is that the version Montmorency gave of the affair?"

Then when she hesitated to answer, he added:

"Because I have heard quite a different one. I wormed it out of little Tommy, whom Melvin had threatened with punishment if he betrayed the really heroic part the 'bugling boy' played in the case. Doubly brave because, though he has tried his best to overcome it, Melvin has a horror of the sea. His father was drowned and if he followed his inclination the orphaned lad would never leave dry ground. But his race is a sea-faring one, and he knows that it may only be by following the profession of his forebears that he can ever earn a living for himself and his mother—though I should have put her first, as she certainly is in her son's thoughts. When Montmorency fooled and fell overboard—by no means was pushed—Melvin conquered his own horror and plunged after him. If he hadn't—Well, we shouldn't be talking so calmly together now, you and I."

Poor Mrs. Stark! She was torn and tossed by more emotions than had ever been hers during her easy life, and each emotion was at variance with another. She dropped into a chair to collect herself; and at the end of a few moments remarked:

"If that is the case I will do something for the boy. Whatever amount of money you think suitable, I will give you a check for."

[Pg 170]

He wanted to retort sharply, but he didn't. He forced himself to say quite gently:

"No payment, Mrs. Stark, would prove acceptable. In his victory over himself and his own cowardice Melvin has grown richer than any dollars could make him. If you will pardon my advice, don't offer him anything save kindness and don't make that too conspicuous. A shy boy needs careful handling."

He bowed as she now rose and went her way, a very thoughtful woman. But her heart rejoiced beyond expression that no matter what the details of the night's episode had been, her best-loved object in this world was safe and sound. She would go to him and basking in the sunshine of his beloved presence content herself as best she could, until tomorrow's trains should bear them both away.

Alas! When she came to the room where she had left him she found no chance to "bask." Her "sunshine" had again disappeared.

CHAPTER XI

[Pg 171]

IN EVANGELINE LAND

The obliging operator at the telegraph office was almost at her wits' end. She had never been besieged so early in the morning and required to send so many lengthy messages, nor have them come crowding one another so confusingly. The strange part of it all was that although they were intended for one person, a Mr. Ebenezer Stark of Boston, there were three persons telegraphing him.

One was a stout lady of exceedingly fashionable appearance and most peremptory manner. As seemed fitting the first reply of Mr. Ebenezer Stark was for her, and assured her that he would meet her at the wharf, with a carriage, upon the arrival of the first steamer out from Yarmouth. It also informed her that he had already sent her word by post—that letter could follow her home—of the dangerous illness of her mother and that she should make all possible haste. Thus far her message suited him exactly. He made no mention of their son nor did she. It went without saying that Monty would accompany his mother upon her return trip.

Judge Breckenridge was also an early riser. He had met Monty hurrying down the back street toward the little railway station and the office in its corner, and had greeted him with gay surprise:

[Pg 172]

"Heigho, lad! Whither so fast and so early?"

"Trying to get ahead of Mamma."

"Why, Montmorency!" cried the gentleman, with an assumed sternness yet a twinkle in his eye.

"Fact. She's on the road somewhere, but she had to wait for them to hitch up a rig first. Thinks she can't walk these few blocks alone, I suppose, and didn't suspect I could have escorted her. But 'Lovey' didn't tell her his plans till he knows if he can carry them out. But I'm glad to see you. I didn't want to do anything sort of underhand with you, you know. Say, Judge, does your invitation to go camping still hold good? After my looking such a muff and acting it?"

"Certainly. If your parents permit, I shall be glad to have you. I think that a few weeks' association with men like my friends would give you a new idea of true manliness; and I can promise you to hear more good stories from the 'Boys' than you ever heard in your life."

"Thank you, sir. I'm going to wire Papa to let me stay. What he says goes, even with Mamma. He lets her have her way about my school, and clothes and all that stuff, but he hasn't ever quite let go of me himself. If it hadn't been for Papa I'd be a bigger muff than I am now. Only he's so awfully absorbed in business that he never takes a vacation himself or does anything except pile up the cash and shove it out for Mamma to spend. Beg pardon, I've no business to tell you, or bother you, with our affairs. I only wanted to know in case he says 'Yes.'"

[Pg 173]

They were almost at the end of their short walk and the Judge's face lightened with a whimsical expression, as he answered:

"Well, Monty lad, muffs are mighty handy sometimes. I heard Lucretia say they wore them large last winter! If I take a muff into camp I shall expect it to add to the general comfort of the party. Ready to warm the heart of anybody who happens to get lonely or out of sorts."

"This muff will do its duty, sir. You'll see; if—"

He left his sentence unfinished and although his response was delayed till after Mrs. Stark's had been received he did not complain of it, but smilingly handed it to the Judge to peruse.

His outward telegram had been:

"Papa, let me stay;" and the incoming one was: "All right. Stay."

He did not inform his mother why he was there at the office so early and she did not inquire. She attributed it to his filial affection and was

accordingly touched by it. She petted him as usual, and carried him back to the hotel in her phaeton, while she thrilled with satisfaction at the knowledge she could at last get away from a benighted region where no Sunday trains were run.

The Judge's messages were last, and the longest. His outgoing one gave Mr. Ebenezer Stark a sketchy outline of his vacation plans, announced the gentlemen who would share it with him, and added a formal invitation for Montmorency to be of the party, if agreeable to the lad's friends. Mr. Stark's reply was heartily grateful, expressed his appreciation of the Judge's courtesy and good nature in "loading himself with a boy of the calf age. A calf of good enough pedigree, but needed turning out to pasture away from the mother," and a little more to that nature.

[Pg 174]

The rub came when trunks were being packed and Montmorency announced that his "things" needn't be put in; except the "dudish" ones which he wouldn't want in a vacation camp.

Mrs. Stark was so astonished that she was silent and during that interval her son talked and explained with a rapidity that left her no chance for reply. "Father says so," was the final argument that clinched the matter; and she wisely refrained from further controversy, reflecting that "Father" might alter his opinion when she had met him and reported the true state of things. Then he would, of course, promptly recall his son and heir from a region so fraught with dangers and temptations as this Province.

Therefore, the parting was effected with less friction than Monty had anticipated, and he watched the train that bore his too-solicitous mother out of sight with a delight that, for the present, knew no regret. He was fully in earnest to "make a man" of himself, and felt that he would be better able to succeed if freed from the indulgence which had surrounded him from his cradle.

[Pg 175]

After allowing himself the relief of one "pigeon-wing" on the station-platform, he sprang up to the steps at the rear of the hotel stage which had brought departing guests to the train and hugged Tommy, perched there, till the little fellow squealed.

"Good enough, Tommy boy! I'm to rough it now to my heart's content. Ever been hunting or fishing in the woods, younker?"

"Yep. Go most every year—that is, I've been once—with the Boss. He's the best hunter anywhere's around. It was him got all those moose and caribou heads that are in the lobby. Oh! you bet it's cracky! I'm going this fall if—I'm let, and my mother don't make me go to school."

"Mothers—Well, mothers have a bad way of spoiling a fellow's fun, eh, lad? But after all, they're a pretty good arrangement. I hope my mother'll have a good trip over to Boston; and see? Look there?"

With that he pulled from his pocket a handful of silver, explaining that when she traveled Mrs. Stark always provided herself with a large quantity of "change" expressly for "tips," and that she had generously handed the amount on to her son, since she was simply "going home" and wouldn't need it.

"More in my suit-case, too, Tommy. But—I'm going to give it all away the minute I get back to the hotel."

[Pg 176]

Tommy's eyes almost bulged from his head, as he ejaculated in intense amazement:

"You *never!*"

"Fact. I'm going to begin right now."

Tommy nearly fell off the step. There in his own small hand lay the greater part of what had been in Montmorency's, but he couldn't believe in his own good fortune. Despite the tips he received at the hotel—they were neither many nor generous—master Thomas Ransom was a very poor little fellow.

He held his position at the inn by the fact that he was willing to work "for his board" and whatever the guests might chance to bestow upon him. The landlord had the name of a "skin-flint," whether justly or not the boarders didn't know.

It was to his interest, however, to serve *them* well and he did it; but it was rumored that the "help" fared upon the leavings of the guests' plates, and in that atmosphere of healthy appetites such leavings were scant. Anyway, Tommy was always hungry, and the fact showed in his pinched, eager little face.

"You're foolin'. Here 'tis back;" he finally gasped, extending his hand toward Monty with a pitiful attempt at a smile.

"Fooling? Not one bit. You put that where it's safe, and the first chance you get run into the village to some restaurant and get yourself a good square meal. Then go to the circus, if you want. I see by the placards that one is coming."

[Pg 177]

"Oh! Pshaw! I don't know what to say. But, if you do mean it, I ain't going to no restaurant. I'm going home to my mother the first leave off I get and give it to her. She can't make her rent hardly, sewing, and she'll cook a dinner for me to the queen's taste! Wish you'd come and eat it with us."

"Wish I could," answered Monty, with a warm glow in his heart. He hadn't often had such a look of rapturous gratitude turned upon him and it gave him a most delightful sensation. "But you see we're off by the afternoon train. Going to hurry along now till we get into camp. See you later, maybe."

Then they were at the hotel entrance and master Tommy made haste to bestow his treasure in the safest place he knew until his brief hour of recreation should arrive and he could take it home. But how he worked that day! Even the keen-eyed proprietor could find no manner of fault with the nimble little fellow, who answered bells like a flash, so smilingly trotted about with pitchers of ice-water, and so regretfully watched the departure of the Breckenridge party from the house. And in justice to him be it said this regret was after all and most sincerely for the courteous treatment all of them had given him.

"Some folks—*some* folks think a bell-boy hain't no feelings, but I might ha' been—Why, I might ha' been *them*, their own folks, so nice they all were to me;" thought the lad, watching the afternoon train bearing them all away, and secretly wiping the tears from his eyes. However, even for him, deserted as his childish heart felt then, there was comfort. The circus was coming to-morrow! It would be his day off and he had the money to pay for his ticket and one for Ma!

[Pg 178]

The train was nearing Wolfville where the travelers were to leave it for a brief visit to "Evangeline land" before proceeding to Halifax whence the campers would set out. Aunt Lucretia had checked off the various stations from her time-table and now announced:

"Better get your things together, everybody. Next stop will be ours."

Then Montmorency Vavasour-Stark got his courage to the sticking point and went forward to where the Judge stood looking through the car door at the landscape whirling by.

"Judge Breckenridge will you do me a favor? Another one, I mean, for you've done a lot already."

"Certainly, if it's within my power."

"It is, easy enough. I want you to take this and keep it for me. I want to actually give it away, or put it beyond my reach. I've been thinking it's the boys without money that amount to something. I want to make myself poor and see if I'm worth 'shucks' aside from my father's cash."

He held out a fat pocketbook but, for a moment, the Judge did not appear to

[Pg 179]

see it. He looked the lad critically over, his keen, but kindly eyes interested and yet doubtful. Then he said:

"I don't like whimsies. A person who makes a resolution and doesn't keep it weakens rather than strengthens his character. Have you the slightest idea what it means to be 'poor,' or even like Melvin back yonder, who has but a very small wage to use for his own?"

"I don't suppose I have. But I'd like to try it during all the time I'm over here in the Province. What I mean is that you should pay all my necessary expenses just as you pay for the others; and beyond that I don't want a cent."

"Melvin will earn a little for his work in camp. He is to cook and do whatever is needed. There will be an Indian guide with us, and he, of course, will have his regular price per day, or week. Beyond these two helpers we 'Boys' will do everything else ourselves. It is our custom. I can't hire you and pay you, as an extra. If that were done it would have to be by some other of the party and it's not likely."

The gentleman's tone was more grave than the lad felt was necessary, but it made him reflect a little deeper himself. At last he again offered the purse, saying:

"I mean it. It's my chance. The first one I ever had to see if I can deny myself anything. Please try me."

"Very well, lad, and I congratulate you on the pluck that makes the effort. However—your last chance! Once made, once this pocketbook passes into my care it becomes mine for the rest of our stay together."

[Pg 180]

"All right, sir. That's exactly what I want."

"Do you know how much is in it?"

"To a cent. And it's a great deal too much for a good-for-nothing like me."

"Don't say that, Montmorency. I wouldn't take a 'good-for-nothing' under my care for so long a time. You forget I already have a 'muff' on hand. I congratulate myself, this time, on having secured a 'good-for-something.' Ah! here we are!"

The Judge took the purse and coolly slipped it into his own pocket, merely adding:

"I will also count the contents and make a note of them as soon as I can. As your expenses have been paid by yourself until now we'll begin our account from this moment. When we part company, soon or late, you shall have an itemized account of all that is used from your store."

Then the conductor came through the car calling:

"Wolfville! All out for Wolfville!"

"Out" they were all, in a minute, and again the "Flying Bluenose" was speeding on toward the end of its route.

"This is the nearest, or best, point from which to make our excursion to Grand Pré and old Acadia, which our beloved Longfellow made famous by his poem. You'll find yourselves 'Evangelined' on every hand while you're here. Glad it's so pleasant. We won't have to waste time on account of the weather."

[Pg 181]

They found comfortable quarters for the night and longer if desired and were early to bed. The girls to dream of the hapless maid whose story thrilled their romantic souls; and Molly went to sleep with an abridged copy of the poem under her pillow.

Early in the morning she and Dorothy took a brisk walk through the pretty village and peered into the shop windows where, indeed, the name "Evangeline" seemed tacked to most articles of commerce. So frequently was it displayed that when they met a meditative cow pacing along the

dewy street Molly exclaimed:

"I wonder if that's Evangeline's 'dun white cow,' whatever 'dun white' may be like. She looks ancient enough and—Oh! she's coming right toward us!"

Molly was afraid of cows and instinctively hid herself behind Dolly, who laughed and remarked:

"Poor old creature! She looks as if she might have lived in the days of the Acadians, she's so thin and gaunt. Yet the whole street is grass-bordered if she chose to help herself. But isn't this glorious? Can you hardly wait till we get to Grand Pré? It's only a few miles away and I'd almost rather walk than not."

"You'll not be let to walk, mind that. My father has had enough of things happening to us youngsters. I heard him tell Auntie Lu that none of us must be allowed out of sight of some of them, the grown-ups, till we were landed safe on that farm, and Auntie laughed. She said she agreed with him but she wasn't so sure about even a farm being utterly safe from adventures. So we'll all have to walk just niminy-piminy till then. We shouldn't be here if Miss Greatorex hadn't said she too wanted to 'exercise.' Now, she's beckoning to us and we must turn back. Come away from staring over into that garden! That hedge of sweet-peas is not for you, honey, badly as you covet it!"

"All right, I'll come. But I wish, I wish Father John could see them. I never saw any so big and free-blooming as they are in this beautiful Province."

"It's the moisture and coolness of the air, Auntie Lu says. Now, Miss Greatorex, do make Dolly Doodles walk between us, else she'll never tear herself away from the lovely gardens we pass."

But they were not late to breakfast, nevertheless. They had learned at last that nothing so annoyed the genial Judge as want of punctuality. He planned the hours of his day to a nicety and by keeping to his plans managed to get a great deal of enjoyment for everybody.

Already carriages to take them on the drive to Grand Pré and the old Acadian region had been ordered and were at the door when they had breakfasted and appeared on the piazza. The two girls were helped into the smaller open wagon where Melvin sat holding the reins and visibly proud of the confidence reposed in him, and on the front seat of this the Judge also took his place. The ladies with Monty and a driver occupied the comfortable surrey; and already other vehicles were entering the hotel grounds, engaged by other tourists for the same trip.

Monty looked back with regret at the other young folks and longed to ask the Judge to exchange places; then laughed to himself as he remembered that it was no longer his place to ask favors—a penniless boy as he had become!

That was a never-to-be-forgotten day for all the party. No untoward incident marked it, but so well-known is the story of that region that it needs no repetition here. Of course they visited the famous well whence "Evangeline" drew water for her herd, and almost the original herd might have fed in the meadow surrounding it, so peaceful were the cattle cropping the grass there. They saw the "old willows" and the ancient Covenanter church, wherein they all inscribed their names upon the pages of a great book kept for that special purpose.

The church especially interested Dorothy, with its quaint old pulpit and sounding board, its high-backed pews and small-paned windows; and when she wandered into the old burying ground behind, with its periwinkle-covered graves, a strange sadness settled over her.

The whole story had that tendency and the talk of "unknown graves" roused afresh in her mind the old wonder:

"Where are my own parents' graves, if they are dead? Where are *they* if they are still alive?"

[Pg 182]

[Pg 183]

[Pg 184]

With this in mind and in memory of these other unknown sleepers whose ancient head-stones had moved her so profoundly, she gathered from the confines of the field a bunch of that periwinkle, or myrtle which grew there so abundantly. Thrusting this into the front of her jacket she resolved to pack it nicely in wet moss and send it home to Alfaretta, with the request that she would plant it in the cottage garden. Then she rejoined the others at the gate and the ride was continued to another point of interest called "Evangeline Beach." Why or wherefore, nobody explained; yet it was a pretty enough spot on the shore where a few guests of a near-by hotel were bathing and where they all stopped to rest their horses before the long ride home.

Dorothy was full of thoughts of home by then, and something in the color of the horse which had drawn her hither awoke tender memories of pretty Portia, now doubtless happily grazing on a dear mountain far away. With this sentiment in mind she stooped and plucked a handful of grass and held it under the nose of the pensive livery-nag.

But alas, for sentiment! Not the few blades of sea-grass appealed to the creature who, while Dorothy's head was turned, stretched forth its own and pulled the myrtle from the jacket and was contentedly munching it when its owner discovered its loss.

[Pg 185]

"Dolly Doodles, whatever are you doing?" cried Molly, running up.

"She's got—he's got my 'Evangeline' vines! I'm getting—what I can!"

Molly shouted in her glee and the rest of the party drew near to also enjoy. They had all alighted to walk about a bit and stretch their limbs, and now watched in answering amusement the brief tussle between maid and mare. It ended with the latter's securing the lion's share of the goodly bunch; but myrtle vines are tough and Dorothy came off a partial victor with one spray in her hand. It had lost most of its leaves and otherwise suffered mischance, yet she was not wholly hopeless of saving that much alive; and in any case the incident had banished all morbid thoughts from her mind, and she was quite the merriest of all during that long drive homeward to the hotel.

As they alighted Monty stepped gallantly forward and offered:

"When we get to Halifax I'll buy you a slender vase and you can keep it in water till you go home yourself. Or I'll send back to that graveyard and pay somebody to send you on a lot, after you get back to your own home."

"Oh! thank you. That's ever so kind, and I'll be glad of the vase. But you needn't send for any more vines. They wouldn't be the same as this I gathered myself for darling Father John."

"But you shall have them all the same. They'd be just as valuable to him if not to you and some of those boys that hung around the church would pack it for a little money. I'll do it, sure."

[Pg 186]

"*Will* you, Montmorency? *How?*" asked a voice beside him and the lad looked up into the face of the Judge.

"No, sir, I won't! I'll have to take that offer back, Dorothy, take them both back," and he flushed furiously at her surprised and questioning glance. It was the first test he had made of his "poverty" and he found it as uncomfortable as novel.

CHAPTER XII

[Pg 187]

SIGHT SEEING UNDER DIFFICULTIES

"Halifax! End of the line!"

The conductor's announcement was followed by the usual haste and bustle

among the passengers, the taking down of parcels from the racks overhead, and a general settling and straightening of travel-crushed garments.

This little preparatory freshening over, the travelers stepped into the car aisles and followed the rush forward; passing out into by far the most pretentious station they had seen in the Province. Lines of hackmen were drawn up alongside the rail which bordered the paved descent to the railway level, and a policeman in uniform held back the too-solicitous drivers from the arriving strangers, who looked about them, mostly, in doubt which vehicle to select:

"Here you are for the Halifax!" "Right this way for the Queen! Queen, sir? Queen, madam? Finest hotel in—" "Prince Edward! Right on the bluff—overlooking—" "King's Arms! Carriage for the King's Arms?"

To the rail and no further were these runners for their various employers permitted to go, yet even at that few feet of safe distance their cries were so deafening and insistent that Dorothy clapped her hands to her ears and shut her eyes, lest she should grow too much confused.

[Pg 188]

But there was no hesitation about the Judge. His hotel was a familiar one, their rooms engaged long before; and by a nod he summoned the 'bus of that house, marshalled his party into it, handed the runner his baggage checks, and they rolled away through the streets of the oldest city in the Province.

Just then it was gay with illimitable decorations of bunting and flags, in honor of the visit of the Viceroy of Canada and his consort, due upon the morrow.

"Oh, Papa, did they know we were coming?" mischievously inquired Molly, as vista after vista of red and blue and white unrolled before her eager eyes. "I never saw anything like it! Even at our home Carnival there wasn't anything to compare."

"That's Canada. We Yankees boast we go ahead of everything in the world no matter what line we chance to follow. Canada doesn't boast, she simply goes ahead."

"Oh! how disloyal, Schuyler!" protested Aunt Lucretia, herself gazing with admiration at the buildings whose fronts were almost solidly covered with artistically arranged decorations. Of course the English and Canadian flags held first place, but at last their 'bus stopped before a quaint old hotel whose balconies were draped with as many American as English banners.

"Why, is this an American, I mean a United States hotel?" asked Auntie Lu; while Miss Greatorex's face assumed a more agreeable expression than it had worn since they left the station. She had felt hitherto as if an alien nation had flaunted its colors in her own patriotic face; but her common sense now assured her that these people had a right to honor their rulers after their own fashion even if it could by no possibility be so good a fashion as reigned in her beloved States.

[Pg 189]

The youngsters of the party felt nothing but delight; and as a squad of scarlet-coated soldiers came marching toward them on the other side of the street Monty tossed up his cap and cheered. Melvin did more, as was natural. They marched to the tune of "God Save the King," and were on their way to Parliament House to give an evening concert; and as the 'bus came abreast of the squad with its fine band and its national colors floating in front, the young Yarmouthian rose and bared his head, saluting the flag! Then he dropped back to his seat with a slight flush on his fair cheek, as he felt the eyes of the three strangers rest upon him curiously. Then cried Molly:

"That was funny! I forgot you weren't a 'Yankee' like ourselves, but you did right, you did just right. I wouldn't have let Old Glory pass by without doing it my honor. But, do you know, Auntie Lu, I feel as if this were a foreign country and not part of our own America?"

She was to feel it more and more, but to find a keen delight in all that was so new to her and so matter of fact to Melvin. Even the dishes served at table, were decidedly "English" in name and flavor, though there were plenty of other and more familiar ones upon the *menu*.

After this supper which was more hearty than most dinners at home, they walked to the postoffice and found a heap of mail that had been forwarded along their route. As usual there were letters from the "Boys" and the Judge hailed with delight the news that they, as well as the Governor-General, would be among the morrow's arrivals.

"We'll stay till Sunday in Halifax, then start for camp on Monday, rain or shine, wind, fog, or sunshine;" wrote the correspondent who arranged matters from the other end of the line.

"Good enough, good enough! Then my vacation will actually begin!" cried the pleased man.

"And pray, what do you call the days that have just passed, my brother?" demanded Auntie Lu, with a smile.

"My dear, I call that a 'personally conducted tour,' a tour of great responsibility and many perils. After Monday, when I deposit you ladies and the youngsters at Farmer Grimm's, I wash my hands of the whole of you for one long, delightful month!"

The laugh with which he said this disarmed the words of any unkindness and was echoed by another laugh quite free from offense.

"Very well, then, Schuyler, until Monday we hold you to your 'personally' conducting. You must take us everywhere, show us everything that is worth while. I want to go to the 'Martello' tower; to the Citadel, the old churches, the parks, all over the harbor on all sorts and conditions of boats, to—"

But the Judge held up his hand, protesting. Then asked:

"Suppose it proves a foggy season? Fog is one of the things to be counted upon in all parts of this country, more especially here. One summer I was here three weeks and the sun didn't shine once!"

However, Mrs. Hungerford was bent upon enjoying and making others enjoy this visit; and she laughingly assured him that they were all "fog proof."

"Every one of us has overshoes, umbrella, and raincoat. We feminines I mean and 'boys' aren't supposed to mind any sort of weather. Am I not right, Melvin?"

"Yes, Mrs. Hungerford, I fancy you are. We have so much wet weather we're 'most unprepared for sunshine, don't you know."

This was so long a remark for Melvin, and so thoroughly "English" with its "fancy" and "don't you know," that all laughed.

But they waked in the morning to find the Judge's fear of a fog justified. The whole city was a-drip. The decorations which had been so crisp and brilliant on the day before hung limp and already discolored; and the scarlet and white bunting which had been so artistically wreathed about columns and cornices now clung tightly to them as if shivering in the wet.

It was a disheartened populace, too, which one met upon the street; for the expense had been great in preparations for the Governor's visit and the week of Carnival that had been planned seemed doomed to a series of disappointments.

None the less Auntie Lu held her brother to his promise to escort them everywhere; and everywhere they went, though mostly in covered carriages or under dripping umbrellas. One morning when the sunshine came for a brief visit they hastened to the street before the Provincial building to hear the most famous band in all the Canadas give its open air concert. Other people besides themselves had flocked thither at the first ray from the sun

and now crowded the pavements surrounding the iron-fenced grounds. Everybody waxed enthusiastic and hopeful till—suddenly a drop fell on the tip of the band leader's nose. He cast one glance skyward but continued to wield his baton with great flourish and skill. Another drop; many; and the summer crowd swiftly dispersed. Not so our sightseers from the States. But let Dorothy tell the tale in her own words and in the journal-letter she faithfully tried to keep for Father John:

"Dear Father:—

"Since we've been here in Halifax I haven't had a chance to write as regular as I ought. You see we come home so tired and wet every time that—Well, I just can't really write.

[Pg 193]

"We went to an open air concert in the heart of the city. The band was, were—which is right? Anyhow the men all had on their Sunday uniforms, the most beautiful red and brass and buttons, and their instruments shone like anything. It rained, still they didn't even wink, except the head of them. He was brillianter dressed than any of them and he didn't like the rain. You could see that plain as plain. They all had little stands before them with their music on and the music got wet and splattery, but they didn't stop. They just tossed one piece of music down and began another, after they'd waited a little bit of while, to get their breath, I reckon. By and by all the people, nearly, had gone away from the sidewalk yet the band played right along.

"Then I heard somebody laugh. It was the Judge. He was laughing at Auntie Lu; he always is and she at him. When she asked him 'why,' he said: 'I was thinking this was a match game between British and Yankee pluck. It's the Britisher's 'duty' to play to the end of his program and he'll do it if he's melted into a little heap when he's finished. It seems to be Yankee pluck, or duty, to stand out here in this melancholy drizzle and hold on as long as he does.'

"'Of course,' said Mrs. Hungerford, 'it would be mean of us to desert the poor chaps and leave them without a listener at all.'

"Then he said: 'Let's go indoors and sit in the 'seats of the mighty.'"

[Pg 194]

"She didn't know what he meant but he soon showed her. The Province Building where their sort of Congress meets was all open wide and they weren't having any session, it not being session time. So we went in and sat around in leather covered chairs, only Molly and I and the boys climbed up on the window seats and sat there. We could hear beautiful and we got quite dry. Only it isn't any use getting dry, daytimes, 'cause you're always going right out and getting wet again.

"Sunday was the wettest yet. It didn't look so and Auntie Lu let us girls put on white dresses, but she made us take our raincoats and umbrellas and rubbers just the same. We went to the soldiers' church out of doors, 'cause they'd thought it was clearing off. There were benches fixed in rows like seats in church, and there was a kind of pulpit all covered by a great English flag. Other benches were up at one side. They were for the band. By and by a bugle blew and they came marching, marching over the grass from the big barracks beyond. The field sloped right down the side of a great hill and at the foot, seemed so close one could almost touch it but you couldn't for there were streets between, was the harbor of water.

"It was an English church service and the minister prayed for all the royal family one by one. The soldier-band played the chants and hymns and they and anybody wanted sang them. After a little while it rained again and we put on our coats and didn't dare to raise our umbrellas, 'cause we were in church you know.

[Pg 195]

"It seemed pretty long but I loved it. I loved the red soldiers and the beautiful place and all. Auntie Lu said it was a good sermon and that the preacher considerately cut it pretty short. But it wasn't so short but that we got our hats dreadfully wet and Auntie Lu had to buy herself a new one

before we came away last Monday morning. In the evening we went to St. Paul's, which is the oldest church in this oldest city of Markland, as some call Nova Scotia.

"Now we have ridden a good many miles in wagons to this great old farmhouse right on the edge of the woods. Miles and miles of woods, seems if. There are lakes in them and rivers and game of every sort, seems if, to hear them tell. Judge Breckenridge's friends are here, too, and the Indian guide. He calls them 'the Boys,' and they do act like boys just after school's let out. They laugh and joke and carry on till Molly and I just stare.

"Judge has hired a river to fish in. Isn't that funny? To pay for a place to fish, and the Farmer Grimm we're to live with is going to haul all their camp things out there to-morrow morning before sun-up. Monty and Melvin are to go, too, and I expect we women folks'll feel pretty lonesome.

"One lovely thing the Judge did for me. He hired a violin for me to practice on here. He said he thought it would pass the time for all of us. There's a piano, too, already in the house, and Molly can play real nice on that. Her Auntie Lu plays mag-nifi-cently. I wrote that out in syllables so as to get it right and to make it more—more impressiver. I'm dreadful tired and have been finishing this letter sitting on the floor beside a great big fire on the hearth. It isn't a bit too warm, either, even though the sun has shone again to-day.

[Pg 196]

"Good night. Your sleepy Dorothy, but always loving you the best of all the world.

"P. S.—The funniest thing happened after supper. Two the funniest ones. The bashful-bugler, that's Melvin, slipped something into my hand and said: 'That's to remember me by, a keepsake, if anything should happen to me out in the woods. I bought it for you that day in Digby.' When I opened the little box there was one those weeny-wiggley sort of silver fishes, they call the 'Digby chickens,' that I'd wanted to take home to Alf. But I shan't take her this; I shall keep it. 'Cause Molly wants one, too, and when we get our next month's allowance, *if* we get it, we can write and buy some by mail.

"The other funny thing was one of those grown up 'boys.' He asked me to play for him and had me stand right near him. When I got through he looked over at the Judge and nodded his head. Two, three times he nodded it and then he said, just like this he said it: 'It is the most remarkable likeness I ever saw. You're on the right track Schuy, I'm sure of it!' And the Judge cried real pleased, 'Hurray!'

[Pg 197]

"They two were little boys together, down in the south where they lived and they know Mrs. Cecil Calvert real well. And the other 'boy' said: 'Aunt Betty'd ought to be spanked—same as she's spanked me a heap of times.'

"I wonder if it was I 'resembled' anybody and who! I wonder why any gentleman should say such a dreadful impolite thing about that dear old lady! I wonder,—Oh, Father John! Your little girl so often wonders many, many things! Good night at last. Molly calls real cross and I must go.

"DOLLY."

Dorothy's letters to Mother Martha were equally descriptive though not so long. One ran thus:

"Dearest Mother Martha:—

"You ought to see this farm where we're living now. It's so big and has so many cattle and men working, and orchards and potato-fields. They call the potatoes 'Bluenoses' just as they call the Nova Scotia folks. The house is part stone and part wood. The stone part was built ever and ever so long ago; strong so the man who built it could protect himself against the Indians. The man was English, and he was a Grimm; an ancestor of this Mr. Grimm we board with. The Indians were Micmacs and friends of the French. Seems if they were all fighting all together all the time, which should own the land. Mrs. Grimm says there have been a good many

[Pg 198]

generations live here though all are gone now except her husband and herself. They are more than seventy years, both of them, but they don't act one bit old. She cooks and tends to things though she has two, three maids to help her. He rides horseback all over his farm and jumps off his horse and works with the men. Sometimes he drives the ox-carts with the hay and lets us ride.

"I did want you that last Saturday in Halifax. The day your letter came to me with the one dollar in it. I expect you wanted I should buy something to bring you with it but I didn't. Listen. It was what they called a 'green market' morning. Rained of course, or was terrible foggy between showers. The market is just a lot of Indians and negroes, and a few white people sitting round on the edge of the sidewalk all around a big building. The Judge told me many of them had come from across the harbor, miles beyond it, so far that they'd had to walk half the night to bring their stuff to market. Think of that! And such funny stuff it was. Green peas shelled in little measures, ready to cook. (I wish they'd have them that way in our own Lexington market at home!) Wild strawberries—I didn't see any other kind, no big ones like we have in Baltimore or at home. The berries were hulled and put into little home-made birch-bark baskets that the Indian women make themselves, just pinned together at the end with a thorn or stick. Auntie Lu bought some for us but Miss Greatorex wouldn't let me eat the berries, though I was just suffering to! She said after they'd been handled by those dirty Indian fingers she knew they were full of microbes or things and she didn't dare. Oh! dear! I wish she didn't feel so terrible responsible for my health, 'cause it spoils a lot of my good times. The boys weren't afraid of microbes and they ate the berries but I have the basket. It will be all I have to bring you from Halifax; because one of those Indian women had her baby with her and she looked so poor—I just couldn't help giving that dollar right to her. I couldn't really help it. She wanted me to take baskets in pay for it, but I knew that wouldn't be *giving*. You won't mind, will you, dearest Mother Martha? if the only thing I bring you from that city is a poor Indian woman's blessing? You always give to the poor yourself, so I wasn't afraid you'd scold. There are just two things that I'd like different here, on this lovely vacation. One is if only you and father were here, too! Every new and nice thing I see, or good time I have, I do so want them for you both also. The other is—I wish, I wish I knew who my father and mother were! The real ones. They couldn't have been any nicer than you have been to me, but folks that don't know me are sure to ask me about my family. Molly and Monty and Melvin are always able to tell about theirs, but I can't. Her mother, the 'other Molly,' died when she was a little thing, but she knows all about her. The Judge has a beautiful miniature of this 'other Molly' his wife, and takes it with him wherever he goes, even into that camp, where we're to be let to go, maybe, for a salmon dinner that the 'Boys' catch themselves.

[Pg 199]

[Pg 200]

"There are lots of books in this old house and a piano. Each generation has added to the library and Mrs. Grimm says that in the winter she and her husband read 'most all the time. Christmases, no matter how deep the snow, all their children come home and then the rooms are opened and warmed and they have such fun. Oh! it must be grand to belong to a big family and know it's all your own! They burn great logs of wood and even now we have a fire on the living-room hearth all the time. One of the young Indian boys who works here has nothing else for his chores except to keep the wood-boxes filled and the fires fresh. He's rather a nice Indian boy but he's full of capers. Molly is so lonesome without Monty and Melvin to play with she makes plays with Anton. I don't think Mrs. Grimm likes it and I'm sure Aunt Lucretia doesn't, for I heard her tell Molly so. But nobody can keep Molly Breckenridge still. She doesn't care to read much and she hates practicing, and she cries every time she has to sew a seam, though Mrs. Hungerford makes her do that 'for discipline.' I don't know what would become of the darling if it wasn't for Anton. She likes me, course, but I can't climb trees after cherries, or wade in ponds after water-lilies, and though I like to ride horseback with her I'm afraid to go beyond bounds where we're told to stay. Molly isn't afraid.

[Pg 201]

"Please give my love to Aunt Chloe and write soon to your loving

"DOROTHY."

Having finished this letter, longer than common, Dorothy wandered out of doors seeking her mate. She was nowhere in sight, but the man who rode into town so many miles away, to fetch and carry the mail and to bring supplies of such things as the farm did not produce, was just driving up the road and playfully shook his mail-pouch at her. She sped to meet him, was helped into his wagon and received the pouch in her arms. She and Molly were always eager to "go meet the mail," which was brought to them only every other day, and whichever was first and obtained it was given the key to the pouch and the privilege of distributing its contents. This privilege would be Dorothy's to-day; and she skipped into the living-room and to the ladies at their sewing, dragging the pouch behind her.

Little she knew of its contents; or that among them would come the solution of that "wonder" that now so constantly tormented her:—"Who were my parents?"

CHAPTER XIII

[Pg 202]

A MESSAGE FOR THE CAMP

When the gray-haired "Boys" had set out for camp, they had left word at the farm that they wished no newspapers or mail matter of that sort forwarded them. Also, most of them had, before leaving their own homes, asked that no letters should be written except such as were important, and these should be duly marked that. They wished to forget care and the outside world as far as possible, and to live in the faith that "no news is good news."

Therefore, since a fortnight had elapsed, there was a table in the living-room already heaped with the mail which had accumulated during that time. Each man's portion of it was carefully sorted and placed by itself; but this morning Auntie Lu, upon whom that duty devolved, did not augment her brother's heap by the three envelopes she had taken from the pouch. She sat long with them in her lap, pondering the course she should follow, for two bore a Richmond postmark and one that of Annapolis, and each was marked according to direction: "Important."

Miss Greatorex and Dorothy had both received a letter and were eagerly perusing them upon a low window seat, and Mrs. Hungerford left her own mail unopened to glance toward them, still considering what she should do. Her gaze rested longest upon the girl, whose face was radiant over a long, many-paged epistle from Father John. The young lips were parted in a smile, the brown eyes were smiling too, and Dolly looked such a picture of innocent delight that a pang shot through the observer's tender heart. For she knew that those "Important" letters concerned the child. They were addressed in Ephraim Cook's familiar, crabbed hand, and the man would never have ventured to disturb the peace of his absent employer except by that employer's command. Also, she knew that the only business of "Importance" the Judge had entrusted to Mr. Cook was that concerning Dorothy C. All law matters were attended to by other, more experienced persons. She longed to break the seals and read the contents for herself and wished now that she had asked permission so to do, but she could not open another person's letter without that one's desire.

[Pg 203]

Presently, she glanced through her own letters and sought Mrs. Grimm in her kitchen, busy among her maids at preparing the mid-day meal, always an early one since the farm-hands so preferred it; and it had been among their arrangements that, although her "boarders" should have a separate table in an inner room, the food for all the household should be the same. Nobody could complain of this for the housemistress was a notable cook

[Pg 204]

and her supplies generous.

"Beg pardon, Mrs. Grimm, for interrupting you, but I want to ask if there's a 'hand' not busy who could ride out to camp and carry some letters to my brother. I am anxious he should have them for they may require immediate replies." She did not add, as she might, that an intense but kindly curiosity of her own was another reason for the request.

"Why, I can hardly tell, Mrs. Hungerford. They're all busy in the fields, and my husband with them. There are some who need a constant supervision and my man believes that there's nothing so good for any job as the 'eye of the master.' Else, he'd ride into the woods himself and think naught of it. Let me consider who—"

At that moment Anton came into the kitchen and threw an armful of hewn wood beside the great fireplace, where kettles hung upon cranes and "Dutch ovens" were ranged before the coals, each filled with savory food for hungry people. It was a spot Mrs. Hungerford found vastly interesting, but where she rarely lingered; for her presence seemed to disconcert the shy French maids who served their mistress there and whose own homes were isolated cottages here and there. So she was even now leaving the kitchen when she chanced to notice Anton and asked:

"Couldn't this lad go? I know that he heaped the boxes in the living-room and our bedrooms with more wood than we can use to-night, and surely one kitchen-fire can scarcely require more than that pile yonder. I will pay him, or you, well, if he can be spared to do my errand."

[Pg 205]

This guest was rarely so insistent and her hostess saw that to deny her the favor would be a great disappointment; so she answered that:

"Anton can be spared if—Anton can be trusted. And please, understand, dear madam, that no payment for such trivial service would be accepted."

"But it is a long ride there and back, longer than into Halifax isn't it? Yet the man who goes there makes but the one trip a day."

"That is for other reasons. He goes out in the morning upon our errands. It is part of our contract with him that he shall stop the night in town with his family and return the next day early. He is really our caterer and postman. But Anton—Anton is 'bound.' And Anton needs watching. Lad, do you promise that if I let you take a horse and ride to camp you'll do the lady's errand right and ride straight home again?"

He had lingered just within the kitchen doorway, fooling with the youngest of the maids who resented his teasing by a sharp clap on his cheek, but he had not been so absorbed in this pastime that he had not heard every word spoken between his mistress and her guest. Knowing that he was in truth an untrustworthy messenger, he resented its being told; and the statement that no payment would be accepted angered him. He was a bound-out servant, of course. So were many other lads of the Province and no disgrace in it; but if a free gift were offered, was it not his to take? A scowl settled on his dark face and he listened to the outcome of the matter with a vindictive interest. Also, he answered, sullenly:

[Pg 206]

"'Tis a far call to that camp in the woods and one must ride crooked, not 'straight,' to reach it. 'Twould be in the night ere Anton could be back, and there is no moon."

"Tut, lad! When was Anton ever afraid of the night or the dark? Indeed, some tell me that he loves it better than the light. The Scripture tells why. Will you go or not? And will you do the lady's errand right?"

"The master read in the Big Book, last Sunday-day that ever was, how the 'laborer is worthy of his hire.' That's good Scripture, too, Missus, the hay-makers say, and one nudged me to take notice at that time."

Mrs. Grimm hastily turned that he might not see the smile which flitted across her face, and Auntie Lu as suddenly found something interesting to observe which brought her back also toward the quick-witted, mischievous

lad. She longed to renew her offer of payment but would not interfere between mistress and man, so waited anxiously for the result. It came after a moment, Mrs. Grimm saying:

"Go, saddle the gray mare and ride upon that errand. You shall have your dinner first, and a supper in a napkin to cheer you on the ride home. By 'lights out' you will be in your loft with the men. Now tidy yourself and come to table."

[Pg 207]

Anton wasted no time before he obeyed. His sullenness had been but a pretence and mostly assumed in order to secure that "payment" which the "foreign" lady offered. The gray mare was a fleet traveler, easy under the saddle—though for that matter he rarely used one—and he loved the forest. A half-day away from the mistress's eye was clear delight. She had said nothing against a gun or a fishing line and not even the best guide in that region knew better the secret of wood and stream than this other descendant of the Micmacs.

The maid he had teased was glad to be quit of him and hurried to dish up his portion of the dinner, while Mrs. Hungerford returned to desk to write a letter to her brother and to safely make all into a little packet, marked: "Private and Important."

She had told her companions of Anton's trip and Dorothy sped out of doors to beg the lad:

"If you see any new flowers, some of those wild orchids Miss Greatorex read grew around here, will you bring me some? Just a few for specimens, to press for Father John and Mr. Seth? They would be so pleased and I will be so grateful. Will you?"

Anton nodded. Promises were easy to make, and to break if he wished. Then came a maid from the kitchen with a message for her home, a tiny clearing on the edge of the "further wood." To her, also, a promise was readily spoken; and master Anton thrusting the securely tied packet of letters into his pocket, bowed to Mrs. Hungerford with a third and more important promise.

[Pg 208]

"'Tis of a truth I will deliver this into the hand of the man they call a Judge. It is a tedious task, yes, but I will so deliver it. Mayhap he too remembers what the Scripture says."

He uttered the last sentence in a low tone, with a furtive glance houseward, and bearing himself with an air of great complacency. He had become a very important person just then, had Anton, the "bound out." Moreover, he was wholly honest in his determination so to deliver the letters. That Judge in the woods hadn't heard the mistress's opinion about payment and it wasn't necessary that he should. Other farm hands had witnessed to the liberality of those odd men who lived in a tent, wore old clothes when they could wear new, and cooked their own food when they might have had others cook for them. Anton was not afraid to trust his "payment" to the man who owned the letters in that packet.

Now it so happened that Molly was riding about the grounds and up and down a leafy lane upon a gentle horse that her father had engaged for her own and Dorothy's enjoyment while on that lonely farm. She used the creature far more than Dorothy, as was natural and right enough; and had mounted it that day to escape what she called her chum's "everlasting fiddling."

Dorothy was as fond of her violin as Molly averse to her piano; and the nearest to dispute which ever rose between them was on account of Dolly's devotion to her music. She had even complained to Aunt Lucretia that "a violin made her head ache." Whereupon the ambitious violinist had begged permission of its owner to use an empty corncrib at the foot of the "long orchard," as a music-room, and there "squeaked" as long and as loud as she pleased. She was going there now, violin case under her arm, to pass the half-hour before dinner and to watch the men come in from the fields, at

[Pg 209]

the ringing of the great bell which hung from a pole beside the kitchen door. To her the country was full of every possible delight, but poor Molly found it "too quiet and lonely for words." So she spent more and more of her time on every pleasant day, riding up and down the lanes or following Farmer Grimm to the fields.

Between those two a great affection had sprung up. He liked her fearlessness in riding and laughed at her timidity when horned cattle appeared anywhere near. He was proud of the way in which she could take a fence and kept her with him all he could.

On this day, however, he could not so take her. His errands were too far afield and too unsuited for her, and that was why she now rode alone, rather disconsolately up and down, until she saw Anton come out of the stable yard, mounted upon the gray mare and holding his head like a prince.

"Anton! Anton! Oh! are you going riding? Take me with you! Please, please, Anton!"

[Pg 210]

For answer he touched Bess with his heel and she flew out of the enclosure like a bird.

That was enough for Molly Breckenridge. Queenie, the broken-tailed sorrel which she rode, was as swift as she was gentle and needed no goad of heel or whip to spur her forward. A pat of the smooth neck, a word in the sensitive ear—"Fetch him out, Queen!"—and the race was on.

Anton glanced behind and the spirit of mischief flamed in him. They rode toward the forest where a few wood-roads entered, each of which he knew to its finish, not one of which knew Molly. Only this much she did know that Anton lived at the farm, where she lived. Anton rode the farmer's horse as she did. Anton was never absent from meals and it was dinner-time. Therefore, if she thought at all about it or considered further than the delight of a real race, she knew that back to the farm would Anton go and she could follow.

He dashed aside from the wheel-rutted track. She stumbled over the ridges, kept him in sight, and followed him. He doubled and twisted, so did she. He dashed forward in a long straight line, curved, circled, and came back to the wood-road some distance ahead. She did not curve but cut his circle by a short line and brought up at his side.

"Huh! 'Tis a good rider you are, Miss Molly, but you'd best go back now. I'm for the camp."

"Never! You can't be! They wouldn't trust you, you're so tricky. Who'd want you there?"

[Pg 211]

He was instantly offended and showed it, drawing himself erect on the gray mare and tossing his head high while his narrow black eyes looked angrily at her. Then he drew from his blouse the packet Mrs. Hungerford had given him and haughtily explained:

"For that Judge. Now, am I trusted? No?"

It was very strange. Ever since she had been at the farm she had heard of Anton's pranks and trickiness. Tasks he had been set to perform were always neglected except that one of keeping fuel supplied, and this work brought him, also, constantly under his mistress's eye. Yet he allowed Molly to come so close she could recognize her aunt's handwriting outside the packet, and especially that word "Important."

Suddenly she resolved.

"Anton, if you ride to camp I ride with you."

"You will not. I say it." He wasn't going to be disappointed of his fun along the way by the presence of this girl, and no time had been told him when that parcel must be delivered. It must come to the Judge *sometime*, that

was all. The later the better for him, Anton, the more leisure to enjoy the wild and escape that eternal carrying of wood. "You will not," he repeated, more firmly.

"I will so. That is for my father. His name is on it and it is 'Important.' I will see that he gets it. I don't trust you, Anton."

He was rather impressed by the fact that she could read what was written—he could not. He was also angered further by that unwise remark about not trusting him. He stared at her, she stared back. Good! It was a battle of wills, then!

[Pg 212]

He seemed to waver, smiled, and shrugged his shoulders. All roads lead to one's goal, if one knows them. He was an Indian. He could not be lost in any forest, he who was wise in woodcraft and could tell all directions by signs this "foreigner" could not know. He snapped his fingers, airily, pricked Bess forward again and into a trackless wilderness.

For a moment Molly hesitated. Should she go back and give up this chase? Turning around she gazed about her and could not tell which way she had come.

"Why! I couldn't go back, even if I tried. I don't see any track and—I must follow him. I can hear him on ahead, by the breaking branches—Forward, Queenie, quick, quick!"

But Queenie wasn't pleased to "forward." She shrank from the rude pressure of the undergrowth against her delicate shanks and, for an instant, set her forefeet stubbornly among the ferns and brambles. But Molly was now past tenderness with any mount which would not do her will and Queenie was forced into the path she hated to tread. Already the brief delay had cost her the sound of the gray mare's progress. There was neither breaking twig nor footfall to tell her whither that tormenting Anton had vanished. There was only the bruised herbage to show which way he had ridden and she must follow; and for a long time she kept her eyes on that faint lead and steadily pursued it.

[Pg 213]

Then she came to a partly open glade and there she lost the trail entirely. Across this glade Anton had certainly passed but in which direction she couldn't even guess. She reined Queenie to a stand and called:

"Anton! Anton! ANTON!!" and after another interval, again: "ANTON!"

There was an agony of fear in that last cry. Had Anton heard it, even his mischievous heart would have been touched and he would have ridden back to reassure her. But he did not hear her. He had now struck out from that narrow clearing into a road he knew well, by the blazed trees and the wheel-marks the camp-teamster had left upon it. The undergrowth had sprung up again, almost as completely as before it had been first disturbed, and even had Molly found that trail she would not have known enough to trace it.

But he was now on his own right road. She was where—she pleased. He had not asked her to come, he had tried to make her go back. He had not wanted her at all, but she had taunted him, distrusted him, and yet he knew that this once he was proving trustworthy. He felt that little packet safe in his blouse and patted the cloth above it commendingly.

"Good boy, Anton. If 'tis worth payment, this payment the so rich Judge will give. That girl rides well. Let her take care of herself. Go, Bess!"

[Pg 214]

He fished a little, fired a shot or two at some flying bird, then remembered that a shot might be heard and those from the camp come to inquire why it had been fired. Save themselves there were supposed to be no other sportsmen for miles around, and they would surely come, if from no other motive than curiosity.

It was supper-time when he came into camp and upon a picture that warmed his heart and banished from it, for a time, that rather uncomfortable sensation which had lately affected him. He had grown

fanciful and thought a night-bird's call was the cry of somebody lost in the woods.

He was glad to see that cheerful fire, to smell the savory food cooking above it, to observe all the rude comforts with which modern sportsmen surround themselves. Those boys—Why, they had positively grown fat! And how they were laughing and fooling with one another! unrebuked by the older campers, who sat about on logs or stools, and smoked or talked or sang as the spirit moved them.

The Judge's keen eyes were the first to see the nose of the gray mare appearing through the thicket and he sprang to his feet with a little exclamation of alarm:

"Why, Anton, lad! What brings you here? Nothing had happened, I hope! Eh, what? A packet for me? All right. Thank you. You're just in time to join us. We've had fine sport to-day and will have a grand meal in consequence. How's everybody? How's my little Molly?"

[Pg 215]

Anton's answer was an indirect one.

"You'll tell 'em I brought it safe, no?"

"Why, surely. Did anybody doubt you would? And if it's good news, a good fee for fetching it. If bad—fee according!"

He drew a little apart, opened the parcel and read the letters. Then he took a pad from his tent and wrote a brief reply; after which he retied the bundle and gave it back to Anton, saying:

"Deliver this to Mrs. Hungerford as safely as you have to me and I dare say she'll give you another like this!"

He held out a shining silver dollar but somehow, although the lad did take it, it seemed to lie very heavy within that inner pocket where he dropped it.

Supper over, all grouped about the fire and beset the Indian guide for a fresh batch of ghost stories, his specialty in literature or tradition; and though Judge Breckenridge asked his messenger if it were not time that he started back—for Aunt Lu had written urging him to keep the boy no longer than was absolutely necessary—Anton still lingered. Hitherto he had known no fear of any forest. He inherited his love for it and his knowledge. He had even loved best to prowl in its depths during the moonlit or starlit hours, and riding hither had anticipated a leisurely return. So long as he was back at the farm by morning he saw no reason to hurry himself before.

[Pg 216]

Then he found himself listening to Monty's question:

"You say, Guide, that these very woods, right around us, are 'haunted?'"

"Sure. Hark!"

There was a strange unearthly cry from somewhere in the distance and the man continued:

"Some call that a screech-owl! But I know it's the cry of a girl who was lost in this forest. Why, Anton, boy, what's happened you?"

Anton had suddenly swayed in his seat and his face under its copper skin had turned ghastly pale.

CHAPTER XIV

[Pg 217]

HOW MOLLY CAME TO CAMP

"Yes, she was the daughter of one of the French squatters on that very lake we've fished this day. Susette they called her, and she was days in the woods. Out of this *Laque de la Mort*, they drew her body; but still, on dark

nights, her spirit wanders as it wandered then, before she sought or found rest in the pool. 'Tis easy, sure. Take one of you men, even, and set you away from all the guide-marks we've made, you could not find your way save by some inherited instinct. We Indians, descendants of the forest men, get that instinct with our birth; even we who have lived among the white men all our days. That Anton yonder, though he has been housed under a roof ever since he was born, I warrant me he could be set in some unknown wilderness but would find a way out. Is it not so, Anton?" asked the half-breed story-teller, shading his eyes from the firelight to look at the boy.

An instant later he had risen and bent above Anton, who now cowered in his corner his head bent upon his knees and his whole attitude one of keen distress.

"Lad, what's amiss with you?"

[Pg 218]

Anton tossed off the kindly hand just laid upon his shoulder and raised a face that had grown haggard, with wild terrified eyes staring into the questioner's face.

"'Tis a lie, no? There is no girl wanders the forest nights! You are fool, Merimée, with your words!"

"That's as a man judges. Ghost tales were asked and told, and one is true. I know it. But fear not, lad. No spirit will molest to his harm one who rides through the wood aright, in the fear of God and with honesty in his heart. As for the ghost of poor Susette, hapless maid! Would not one with a spark of manhood in him seek to help her if he could? But alas! When one is dead, even living men with hearts of courage can avail nought. But, up. You've rested and supped. 'Tis time you were a-saddle and riding home to your duty. Up and away. Though the wood looks dark from here, 'tis because of our fire so bright. The stars are out and once away from this the road will seem light enough. As light as many another when you're played truant to your master to wander in it. Up, and away!"

This Merimée, guide, was mostly a man of few words. Yet when, as now, his toil for the day was over and the campers gathered for an evening chat it flattered his vanity to be asked for the legends and traditions of the countryside. His tongue had been loosened and he used it thus liberally for the benefit of Anton, the mischievous, who "shamed his duty" as old Merimée always honored it. As he finished speaking he walked to the tree where the gray mare was fastened, slipped on its saddle, tightened its girth, and called:

[Pg 219]

"Ready, Anton!"

And, as if in echo, again floated through the air overhead a night-bird's mournful cry and Anton shrieked, then sprang to his feet shivering with terror.

The men stared at him, astonished, and Monty ran to him, shook him, and demanded:

"Don't you know better than that? Scare a fellow's wits out of his head? That's nothing but the same old bird that's kept me awake—"

Melvin shouted in laughter, and the others echoed him.

"Kept you awake! Well, I'd like to know when? You that always go to sleep over your supper—if you're allowed!"

Monty laughed, also, and the mirth around him seemed to restore Anton's composure in a measure. But happening to glance toward Judge Breckenridge he saw that gentleman looking at him keenly and his guilty conscience awoke. In fact, the Judge was merely interested in watching the changes which fear wrought upon Anton's healthy face and was growing impatient to have the lad start home. He knew how eagerly his sister would wait to read the letters he was returning her and to comply with his own brief instructions concerning them. He was a man who wished always to do at once anything he had to do; and nothing annoyed him more than others'

[Pg 220]

shilly-shallying. To his amazement, Anton begged him:

“Don’t! Don’t, sir, look at me like that! I didn’t go for to do it! She—she done it herself!”

“Who did what? Have you lost your common sense?”

Then it all came out, the whole miserable story; in broken sentences, with keenest regret now, unhappy Anton told of Molly’s following, of the trick he had played upon her, and of the fact that she was now wandering somewhere in that wild forest alone, save for old Queenie.

But the story was not ended before every member of that startled group was on his feet, ready for search and rescue. Though he could almost have killed the lad where he cowered, so furious was his wrath and terrible his fear, the Judge controlled himself and sternly ordered:

“With me you come, Anton. Close to me you keep and lead me to the last spot where you left my child. If we find her not—”

He did not need to finish his sentence with a threat, nor did he wait for the horse which Merimée made haste to catch and saddle. On foot he started, Anton held by an iron grasp, and they two were out of sight before the others had quite realized that they were even moving.

Old Merimée took charge without question; organizing his little company into bands of two and directing each pair to take a separate route through the woods, but all verging toward the east and the distant farmhouse. He arranged that all, carrying guns, should agree upon certain signals; one shot meant distress, two reports called for reinforcement by the nearest searchers; and three—or a succession of more—good news, that the work had happily ended and the word was: “Back to the camp!”

[Pg 221]

The old college president took Montmorency as his aide, with the clannish instinct of two New Englanders for one another’s company. Indeed, this odd pair had been almost constant companions since they entered the woods, and the lad had found the alert old man the “jolliest ‘boy’ he had ever chummed with.”

The surgeon called Melvin to share his own search and the merchant strode sturdily forward in the wake of Merimée, the guide; who delayed but long enough to cover the fire and to sling over his shoulder a hunting-horn. He had often used this for four-footed game, and might now as a call to the Judge’s lost daughter. Seeing Merimée do this sent Melvin also back to his tent, yet only for a moment. Then he ran after his partner and disappeared in the gloom of the forest.

Back at Farmer Grimm’s, when Molly rode out of the grounds, there had been none to see her go except one of the maids, drooping with sick-headache against the back porch. Even she had scarcely realized the fact, so absorbed was she by her own physical misery. There her mistress found her and promptly despatched her to her room and bed, until she should recover, and it was not till some hours later that she descended to find the house in a turmoil of search and anxiety. At dinner-time, Mrs. Hungerford had bidden Dorothy to call Molly; adding a warning word:

[Pg 222]

“Tell her, Dolly dear, that she must come at once. Too often she lingers and keeps Mrs. Grimm waiting. That isn’t right because this household is managed as systematically as your own Academy in school time. Be sure and tell her.”

“Yes, Auntie Lu, when I find her,” answered Dorothy, speeding out of doors, while the lady looked after her with more than ordinary interest; thinking: “What a dear, bonny creature that child is! And I am so glad, I hope so much for her now. I’m sure Schuyler will bid me go ahead and write, or will send a note to be forwarded. I can hardly wait for the outcome of the matter, but Dorothy must know nothing—nothing—until just the right moment. Then for the climax, and God grant it be a happy one!”

She sat down on the broad sill by the open window to wait for the girls, lost in her own happy thoughts, until Miss Greatorrex came and asked:

“Did you know that dinner had been served some moments and is fast getting cold? It’s mutton to-day, and Mrs. Grimm is fretting that ‘mutton must be eaten hot to be good.’”

“So late? I was musing over something—didn’t notice. Have the girls come in without my seeing them?”

[Pg 223]

“Neither of them.”

“That’s odd. By the way, when did you see Molly?”

“A few moments after breakfast, I think. I’ve been writing all morning at that further window and have scarcely looked out. Why?”

“She hasn’t been in and dearly as she loves riding I never knew her to keep on with it so long, unless she was off with the farmer. I sent Dolly to call her and now she delays, too.”

“Very well, *I will find Dorothy!*” said Miss Isobel, with an air of authority. She considered Mrs. Hungerford quite too indulgent to her niece and was all the more strict with her own especial charge for that reason. She now left the room with a firm step and was still wearing an air of discipline when she came upon Dorothy emerging from the stables. The child looked perplexed and a trifle frightened. She didn’t wait for her governess to upbraid her but began at once:

“Oh, dear Miss Isobel! I can’t find her anywhere! Nobody has seen her and Queenie isn’t in her stall. I’ve been to my corncrib, the garden, the long orchard all through, and yet she isn’t. Ah! There’s Mr. Grimm! He’s finished his dinner already and is going back to the hay-fields. Please excuse me, I’ll run ask him if he’s seen her.”

“Best not delay longer yourself, Dorothy—” called Miss Greatorrex, but for once her charge did not pause at this tone of reproof; and a first, faint feeling of alarm rose in her own breast.

[Pg 224]

“Molly, lassie? No, indeed! I haven’t seen her to-day. I was off to work before she came down stairs, but I’ve been wishing for her and you, too, the livelong day. The wild-roses that you love are blooming wonderful. All my far-away meadows are hedged with them as perfect as if they’d been set out a-purpose. Miles of them, I fancy, are on this old farm; but little golden-haired Molly’s the sweetest wild-rose I’ve seen this summer. For you’re no wild rose, lassie. You’re one of those ‘cinnamons,’ home-keepers, close by the old house and that the Missus claims are the prettiest in all the world. So there’s a compliment for the pair of you! Wait till I whistle! Mistress Molly knows that it means: ‘Come! I’m waiting for your company!’ ‘Twill fetch her, sure, if she’s within the sound of it.’”

So he put his hands to his lips and whistled as only he could do, a long, musical note of call that reached far and wide and that the missing girl had often likened to the sound of Melvin’s bugle.



"QUEENIE TOO, HAD HEARD."

Dorothy's Travels.

But there came no answer of Queenie's footfalls over the gravel nor their soft thud-thud upon the grass, and the farmer felt he could delay no longer. Yet, could he go? While his little "comrade" was missing? Silly, to feel a moment's alarm at such a trivial thing. A thoughtless lassie, sure she was, this little maid of the far-away southland; but oh! so "winsie." No. Let the hay wait. He'd tarry a bit longer and be on hand to scold Fair-Hair when she came galloping back with a string of merry excuses tumbling off her nimble tongue, her ready "I forgots" or "I didn't thinks"—the teasing, adorable witch that she was!

[Pg 225]

"Fetch me my pipe and my paper, Dorothy, girl. I'll wait under this apple tree till she comes. But do you all get your dinners and not so many go hungry because one wild child loiters. A whisper! The missus is getting a trifle crisp, in the kitchen yon. She's missing the nap that is due her as soon as her people are fed. Best make haste. It's pleasanter for all on the Farm when Missus is left to go her gait regular, without hindrance from any. Go, little maid, and a blessing on you."

So she ran and brought him his pipe and his paper, received a kiss for her pains, and left him on the bench under the apple-tree, idle because little Molly was idle—no better reason than that—though this was his busiest time and he a most busy man.

But Mrs. Hungerford could not eat, even though courtesy compelled her to table and to taste the good fare provided. Her want of appetite banished Miss Isobel's, and though Dorothy was healthily hungry, as why shouldn't she be? even she sent away her plate untouched, and was the first of the trio to put into words the dreadful fear that was in all their hearts:

"I can't, I can't eat! Something has happened to Molly! Something terrible has come to our Molly!"

[Pg 226]

That ended waiting. After that the farmer promptly summoned his men, the mistress her maids, and a thorough search of all the premises began. Over the old-fashioned well with its long sweep poor Aunt Lu hovered like a creature distraught.

That well had held a fascination for the novelty-loving Molly, in this case its age being the to her new thing. She had tried her own strength in lifting the great beam and lowering the bucket from its pole; and, perhaps, she

had done so now and had fallen over the curb into the depths below!

In vain did the others tell her how almost impossible this would have been; she could not be dissuaded, and most earnestly begged the farmer to have someone search the well.

"No, no, dear madam. Not till we've tried other more likely spots first. The last time Molly was seen was on Queenie's back. Well, then we have only to find the sorrel and we'll find the child. Take comfort. That up-and-a-coming little lass isn't down anybody's well. Not she."

There were many barns and outbuildings on that big farm; some new and modern, some old and disused. Not one was left unsearched. All work stopped. Haymakers and ploughmen left their fields to add their willing feet and keen eyes to the business, and up-garret, down cellar, through dairies, pantries, unused chambers, everywhere within doors the troubled housemistress led her own corps of searchers, and always without result. This had been a foregone conclusion yet she left nothing undone that might lead to the discovery of the missing girl; while the longer they sought the deeper the conviction grew in all those anxious hearts: "Molly is lost."

[Pg 227]

It was the maid with the headache who furnished the first clue. Coming below after her hours of rest, she found the kitchen deserted, and all labor at a standstill. Hearing voices without she questioned the first she met and was told in faltering tones:

"The bonny little maid is—lost!"

"*Lost?* Where, then, is Anton?"

"Gone with a parcel to the far-away camp. The mistress sent him for Mrs. Hungerford."

"Well, but, the maid was with him. That is she sought to be. I heard her call after him as he rode away and I thought her cries would split my aching head. He was galloping out of the far gate and she a-chase. They need not seek her hereabouts."

Said the mistress, in vast relief:

"I might have known. I might have guessed. He a mischievous tease, she a wild, impulsive child." Then she hurried to poor Auntie Lu, sitting disconsolate beside the well with Dorothy clasping her hand in her own small ones, trying to comfort as best she could, and exclaimed: "Fear no more! We should have thought at once the prank that madcap would be at! She saw Anton ride away to the camp and she has followed him. The maid who was ill remembers. She is safe with her father long before this. Come in by, now, come in and have a cup of tea. A cup of tea will set you up again like anything."

[Pg 228]

Aunt Lu was greatly cheered but it took more than the other's panacea of a "cup of tea" to banish all anxiety; yet in the hope that had been raised she passed the remainder of that dreadful day as calmly as she could and without burdening others with the fear which still lingered in her heart.

Upon his wife's report the farmer left off prying into all the home places and saddled his fleetest horse. He sent all the men back to the fields to house the abandoned hay machines and rusting ploughs, and to attend the many duties of so great a farm. But he took one man with him and a "snack" of supper in their pockets. It would be a long ride there and back and a detour might be necessary. Wherever he found sign of the child's wandering, should she by chance have lost the trail of Anton, whom she followed, he would keep to the signs and not the shortest route. Many a place there was, of course, where even the surest-footed horse could not travel, and only a foot passage be made with difficulty.

But he rode round to Auntie Lu, now coaxed within doors to an open window, and cheerily bade her:

"Keep stout heart, my woman dear. When you see my grizzled face again

[Pg 229]

you shall see your Molly's bonny one beside it. I'm a Grimm. I mean it."

Then he bared his gray head, settled himself firmly in his saddle, called to his man: "Come on!" and rode as gallantly to the rescue as if his seventy winters had been no more than seventeen.

All this time where was Molly?

When she found that Anton had disappeared from that open spot in the forest she was at first terrified then comforted.

"Why, I reckon this must be mighty near that camp, after all. It's 'most clear of the little trees and bushes, like some of the farm-groves that anybody can play in and not be scared or—or get their dresses torn. Queenie, you and I can rest a few minutes. Somehow I'm dreadful tired. I rode such a lot all morning and now away out here after that Anton. He's mean. He surely is dreadful ornery. When I see him again I'll just hold my head mighty high and take no notice. Indians aren't much better than negroes, I reckon. Anyhow he isn't half so nice. Catch one of our black 'boys' treating 'little missy' so! You hungry, too, Queenie? Well, you're luckier than I for you can get your dinner off the ground. Go ahead and nibble it. I'll wait for you;" she said, talking to the sorrel as if she were human and could understand, and slipping from her saddle to the ground.

After a moment's contemplation of the lovely place, where a little stream ran trickling and babbling over stones, and where the ferns were high as her head, looking to her like miniature trees themselves, she began to feel almost contented. Open places between the pines let the sunlight through and, where it fell, the wild roses which creep everywhere over that fair land had forced themselves into a home and bloomed away most bravely. Then she espied a scarlet patch of color underneath and found that they were the wild strawberries she loved so well. She cried, scrambling after these:

[Pg 230]

"Ah! Queenie! You're not the only one can get something to eat away out here in the woods. I suppose that's the kind of stream Papa fishes for trout. If I had a line and a hook and—and whatever I needed I could fish, too. But I wouldn't. I never would like to kill anything, though a trout that somebody else had killed would make a mighty nice dinner right now."

The berries were plenty, and "enough" of anything is "as good as a feast." At least they satisfied her immediate hunger as the water from the brook, caught in a little cup made of a big leaf, satisfied her thirst. Queenie slaked her own thirst at the same pool and was so quiet and content that she greatly helped to cheer her small companion.

Finally Molly remembered a maxim she had once taught Dorothy:

"When you're lost, stay right still in that spot till somebody comes and finds you." Not always the safest judgment, it may be, but consoling then to this small girl.

[Pg 231]

Then she continued to converse with the sorrel mare; assuring that calm creature:

"That boy went away out of here, some place, and to go home again he'll have to come away back. That's plain enough. Now, you and I are real safe, Queenie, really perfectly safe; if some them mooses or caribous, or deers, or—or things—Let's not think about them, Queenie. Let's just wait. Let's—let's take a nap if we can, to make the time pass till—till Anton comes."

She wished she hadn't happened to think of any "wild beasts" just then and she was astonished to see Queenie take her advice so literally; for down upon that mossy ground dropped the sorrel, did its utmost to work the saddle off its back, and, failing in this, stretched itself on its side and did go to sleep.

Then for a time Molly busied herself in gathering flowers, wherever she caught sight of one, and, thrusting them into her blouse, told Queenie that "these are for that terrible flowery girl, Dorothy C. Oh! I wonder what she is doing now! If she isn't scraping away on that old fiddle I'll bet she's

missing me. 'Tisn't polite for girls to 'bet,' Auntie Lu says. Oh! I wish I could see her now. Funny I should be so lonesome, right in the daylight with Queenie here. If I don't look out I'll be crying; for I'm getting that awful scared way I was when Anton first went. I'll lie down too on that pile of ferns and go to sleep—if I can. I hope there aren't any wigglers of any sort to get into my ears. I'll put my handkerchief over them and my face on that. Let's play pretend it's bedtime, Queenie. Good night."

[Pg 232]

There was no response from the weary old horse who had jugged about nearly all that day and Molly waited for none. A merciful drowsiness stole upon her and when she woke again the night was really there. Through the scattered tree-tops she could see the stars shining; close at her feet was the same gentle purring of the little stream, and overhead the soft rustle of pine needles moving lightly in the breeze. But what had wakened her? Something had, she knew. Some sound other than that of the brook or the pines. Queenie too, had heard. She had got to her feet and was listening, was whinnying, as in no fear of whatever thing it was. Molly could dimly see the old horse against the background of gloom but her presence was vast comfort.

Hark! HARK!!

Molly was on her feet now, wider awake than in all her life before, hands clasped to her breast, head bent forward, listening—listening—listening.

"Toot! Toot! Tooty-ti-tooty-ti-toot!"

"A bugle! A bugle! The 'Assembly!' First call to meals! Melvin's coming! Melvin—MELVIN!"

Nearer and nearer it came. It was at hand. On the other side the murmuring stream. On this side. In her very ears; and screaming "Melvin!" with all the agony of fear that she had pent within her brave heart, Molly fell sobbing in the "Bashful Bugler's" arms.

[Pg 233]

A few minutes later she was in her father's; and not long thereafter sat upon his knee before the camp-fire with her head upon his breast and he clasping her close, close in an embrace that held within it almost an agony of joy, so fierce it was.

CHAPTER XV

[Pg 234]

MRS. CALVERT PLANS AN INFAIR

Instead of being scolded for her escapade Molly found herself a sort of heroine. Nothing could exceed the tenderness of her thankful father, nor the interest of all the campers. The signal shots had brought them all back to the camp, and there the two lads went immediately to work to cook for the girl the most wonderful of suppers. Monty had caught some of Melvin's deftness at the task and was most ambitious to show Molly his newly acquired skill. Also, at the first opportunity, when the Judge had for a moment released his darling's hand to rise and greet Farmer Grimm coming through the woods, the boy proudly pulled from his pocket a few small coins and displayed them upon his palm.

"See them, Miss Molly? Hmm. Those are mine. My own. I—earned—them—myself!"

He paused so long to let this amazing statement sink into her mind that Melvin called:

"Come on, Mont! No loafing! Fetch another bit of wood and get on your hurry-up step! Merimée covered this fire so snug he nigh put it out, but wise enough, too. A fire in the forest isn't a laughing matter. Look out! Don't poke it, you clumsy, else you'll tip over that coffee-pot. First time we've had a lady to visit us don't want to act the blunder-head, do you?"

[Pg 235]

"Oh! hush, Bugle! No call to bulldoze a fellow just because you happened to be first on the spot! What made you think of carrying that thing, anyway?"

Molly herself drew near to hear the answer. She was wondering at the fact of their jolly comradeship, which was now so evident; and at Monty's pride over a little money—he who had cared so little for it once. She was wondering at many things, and when Melvin did not at once reply she repeated Monty's question.

"Melvin, how did you happen to take the bugle?"

"Why—why—I don't know, but I fancy my mother would say that Providence put it into my mind. My mother believes that Providence has a Hand in everything, don't you know? Anyhow, I'm glad I did take it. Without it and you hearing it we might have wandered right past that very place—one spot looks so much like another in the woods at night."

"Melvin, would you sell me that bugle? It was that saved my life, maybe, if the animals I thought about had come or if—Would you?" asked Molly, softly, and with a pathetic clasping of her hands, which trembled again now, as she recalled past perils.

"No, Molly, I won't sell it to you. I'll give it to you, if you'll take it that way, and only wish it were a better one. It's the cheapest made. It had to be, don't you know?"

[Pg 236]

For a moment the girl hesitated. She did not like to rob the lad of his only musical enjoyment and she felt that he could not afford the gift. Then she remembered that there were other bugles in the world and that she had but to suggest to her father a sort of exchange for the better, and so satisfy both herself and Melvin. So she said simply:

"I shall prize it as the greatest treasure in the world, and I thank you, I—I can't say much—I can't talk when I feel most—but don't you know how I feel? About my teasing you whenever I had the chance and—and lots of things? I'll take the bugle if—if 'you'll call the slate washed clean,' as Dolly says, and we can begin all over again?" She held out her hand, entreatingly, and the shy lad took it for a moment, then dropped it as if its touch had burned. A sudden wave of his old bashfulness had swept over him, for though he had gained much self-confidence during those weeks in camp it would be a long time before he conquered the timidity of his nature, if he ever did.

Then she asked Monty how he had earned money in such a place as that and he answered proudly:

"Made myself generally useful. The Prex hired me to wait on him and keep his traps in order sometimes—when the other old 'Boys' would let him be 'coddled.' Every man for himself, you know, out here. But the Prex is odd. He wants his boots blacked, or shoes, that he puts on after he takes off his hunting ones and I've 'shined' 'em for him like any street bootblack that ever did my own. Fact! Fancy what my mother would say! Master Montmorency Vavasour-Stark blacking shoes in order to get a bit of pocket-money! But I tell you what, Molly Breckenridge, I like it. I'm going to have one of these dimes made into a watch-charm and wear it always, just to remind me how fine I felt over the first, the very first, cent I ever honestly earned. And it's taught me one thing. I'll quit idling. I shall never be a scholar like long-legged Jim, but I'll *do* things, I mean it. I'll find out what I can do best, and I think I can guess that, and then I'm going ahead to do it. I'm going to ask Papa to stop giving me money. I'm going to shock my mother by going to work. But—that Prex is a wise old chap. He's taught hundreds, likely thousands, of boys to make decent men and he's trying to teach me. He says—"

[Pg 237]

"O, Monty! Quit! I've broiled that salmon steak to the Queen's taste and the coffee's settled as clear as that spring water and—Supper's ready, Miss Molly Breckenridge. Will your ladyship partake?" demanded Melvin, interrupting.

Such a supper that was! Odd, that all the campers who had fared so heartily just a little while before should suddenly be "taken hungry" again and beg an invitation too. Even Farmer Grimm and his man waited to feast with the others before riding home to carry the good news; then departed, with the forgiven but shame-faced Anton riding between them and with the precious packet of letters transferred from his pocket to his master's for safe-keeping.

[Pg 238]

Molly stayed the night to rest; lying snug in her father's tent while he sat long awake thinking of many things; but mostly thankful for the safety of the little maid whose love and life meant all the world to him. The dear, repentant child; who had not gone to sleep till, all alone with him in the seclusion of his tent, she had clasped her arms about his neck and begged his pardon for all her thoughtlessness.

"It was terrible there in the dark woods when I woke and found I was lost, alone; but that wasn't half so terrible, it didn't make me feel half so bad in here," laying her hand upon her heart, "as it does knowing how unhappy I've made everybody and how much trouble given. Seems if I never would be heedless and forget again, Papa dearest, seems if! But I'm just only Molly—and I haven't much faith in your Molly, Judge Breckenridge!"

What could he do but kiss her quivering lips and smile at the whimsical way in which she expressed her contriteness? And, after all, would he have had her greatly different from what she was by nature, just his great-hearted, impulsive, precious Molly?

Next morning she rode home in great state. With Guide Merimée heading the little cavalcade and with masters Melvin and Monty on either side when that was practical for the crowding of the trees, and as van or rear guard it was not. Because the road was straight enough to one who knew it, as did the half-breed hunter, and that happy company followed him with no thought of care. Monty was laden with wild-flowers of every sort for Dorothy; Melvin had store of forsaken birds' nests, lichens, and curious bits of stone or bark for Miss Greatorex to add to her "collection," which Mrs. Hungerford assured her would cost more than it was worth to pass the revenue officers. "No matter if it does!" cried the happy teacher, "since it will be such an addition to Miss Rhinelander's museum."

[Pg 239]

The guide brought fish, freshly caught that morning before daybreak, and enough of game to feast even that farm crowd of "hands;" and having tarried long enough to deliver the packet to Mrs. Hungerford, to assure her that her brother was well and more than happy now; that he and the other "Boys" intended to lengthen their vacation by a few weeks, in fact to "stay just as long as they could;" to add that by no means must Molly ride "off grounds" again, alone, and that Anton was not to be punished for his "prank;" and to partake of Mrs. Grimm's most excellent food and drink. Then he called the lads, now almost reluctant to leave the pleasant place of peace and plenty, and rode away again, they following and looking back again and again, to wave farewell.

"I never saw so great an improvement in two boys as in those!" said Auntie Lu, standing to watch them disappear toward the forest, with Molly fast in her arms and Dorothy beside her; then laughed at the rather awkward manner in which she had expressed herself, as she saw Miss Greatorex regarding her. But for once that estimable person was not critical of others' speech or grammar; and murmured with an air of great content:

[Pg 240]

"So many more weeks of rest and time to write up my travels."

Mrs. Hungerford sighed, but conquered the slight loneliness that now oppressed her and set to work herself upon a vigorous correspondence and the carrying forward of a matter her brother had outlined for her. Sometimes in writing these letters she asked Dorothy to sit beside her and would frequently look at the girl as if she were studying her features or her manner. At such time Dolly felt a little awkward and perplexed, yet always, in some indefinable manner, as if this scrutiny were for her own good. Then Auntie Lu would laugh and call the girl her "Inspiration," and write the

faster.

Those last weeks on the old Farm were very quiet, uneventful, yet most happy ones; and the two girls passed much of the time in the cool, shadowy library, among the fine literature therein collected. For Molly had no further desire at present for "larks" and began, instead, to find out how much happiness one may find between the covers of a book. Dorothy introduced her to Dickens, and thereafter the merry maid needed no urging to: "Do sit down and read and let me do so!"

[Pg 241]

One morning in that late summer time, Mrs. Betty Calvert was sitting on a hotel veranda at the Springs. She was looking very handsome and queenly, in her white gown, her piled-up, snow-white hair, and her "air of one who belonged" to an old "aristocracy." A little table was beside her, heaped with her morning's mail; for here, even as in her old home at Bellvue, she surrounded herself with more such reading matter than she could use. But the letters were duly read and re-read, some of them; and at last she dropped one to her lap, and remarked to a gentleman near her:

"Cousin Seth, Lucretia Breckenridge always was a fool!"

"Hard judgment, Cousin Betty. I should have given quite the contrary. I always thought her a very sweet, sensible, lovable woman."

"Hmm. You see a deal of 'sweetness' in this silly old world. But look here. What sensible woman would write a letter of twenty pages when one would do? All to convince me of something I already knew."

"Don't expect me to answer that. Go on and tell me what's 'meat' in so much 'cocoanut.'"

"She believes—and she takes pages to justify her belief—that she has traced the parentage of one Dorothy, a foundling! Indeed! Why, Seth, those people up in that unhappy Nova Scotia—unhappy to be afflicted with two such foolish visitors—they think themselves detectives fit to rank with the world's greatest. I thought Schuyler had some sense if Lucretia hadn't. If they weren't already there I'd bid them both 'go to Halifax' as I used to be bidden when I was a naughty little girl and plagued my nurse. She makes a great ado about Dorothy's 'unhappiness.' I can't believe that. I never, never saw a happier child in all my life. The idea! Lucretia is just as simple as she was always. She's set out to find who Dorothy's parents are or were and she thinks she's found. The idea! The impertinent minx!"

[Pg 242]

The "Learned Blacksmith" did not reply, but calmly perused his own paper. He was a blacksmith transformed, and he seemed to fit into this environment as readily and completely as he had fitted the simple life of the old smithy under the Great Balm tree. He had recovered his health but was sojourning for a little time in this old resort of his youth, meeting those who were lads and maidens then but now as venerable as himself. Few among them were as alert, as vigorous and as young of heart as Cousin Betty and himself; and they two had, as a younger guest remarked: "Been having the time of their lives. Why, that black-eyed old lady has more attention this day than any of us girls; and as for wit and repartée, there isn't her equal this year at our Springs."

After a few moments of this silence, during which Mrs. Calvert tapped her white slipper impatiently, she interrupted her companion's reading by an exclamation:

[Pg 243]

"Seth Winters, do put up that tiresome paper and listen. I don't believe you've comprehended a single sentence you've looked at. I know. Your eyes had that hungry-for-Dorothy look in them. Leastwise, if they hadn't, the feel of it is in my own old heart. A pretty how'd-ye-do, when that little Lu Breckenridge-Hungerford sets out to hint to me of my duty! a slip of a girl like her—the saucy chit!"

Old Seth laughed, so merrily that others drew near to learn the sport; seeing which, Mistress Elizabeth Cecil Somerset-Calvert, rather haughtily

arose and remarked:

"Come, Cousin Seth, I'd like to take a walk."

Pacing the green grove, up and down its smooth paths, they were undisturbed; but now all desire for conversation had left Mrs. Betty. She was, indeed, in deep reflection; wondering if a certain course she had followed were all for the best as she had hitherto esteemed it; and the only hint she gave to the blacksmith was the sentence:

"I wanted to wait till she came of her own accord. I've never quite forgiven her for preferring that woman Martha to me."

Then she went on in a silence which he knew her too well to disturb and finally she announced:

"I think I'll give a house party at Deerhurst. A regular old-fashioned 'in-fair,' though it'll be no bride for whom the festivity is given. After the assembly—what seems best! Those Breckenridges and their camping friends; including the old 'boys' and young ones. The foster parents, of course; and Johnnie must be written to about bringing that sealed letter of mine, that I entrusted to his care. I marked it not to be opened till after my death; but I think I'll postpone dying—if God wills!—for I'm not nearly so dumpish as I was the day I sealed that packet and set my directions upon it. I may open it and I may not. I may oblige Lu Breckenridge by letting her think she's a wonderful clever woman, and I may take the wind out of her sails by telling her—the truth. What do you say? Will you go along?"

[Pg 244]

"Will I not? I should go anyway, whether your house-warming-in-fair materializes or not. I hope, though, you won't change your mind, because I long for the mountain and my peaceful life upon it. I hope you'll stick to this notion longer than some others."

"Then come in and help me write the invitations and set things in trim for such a big entertaining. After they're written I can't change my mind, you know, though I rarely do. I scorn the imputation. Only, ought I to do it? Will it be for the best?"

"Oh! make haste, Betty Calvert! If I don't get those invitations off in the first mail I'll never be allowed to send them at all!"

He spoke jestingly, yet not without deep sympathy. The "change of mind" she intimated meant much, very much to little Dorothy; whose best interests nobody had so much in mind as these two old people with the young hearts. But his own desire was now for the clearing of all that "mystery" which had enveloped the child from her infancy and which only they two could solve.

[Pg 245]

The notes were written and most promptly posted. Then other matters were put in line to make the reopening of Deerhurst the most memorable event in its history. Servants were ordered thither, disused rooms were aired and fitted for occupancy, every scrap of fallen leaf or intrusive weed removed from its driveways and paths, and in all the glory of its early-autumn beauty the fine old place awaited the coming of its mistress and her guests.

First of all to arrive was one James Barlow, with two kindly happy dogs, leaping and barking and doing their canine best to express their happiness at seeing "home" once more. "Home" it was to the lad, also, as he felt it now; tugging stoutly upon the chains of the Great Danes, lest in their exuberant joy they should break away from him to gambol in the geranium beds that glorified the lawn.

Around from the vine-draped back porch came old Ephraim and Dinah; Hans and Griselda Roemer, who greeted Jim in their hearty German fashion, as if he were their own son come home. And bless me! If out of that great kitchen didn't issue Ma Babcock herself, and all her daughters a-trail behind!

"Why, Mrs. Babcock, you here? Surely, this is indeed a surprise!" cried Jim, releasing the Danes to Ephraim's care and clasping the hands she extended

[Pg 246]

toward him.

“Well, then, it needn’t be. Me and Mis’ Calvert has been neighbors this long while, years indeed. So what more natural than, when all the company was comin’ and help so hard to get—capable help, you know—up-mounting, but that old Seth, the farrier, should write me the invite to come and take a hold of things and see that they was the rightest kind of right for such grand doings? So I come; and I had to fetch the girls along, ’cause I never do leave them out of any the good times I have myself. Baretta stop holdin’ onto my skirt! You’ll pull it clean out the gathers and it’s just fresh-washed and ironed. Claretta, will you never, never quit suckin’ your thumb? Make your manners pretty, darlin’, to this fine gentleman! Who, after all said, is nobody but Jim Barlow, makin’ the most of his chance. Why, Alfy! You bashful? Come and shake hands with your old friend and don’t act simple!”

So Alfaretta came forward, a new modesty upon her and a change for the better in her whole appearance, even after so short a time as this one summer. And both happening to recall how she had greeted him when first this “hero” was presented to her, they laughed and the “ice” which had formed over their friendship during separation speedily melted.

“Pa Babcock, you’re askin’ for? Oh, he’s well, that kind don’t never have nothing the matter with their health, though they’re always thinking they have. He stopped with his sister till she got tired and shook him. Then he went to Chicago, where there’s such a lot of silly Nanarchists like himself, and there he’s stayed. I hope will stay, too, till the children get growed. He seems to be makin’ his salt, some kind of livin’, and he’s happy as a clam in high water. He hasn’t a thing to do but talk and talkin’ suits him to a T. Best come in and get washed up. A letter come from Dorothy’s parents and the pair of ’em will be to the Landing by the evening boat. Or one by train and one by boat. Anyhow they’ll both be there and I ’low they’d admire, just admire that it should be you drove down to meet ’em. Me and Alfy and Dinah’ll be right on hand here to see they get their supper and to show ’em where they’re to sleep. You best hurry down to your own room to the gate-house and clean yourself. You’re powerful dusty and your face needs washin’. Alfy! What you gigglin’ at? Ain’t I tellin’ the truth? Ain’t he a sight?”

[Pg 247]

“Yes, Ma, he is; one ‘good for sore eyes,’ as you sometimes say;” and with this inelegant remark Miss Alfaretta walked away while laughing, happy Jim sped downwards to the vine-wreathed lodge at the great entrance gate. He had been happy all that summer, never more so; yet happier than ever now as he stepped into the freshly furbished upper chamber which was his own, his very home. All the dear familiar books on the shelves, the snowy bed, the dainty neatness of the place that showed the motherly touch of old Griselda everywhere, even to the bunch of flowers upon the little table.

[Pg 248]

Dolly would have said that the bouquet looked “Dutchy,” like the kind hands which had arranged it; with its conflicting colors and its tightly crowded bunches of bloom. But Dorothy wasn’t there to comment, there was nobody who could see him, and the orphan lad who had not yet outgrown his boyish tenderness suddenly stooped and kissed it. Was this in memory of a mother he had never known, or because of his gratitude for his “home?”

CHAPTER XVI

[Pg 249]

WHEN JOURNEYS END IN WELCOME

“Welcome! Welcome! WELCOME!!”

The blacksmith, “himself once more” and not the summer idler on a hotel veranda, stood at Mrs. Betty’s right hand on the broad steps of Deerhurst, to greet the carriages of happy folk who were whirled over the curving

driveways and up to the hospitable door which stood wide open, as if eager to embrace them all in its own genial "welcome."

Somehow, there was a slight trembling in the hostess's slender frame and she put out her white hand against the porch-pillar to steady herself. Somehow, too, there seemed a little mist in her bright eyes, as she peered anxiously outward toward her arriving guests. Had they all come? Everyone whom she had bidden to her "infair?"

In the first carriage, the state barouche, sat the four grayheaded "Boys" whom she had known all their lives and for whom her best was prepared. In the next was "that slip of a girl," one Mrs. Lucretia Hungerford, a "girl" whose locks were already touched with the rime of years; a rather stern and dignified person who could be no other than Miss Isobel Greatorex of whom Dorothy had written; and a cadet in gray. A West Pointer! Off for the briefest of "furloughs" and a too-short reunion with his radiant mother. Cadet Tom Hungerford, and no other. Also, within that open trap a third gentlewoman, brought by Mrs. Hungerford's invitation for a short "tour of the States" to see what sort of home it was unto which she would consign her son, the lad Melvin come to try his fortunes so far from home. The little widow, Mrs. Cook, indeed; past mistress in the art of making gardens and good dinners, and happy in her unexpected outing as a child. To her bonny face under its white hair, with her lovely English color and her sorrow-chastened smile, the heart of Mrs. Betty immediately went out in interest and admiration. Stranger though she was her welcome, too, was ready.

[Pg 250]

But it was on that last open pony-cart, with its load of young folks, that the eye of the hostess rested first and last. Such a gay and laughing quartette that was! Molly and Dolly, the blonde and the brunette, Monty and Melvin, the rotund and the slender; but Dolly the gayest, the sweetest, the darlingest of all!

At least, that was what some of those welcoming people, grouped upon the steps, believed with all their hearts. Father John and Mother Martha, Mr. Seth and "Fairy Godmother," aye and honest Jim, first and faithfullest of comrades—to these there was visible, for one moment, no face save the face of smiling Dorothy.

[Pg 251]

When they were all housed and supper ended, they gathered in the great parlors, which Alfaretta's capable hands had adorned with masses of golden-rod, of scarlet woodbine and snowy wreaths of seeding clematis—feathery and quite "too graceful for words," as Dorothy declared, lovingly hugging Alfaretta who lingered by the door, a new shyness upon her, yet longing to be beside these other girls and lads no older than she, but who had seen so much more of the world in which they all lived.

Then when Mrs. Betty begged:

"Now if all are rested, let's compare our notes of the summer and tell what each found loveliest to remember. Come in, Alfaretta, and cuddle down with the rest upon the rugs before the fire. Old Deerhurst is at its best, to-night, filled with happiness. Now, Dr. Ryall, as once-master of these other 'Boys,' can you give your happiest thought of the summer?"

The venerable collegian leaned back and twirled his thumbs. He had left his boyishness but not his happiness back in the Markland woods, and it was quite gravely yet simply he answered:

"Why yes, Elizabeth, and easily. It was the awakening of Monty yonder to a sense of his own responsibility as a human being, made in his Creator's image. He's got down to bottom facts. He knows it isn't dollars but doings that make God's true man. Needn't blush, my lad; but be reverently thankful." Then he turned a merry glance upon the company and demanded: "Next?"

[Pg 252]

And as if he were still in the class-room questioned upon a text-book, his merchant-pupil answered:

"The happiest sight to me was the first salmon I landed!"

"A good and honest answer!" laughed Mrs. Betty, and like the president called: "Next!"

One after another the answers came; that of the surgeon being the memory of a wounded fawn whom he had cured and set at liberty again. The Judge's happiest moment had been when he caught sight of Molly's face on that dark night in the forest, when he dreaded lest he should see it no more alive and alight with love.

All had some answer to give, even Miss Greatorex, who wondered why they smiled when she recorded her blest experience in discovering a rare specimen of quartz. Surely, that was the very best gift she was bringing home to "the Rhinelander," and wasn't it a specimen worth the whole trip to a "foreign" land?

Even the youngsters were pressed to tell what they had found choicest and when Molly answered the question put to her, she spoke with a sweet solemnity: "The sound of Melvin's bugle in the wilderness."

There was a momentary silence. All were more moved than they could say, remembering how different a group this would have been had that bugle never blown "Assembly" in that far-away forest. Dorothy said nothing. Even when it came to her and the last "turn," she could only turn her happy eyes to one and another of the loved faces before her and shake her head. There had been times out there on the Nova Scotia farm when she had not been happy; when the moods of "wondering" had disturbed her peace and made her discontent. That was all past now that she was reunited to Father John and Mother Martha and somehow, best of all, to that beautiful, white-haired "Fairy Godmother," who had caught her to her breast in such a tender fashion and had even left tears of joy from the old, dark eyes upon her own upturned cheek. Why had she loved the lady so? Why did the clasp of her slender arms seem so much more than that of sturdy Mrs. Martha? Dorothy inwardly upbraided herself for the disloyal feeling, but she was too honest to deny even to herself that her dearest welcome home had come from one on whom she had no claim.

[Pg 253]

"Well, Dolly Doodles, it isn't fair for all the rest to tell their part and you just sit mum and stare and stare and stare! Honey Doll, I'm ashamed of you!" cried Molly.

Thus goaded into speech, Dorothy answered: "The happiest thing I've known isn't past, in the summer-time, but just right now and here. It's coming home to Deerhurst and—YOU!"

She could not have helped it and she could not have explained why not; but there was a look in Mrs. Betty's eyes, an appealing tenderness that went straight to the heart of the girl, who sped like an arrow shot from the hearth to a place in her hostess's arms.

[Pg 254]

And again there was silence; while some of that goodly company exchanged most speaking glances. Then with a gesture prouder than the proudest she had ever given, Mrs. Calvert lifted her head and beckoned the Judge.

"Schuyler, you're a lawyer and that rare one, an honest man. I depute you to open this sealed document and read the contents to the company. Practically, it is my 'last will and testament'—I mean the last one I've made, though I'm likely to alter it a score of times yet! I inscribed it 'to be opened after my death,' but as I feel I've just secured a new lease of life you needn't wait for that but shall open it now."

She spoke with all her old whimsicality but with a tremor in her voice, and somehow Seth Winters managed to place himself a little nearer to her and Dorothy clung the tighter about her neck.

Not yet did the child dream that this sealed packet related to herself or that the irrepressible feeling which had sent her flying to the old gentlewoman's arms had been the call of the blood. She merely felt that her "Godmother" needed soothing and that it was her delightful duty to so soothe.

There is no need to here repeat the technical wording of what the Judge so distinctly read in his clear, strong voice, amid a silence which except for that voice would have echoed the falling of the proverbial "pin." He summed it up after one reading in a brief epitome:

[Pg 255]

"Dorothy, otherwise Dorothy Elizabeth Somerset Calvert, is the last and nearest living relative of Mrs. Elizabeth Cecil Somerset-Calvert. She is the only child of one Cecil Calvert, deceased, and of Miriam his wife. Cecil Calvert, herein named, was the only son of the only son of Mrs. Calvert's only brother. The descent is clear and unmistakable. Cecil Calvert, the father of Dorothy, was early left an orphan and was 'raised' by Mrs. Betty, presumably to be her heir. When he came of age to want a wife she provided one for him. He objected and made his own choice. She cut him off with a limited income, but sufficient for one differently reared, and taking his bride he went to the far West. There he died and his wife soon followed him; but her illness was a lingering one and during it she sought to provide for their baby Dorothy.

"This envelope contains her letters and those of her husband, written after his fatal seizure to Mrs. Calvert, describing everything connected with their young and, as it proved, improvident lives. Neither of them, the sad wife protests, had ever been trained to the wise handling of money or of anything useful. It had not been their fault so much as their misfortunes that they were dying in what was to them real poverty; and the pathetic letters ended with the declaration that, after its mother's death, the child Dorothy would be safely convoyed to its great-great-aunt's door and left to her to be 'fairly dealt with.' It was all quite simple and direct; the commonplace story of many other lives."

[Pg 256]

But here Mrs. Betty, stifling the emotion which the re-reading of the papers had roused in her, took up the tale herself.

"When the baby came I was indignant. That at first. I felt I was too old to have a squalling infant forced into my house. Then better thoughts prevailed. I saw in the little thing traces of my own family likeness and I would have kept her. It was old Dinah and Ephraim who advised me then and wisely I believe, though there have been times when I've wished I hadn't listened to them. They told me with the privilege of life-long service, that I'd made a brilliant failure of my raising of Cecil. They advised me to hunt up some worthy couple unburdened with children of their own and force the child upon them, to rear in simple, sensible ways, I to pay such a sum as would provide for the child's actual necessities. No more. I listened and the notion falling in somewhat with my own conviction—you behold the result.

"Dorothy is what she is; to me the loveliest little maid in God's good world. Save what nature implanted in her, all that makes her adorable to me and others is due to her foster-parents, the most unselfish and self-devoted pair of mortals it has ever been my lot to know in my long life. She belongs to them more than to me; but it shall be as she and they elect. Even yet I will try to say it justly.

[Pg 257]

"My homes are many and ample. There is room in every one of them for a little household of four. Johnnie, Martha, my own Dorothy, shall we not make at last, one unbroken, happy family?"

It was a long speech and it had sorely tried the speaker. One by one her guests withdrew, leaving only the "four" of whom she spoke with that faithful friend of all, the radiant Seth, remaining in that firelit room.

Then cried Dorothy, running to draw her foster-parents to her great-aunt's side:

"Yes, father, yes mother! Come and be—*us!* I have a name at last and it still must be yours with 'Calvert' at the end, a hyphen between! Say yes, dear ones, who've loved me all my life. We want you, 'Godmother' and I, and don't you dare—don't either of you dare to be proud and independent now, when your little girl's so happy—*so happy!*"

Who could withstand her? Or the sincere affection which beamed upon them from Mrs. Cecil's fine old eyes? Not "whistling Johnnie" of the big heart, himself; nor faithful Martha, radiant now in the doing away of "mysteries" and the happiness of the girl who had been found a "squalling baby" on her doorstep.

So the night fell on Dorothy Calvert's homecoming and home-finding. Once more she stood on the threshold of a new life. What befell her in it and what use she made of some of the great gifts which had come to her cannot be told here. That telling must be left for other pages and other hours; perhaps the reader will like to go with us to "Dorothy's House party," until then let us bid happy Dorothy a glad

[Pg 258]

Good night!

THE END

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