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DOROTHY'S TOUR

BY

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DOROTHY'S TOUR

[Pg 9]

CHAPTER I.

AT BELLEVIEU.

"Dorothy!" called Jim as he quickly searched the garden at Bellevieu for her.

"Yes," answered Dorothy, "I am here sitting under the big oak tree."

"I have something for you," cried Jim. "Guess what?"

"Guess what?" echoed Dorothy. "Well it might be—Oh! there are so many, many things it could be."

"Here, take it. Its only a letter from New York, and never mind what might be in it, read it —" said Jim, who was altogether too practical and never cared to imagine or suppose anything. All he wanted was real facts and true and useful facts at that, which is not a bad trait in a youth's character.

Dorothy broke the seal carefully and read the letter through once and then started to read it all over again, exclaiming every once in a while to herself, "Oh, oh, dear. I am so glad!" [Pg 10] and finally, "I must tell Aunt Betty at once."

Jim, who had been standing there forgotten all this time, broke in: "Oh, I say, Dolly Doodles, can you tell me what this message is that so excites you that you have clear forgotten me?"

"Oh, Jim dear," said Dorothy, "it's too wonderful. Just think, I am to start in two weeks for New York, where Mr. Ludlow will meet Aunt Betty and I."

By this time Jim and Dorothy were walking rapidly toward the house, where at once they sought Aunt Betty to tell her the news, only to find that Mrs. Calvert had gone visiting.

Seeing Old Ephraim in the hall, Dorothy ran up to him and said: "Ephraim, do tell us where Aunt Betty has gone."

"Ah certainly does know, Misses," answered old Ephraim. "She o'de'd Metty" (whom we remember as Methuselah Bonapart Washington from the previous books, Dorothy's Triumph, House Boat and Oak Knowe, and other volumes wherein our little heroine's story is told). "Metty, he 'lowed he take her see dat lil lady. De man what gibs de music lessons' wife."

"Oh, I know now, Ephy," said Dorothy, "Aunty went to see Frau Deichenberg. Well, Jim, we [Pg 11] shall have to wait till Aunt Betty comes back to tell her our wonderful news. But dear me, what a forgetful girl I am. I haven't told you all yet. Well, Jim, it's a long story, so let's go back to the garden and I will tell you all there."

So back to the old oak tree with the rustic seat beneath it they went. The garden in Bellevieu looked its loveliest. It was early in September and all the fall flowers with their wondrous hues made the garden a regular fairy land. And Lem, the little boy the campers had found on a memorable night, had been true to his word and had tended the garden faithfully.

You will remember how Lem Haley had cried out at night and when found and protected by the little camping party had ridden back to Bellevieu in the huge automobile. He, like all

who knew Aunt Betty, Mrs. Cecil Somerset Calvert, had grown to love her and now tried hard to please her by keeping the garden at old Bellevieu a feast for the eyes and a delight to all who came there.

Dorothy and Jim seated themselves beneath the tree and Dorothy started out by saying: "Oh, Jim, dear, I really am dreadfully nervous every time I think of starting out on that long trip through the United States and Canada, as Mr. Ludlow says I must. You see this letter [Pg 12] says that Mr. Ludlow will expect Aunt Betty and I to be at the Pennsylvania station on September 27. That's, let's see——. Oh, Jim, what day does the 27th of September fall on?"

Dorothy at this period was a winsome girl indeed. She had good looks, which is always a worthy asset, then her artistic temperament and perhaps her musical training had combined with other natural attributes in the building of a character charmingly responsive. She had been frequently complimented for her musical talent, but bore her honor simply and unaffectedly.

As a protege of Mrs. Calvert, Jim had grown to be a fellow of manly aspect, and while in no way related to her, filled in some degree the place of a son in her heart and was a brother to every one else in the household.

Jim, who had been calculating the same while Dorothy was talking, quickly responded, "Tuesday."

"Oh, dear, I might have known that myself if I had only read on a ways instead of stopping just in the wrong place. Mr. Ludlow said that he would like me to play at a concert or two in New York before I start traveling for good. Oh, I must play at a concert on Thursday, the [Pg 13] 29th. That is why he wants me to be in New York on Tuesday so I can have one day to rest in. Dear, thoughtful man to think of giving me a rest after my trip. Oh, Jim, if you could only come to New York with us!"

"I can," said Jim. "In fact I was going to keep that as a surprise, but I have saved enough money this summer to go to New York and be near you and with Aunt Betty when you play for the first time under this new contract."

"Jim," Dorothy said, "you are just as thoughtful and kind as you can be and it will be so nice to have you with Aunt Betty, and I shall play all the better for knowing that out in the big, big audience there are you two whom I really care to please more than anyone else in the wide, wide world. Jim, every one is so good to me and so kind in all things. Oh, dear, oh, dear; do you really suppose that I will be a very great violinist?"

"Why Dorothy Calvert!" Jim reproached. "You funny girl. You are a great violinist already, and in time you will be a very, very great violinist perhaps—who knows but what you might [Pg 14] be the most famous violinist in the world? Why, Herr Deichenberg thinks you are doing very wonderfully now, and you will practice just the same even if you are going on a concert tour. In fact you will have to practice harder——"

"Oh, Jim, I must do my very best all the time and you can trust me to do that. But, come, let's go inside now. It's getting dark and Aunt Betty will soon be back."

But the boy did not move, and finally said: "You stay here and finish telling me your plans and then we will go in."

So Dorothy reseated herself and told Jim how Mr. Ludlow would tell her when she got to New York her future plans and that now all that he had written was for her to get ready for her trip, and on Tuesday, the 27th of September, for her and her Aunt Betty to be in New York.

"To think, Jim," said Dorothy, "that my one ambition in life has commenced to be realized. I have always longed for this day to come when I could really play to people, and now to be in a company with so many other artists and to tour all over. There are so many, many people who can play the violin better than I can, and for me to be chosen!"

"Dorothy, girl, it was because you worked so very, very hard, and as Herr Deichenberg, you [Pg 15] know says, 'You have, mine girl, accomplished the impossible,' and now we are all so proud of you," Jim gladly responded.

"I tried so hard and all for dear, darling Aunt Betty, and she has been so good to me and to you and to everybody, no wonder everyone loves her," added Dorothy.

"Jim, I am worried about Aunt Betty. You know how she lost so much money last year in those old investments that foolish lawyer made for her. Well, she has always done so much for me that I am going to show her that I can take care of myself, and her too. Just think, $200 a week and all my expenses paid. And a private car for the party, Aunt Betty, and an

attendant. I just couldn't go and leave aunty, so they managed to let me take her with me. Do you think, Jim, that traveling will hurt Aunt Betty?"

"Hurt her? Indeed I do not," the boy said gravely, for he was thinking that Aunt Betty was no longer young and that she had been worried and tired most all summer, for she had insisted on staying near Dorothy who couldn't leave Baltimore because of her lessons and preparations for the fall, as Herr Deichenberg was working hard over his little protege so as to have a great success come of the tour. [Pg 16]

"You know, Dorothy, the change will be good for her," Jim volunteered. "And Aunt Betty enjoys nothing more than travel. She will enjoy the music, too, and most of all the very one thing that will give her most pleasure is the fact that she will be with you and near you to keep you from all kinds of harm and such things as are apt to go with such a trip. But, Dorothy, dear girlie, don't think I mean that anything is going to hurt you or harm you in any way, but you see I mean Aunt Betty will be with you and it's not many a girl who has an Aunt Betty like yours."

"Jim, what a long, long speech for you. Let's go inside," said Dorothy.

The two slowly walked around the garden, exclaiming at its beauty, till they reached the house. Dorothy led Jim into the music room, pushed him playfully into a chair, and taking her violin in her hand, said, "Listen."

Jim sat there listening to what he thought was the most wonderful music in all the world. Piece after piece the girl played, bringing out with clear, vibrating tones, the tunes she loved best, her body swaying to the music's rhythm. [Pg 17]

"Surely," thought Jim, "if the audiences do not care for Dorothy's playing, and how they can help that I cannot see, they will immediately fall and worship at her personal charm and beauty," of which, thanks to Aunt Betty and the good Mother Martha's training, Dorothy was wholly unconscious.

How long they stayed there, neither of them could have told. And Aunt Betty, who had entered quite unseen, remained till old Ephraim said from the doorway, "Ah most surely wanted to excuse myself, but ah has been dere standing for most a hour and more than likely the dinner is spoilt, cause ah simply couldn't interrup' dat beautiful music."

Dorothy carefully put away her violin and ran to Aunt Betty telling her she had some brand new news.

"Let it wait, Dorothy," said Aunt Betty, "till we are all at the dinner table. Come, Jim," and then they all went to the table, Jim saying as he did that music sure did give him an appetite, and that that must be the reason they had music at so many of the New York hotels at meal time, or, as Dorothy corrected him, at dinner.

CHAPTER II. [Pg 18]

ALFARETTA'S LETTER.

"Alfa, Alfy," called Ma Babcock. "Come 'ere quick, there's something 'ere fer ye."

"Ma, where are you," yelled Alfy from the barnyard.

"'Ere in the kitchen," answered Ma Babcock.

"All right," said Alfy. "Dunno as I know what you want," she continued to herself. "What is it, ma?"

"'Ere's a letter fer ye," Ma Babcock rejoined.

"Must be from Dorothy. Can't think of anyone else writing me, can you? I'll open it and see.

"Oh, ma! Listen, listen! Dear Dorothy wants me right away. Oh, how can I get to her; you couldn't get on without me, now. Oh, dear, oh dear," wailed Alfy, most in tears.

"Alfaretta Babcock, come to your senses. A big girl like you, crying," scolded Ma Babcock. "Tell me what Dorothy says in her letter."

Alfaretta, reading— [Pg 19]

> "Dear, dear Alfy—.

"In two weeks I start on my concert tour, and as I had not expected to go for more than a month at least, I want you to come and stay with me and I've got such a good proposition to make you. I will be very busy and will need you to help me get my clothes and things together. Oh, Alfy, dear, please, please come. Don't you disappoint me. I just must see you again. It's been such an awful long time since you have stayed with me. Tell Ma Babcock she simply must let you come. Metty will meet you at the station. Take the noon train. Give my love to all the little Babcocks and to ma. Tell ma, Baretta and Claretta can help her while you are away, and I am sure that Matthew will help too. Oh, Alfy, do, do come. With love,

"Ever your affectionate,
"DOROTHY.

"There, ma, that's what she says."

"Well, well, things do come sudden always. I must get my things on and drive down and tell 'em all at Liza Jane's Thread and Needle Store to start the news a-spreadin'."

"Then I may go?"

"Matthew, hitch up Barnabas, quick now," responded Mrs. Babcock, by way of response. [Pg 20]
"You, Alfy, go inside in the front room and get your clothes out so we can see what's clean and what ain't."

"Ma! Then I can go! Oh, goody, goody! I am so glad. And I can start to-morrow—yes? Oh please say yes!" coaxed Alfy.

Inside in the front room, Alfy working quickly, sorted things out and before Ma Babcock got back with a new pair of shoes for her, she had most of her things mended (as she was real handy with the needle), and nearly all packed in the old suit case Pa Babcock brought home with him from Chicago.

"Alfy!" called ma from the kitchen. "Try on these shoes and see as they're all right."

"Yes, ma," answered Alfy, coming into the kitchen with thread and needle in one hand and shirt-waist in the other. "What shall I do with these? I can't take those shoes with these in my hand."

"Go back and take those things in and put them on the bed," said ma, getting vexed at Alfy's excitement and trying to calm her down.

Alfy, after laying the things down, came back and took the shoes and some new ribbons ma [Pg 21]
had brought her from Liza Jane's and went back to the front room.

"My, but these shoes are real smart. I think that they are and hope Dorothy will. And shucks, no one has such pretty ribbons. Black, that's kind of old and dull looking. I like the red much the best. The blue ones are real pretty, too. And my, but those red ribbons are pretty." And thus Alfy talked to herself as she fussed around and tried to remember all the little things she wanted.

"Ma, ma," and Alfy ran in the kitchen calling louder as she went: "Where did you put my raincoat? You know I haven't used that one—the good one—since I was to California with Dorothy."

"Well, let me see. Reckon I did see you have it. So long ago I can't just remember. Must a been last year some time. Oh, did you look in the closet in the barn? Upstairs in the room I had fixed for the boys to sleep in, but they got scared and wouldn't. You remember I put all the things we didn't use much up there."

"I'll look. Maybe it's up there," and Alfy went out still talking to herself, while ma went all
over the house, in all the closets, looking for that raincoat. It was a very fine raincoat, one [Pg 22]
just like Dorothy's, only Alfaretta's was red while Dorothy's was gray. Mrs. Calvert had bought one for each of the girls in San Francisco. Alfy had put hers away when she reached home, hoping to be able to use it some time again, thinking it was too good for use "up mounting."

Alfy was now in the barn and had just reached the closed door when she heard a curious "tap-tap." Alfy was not afraid. She never had been what the boys call a "scare-cat," but it seemed kind of funny, so she stood still and listened. "Tap-tap."

"My," thought Alfy. "What's that? Oh, it's——"

"Tap-tap," again and this time the sound came from right over Alfaretta's head, making her

start and her heart go thump, thump so loud she thought whoever it was tapping could hear it. She tried to move, but stood rooted to the spot. “Tap-tap.” This time to the right of the girl. Then Alfy summoned her lost courage and said as calmly as she could, “Who’s there?”

No one responded, and in a few seconds, “Tap-tap,” came the sound to the left of the girl. Then thoroughly scared, as the room was half dark and rapidly growing darker, Alfy turned and ran, stumbling over an old stool as she tried to make the door in great haste. [Pg 23]

Matthew heard her and came running up, saying: “What’s the matter, sis?” He had been unhitching Barnabas, as Ma Babcock was through with him now.

“Oh!” moaned Alfy. “It’s some one in the closet. I heard them tap-tapping and got scared and ran. Gosh, my shin hurts! There!” giving the stool that had caused the disaster a vicious kick.

“Maybe—oh, Alfy! Maybe——” chimed in Matthew. “Maybe its a ghost.”

“Ma! Ma!” screached Alfy.

“Ma! Ma!” yelled Matthew.

Both by this time were rapidly approaching the kitchen.

“Well,” said Ma Babcock, “You—land o’ livin’—you look as though you’d seen a ghost.”

“Ma,” murmured Alfy, “we didn’t see him, I heard him. He’s in the closet in the barn.”

And then both children started in to talk and explain at the same time so that ma couldn’t understand a word.

“Here, you—you Alfy, tell me all. You, Matthew, keep still,” she exclaimed. [Pg 24]

Then Alfy told her how she heard the tapping on the door of the closet.

“Come, we’ll all go back and see,” said Ma Babcock, and with that they all started for the barn, Alfy limping after ma and Matthew.

When they reached the upstairs room they tip-toed to the closet and listened, and after waiting a few minutes and hearing nothing, ma called loudly, “Is anyone in there?” No answer came. Then she quickly flung open the closet door, and what did they hear but the flutter, flutter of wings, and then they saw, perched high on the lintel of the door, a little wood-pecker.

“There,” said Ma Babcock, “there is what made those tap-taps, a wood-pecker. Just as if I didn’t know there couldn’t be any ghosts. And a great big girl like you, Alfaretta, being scared of a little bird.”

With that they all breathed a sigh of relief, and Matthew and ma went down out of the barn, leaving Alfaretta to look over the contents of the well packed closet, to find, if possible, her raincoat.

“My, my, just think what a lot I shall have to tell Dorothy. I wonder what she will say. Just a bird. Shucks. I thought it was a real ghost. But ma says there are no really real ghosts. But, well, I don’t know.” [Pg 25]

All this time Alfy had been opening boxes and shutting them, putting them back where she had found them, when suddenly she came across an old sampler about a foot square. Alfy looked at it, then brought it to the lamp and could see lots of new and hard stitches she had never learned. She didn’t see how anyone could sew them at all. And, my—what was that in the corner? A name. “Well,” thought Alfy, “here is a find. Maybe I can beg it off ma, and then I can take it to Dorothy.”

She had almost forgotten her raincoat, when she went back to the closet and looked in the box again to see if there was anything else new there, and then discovered her precious raincoat in the bottom of the big box. Hastily closing the box and shoving things back in the closet, with her raincoat and the queer old sampler, Alfy ran hurriedly downstairs and through the yard and into the kitchen.

Ma Babcock had by this time prepared dinner and just as Alfy came in she called all the children to the dinner table.

“Ma,” exclaimed Alfy, “I found my raincoat, and this, too. What is it?” [Pg 26]

“Let me see.” “Let me see.” “And me,” chimed in all the little Babcocks, trying to get possession of what Alfy was holding.

“Be quiet,” said ma, sternly. “Give it to me, Alfy.” Alfy handed her the sampler and Ma Babcock exclaimed: “Poor Hannah! Poor Hannah!”

“What Hannah? And was she very poor—poorer than we?” lisped little Luke, the youngest of the Babcocks.

“Ma, who did you say?” demanded Alfaretta.

“Why, Alfy, this is a sampler made by one of my little playmates years and years ago. A delicate little girl was Hannah Woodrow. She came up here summering, and then ’cause she was broken in health stayed all one year with me. She could sew so very well. She made that sampler and left it with me when the folks did take her back to Baltimore with them. She married—deary me—maybe she married some one named—Haley, I think. That’s what it was; and I ain’t heard from her since.”

“Ma, can I have the sampler?” asked Alfy. “I would like to take it to Baltimore to show Dorothy.”

“Well, I s’pose I must say yes, if you want to show it to Dorothy Calvert, and ’pears to me [Pg 27] Mrs. Calvert might like to see it, too,” remarked ma. “But come now, dinner is getting cold and you must get to bed early, Alfaretta, if you want to catch that early train for Baltimore, and like as not you’ve fooled your time away and haven’t packed a single thing.”

But Alfy showed her mother she had been very busy and had all her things ready to start. So she went off gladly to bed, dreaming that all was ready and that she had departed for Dorothy, which, indeed, the next morning was a reality.

CHAPTER III. [Pg 28]

THE PREPARATIONS.

“You dear, dear Alfy,” piped Dorothy, joyously as she ran to meet Alfy, whom Metty had just brought up from the station to the house.

“Oh, Dorothy, I am so glad to see you,” rejoined Alfy with none the less joy than Dorothy had displayed. “I just must kiss you again.”

“Did you have an uneventful trip?” asked Dorothy, drawing her friend into the house.

“Just simply took train and arrived, that was all.”

“Metty, you see that Alfy’s things are taken up to the blue room.”

Then turning to Alfaretta again, “Aunt Betty is upstairs in the sewing room. We shall go straight to her. I believe she is just longing to get a sight of you again, just as much as I was when I wrote you.”

“Oh, Mrs. Calvert, I am so glad to see you again—Aunt Betty,” said Alfy, going over to Aunt [Pg 29] Betty’s chair and putting both arms around her and kissing her several times.

“Why, Jim, I do declare. You here, too? Dorothy didn’t say you were here in her letter.” Alfy then went to the doorway where Jim was standing and gave him a hard hug.

“Oh, it’s just like the old times.” Jim blushed a rosy red and said awkwardly, “I’m so glad to see you, Alfy. It’s been more than a year since you have seen me, isn’t it?”

Jim decidedly disliked to be fussed over, and although he had known Alfy all his life just as he had Dorothy, he always felt confused and ill at ease when either of the girls kissed him or embraced him in any way. Now all the other boys, so Gerald often told him, would only be too glad to stand in his shoes.

“Come, Alfy,” said Dorothy, leading Alfaretta upstairs one more flight. “Here is your room. And see, here are all your things. Now hurry and clear up, and put your things where they belong. When you have finished, come down to the sewing room and we will talk as we work.”

“I’ll be there in less than no time,” called Alfy.

Dorothy then went back to the sewing room and picked up her sewing. There she and Aunt [Pg 30] Betty worked till Alfy put in an appearance.

“See, I have my needles, thimble, thread and all, all in this little apron pocket. And this

apron will save me lots of time, for when I'm through sewing all I have to do is take the apron off and shake the threads into the waste basket and not have to spend most half an hour picking threads off my dress," said practical Alfy.

"Well, Alfy," said Mrs. Calvert, "that is surely a very good idea. What can I give you to sew? We must all be kept busy, and then Dorothy will tell you her plans. Maybe you could baste up the seams of this skirt," handing the skirt to Alfaretta, who immediately began to sew up the seams.

Dorothy then unburdened herself of the good news and told Alfy how Mr. Ludlow, her manager, had written for her to be in New York on Tuesday, the 27th, and be ready to play at a concert on Thursday, and shortly after to start on her trip. Then, best of all, how besides a very liberal salary, she could have accompanying her, with all charges paid, her dear Aunt Betty and a companion. Would Alfy be the companion?

Alfaretta was astonished and delighted, and her joy knew no bounds. She felt sure Ma Babcock would allow her to go. Such wonderful vistas of happiness the plan suggested, it [Pg 31] was long before the subject was exhausted.

Aunt Betty then told Alfaretta that she and Dorothy were making some simple little dresses for Dorothy's use while away.

"But, Aunt Betty," asked Alfy, "what are you going to wear?"

"Why, Alfy," replied Aunt Betty. "I have ordered a black serge suit for traveling, and some neat white waists. Then I am having Mrs. Lenox, Frau Deichenberg's dressmaker, make me a couple of fancy dresses, too, both of them black, but one trimmed more than the other."

"And Alfy, Mrs. Lenox is making me a couple of dresses, too. One pink one for the very best, and one white one for the next best. These I shall have to wear at some of the concerts," added Dorothy.

"I would like to know what these are that we are sewing on," demanded Alfy.

"Why," answered Dorothy, "these are simple white dresses, the kind I have always worn, and most always shall."

"Dorothy Calvert," remarked Alfy, very sternly, "they are as pretty as they can be, even if they are plain. They are very substantial and can be washed and worn many times without [Pg 32] hurting the dress. You know very well fancy dresses are so hard to launder."

"And, dear," said Aunt Betty, "you know, Dorothy, the people go to the concerts to hear you play, not to see what you wear and I have always liked my little girl best in just this kind of white dress. Now, dear, go down and practice awhile so as you will be able to play just the best you know how to when you go to Herr Deichenberg to take your lesson. For, Dorothy, you will not have many more lessons from Herr before you go away. And maybe if we finish up some of this sewing I will let Alfaretta go with you to Herr's for your lesson. Frau Deichenberg said that Herr was not feeling very well and had a bad cough, so that when I was there night before last she said, 'Maybe Miss Dorothy would not mind coming here for her lesson.' I told her you would come."

With that Dorothy walked slowly from the room, very much worried about her dear Herr Deichenberg, as she knew he was getting old and was afraid his cough might develop into something worse. She reached the music room and practiced faithfully for more than an [Pg 33] hour.

When she had put the violin away and was about to leave the music room, some one called her. She turned and saw Jim on the veranda outside the window, and crossing the room and lifting up the French sash she said, "What is it, Jim?"

"I just wanted to tell you something," the boy answered. "While you were practicing, Gerald Banks came up here in his automobile. He wanted to see you. I told him he couldn't as you were very busy practicing."

Dorothy liked to have Jim assume authority over her in this manner, and questioned gayly: "Well, Father Jim, what did he want?"

"He just wanted to take you autoing in the morning," Jim replied, "so I went upstairs to Aunt Betty and told her."

"Dear, thoughtful Jim," interrupted Dorothy. "What did Aunt Betty have to say?"

"Aunt Betty said," replied Jim, "that he could come around about ten o'clock to-morrow morning and take you and Alfy to Herr Deichenberg's when you could take your lesson.

Then—well, I guess I won't tell you. I will let you be surprised. You wait and see!" [Pg 34]

"Oh, Jim! Please, please tell me? I must know now, really I must. Please, please," begged Dorothy.

"I shan't tell," remarked Jim, slowly walking away from her.

"Jim! Jim!" called Dorothy, running after him. "Dear Jim, please, please tell me."

"Girls certainly are curious creatures," soliloquized Jim, as Dorothy had turned on her heel and was walking quickly toward the door, saying to herself, but loud enough for Jim to hear, "Well, Aunt Betty will tell me, I'm sure."

"Aunt Betty. Oh, Aunt Betty!" called Dorothy as she burst into the sewing room where Aunt Betty and Alfy were still sewing. "Jim says—oh, I mean, you must tell me what the surprise is for to-morrow. He said Gerald would take me to Herr Deichenberg's for my lesson in the morning and then he wouldn't tell me any more."

"Well, can't my little girl wait till then and see what more, for herself? That's much better than having some one tell you," remonstrated Aunt Betty.

"I'll tell you, Dorothy," said Alfy.

"You will?" interrupted Dorothy, "you dear." [Pg 35]

"Don't interrupt me, Dorothy. I was going to say—what was I going to say?" said Alfy. "I know. I said I'd tell you—well, I meant to say I would tell you that a surprise isn't a surprise if you know beforehand."

"I thought you were going to tell me," remarked Dorothy, "but you didn't even intend to."

"I guess my little girl will have to wait," severely murmured Aunt Betty, kissing Dorothy, who by this time was standing very near her aunt's chair.

"Well," said Dorothy, "I guess I shall have to." So she sat down and took up her sewing again.

All three carefully sewed in silence for some time till Aunt Betty said: "Dorothy, girl, I think you could try on this dress, now."

"Certainly," replied Dorothy. "I am sure I ought to be quite willing."

Aunt Betty and Alfy fitted the dress carefully, altering the seams in the shoulders and cutting out the neck some. Before they had stopped sewing they had nearly finished this dress and had two others well under way.

Putting away their sewing carefully so as they could start again early in the morning, they [Pg 36] all went to their rooms to dress for dinner.

They had a quiet meal after which Dorothy played for them awhile, and then they all sang songs, each choosing the songs they liked best. Thus they spent a quiet but most enjoyable evening. They retired early as Alfy was quite tired after her long journey and wanted to get a good night's sleep.

They had an early breakfast of pancakes and maple syrup of which Alfy was very fond, and soon after, the three were busy again in the sewing room. There they stayed, quietly working and talking, Alfy telling of the little Babcocks, till it was time for the girls to get ready for the automobile ride. Dorothy had apparently forgotten all about the surprise for she never even mentioned it at all.

"Alfy," said Dorothy, when they were most ready, "when we get to Herr Deichenberg's you must be very quiet as I take my lesson and not say anything at all. You know Herr does not like to be disturbed while he gives a lesson. You will find many curious things to look at, and if you want to ask about any of them, you just remember what you want to ask about [Pg 37] and tell me after."

Alfy promised, and in a few minutes the girls heard Gerald toot his automobile horn. Quickly they ran, waving good-bye and throwing kisses to Aunt Betty, who was looking out of the second story window. With Jim seated beside Gerald, they started.

Dorothy told Gerald the direction to take and after a very short time they drew up at Herr Deichenberg's little cottage. The girls descended and bade Jim and Gerald good-bye.

"Oh, Dorothy," Gerald called back, "when shall I return for you?"

Dorothy, greatly surprised, questioned, "You are coming back, Gerald?"

“Surely.”

“Oh, goody, goody. Be here at twelve o’clock. That will bring us back home in time for lunch at one o’clock.”

Alfy, who thought the previous ride had been to short altogether, exclaimed “Oh, I’m so, so, so glad. We can have another ride. Oh, Dorothy, I do just love automobiling, I really do.”

Frau Deichenberg came to the door just then and ushered the two girls into the cozy living-room where they laid aside their wraps. “Herr is in the studio,” murmured Frau. “He is awaiting you there, Miss Dorothy.” [Pg 38]

“I’ll go right up,” answered Dorothy. “Now Frau Deichenberg, do not bother with Alfy at all. She can amuse herself till I finish.” With that Dorothy ascended the stairs and Frau, after excusing herself by saying she must tend dinner as they always had dinner at noon—Herr wanted it so—left Alfy alone.

Alfy roamed about the room and examined all kinds of curios,—queer baskets, curious vases, old fans and precious paintings and etchings. So quickly did the time pass that she never noticed Dorothy as she came into the room.

“Well, Alfy, all ready to go home?” chirped Dorothy from behind her.

“Well, well, I never knew you were through. When did you come into the room, just now?” asked Alfy.

“Yes, Alfy, just now, and if I’m not mistaken, there is Gerald tooting his horn outside—he must be hailing us,” remarked Dorothy. The girls quickly donned their coats, bid good-bye to Frau, and departed.

Dorothy exclaimed in delight, “Look, look, Alfy, its dear Aurora, she must have come too! Oh, you dear, dear girl, I am so glad to see you!” And Dorothy embraced her, fondly kissing her several times. “Alfy, this is Aurora Banks, Gerald’s sister. Aurora, you have heard me speak of Alfaretta many times, I am sure.” [Pg 39]

“Oh, I am so glad to know you,” heartily responded Aurora, “Dorothy is always talking of you.”

“Well, Jim, now I know what the surprise is,” laughed Dorothy, “its Aurora.”

“Now, that’s all wrong,” warned Gerald, “altogether wrong.”

“No it isn’t, is it Jim?” remarked Dorothy.

“Well, yes and no,” tactfully put in Jim. “The real surprise is this,—Aunt Betty has ordered a luncheon for all of us, a farewell luncheon for you, Dorothy, and we are all invited; so let’s hurry home. I’m hungry for one.”

“And I—I am most near starved,” cried Alfy.

The young people reached home just as luncheon was ready, and my! what a luncheon it was; all declared there never was a finer.

CHAPTER IV. [Pg 40]

IN NEW YORK.

“Good-bye—good-bye—dear old Bellevieu,” sang Dorothy. “Good-bye all for a long, long time, for to-day has my career begun.”

Aunt Betty looked sadly at the dear old home and felt very loathe to part from it and its comforts.

Then all, Dorothy, Alfaretta, Jim and Aunt Betty, waved fond farewells to the faithful old force of servitors who stood lined up in the doorway.

“Oh, Jim, boy,” wailed Alfaretta, “we will soon be in New York and then I shall have to say good-bye to you for, goodness only knows how long it will be before I see you again.”

“That’s right, Alfy dear,” replied Jim, “always look for trouble. Just think of the good times we’ll all have in New York before Dorothy really starts to travel.”

“Well, I suppose I might have thought of that, but I didn’t,” answered Alfy.

“There is only a short drive now to the station,” added Aunt Betty, “and I think you could [Pg 41]
get our tickets, Jim. Take this money and get four tickets for New York on the noon train, I think we have plenty of time to catch it.”

“I am so sorry that Herr and Frau are not with us. I just hate to go without him. It hardly seems right, does it, Aunty,” asked Dorothy.

“You know, Dorothy, that Herr has a very bad cold, and such a cough, I am quite worried about him. He would have come in spite of all that but Frau would not let him. I think Frau Deichenberg did a wise thing in keeping him home,” replied Aunt Betty.

“Seems as if I am not going to have a very happy start,” lamented Dorothy. “I wanted Herr to hear me play and criticise.”

“Dorothy, girl, cheer up. That’s no way to be when you are about to start on a career,” sternly admonished Jim. “You have every reason to be happy.”

In the rush and excitement of getting the tickets and finding out just when and where the train came in, Dorothy forgot her sorrow. They all bid good-bye to Metty, who had driven them to the station and who drove away mourning to himself as he went, “Deedy, deedy. [Pg 42]
Lonesome, ve’y, ve’y lonesome will ole Bellevieu be wi’out de Misses and de li’le Misses dere.”

They were at last all seated on the train and quickly were speeding toward New York. Dorothy and Alfaretta were sitting together talking happily of the people in the car and of the passing, ever changing scenery. Aunt Betty and Jim were in the seat just in back of them. Suddenly the latter reached into his pocket and procured a letter, handing it to Aunt Betty to read, explaining he had written the Edison Co., of New York, and that that was their answer.

Aunt Betty carefully read the letter through and turning to Jim, asked, “What are you going to do about it, my boy?”

“That’s just what I would like to know,” answered Jim. “I always wanted to go to college, and have saved as much as I could, but I can’t quite see my way clear to go there yet. I have studied very hard all along and have learned a great deal about electricity. The books Mr. Winters left me have helped me very much, but I am very far behind in some subjects required for entrance to college. My languages are very poor as is my history, and I write a very poor hand.”

“Well, Jim,” answered Aunt Betty, “I am sure I do not know just what I would have you do in [Pg 43]
this case. The offer is for work in the—what department is it?”

“The position is in the department of installation as assistant to the superintendent. The company is a very desirable one to be in. I have heard that they are very fair and that one who works well stands good chances,” replied Jim.

“I think we had better talk this over with someone before you decide one way or the other,” added Aunt Betty. “Maybe Mr. Ludlow could tell us something of it.”

“I would have to live in New York,” remarked Jim, “and where I do not know.”

“I should see that you were well established in your new place before I left New York,” Aunt Betty said.

“You are always so good, Aunt Betty,” answered Jim. “The salary they have offered me is not very large, but is is twenty-five dollars a week.”

“Did Mr. Sterling have anything to do with trying to get you the place, Jim?” asked Aunt Betty.

“Yes and no,” responded Jim. “I used a letter from him for reference.” [Pg 44]

“Well,” rejoined Aunt Betty, “I think we had better leave the matter open and not say anything more about it till we talk it over with Mr. Ludlow. Don’t say anything to the girls as yet for it will be quite a surprise for them.”

By this time the train was nearing New York and Dorothy asked Aunt Betty if they had not better get fixed up. Quickly gathering their things together, they left the train to find Mr. Ludlow waiting for them.

Mr. Ludlow expected to take Aunt Betty and Dorothy right to the Martha Washington, where they could stay till Dorothy was ready to start on her tour, but Jim presented a new

problem for the Martha Washington was a hotel for ladies only and no men can stay there. So calling a couple of taxicabs, he hustled Dorothy, Aunt Betty and Alfaretta in one, and taking the other with Jim he ordered the man to drive to the Prince Arthur. They reached their destination very quickly and Mr. Ludlow arranged for rooms for all. Leaving them in the possession, so to speak, of a bell-boy, he departed, saying he would see them early in the morning for a little while to tell Dorothy briefly what she would have to do for the next few days. [Pg 45]

The bell-boy conducted Alfaretta, Dorothy and Aunt Betty to the seventh floor, where, unlocking a door, he disclosed to them three very nice connecting rooms, and leaving them there he took Jim down the hall a few doors and showed him his room.

Once inside the room, Alfy murmured faintly three or four times, “Oh!”

“What’s the matter, Alfy?” asked Dorothy.

“I just can’t get used to elevators,” replied Alfy. “What nice rooms”—walking through them —“three rooms”—looking at them again—“two bedrooms—one parlor.”

“Two bedrooms and one sitting room,” corrected Dorothy. “You take the single bedroom, Aunt Betty, and Alfy and I can use the double one.”

Alfy picked up her things and took them to the smaller bedroom and taking off her hat and coat and hanging them in the closet, she started immediately to unpack. “What a lovely room ours is,” remarked Alfy, “it’s such a pretty pink and white.”

Aunt Betty took off her things and Dorothy insisted she go in the sitting room and stay there till they had unpacked everything. [Pg 46]

Shortly they heard a knock at the door. Alfy ran to open it. It was Jim. Coming into the room, he said, “I have a nice little room, but as I finished unpacking my things I thought I would come in here and see how you were.”

“We are all settled now,” said Aunt Betty. “Dorothy and Alfy have been quite busy. But children, come now, we must all dress for dinner. When you are ready, Jim, come back here.”

Jim was ready in no time, so he went into Dorothy’s sitting room and waited there, reading a magazine. Very shortly the girls were ready and they all descended into the large dining room.

Alfy, clinging to Dorothy’s hand, said, “Oh, Dorothy dear, I am quite scared. What shall I do?”

“Do just as I do,” whispered the more experienced Dorothy, quietly leading Alfy into the room. Odd it is that those accustomed to hotel life are inapt to think of the trepidation of the novice or new comer.

The head waiter conducted them to a table in the corner, then handed them his bill of fare.

“What would you like to have?” Aunt Betty asked Alfaretta. [Pg 47]

“Oh, dear, most anything suits me, just what I would like to have I can’t think. I want just what Dorothy orders,” answered Alfy.

“Well, Dorothy girl,” said Aunt Betty, turning to her, “what will it be?”

“I would like—oh, let me see. Can we have oysters, Aunt Betty?” asked Dorothy. “Then steak and baked potatoes. For salad just plain lettuce with French dressing.”

“Yes, that will do very nicely, dear, and we can have ice cream for dessert,” answered Aunt Betty, who gave the order to the waiter. Shortly after they were served and all voted that they were enjoying a delightful repast.

“What kind of ice cream would you like, Alfy?” asked Aunt Betty.

“Strawberry,” promptly answered Alfy, “it’s so nice and pink.” “Chocolate for me,” cried Dorothy. “And for me, too,” joined in Jim. “I think I shall have plain vanilla,” added Aunt Betty, laughing.

When dinner was over and a very pleasant meal it was, they all went up to Dorothy’s sitting room for a quiet evening.

“Oh, Dorothy and Aunt Betty, I had just the best dinner I have ever had. I must, I just must write it all to Ma Babcock, she will sure want to tell it at Liza Jane’s.” With that Alfy crossed the floor and entered her room where she wrote a long, long letter home telling her mother [Pg 48]

of the wonders of a New York hotel.

“Ting-ling-ling-ling,” bussed the telephone in the hall. Dorothy answered the call saying, “Hello. Oh! Why we are all up here. Where? Oh, yes, in the sitting room. Yes. Yes. Now? All right. Good-bye.” Turning to Aunt Betty, Dorothy said, “It’s Mr. Ludlow.”

“What did he want, dear?” asked Aunt Betty.

“He is coming right up here,” replied Dorothy. “There, that’s him now. Didn’t you hear a knock?” Opening the door she found Mr. Ludlow there. “Come in, Mr. Ludlow.”

Mr. Ludlow came in and deposited his gloves, cane and hat on a vacant space upon the table, then he sat down and turning to Dorothy said: “I suppose, little girl, you are very, very curious to know where you are going to play to-morrow—no, not to-morrow—the next day.”

“Yes, I am,” timidly responded Dorothy.

“Well, I am going to give you a treat. To-morrow I am going to ask Aunt Betty to take all you young folks to a matinee. I hope I have picked out a play that will suit you all. I have chosen ‘Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.’ I suppose you are quite familiar with the little heroine, Dorothy.” [Pg 49]

“No, Mr. Ludlow, I am sorry to say I do not know her.”

“Oh dear, Dorothy didn’t I get you the book to read?” asked Aunt Betty.

“Yes, Aunt Betty,” answered Dorothy, “but Molly took it home with her. She wanted something to read on the cars.”

“Well, well, never mind, you will enjoy the play all the more for not having read the story. Here are the seats, Mrs. Calvert. And, Dorothy, I would like you to notice the naturalness of the characters in the play, and profit by it. Naturalness and ease mean a great deal for you, —self possession—poise, my dear.”

“What about the concert? Where is that? When? Here I am asking questions faster than you can answer them,” remarked Dorothy.

“In time, in time, my dear,” responded Mr. Ludlow. “Thursday I will call for you here and take you with me to Carnegie Hall, where, my dear, you will render two pieces. The rest of the concert has been arranged for, and the small part left for you will not scare you, but only help to get you used to playing before large audiences. Now, Dorothy child, what would you like to play? This time you can choose your own pieces.” [Pg 50]

“I should like to play what Aunt Betty and Jim like best,” answered Dorothy; “they hear me play oftener than anyone else.”

“My choice is ‘Das Gude vom Lied,’ by Schuman,” replied Aunt Betty.

“And mine is ‘Rondo a capriccio,’ by Beethoven,” said Jim.

“All right, all right, they will suit exactly,” added Mr. Ludlow.

“Mr. Ludlow,” remarked Aunt Betty, “I would like to take up a few minutes of your time when you are finished with Dorothy.”

“I shall be through in just a few minutes, madam,” answered Mr. Ludlow.

“Do you want me to play again in New York?” questioned Dorothy.

“Yes, just once more, my dear,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “That is on Saturday night at the Hippodrome, at 8.15 p. m. It’s a benefit concert for the blind babies of New York. Many famous people are offering their talent. You do not mind playing there, do you? Your future plans we will discuss later, but that will be all for now. No—I shall have to know what you are going to play there. May I suggest that ‘Southern Medley’ you play so well, and one other piece, say Shubert’s ‘Serenade.’ Now have a good time to-morrow and be ready at one o’clock sharp, on Thursday.” [Pg 51]

“What I wanted to say, Mr. Ludlow, was concerning Jim. He is thinking of taking a business proposition with the Edison Company as assistant in the department of installation,” added Aunt Betty.

“Why, really, Mrs. Calvert, I hardly know much about that line of business, but judging from hearsay I should say that Jim was very lucky indeed to get such an offer,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “Haven’t you any business friends in New York?”

“Why Mr. Ford, the railroad man might help,” announced Jim from his corner.

“By all means see Mr. Ford,” said Mr. Ludlow. “It’s getting very late and I must go.”

“I will be ready for you in time on Thursday. And thank you, oh so much, for the tickets for to-morrow,” replied Dorothy.

CHAPTER V.

[Pg 52]

THE CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT.

“Oh, dear, what a lazy girl I am. Nine o’clock and I have not had breakfast. What day is it? Thursday,—and Mr. Ludlow coming here at one o’clock. I must hurry for I must practice some,” murmured Dorothy to herself.

“Dorothy girl, are you still in bed?” called Aunt Betty from the next room.

“I’ll be with you in just a minute, Aunty dear. I’m most ready. Oh, Alfy, please help me,—please,” called Dorothy.

“All right,” replied Alfy, “do you need me to do up the back of your dress?”

“Yes, and that’s all. I’m so late. I did want to write Frau this morning, too,” said Dorothy crossly. “Come, let’s go to breakfast.”

After breakfast Dorothy practiced and Aunt Betty and Alfaretta took a walk and visited some of the large stores where they did a little shopping, Aunt Betty buying the girls each a pair of long white gloves and an Irish-lawn collar at Altman’s.

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Dorothy was all dressed and waiting for them when they got home. She had on a very simple white dress, one they had made, with just a touch of pink, a small pink bow, at the waist, and a pink hair ribbon. She had practiced the two compositions thoroughly and felt that she knew them perfectly. True, she did feel a slight bit nervous, but in her past experience when she had her violin in her hands she lost self-consciousness and became wrapped up in her music.

“Dorothy,” called Alfy, “we are home, and, see, Aunt Betty bought me these. They are so pretty and I always did want them. I’m so glad I have them. But you go to Aunt Betty, she has something for you.”

“You are a funny girl, Alf,” answered Dorothy. “You have been talking away and I haven’t any idea what you were trying to get at. Aunt Betty, where are you?”

“In the sitting room, dear,” answered Aunt Betty.

“What is Alfy talking about, Aunt Betty?” asked Dorothy, walking into the room.

“This and this,” replied Aunt Betty, holding up two packages. “These are for you, dear.”

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Dorothy, taking the two packages and kissing her aunt, murmured: “You dear, dear Aunt Betty. I must see what’s inside.”

She carefully opened the first and exclaimed as she drew forth a long pair of white gloves, “Oh, goody, goody. Just what I have been longing for.” And then opening the second package she found it contained a very beautiful Irish crochetted collar. “Aunt Betty! You dear, dear Aunt Betty. Just think how fine this will look with my gray coat. Just like all the girls we see here in New York. You are the best aunt ever a girl had.”

Dorothy then gathered up her treasures and took them with her into the next room to put them away.

Aunt Betty went into Alfy’s room and said, “Alfy dear, if you will give me your coat I will help you sew the collar on it so you can wear it this afternoon.”

“Oh! that will be fine! I can wear it to the concert. And can I wear the red hair ribbon Ma Babcock bought me from Liza Jane’s?” said Alfy.

“Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling,” rang the telephone bell. Dorothy rushed across the room to answer it and found that Mr. Ludlow was waiting for her below in a taxicab.

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“Good-bye, Aunt Betty, dear,” called Dorothy; then running into her Aunt’s room she kissed her several times. “You will all surely come. I do need you all there.”

“We’ll be there in plenty of time, Dorothy dear,” answered Aunt Betty. “Now run along girlie, and don’t forget your violin.”

“Here it is,” cried Alfy from the next room, “I’ll bring it to you.”

“You’re a dear, Alfy,” called Dorothy, who by this time was already in the hall.

Mr. Ludlow escorted Dorothy to the taxicab, getting in with her and, shutting the door, he directed the driver to go to Carnegie Hall.

“Well, Dorothy, child,” asked Mr. Ludlow, “is everything all right? You are not scared, are you? You just try to do your best and everything will be fine.”

“I’m not scared, I’m sure of that; but do you think the people will like me?” questioned Dorothy.

“Sure of that, my dear, sure of that. All you must do is just be your very own self,” laughed Mr. Ludlow. “But here we are and we must get out.” [Pg 56]

The driver stopped the cab and they quickly descended and walked into the building.

“Now, Dorothy, I am going to show you around the place. Just follow me,” directed Mr. Ludlow.

Dorothy looked at the large room and the many chairs and said hesitatingly, “Will it be crowded?”—and when Mr. Ludlow said he hoped so, she sighed and murmured: “My, what a lot of people I shall have to please!” then she added softly to herself, “Jim, Alfy and Aunt Betty; they will surely be pleased and the rest will, too, if I can make them.”

Mr. Ludlow then led Dorothy to the stage and made her walk up and down and all over the place so that she would get familiar with it.

“Mr. Ludlow,” asked Dorothy, “where shall I stand?”

“Right about here,” answered Mr. Ludlow, walking to the front of the stage and a little to the left. “Don’t face directly front.”

“Is this right?” asked Dorothy, taking the position Mr. Ludlow requested.

“That will do,—that will do just right,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “Now come inside and I will take you to see some of the noted artists who are going to play or sing.” He led Dorothy in from the stage and through a long narrow passage which terminated in a large room where there were numerous chairs, tables and couches. Dorothy noticed three or four girls talking together in the center of the room but those in other groups all seemed to be older. [Pg 57]

Mr. Ludlow walked over to the group in the center of the room and addressing a small, fair girl, said, “Good afternoon, Miss Boothington.”

The girl turned and seeing Mr. Ludlow, exclaimed, “Mr. Ludlow, I am so glad you are here. I did want you to hear my singing and criticize. You will, will you not?”

“Miss Boothington, that shall be as you please. But now let me present you to a little friend of mine. This,” remarked Mr. Ludlow, turning to Dorothy, “is Miss Dorothy Calvert, and Dorothy, this is my ward, Miss Ruth Boothington. Miss Boothington sings, and will be one of our companions on your trip.”

“I am so glad to meet you, Miss Calvert,” replied Miss Boothington.

“As we are to be so much together, please call me Dorothy if you will,” interrupted Dorothy. [Pg 58]

“And you will call me Ruth,” Miss Boothington remarked. “I know we shall have some very fine times together. And you are a solo violinist?”

“Yes, I play the violin,” answered Dorothy. “Are you going to sing to-day?”

“Yes,” answered Ruth. “At least I am going to try to.”

“Here, here. That will never do, Miss Ruth. You should have said that you would sing. Of course you would sing,” remarked Mr. Ludlow. Turning to Dorothy, he said, “Well, Dorothy, I think I shall leave you here with Miss Boothington. I guess she can take care of you. I am going to the front and will sit with your Aunt Betty.”

With that Mr. Ludlow left the two girls and walked out and around front where he looked for Aunt Betty.

“Is this the place? My, ain’t it big!” exclaimed Alfy, as Aunt Betty and Jim followed her to the door.

“I have our tickets here,” remarked Jim, presenting them to the doorkeeper.

“I guess we shall have to go right in and get our seats,” added Aunt Betty. “Keep close to me, Alfy, and Jim, you see that Alfy doesn’t get lost.” [Pg 59]

They were at last ushered into a large box on the right side of the house.

“My, what a lot of seats. Is there going to be people in all of them?” asked Alfy, leaning so far out of the box that she almost fell over the rail.

“Here! You sit still,” sharply corrected Jim. “And, Alfy, try to act like a young lady, not like a back-woods little girl. Sit still.”

Alfy reluctantly subsided and appeared to be rather angry. Aunt Betty, noticing this said, “Watch me, Alfy, and do as I do and you will be all right.”

“Good-afternoon, Mr. Ludlow,” said Jim, making room for him.

“Good-afternoon, all,” answered Mr. Ludlow, seating himself next Aunt Betty.

“Did you come to keep us company all the afternoon?” asked Aunt Betty. “Or did you just wish to hear Dorothy play?”

“I thought you wouldn’t mind if I sat with you,” replied Mr. Ludlow. “I have quite a few young friends who are to help entertain us this afternoon. I do hope you shall enjoy them.”

Ruth had, in the meantime, presented Dorothy to the other girls in the group, and they all chattered gayly for a while. [Pg 60]

Ruth glanced at her watch, and drawing Dorothy aside, said, “Let’s sit down quietly for a few minutes, and say nothing at all. It always helps to calm you and give you self-possession.”

The girls walked to a far end of the room and sat down, keeping silent for several minutes.

Then Ruth broke the silence by asking, “Where is your violin, Dorothy?”

“I guess it’s over there where we were standing before,” replied Dorothy, rising and making her way quickly to the spot. But no violin was visible.

“My!” exclaimed Ruth. “What did you do with it?”

“Oh,” lamented Dorothy, “I don’t know.”

“Where did you have it last?” questioned Ruth.

“I had it home in the hotel,” moaned Dorothy, most in tears. “I remember I did bring it. Alfy handed it to me and I took it in the taxi.”

“In the taxi? That’s where you left it, you foolish child,” interrupted Ruth.

“How, oh how, can I get it? I must have it. I have to play,” groaned Dorothy.

“Run! Run and telephone. Call up the New York Taxicab Company,” breathlessly exclaimed Ruth. “Oh, oh, Dorothy, I must go! I must! I just must, yet how can I leave you here—but I have got to sing now. Oh, I am all out of breath.” [Pg 61]

“Stop talking, you dear girl, and go and sing your best so as to make them give you an encore, anything to gain more time for me. Now go!” And Dorothy kissed her and pushed her forward.

Running down the length of the room, she flew into a telephone booth, and hastily searching out the number called up Columbus 6,000.

“Hello, hello,” called Dorothy, frantically. “Hello! Is—has—a man come back with a violin in his taxicab—I must have it! I have to play! Yes. Yes. Yes. No. No. Good-bye.”

She hung up the receiver, and sat back despondently. The cab had not returned in which she had ridden to the hall.

“Oh, what shall I do! No violin and my turn to play next. What shall I do, oh, what shall I do?”

“Miss Calvert,” called the boy. “Your turn next.”

“Oh, dear,” moaned Dorothy, “see if you can borrow an instrument for me from one of the musicians in the orchestra.” [Pg 62]

Just then a man rushed into the room carrying a violin under his arm. Dorothy ran up to

him and fairly snatched the precious thing out of his arms, exclaiming, “I can play now. I can. I can! Oh, thank you, thank you! But I must go. Please come to the Prince Arthur to-night at 8.30 p. m. I will see you then.”

With that she dashed off, and trying to calm herself, walked upon the stage.

She carefully positioned herself just where Mr. Ludlow had told her to stand, and waiting for the introduction to be played by the orchestra, looked around the house, and discovering the box party, smiled at them gayly. When the last few bars of the music were played, gracefully placing her violin in position she commenced to draw her bow gently across the strings and produced clear, vibrant tones. Her body moved rhythmically, swaying back and forward in perfect accord with the music.

The audience listened spellbound, and when she had finished the whole house echoed with applause. She then walked slowly off the stage, only to be motioned back again to play an encore which she did with as much success as she had scored with her first piece. [Pg 63]

When she turned from the stage the second time Ruth, who was waiting in the wings, whispered in her ear, “Dorothy dear, you did just splendidly, and you will surely be a great success. The people applauded you so very much I thought they would never stop.”

“Oh, I’m so glad. I do hope Mr. Ludlow liked it, and is satisfied with me,” murmured Dorothy.

“I can answer that, Dorothy,” said a voice in back of her that belonged to Mr. Ludlow, who had left the box just as Dorothy had finished playing and come to speak to them. “Both of you girls did very well indeed. Very well indeed. But come now with me and we’ll go around and sit in the box and listen to the rest of the concert. I want to hear it all.”

With that they traced their way back and soon were seated with the rest of the party. Dorothy told them all about how she had lost her violin and at the last minute recovering it vowed that she would be more careful of it in the future.

The little party was loud in its praises of Dorothy’s playing and Ruth’s singing, for Dorothy presented her new friend to them as soon as she could. [Pg 64]

That evening they learned that it was the chauffeur of the taxicab who had found the violin in the auto before he had returned to the garage, and he had immediately started back for the hall with it, knowing it would be needed. Dorothy sent a letter of thanks and a reward, and Aunt Betty, learning the next day that he had a little boy with a broken leg in the hospital, sent a large basket of fruit for the young sufferer.

CHAPTER VI. [Pg 65]

THE OPERA.

The girls spent the next day in a very quiet manner. The morning passed quickly as they wrote letters and fixed up their rooms. About dinner time Jim knocked at the door and Dorothy answered.

“Dorothy, I have written and ’phoned Mr. Ford and I can’t seem to get any answer from him,” announced Jim.

“What did you want him for, Jim?” questioned Dorothy.

“Why, I wanted to get his opinion on that position I want to take with the Edison Co.,” answered Jim.

“I have it!” exclaimed Dorothy. “Send him a telegram.”

“I might try that, though I have about made up my mind——”

Just at that moment Aunt Betty called from her room, “Dorothy, Dorothy, girl!”

“Yes, Aunt Betty,” answered Dorothy, going to her aunt’s door. “What may you want?” [Pg 66]

“Don’t you think it would be real nice if we four went for a drive this afternoon? It’s a nice warm afternoon and we can go up Fifth avenue and into the park,” suggested Aunt Betty.

“That will be fine. I’ll run and tell Alfy and we’ll get ready,” responded Dorothy, going quickly out of the room. “Alfy! Alfy! Where are you?”

“In here,” called Alfy from her room.

Dorothy rushed into the room, crying, “Alfy dear, just think, we are going driving this afternoon, Aunt Betty, Jim, and you and I. We are going driving—driving.”

“Oh, that’s just great,” exclaimed Alfy, dancing round the room. “It’s fun to go driving in a big city.”

“Let’s get ready right away,” said Dorothy, taking Alfy’s hand and dancing round in a circle with her, singing, “Let’s get ready, let’s get ready, let’s get ready right away.” And then they let go of each other’s hands and danced away to accomplish the art of “getting ready right away.”

Very soon the girls were in the sitting room waiting for Jim and Aunt Betty.

Just then Jim burst into the room crying, “Dorothy, I can’t get a horse and carriage here to drive myself like one has in Baltimore, but I did get a nice automobile. I guess it will not cost any more, for we cover so much ground in a short time. I found a large, red touring car that just holds five and the chauffeur is downstairs now waiting for us, so hustle into your things.” [Pg 67]

“An auto ride! That’s better still,” responded Alfy as she rushed to put on her hat and coat.

“I am all ready, dear,” called Aunt Betty from the next room.

“Well, then, come on,” answered Jim. “All come with me.” And they followed him down and out to the automobile.

They were very much delighted with the auto car, and the three, Aunt Betty, Dorothy and Alfy, climbed into the back seat, and Jim took his place with the driver.

Aunt Betty called, “Jim, Jim, please tell the chauffeur to drive slowly and to go up Fifth avenue.”

Away they went. “Oh, oh, oh!” gasped Alfy at the first corner. “Oh, I most thought we would bump into that trolley car!”

“Well,” said Jim, “we didn’t, but it was a pretty close shave.”

“Just think of all the people we might have hurt if we had,” said Dorothy. [Pg 68]

“I guess,” replied Jim, “that the only ones hurt would have been ourselves, for the trolley is so heavy we couldn’t have bothered that much.”

Just then they turned into Fifth avenue and joined the procession of already too many machines that were slowly wending their way up and down that old thoroughfare.

“Dorothy and Alfy,” said Aunt Betty, “in those large houses live the very rich of New York.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t live in a house like that,” said Alfy, “if I was rich. I couldn’t, I just could never be happy in one like that,” pointing to a large gray stone mansion. “It hasn’t any garden and windows only in the front, and looks like a pile of boxes, one on top of the other.”

“Don’t the people in New York care for gardens, aunty dear?” questioned Dorothy.

“Yes. Yes, indeed, dear. But these are only their winter homes,” laughed Aunt Betty. “They have summer homes in the country where they have very beautiful gardens. They only spend a few months here in these houses each winter.”

“Well, I would rather have a real home for all the time,” said practical Jim. “A real home, like Bellevieu.” [Pg 69]

“Dear, dear old Bellevieu, I wouldn’t exchange it either for all of these places,” whispered Dorothy. “And after this trip is over, and I have made a lot of money, we will all go back there again, and I will build that new sun-parlor Aunt Betty has so long wanted.”

Aunt Betty sighed, for she and she only knew how badly off was the poor old estate. The mortgage that must be paid and the repairs and other things that were needed. She hoped that Dorothy’s trip would be a success, and that she could pay off the mortgage at last.

Then answering Dorothy, she said, “Dear, dear little girl, you are always trying to think of something pleasant for someone else. Never mind your old Aunt Betty, dear.”

“But I do,” whispered Dorothy in her ear, “because I love you more than anyone else in the world.”

“Yes, dear, maybe now you do,” rejoined Aunt Betty, “but some day, some day wait and see.”

They eagerly looked at the beautiful homes, the large and handsome hotels and most of all the happy throng of people who filled the streets, remarking that they had never before seen quite so many people, each hurrying along apparently to do his or her special duty. [Pg 70]

From Fifth avenue they went up Riverside Drive, around Grant’s Tomb. Then as the limit of time they had arranged for was nearly up they told the chauffeur to drive home, all happy and full of thoughts of the new things they had seen.

“Well, what next, Dorothy girl?” exclaimed Aunt Betty.

“Why, I don’t quite know. Let me see—just what day is this?” said Dorothy to herself. “It’s—it’s—oh, yes, it’s Friday! Oh, oh! Why we must all hurry, hurry, hurry—dress right at once.”

“Dorothy, child, what ails you?” laughed Aunt Betty. “Talking away so fast and all to yourself. Come now, tell me what you want us to dress for?”

“Why, aunty, I had most forgotten it. It’s Friday, and we promised—I mean I promised—but I forgot all about it,” continued Dorothy.

Just then Alfy interrupted. “Dorothy I am most dead with curiosity; tell us quick, please.”

“Well,” rejoined Dorothy, “it’s just this. You see, I promised—”

“You said all that before,” interrupted Alfy again. [Pg 71]

“Be still, Alfy, or I just won’t tell,” scolded Dorothy. “Mr. Ludlow is coming here at eight o’clock to take us all to the opera. Miss Boothington, Ruth, is going also. He told me to tell you all, and I just guess I must have since then forgotten. I don’t see how I did, but I just did. Oh, aunty, it’s a box Mr. Ludlow has and we must dress all up ’cause all the millionaires of New York go to the opera.”

“Dorothy dear, whatever made you forget?” asked Aunt Betty.

“Guess ’cause she is doing and seeing so much she has lost track of the days. Isn’t that so?” chimed in Alfy.

“That doesn’t excuse my little girl,” remarked Aunt Betty, and turning to Dorothy, “What is it we are going to hear, dearest?”

“I think Mr. Ludlow said ‘Koenigskinder’,” answered Dorothy. “I am not sure but that’s what I think he said.”

“Ah, yes,” said Aunt Betty, “that is a comparatively new opera and Miss Geraldine Farrar sings the principal part in it. She plays the part of the goose-girl. Well, I guess we had better hurry. We must dress and have dinner before Mr. Ludlow gets here for us.” [Pg 72]

“Can I wear that new pink dress, Aunty?” called Dorothy.

“Why, dear, I would keep that one for one of your concerts, and if I were you I would wear the little white one with the blue ribbons, and tell Alfy she might wear the white dress Miss Lenox made for her before we left Baltimore,” said Aunt Betty.

“All right,” called back Dorothy.

It didn’t take the girls long to get dressed, and when they were finished they appeared in the sitting room. Both Jim and Aunt Betty declared that there weren’t two finer girls in all New York City. And Jim added under his breath, “In all the world,” thinking only of Dorothy then.

Down they went for dinner, and so anxious were they that they should not be late that the meal was passed over as quickly and quietly as possible.

They had just reached their rooms when Mr. Ludlow was announced, and gathering up their wraps and long white gloves—for Alfy thought more of these white gloves than anything else she owned just then—they went forth to meet Mr. Ludlow. [Pg 73]

“Well, well,” said Mr. Ludlow, who was standing beside Ruth in the lobby, “all here and all ready. I do wish you would set the same example of promptness for Ruth. She is always, always late.”

“Well,” replied Ruth, “somehow I always try but just can’t seem to get dressed in time. I didn’t keep you waiting very long to-day, did I?”

“Well, dear, that is because I said that the longer you kept me waiting, the less you could

have for dinner," laughed Mr. Ludlow.

"Maybe that is why, because I do get so tired of boarding house meals," rejoined Ruth, and, turning to Dorothy, "Come dear, the auto is all ready and we are not so very early."

The others followed them and soon they reached the Metropolitan Opera House, and after passing through the crowded lobby, entered the foyer. It was quite dark, and very quietly they followed Mr. Ludlow, whose box was on the right hand side, well toward the stage.

They were presently all seated, but before they had time to talk or look around much the music began. And such music. Dorothy was oblivious to all else as she followed the score. [Pg 74] For memory's convenience she wrote out the plot of the opera, the next day, and here is a copy from her diary:

> The Goose-Girl lives in the hills which look down in the town of Hellabrunn. Around her stray her geese. She lies on the green grass, beneath the branches of a shady linden-tree. Near her is the hut which she inhabits with an old cruel Witch. Behind her stretch wild woods and lonely mountains. She sings and feeds her flock. The Witch appears, scolding and berating the girl, whom she orders to prepare a magic pasty which will kill whoever eats of it. The Goose-Girl begs the Witch to let her go into the world of men. But she implores in vain.
>
> Out of the woods, and from the hills, a youth comes roving. He seems poor. But by his side there hangs a sword and in his hand he holds a bundle. He is the King's Son, though the Goose-Girl does not know it. And in the bundle is a royal crown.
>
> The King's Son tells the Goose-Girl of his wanderings. He has left his home, and the King's service, to be free. The Goose-Girl asks him what a King may be. He answers her, marvelling at her beauty and her ignorance. She longs to [Pg 75] follow him. He falls in love with her, and asks her to go maying with him, through the summer land. He kisses her; and then a gust of wind blows the girl's wreath away. The King's Son picks up the wreath and hides it near his heart. In exchange for it he offers her his crown. The sweethearts are about to run off together when a wild wind alarms them and the Goose-Girl finds her feet glued to the ground. Thinking she is afraid to roam with him the King's Son tosses his crown into the grass, tells the girl that she is unworthy to be a King's mate and leaves her, vowing she shall never see him more till a star has fallen into a fair lily which is blooming near.
>
> The Goose-Girl is still sighing for her lover, when the Witch returns, abuses her for having wasted her time on a man and weaves a magic spell to prevent her escape.
>
> A Fiddler enters, singing a strange song. He is followed by two citizens of Hellabrunn, a Woodcutter and a Broom (or besom) maker, who have been sent to ask the Witch where they can find the son of the King, who is just dead. They are in mortal fear of the old woman. But the Fiddler scoffs at her [Pg 76] and all her arts. The Fiddler, acting as their mouthpiece, says that the people of Hellabrunn are dying to have a King or a Queen to rule over them. The Witch replies that the first person, rich or in rags, who enters the town gate next day at noon should be enthroned. The Woodcutter and Broom-maker go back to Hellabrunn. But the Fiddler lingers, suspecting that the Goose-Girl is in the hut. Soon she appears and confides her sorrows to the Fiddler, who assures her she shall wed the King's Son. The Witch, however, jeers at the thought and tells the Fiddler that the girl is the child of a hangman's daughter. In spite of all, the Goose-Girl plucks up heart, for she feels that her soul is royal and she knows that she will not shame her kingly lover. She prays to her dead father and mother for help. And as she kneels, a shooting star falls into the lily. The Goose-Girl runs off into the woods with her flock, to join her sweetheart, and this ends the first act.
>
> In the second act the town of Hellabrunn is in a turmoil of excitement, awaiting the new ruler. Near the town-gate is an inn. The Innkeeper's Daughter is scolding the Stable-Maid, when the King's Son enters, poorly clad as before. Though she despises his poverty, the Innkeeper's Daughter [Pg 77] coquettes with him; for he is comely. She gives him food and drink, which seem coarse to him, and advises him to get married. He declines and arouses the girl's anger.

The people enter, seat themselves and drink. A Gate-keeper forbids any to approach the gate, which must be left free for the coming King. Musicians enter, playing pipes and bagpipes. A dance begins. The Innkeeper and his servants bustle about. He sees the King's Son, who offers himself to him as an apprentice, but is told that there is no work for him, unless he is willing to be a swineherd. He consents. The Woodcutter appears, with the Broom-maker and his thirteen daughters. The Woodcutter, swelling with importance, tosses a gulden on the Innkeeper's table, to wipe out an old score, but pockets it again when unobserved.

One of the Broom-maker's daughters asks the King's Son to play at Ring-a-rosy with her. Their game is interrupted by the entrance of the Town Councillors and well-to-do Burghers, with their wives and children. The Councillors seat themselves in a tribune erected for them and the eldest of them invites the Woodcutter to relate his adventures in the woods. The King's [Pg 78] Son is amazed to hear him tell of imaginary dangers which he has encountered with the Broom-maker. He learns from the Woodcutter's account, however, that on the stroke of twelve a King's Son, richly clad, and bright with gems, will enter by the now closed gate. He asks the people if the expected monarch might not come in rags. They laugh at the idea and he is accused of being a meddler, rogue and thief. The clock strikes twelve. The crowd rushes toward the gate. An intuition warns the King's Son who is near. Then, as the gate is opened, the poor Goose-Girl enters, escorted by her geese. She tells the King's Son she has come to join him on his throne. But the crowd jeers at her and scorns her youthful lover and though the Fiddler storms and rages at their blindness, the two lovers are driven out with sticks and stones. Only the Fiddler and the little daughter of the Broom-maker believe them worthy of the throne.

This was where the curtain went down and I thought it was the end. Oh, how disappointed I was, and then how happy, when I knew there was another act.

Winter has come. Since the expulsion of the King's Son and his sweetheart, [Pg 79] the Witch has been burned at the stake for her supposed betrayal of the people to whom she had promised a new ruler. The Fiddler, who has been maimed and imprisoned for defending the outcasts, now lives alone in the Witch's hut, where he is feeding the doves the Goose-Girl has left behind. He is disturbed by the arrival of the Woodcutter and the Broom-maker, with a troop of children who have come to entreat him to come back to Hellabrunn. He refuses. But when one of the children begs him to lead them all in search of the lost King's Son and his bride, he consents. The Woodcutter and the Broom-maker withdraw into the hut, where they discover the poisoned pasty which the Witch had baked.

Hardly have the echoes of a song sung by the Fiddler died away, when the King's Son and the Goose-Girl re-appear, hungry and thirsting and worn out with wandering. They stop to rest and the King's Son knocks at the door of the hut to beg food and shelter. The Woodcutter refuses to give them anything. To comfort her sweetheart, the Goose-Girl pretends she is none the worse for her long travels over hill and dale in the vain effort to discover the King's Son's old home. She sings and dances to him. But she soon grows faint [Pg 80] and falls. To save his love from starving, the King's Son then barters his royal crown, which he has found again, for the poisoned pasty. The outcasts eat it and soon after die, fancying themselves happy in a land of love and roses. With her last breath the Goose-Girl braves grim Death who threatens her and sighs "I love thee, dear!"

The Fiddler and the troop of little children then return, only to learn that they have found the outcasts but to lose them. They lay the youthful lovers on a bier and bear them away to bury them on a high hill. And as they go, they sing a last lament for the poor "Kingly Children."

After the opera, Mr. Ludlow invited them to a supper at one of the cafes, but Aunt Betty demurred, as it was quite late, and so they were driven straight home.

"Alfy," said Dorothy, when they had reached their rooms, "you are such a funny girl. You didn't half pay attention to the opera at all. All I saw you doing was looking at the ladies in the boxes."

"I was trying to remember the dress of the lady in that one box, the one that glistened all

[Pg 81]

over with diamonds. I wanted to write and tell Ma Babcock just how to make it. It was so stylish, and had such a nice low neck and long train," said Alfy.

"Alfy, are you sure you are not crazy?" laughed Dorothy. "Oh, oh! Just imagine Ma Babcock in a dress like that! Oh, dear! It's so funny."

"Why, Dorothy!" angrily added Alfy, "why couldn't ma have a dress like that? And anyway, I couldn't understand a word they were singing. I am going right to bed, I am, so there!"

"Alfy, dear, don't you know that people only wear dresses like that to evening affairs, and, of course, you couldn't understand, it was all in German. Here, kiss me good-night." The girls kissed each other and were soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

[Pg 82]

AN EPISODE.

The next morning no one arose very early. They were all quite willing to rest. Jim, first of all, was up and out. He had been working over a list of boarding houses as he had quite decided to take the position, and his salary would not permit him to live in an expensive hotel. He had not been very successful and on returning to the hotel found Aunt Betty reading in their sitting room.

"Aunt Betty," said Jim.

"Yes," answered Aunt Betty, "what is it? Do you want to talk business with me?"

"Yes, business," responded Jim, doubtfully. "I have been out all the morning trying to find a boarding house."

"A boarding house?" echoed Aunt Betty.

"Yes, a boarding house," answered Jim. "You see I have quite decided to take the position. I received a letter from Mr. Ford's secretary saying Mr. Ford is abroad, and not expected [Pg 83] back for some time. And if I work there at the Edison, I must live in a boarding house not too far away from there. I didn't have much luck."

"Why not ask Mr. Ludlow? He might know of a place," suggested Aunt Betty. "Or maybe you could see if there is a room at that place where Ruth, Miss Boothington, is staying. You remember her saying that she was tired of boarding house meals, do you not?"

"I never thought of that," added Jim. "Suppose I ask Dorothy where she lives, maybe she knows."

"Yes, call her," replied Aunt Betty.

"Dorothy! Dorothy! Where are you?" called Jim.

"Here, in Alfy's room, I have been writing in my diary," answered the girl. "I will be there in just a minute. Oh, dear," she continued to herself, "I just can't seem to ever write to Frau. Every time I start on that letter someone calls, and then I stop writing, and it is so long before I can get at it again. I have to begin all over."

"Well, young man, what is it this time?" she said, turning to Jim as she entered the room.

"It's just this, Dorothy. You see, I am going to take the position in New York and I must live [Pg 84] here," started Jim.

"Ah, Jim, you never told me anything about really taking a position. I just supposed that—well, I don't quite know—but I didn't think you really meant to do it," interrupted Dorothy.

"I do, Dorothy, mean it. And I have made up my mind to take it and work, so hard that some day I can make a man out of myself like Dr. Sterling and some others I know," replied Jim. "But to get down to the point why we called you, Aunt Betty thought you might help in finding a boarding place for me. You see, I must live here in the city, and it's hard to find a good boarding place. Miss Ruth, last night, said something about her place. Do you know where it is?"

"No, Jim, I can't say that I do, but I heard her say that it was down on lower Fifth avenue—way downtown, she said. I might call up Mr. Ludlow and find out right now, or you can wait till to-night, for I play at that concert at the Hippodrome this evening, you know."

“Call him up now, dear,” suggested Aunt Betty from her corner. “Then you and Jim can take a walk there this afternoon. Alfy and I can find something to amuse ourselves with. We could take one of those stages and ride up Fifth avenue on it. It’s a fine ride on a nice day like this.” [Pg 85]

“Very well,” answered Dorothy, immediately going to the telephone, and acting on her aunt’s suggestion.

Jim and Aunt Betty sat quietly by till she had finished her conversation at the telephone.

“Mr. Ludlow says that Ruth lives on Fifth avenue, near Washington square, and it’s a very large, old-fashioned boarding house run by an elderly southern lady, who, being in very adverse circumstances, had to take hold and do something. He said that the rooms were fairly large, the meals first rate and the charges moderate, and that we had better see her at once because she has usually a pretty full house,” added Dorothy.

“Why not start at once, dear,” replied Aunt Betty. “Then you can come home and practice this afternoon, and as Alfy and I will be out there will be nothing to distract you.”

“Yes, let’s go now, Dorothy, if you can spare the time to go with me,” pleaded Jim. “Where is it near?”

“He says it is near Ninth street,” replied Dorothy. “All right, Jim, I will be ready in a few minutes. Oh dear,” she sighed to herself, “poor Frau will not get her letter very soon, I guess. Well, I can write this afternoon, after I practice, and I will make the letter extra long so as to make up for the time I have taken to write her.” [Pg 86]

“Good-bye, Aunt Betty,” called Dorothy a short time later.

“Good-bye, Aunt Betty,” echoed Jim. “We’ll be back soon.”

With that the two disappeared and Aunt Betty from her corner sighed as she thought of what a charming pair the pretty Dorothy and the tall youth made.

“Shall we ride?” asked Jim.

“No. Let’s walk, it is not far, only a few blocks,” said Dorothy.

“That’s just what I wanted to do,” replied Jim, “only I was most afraid you would not care to. We haven’t had a good walk in a long time.”

They walked on silently as the streets were so crowded and there was lots to see, and the crossings required much attention, these two not being used to the busy streets of New York, where one has to look in all directions at once and keep moving lively to avoid being run into by the many automobiles or trucks that are hurrying along.

Finally Dorothy, observing the number on the houses, said: “Here we are, this is the house.” [Pg 87]

Up the steps they ran and Jim gave the old-fashioned bell a vigorous pull. “Ting-a-ling-a-ling-a-ling,” vaguely sounded from somewhere within and presently a pleasant faced young girl with white cap and apron and dark dress, said in a low voice, “Whom do you wish to see?”

Jim answered, “Will you tell Miss Boothington that Miss Dorothy Calvert wishes to see her?”

Slowly they followed the neat maid into the old fashioned parlor and waited there for her to take the message to Ruth.

“Oh, Jim,” whispered Dorothy, very softly putting her hand on Jim’s arm. “Jim, if I were you I should love to stay here. It is more like a home, a real home than any place I have been in, in the big city.”

“Yes, it is. And it is so quiet and restful. I do hope there will be room for me here,” answered Jim.

Just then they heard foot-steps on the stairs and in a second Ruth’s cheery voice greeted them with a “Hello!” from the hall.

“Well, this is a surprise. I didn’t expect to see you till to-night, Dorothy. Have I you to thank for bringing her to me?” she asked, smiling at Jim. [Pg 88]

“Yes, I guess so,” replied Dorothy. “We came on business.”

“On business!” echoed Ruth.

“Yes, on business,” answered Jim. “It’s just this: You see I have taken a position in New York and I have to board here. We didn’t know of any place and Aunt Betty thought of something you had said the night before about boarding-house meals.”

“Yes,” continued Dorothy, “and I called Mr. Ludlow up and he recommended this place and we came right down here, and we have just fallen in love with the place at first sight. Haven’t we, Jim?”

“Wait. Let me see. You want to see Mrs. Quarren. She is out just now, but she is such a dear. I know! You must both stay to lunch. It is just eleven forty-five and we lunch here at twelve. You see so many of the boarders here do not come home at noon-time, they work too far to come back, so that there will be plenty of room. And then you can see how the table suits you. Mrs. Quarren is always in for meals. You see she is just a great dear mother [Pg 89] to us all. I won’t know what to do without her.”

“I will lend you Aunt Betty when you are with us,” volunteered Dorothy. “But we must let her know we are going to stay here for lunch.”

“I’ll telephone her if you will show me where the ’phone is,” spoke up Jim.

“Right this way, please,” said Ruth, leading Jim into the hall where he saw the little table and ’phone. “Come back to the parlor when you are through,” and Ruth went back to Dorothy.

“You are to play to-night, are you not?” she inquired.

“Yes, and are you to sing?” questioned Dorothy.

“Right after you play. We are each to do just one thing to-night. I am going to sing ‘Still vie de Nochte,’ or in English, ‘Still as the Night,’ you see it’s just a little German song. What are you to play?” asked Ruth.

“I thought I was to play two selections—Mr. Ludlow said so——” started Dorothy.

“Yes, dear, you were,” interrupted Ruth, “but he changed his mind after I had coaxed him and he has consented to let me sing so we each can have one number then.”

“Well, then I will play that old medley, ‘Southern Airs.’ I like that best of all. It makes me [Pg 90] think of home,” answered Dorothy.

“And I always can just fairly see old Bellevieu when you play that piece,” added Jim from the doorway. “Aunt Betty said it was satisfactory, and that she and Alfy would go out this afternoon and for you to come home soon and practice.”

Just then the luncheon bell sounded and the three went quickly down stairs. They were seated at a small table near the window. Ruth always sat there and as the other guests at that table were never present for luncheon, Dorothy and Jim could sit there too. So the three had the little table all to themselves.

Just as soon as she could, Mrs. Quarren came over to the table, for she had returned from her duties outside. Ruth presented Dorothy and Jim to her, and as she sat pleasantly chatting, Jim told her of his want. She said she would see him after dinner in the library.

“Well, Dorothy, you come to my room with me while Jim sees Mrs. Quarren in the library,” said Ruth, rising and carefully pushing her chair back under the table.

“You are very kind. I would like to see your room. You lead and I will follow,” answered [Pg 91] Dorothy.

“Oh, the room is not much. You come too, Jim, and I will show you where the library is,” said Ruth, leading the way upstairs. “Right in there, Jim.”

Jim entered the library and the girls ascended to the floors above.

“I am going out this afternoon with a friend,” said Ruth. “I promised I would go shopping with her,” and she opened the door of her room.

The room was a large, sunny one with simple furnishings.

“I’ll sit here,” announced Dorothy, “till you are ready to go.”

“I will just hustle with my things and be ready in a moment,” replied Ruth, suiting her actions to her words.

In a very few minutes the girls were ready and slowly descended the stairs again to wait for Jim in the parlor.

“Well, here I am. Room engaged and all,” said a cheery voice from the hall which they knew as Jim’s.

“Where is it?” questioned Ruth.

“Yes, where?” echoed Dorothy.

“Where do you suppose?” mocked Jim. “Well, I will tell you. Ruth it is your room.” [Pg 92]

“My room!” exclaimed the girl.

“Yes, your room,” laughed Jim. “I am to have it next Wednesday. Mrs. Quarren said you were to leave it Tuesday.”

“Tuesday!” interrupted Dorothy, in a very much surprised tone of voice.

“Yes, dear, Tuesday. Didn’t Mr. Ludlow tell you?” added Ruth. “Tuesday we go to Washington on the noon train.”

“Ah, is it so soon? I didn’t know it. It makes me feel so sad. I hate to leave New York now, just as I am becoming used to it,” wailed Dorothy. “Oh, I just must go back to the hotel. I have to practice and it is getting late.”

“Come on, Dorothy,” said Jim, rising and walking to the door.

“Good-bye till to-night,” said Dorothy.

“Good-bye, dear, till to-night,” answered Ruth.

With that Dorothy and Jim made their departure for home. The way back was rather quiet, for the news that the girls were to start so soon had made Jim sad. And Dorothy couldn’t help but feel the same way. When at last they had silently reached the hotel and had gone [Pg 93] up to the rooms, Dorothy spoke.

“Jim, do you want to stay here and be my audience while I practice and tell me what you think of my playing?”

“Yes, indeed I do,” answered Jim, gladly grasping the opportunity to be near the girl, and when he had seated himself in a great chair added, “I’ll be more than audience, I’ll be newspaper reporter and a very exacting and critical one at that. And then, when you finish I will tell you what I would put in the paper about you and your playing.”

“That’s a bargain,” answered Dorothy, taking her violin in hand. “I will start right now.”

So saying she commenced playing slowly at first, anon faster and faster, then again more slowly that beautiful composition, “A Medley of Southern Airs,” putting all her love and yearning for her own southern home into the effort. Jim from his chair by the window could picture each phase of the piece, and when she had finished with the beautiful sad strains of “Home, Sweet Home,” he could hardly control himself, and man that he was, he could not keep the tears from his eyes.

For a brief moment neither spoke. Dorothy laid down her violin and came over to him. Jim [Pg 94] arose and took both her hands, saying softly, “Dorothy girl, it was wonderful, but it makes me so sad. I just can’t bear to think of parting from you.”

“Jim, dear, you too feel sad?” she questioned softly, but withdrawing her hands.

Jim let the little hands slowly drop but took her by the shoulders, looking eagerly into her eyes. “You will miss me?” he questioned, “really miss me?”

“Of course I will, dreadfully so,” she answered.

Then without a word of warning he drew her gently to him and kissed her full on the lips. For one brief moment they clung together, then Dorothy withdrew his arms.

“Jim, oh, Jim! what have you done?” she sobbed.

“Girl, I just couldn’t help it,” answered Jim, gently drawing her into his embrace again. “Dorothy, little Dorothy, didn’t you know before? Couldn’t you guess?”

“Jim, dear, I never thought of you that way, and it’s so new and strange. I can’t realize it all.” And with that Dorothy rushed away and into her own room.

CHAPTER VIII. [Pg 95]

Just before dinner Dorothy came slowly from her room into the sitting room where she found Jim all alone, seated in the same large chair by the window. She had dressed this evening with much care and wore a white dress with blue ribbons at her waist.

She had also fixed her hair differently and more in the prevailing fashion. The girls of New York she had noticed wore their hair “up,” and as Dorothy was eighteen, she thought she too must dress it like they did. So carefully this afternoon did she arrange it, with three little curls at her neck and a tiny curl just peeping out at each ear. It made her look a little older and very fascinating indeed. Decidedly Jim so thought, as he turned to look at her as she entered the room.

“Come here and sit down. I want to talk to you just a few minutes, dear,” he said, drawing up a chair close to his for her.

Dorothy obeyed, as some way she always was accustomed to obeying this boy, although he was really only five years older than she was. “What is it you want to say?” she asked, seating herself leisurely. [Pg 96]

“It’s about what happened this afternoon,” Jim began, and hesitated, hardly knowing how to continue. Looking at Dorothy he thought that she too had changed since the afternoon; she seemed more fair, more grown up, as if she had become a full grown woman instead of a child.

“Dear, I am sorry for what I said and did. I can’t make any excuses, I just lost control. The thought of your going away maddened me. I can’t help loving you, caring for you. I have done that now for years. I didn’t mean to speak to you until I had made good. And now I have spoiled it all by my recklessness,” he added, bitterly.

Then quickly changing his tone of voice to a more cheerful one, he continued: “Dear, never mind, we can be the same old friends again, can’t we?”

“Yes, and no, Jim,” quietly responded Dorothy, who had already felt a complete change that before she didn’t realize and even now didn’t understand.

Jim seized her hands and asked hurriedly, “Could you love me? Could you? You don’t know how much I would give for just one little word of hope. Don’t leave me back here in New York, working, fighting, all by myself with no word of cheer. Answer me girl, answer me. Could you care, not as much as I do, now, but just a little?” [Pg 97]

“Jim, I do, a little,” was all she could manage to say before she was seized eagerly in his arms again and having kisses showered upon her hair, cheeks and lips.

“Jim, Jim, you are behaving shamefully and mussing me all up,” she said, struggling to free herself, but she was held fast and stern tones pleaded, “I just can’t let you go now. I just can’t.”

“Jim, dear, you must or I won’t even love you a little,” she laughed.

“Well, if I must, I must,” he said, kissing her just once again. “My girl, my own girl,” he added.

“Jim, I haven’t promised you anything, and I just said I cared for you a little. I’d have to love you a lot before I could promise you anything. You mustn’t call me yours. If, when I come back from my trip, and that’s a long time from now, I do love you——” added Dorothy. [Pg 98]

“You will promise me then? You will? Oh girl, you make me so happy, so happy!” cried Jim. “I will work so hard all winter and save up so much. I have considerable saved up now. Then you will come to me, girl?”

“I said if I did love you then,” teased Dorothy, “and that’s if——”

“You little tease,” interrupted Jim. “I will punish you.”

“No you won’t,” Dorothy added quickly. “And never, never say anything of the kind to me again, or even try to love me, or I’ll just never, never love you. I have my music to attend to and you mustn’t disturb my practice or even try to make me think of you when I should be thinking of it.”

“Very well,” acquiesced Jim, sadly, “it will be very hard though. I’ll promise if you will write me every day while you are away.”

“Every day!” exclaimed Dorothy. “Not every day. I wouldn’t know what to say.”

“All you would have to say to me would be, ‘I love you,’ over and over again,” laughed Jim.

“But I can’t, cause maybe I don’t,” teased Dorothy, “but I’ll write sometimes.” [Pg 99]

“Sometimes,” complained Jim, mournfully.

“Sometimes is better than never,” laughed the girl.

“Very well. I’ll hope that sometimes is very often or nearly every day,” said Jim. “Kiss me once more, then I won’t bother you again.” Then folding her to him he kissed that dear, dear face and thought of the many times he used to blush and show all kinds of discomfort when Dorothy kissed him of her own free will, and then he remembered Gerald Beck’s comments that any fellow would go a long, long way to kiss Dorothy. And thinking of the difference now, he drew her closer as she was drawing away, and turning her head back, kissed her on the brow and then she slowly turned and walked to the table, picking up her violin and played.

While she was playing Aunt Betty and Alfy came in. They sat down quietly so as not to disturb her. Dorothy finished her piece and then came over and kissed her aunt, saying, “Dear Aunt Betty, have you and Alfy enjoyed yourselves?”

“Oh, yes indeed, dear. We took a stage up to Ninety-sixth street, through to Riverside Drive and then back again,” answered Aunt Betty. [Pg 100]

“And what did you think of it, Alfy?” asked Jim, turning to the girl.

“I just couldn’t keep my eyes off the crowds of people walking up and down Fifth avenue, all of them dressed up as if they were going to church, and Aunt Betty said they were all going to tea at the hotels—afternoon tea—and men too. Why, I saw a lot of men and they were all dressed up too, and had on some of those yellow gloves and carried canes. And all the ladies carried silver chain purses or bags. Ah,” and Alfy heaved a great sigh, “I wish I had a silver bag; they make you look so dressed up. Then there were so many, many stores and such nice things to buy in all of them. I would like to be rich just for one day and then I could buy all I wanted. I would get—oh, I just couldn’t tell you all I would get. I saw so many things I just wanted so bad.”

And I guess Alfy would have continued indefinitely if the telephone bell had not interrupted her.

Dorothy answered the call and turning to Aunt Betty, said, “Aunt Betty, dear, Ruth wants to know if I can take dinner with her and Mr. Ludlow at the Hotel Astor at six o’clock, so we can go to the Hippodrome real early and find out our places before the concert starts.” [Pg 101]

“Certainly, if you wish it,” answered Aunt Betty.

So Dorothy returned to the telephone and continued her conversation with Ruth and when finished hung up the receiver and turned again to Aunt Betty, saying, “Ruth said for me to hurry and dress and they—Ruth and Mr. Ludlow—would call for me—about six o’clock. What shall I wear?”

“The little pink dress, dear; that is quite pretty and most appropriate for the occasion,” answered Aunt Betty. “I am tired, so Alfy will help you. Besides, I want to talk to Jim.”

“Oh, Aunt Betty,” interrupted Dorothy. “I forgot to tell you that this afternoon while we were at Ruth’s, we learned of the fact that we start on our trip on Tuesday—the noon train for Washington. Jim can tell you all the rest while I dress.”

“And did you get a room there where Ruth is, Jim?” questioned Aunt Betty. Whereat Jim told of his arrangements, discussing the matter till Dorothy returned.

“Take your violin, dear, and hurry. The ’phone is ringing now and I guess that is them. Yes, it is,” said Aunt Betty, answering the call. [Pg 102]

“Good-bye, all, for just a little while. You all be early,” called Dorothy, as she left the room.

After a remarkably fine dinner at the Hotel Astor, which the girls enjoyed immensely, they all drove to the Hippodrome. Mr. Ludlow led the girls inside and showed them where they were to sit while they waited for their turn to play or sing. There were many, many people in a large room and Mr. Ludlow told them they were the artists and their friends, but that presently all that were to take part would meet in the room where the girls were. He left them there for a few minutes and went away to find out if they had been given their places on the list. He found their numbers were five and six, Ruth being five. He came back, told the girls this and then left them to themselves till their turns came. They sat still, not saying much but enjoying all the people about them,—some of them seemed to them so queer.

Finally it was Ruth's turn to sing. Slowly she got up, walked to the entrance and on the stage. She rendered her simple song, "Still vie die Nochte" very well, and amid a volley of [Pg 103] applause, left the stage. She could not give an encore so she simply walked to the front again and bowed.

Dorothy, listening, had heard all and was preparing for her task, tuning her violin. Just then Ruth, returning, whispered in her ear, "Good luck," as she passed her.

Dorothy turned and smiled at her new friend, and then proceeded forward to the stage, violin in hand. One brief glimpse she caught of the crowded house, and she thought she had never seen so many, many people before.

The Hippodrome is very large, the stage being one of the largest in the world, and the seating capacity being many thousands. So you see there were a great number of people there. The house was over-crowded, as naturally every one was interested in the home for blind babies, and the talent of the evening had called forth a very large attendance.

Slowly Dorothy raised her violin and started the initial strain of the melody. The beautiful "Southern Airs" appealed to many, as there were a large number of southerners present that night. Played by the beautiful girl, it made the old go back in memory to days that were the happiest in their lives. They longed for the South; the large plantations, the beautiful [Pg 104] gardens, the spacious, old, rambling houses, the darkies playing on their violins in the moonlight, the cabins with the little pickaninies disporting in front—all of these and more dreams floated vividly before them, inspired by the wonderful music.

Then softly, very softly the music fell from the violin, the sweet strains of "Dixie," when suddenly a piercing shriek, another, still another, rent the air. People turned pale. Some started to rise from their seats. A woman or two fainted.

Then another and more awful shriek, which sounded as if some one was being murdered. The people in their seats hesitated! Was it fire? Was someone being robbed, or murdered, or what? In a single second a great restlessness took possession of them all, tending to make of the crowd an angry mob, and panic a possible result.

Dorothy from her place on the stage for a moment was rooted immovable to the spot. She looked in the direction from which the screams came and saw a man throw up his hands and shriek again. It was the man who played the trombone in the orchestra. He threw his instrument in the air and turned as white as chalk, then stiffened out and began to froth at [Pg 105] the mouth.

In a moment she knew that the man had convulsions. She had somewhere seen someone in a similar state. The orchestra had suddenly stopped playing. Out in the audience she saw a sight that terrified her more than she would admit to herself. One thought raced through her brain. She, she alone might—nay must—prevent a panic; people were becoming more excited every moment.

Instinct of some sort made her grasp her violin and raise it. Then she knew what to do. Without accompaniment, in clear, sweet tones she played "America." Slowly the people rose, rose to pay their respects to their national hymn, patriotism immediately conquering all fear. While she played the poor trombone player was carried out to receive medical attention. All through the three verses of the hymn Dorothy held the audience, and then as she finished and the curtain fell, the house broke out in thunderous applause, for now they realized what this girl had done, what possibilities she had saved them from. So insistent was the applause that Dorothy had to stop in front of the curtain again and again.

CHAPTER IX. [Pg 106]

A DREAD CALL IN THE NIGHT.

The next day Dorothy was ill as the result of the strain of the previous evening, and when Mr. Ludlow and Ruth called they found her resting on the couch in the living room. Ruth was eager to talk of the happenings of the night before, but Mr. Ludlow restrained her, saying:

"Dorothy, I am very proud of you, and I want to thank you for what you did last night. The morning papers are full of the news of the events of last night, and now every place you go you will be doubly welcomed and given hearty receptions. It was a very good thing for us as it has given you advance press notices, which are superior and more convincing than

anything I could put in for you. You will probably get all kinds of letters from people wanting you to play at private concerts, but keep them, my dear, as sometimes they come in very handy, and you never can tell when you can use them.

"But for the present you must rest, that is, to-day and to-morrow. Tuesday we start on the noon train for Washington, so be prepared and on time. Ruth has much packing to do likewise, so we will go now and leave you to yourself." [Pg 107]

"Oh, can't I stay and talk?" interrupted Ruth eagerly. "There are so many things I want to talk to Dorothy about."

"No. I guess you had better go home and pack up. You know I want you to go to church to-night. There is to be a musical service at St. Bartholomew's that I want you to hear," added Mr. Ludlow.

"Can't we all go?" questioned Ruth.

"I think Dorothy is better off home, here," rejoined Aunt Betty. "She had better stay here and rest, just for to-day. Then you see, she has to pack and shop a little to-morrow."

"I would like to go," Alfy chimed in. "I just love church music, it is so grand, so very impressive and kind of awe inspiring."

"All right," answered Mr. Ludlow, "suppose you do. You can bring Jim with you, if he would care to come."

"I know I should enjoy the services very much," responded Jim, not very enthusiastically, but so long as he couldn't be with Dorothy he could sit there and think of her, and Alfy was so anxious to go it would be unkind to refuse. [Pg 108]

"Well, you two meet us there," said Mr. Ludlow, and turning to Ruth, "Come along, my dear."

"Good-bye, all," said Ruth, and they departed.

Dorothy and Aunt Betty stayed home as arranged, while Jim and Alfy attended church, returning to the hotel just as Aunt Betty and Dorothy were about to retire.

"Oh, Dorothy," exclaimed Alfy, eagerly, "you ought to have gone, you missed such a lot. The music was so beautiful. I just know that an organ has locked up in those big pipes the finest music in the world. It's so solemn and impressive it most made me cry."

"But you forget the wonderful singing," interrupted Jim. "They had a full choir, and the voices of so many young boys sounded like the voices of angels. And as they played the recessional and marched out, the singing grew softer and softer, and sounded as if it were coming from Heaven indeed."

Dorothy did not say anything at this, but looked at Jim earnestly.

"I am glad you enjoyed the services. Yes, the Episcopal services, I do think, are the most impressive of all denominations," said Aunt Betty. [Pg 109]

"Did you see Ruth and Mr. Ludlow?" asked Dorothy, turning to Alfy. She was afraid to look at Jim for fear of seeing something in his eyes she felt she had no right at that time to see.

"Yes, we met them in time, and they both wished to be remembered to you and Aunt Betty, and hoped you were feeling rested now," answered Alfy.

"Come, let's go to bed now, dears," said Aunt Betty. "We all have to do a lot to-morrow and must get up real early." With that they all retired to rest till the morrow. That at least was their expectation, but soon there was to materialize a different aspect to affairs. New York, even at night, is a noisy place, so it is little wonder that when the cries of "Fire," "Fire," rent the air, few heard and the few who did hear paid not much attention.

But when someone knocked on Mrs. Calvert's door with a terrific thud, and yelled, "Fire! Fire! All out! Use stairs to the left!" all three, Aunt Betty, Dorothy and Alfy, were out of their beds with unhesitating promptness, and remarkably scared at that.

"Fire! Fire!" rang through the air, and they could hear the bell-boys thump, thump, thump on each door. [Pg 110]

"Put on your slippers and kimona and come at once!" commanded Aunt Betty, suiting actions to her words. "Come, Alfy, Dorothy, this way out!"

Very quickly, indeed, the girls, too bewildered to do much else but obey orders, followed close by, Alfy picking up her hat and a few other articles as she ran through her room.

“This way, ladies,” called the bell-boy. “This way. No danger, only it’s best to get out. Use this stair.”

Aunt Betty and the girls quickly gained the stairs, and ran down as fast as they could, one after the other. On reaching the main floor they heard the call of another attendant. “All step outside and across the street.” So they followed quietly on and outside till they stood on the opposite side of the street.

There were assembled a couple of hundred people, mainly guests of the hotel, most of them more or less asleep and very scantily clothed in garments hastily assumed. Some of the women and children were sobbing, and most of them shivering. Looking up at the hotel, Dorothy tried to locate just where the fire was. She finally discovered a little flame and [Pg 111] smoke curling up from the wing of the hotel, not where their rooms were, but far above, near the top floors. Quickly she ran her eye down and counted the floors, finding that the fire was on the tenth and eleventh floors.

Suddenly it came to her that her priceless violin, her precious Cremona, was back there in their rooms on the seventh floor. Suddenly she slipped away from Aunt Betty and started toward the building. Swiftly she made her way through the crowd, and very quietly passed the firemen and bell-boys who stood about the entrance to the burning building. In a second she was past them, and on her way up the long stairs as she knew that the elevators were not running, and would not take her up if they were. She felt sure that she could get to the room and return with safety without being missed.

In the meantime, Jim, who had not awakened at the first alarm, almost frantic at not being able to discover Aunt Betty and the girls, was wandering in and out of the crowd, scanning the faces of everyone very carefully, trying vainly to find the ones he loved best in all this wide, wide world. Suddenly a hand grasped his arm and a voice said, “Jim, Jim, we have [Pg 112] been looking for you. Where have you been?” and Jim turned and saw it was Aunt Betty that spoke.

“What do you think of the fire?” she continued. “Do you think it is going to be real serious?”

“No. But one can hardly tell. I should judge that with the capable fire service that New York has, so fully equipped and strictly up-to-date, that they could get it under entire control with possible danger to only a couple of floors,” answered Jim.

“Then, maybe our floor will not be burned at all?” inquired Alfy.

“I hope not,” answered Aunt Betty.

Just then Jim turned to look at the girl, for she stood directly in back of Aunt Betty, and catching sight of her he laughed outright. “Why, Alfy, what have you there?” he exclaimed.

A funny sight, indeed, was Alfy, her little bedroom slippers of red just peeping out from under her bright pink kimona which she had slipped on over her night dress, and a bright red hat in her hand.

“My hat,” answered Alfy. “My best new hat. I saw it lying on the table so I picked it up as I passed. I couldn’t bear to think of losing it. It’s my favorite color and here it is.” She placed [Pg 113] the hat on her head and laughed as she did so. Aunt Betty turned and laughed, too, and so did many of the people around them.

The girl looked funny indeed with the kimona and the hat. Her long, abundant growth of hair was braided down her back in two huge braids tied at the ends with blue hair ribbons which had long been discarded from day use. The red hat topping all looked as if the fire itself was there in their midst.

“Great heavens!” exclaimed Aunt Betty, suddenly. “Where is Dorothy? Where is she?” Whereat faintness overcame her, and she dropped helpless upon the sidewalk. Jim caught and held her in his young strong arms, and carried her over to a chair that had been brought out of the hotel. Here he put her in the care of a young matron, who had kindly offered assistance, and was aiding Alfy. Being sure that she was safe and well cared for, he quickly began to look for Dorothy. In a few seconds he ran through the crowd, his heart sinking, as he could not locate her anywhere.

Then he thought she might have gone back to the burning building. The thought of her, the girl he loved, up there in that dangerous place nearly drove him frantic. Quickly he rushed [Pg 114] past the fire lines, yelling to the policemen who would have delayed him perhaps, when every moment was precious. He must find her. His Dorothy must be saved.

“There is someone in there I must save!” he shouted to those he passed.

He hurried on and ran into the building. First he went toward the elevator, but seeing no

one there, turned and ran for the stairs. Quickly he mounted them quickly—indeed he ran! Up those seven long flights of stairs he went with an energy he never called forth before. As he neared their floor he saw that the fire had in some few places broken through to the seventh floor, and realized that he could go no higher, and had but a few moments more.

“Dorothy! Dorothy!” he called out. He thought he heard a very faint answer from her and rushed madly onward. He could not see, and was choked by the thickening smoke. Finding his way into the bath room he opened the window, then he picked up two large towels and hastily wet them with cold water. One of those he wrapped about his head, and then he called again. She answered faintly, and then he found the girl, her precious violin in her [Pg 115] hands. She choked with the smoke, and was all out of breath from her long race up the many flights of stairs.

“Jim,” she sobbed. “I just had to get this. I couldn’t leave my violin up here,” and fell into his arms.

“Come girl,” said Jim, sternly. “Here, put this around your face, so,” and he carefully adjusted the wet towel he had provided for the purpose.

“Now, follow me, and give me your hand.”

Just outside the doors the smoke was very dense.

“Lay down and creep!” ordered Jim, “and give me your violin.”

He took the violin and forced Dorothy down and beside him so that their heads would be close to the floor. As you doubtless know, smoke rises, and the place freest from smoke would be the lowest possible one. Thus they crept until they reached the stair.

“Stand up, now,” commanded Jim, “and take the violin again.” Then he took her in his arms and rapidly made his way down, till they had passed the zone of danger. Here for one brief moment he held the girl in his arms, murmuring lowly, “Thank God, darling, you are safe now.”

Then they quickly made their way to the place where he had left Aunt Betty and Alfy. [Pg 116]

There sat Mrs. Calvert, pale but calm. On seeing her, Dorothy rushed into her aunt’s arms, and explained, “Dear Aunt Betty, I just went back after my violin. I couldn’t let it stay in there and get burned. And Jim came after me and saved me.”

“Dear, dear child, don’t you know how foolish that was to do? Why you are far more precious to me than any violin, no matter how priceless it may be.”

Just then they heard a voice calling the crowd to attention. It was the manager of the hotel, making an announcement. He told the people that while the firemen had the fire well in control, it was considered safest for none of the guests to return to their rooms until the morning, when it would be entirely safe. The Hotel Breslin, he informed them, would accommodate them for the night, and was but a few doors away.

The people began to follow his instructions at once, and the clerks at the Hotel Breslin were soon very busy apportioning rooms to them. All were very shortly trying to overcome their worries sufficiently to enable them to regain the sleep they had lost. [Pg 117]

The fire had been caused by the carelessness of some of the servants of the hotel in dropping lighted matches on the floor, the servants’ apartments being in the top of the building. It was therefore hoped that little damage had been done to the property of the guests.

CHAPTER X. [Pg 118]

THE LOCKET.

The next morning, quite late, for it was nearly ten o’clock, Aunt Betty and the two girls arose. The hotel people had arranged to have the breakfasts sent up to all the unfortunate ones, and otherwise made them as comfortable as possible.

The trio breakfasted and Aunt Betty suggested, “Dorothy, dear, I think it would be a wise idea to telephone over to the hotel and find out if any of our things were left unharmed by the fire, and ask, too, if we might come back there now.”

“Yes, Aunt Betty,” answered Dorothy, as she started for the ’phone. She talked over the wire for several minutes, then returning to her aunt and Alfy said, “They say that some of our things have not been spoiled at all, but that the rooms are a complete wreck, because the firemen broke all the windows when they stopped the fire at that point. We have been given a suite on the second floor, and all the things which belong to us have been moved down there.”

“Ah,” interrupted Alfy. “I am so glad there are some things left. I was afraid we would have [Pg 119] to go about all day in blankets and look like Indian squaws.”

“No, indeed,” answered Dorothy. “They are going to send us in our coats, so that we can get to the carriage that they have placed at the disposal of the guests and be driven right to the door.”

“They have certainly tried to be as considerate as possible to all their guests,” said Mrs. Calvert.

“Here,” said Dorothy, answering a loud knock at the door, “here are our coats now.”

“Come, let us see what we have left, for I feel sure that we will have to hurry and get more clothes for you girls if we have to start for Washington very soon,” rejoined Mrs. Calvert.

They all slipped on their outer garments, and very quickly were carried downstairs by the elevator. They hurried into their carriage and very soon were located in their new suite of rooms.

“Oh, just look, Aunt Betty!” exclaimed Dorothy. “See, the trunks we packed last night with all our good things are all right. The water never leaked through at all.”

“That saves us a good deal of trouble and expense, doesn’t it? I certainly thought that all [Pg 120] three of us would have to be fitted out entirely again. I am very, very glad that we were so fortunate,” answered Aunt Betty.

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Alfy. “Oh, dear, just see! Isn’t it too bad that I didn’t stay home and pack instead of going to church with Jim last night. All I have in my trunk is the two white dresses you made me at Bellevieu before we started on the trip, and my raincoat. Oh! Oh! Oh! And I forgot all about it. I intended to show it to you right away as soon as I reached Bellevieu. I begged Ma Babcock so for it, and then to think I clean forgot it! Ah, she will be so disappointed to know I forgot it.”

“Why, Alfy child,” remonstrated Aunt Betty. “What are you talking about? There now, calm yourself and tell me.”

“It’s this,” replied Alfy, holding up a piece of linen about a foot square, “this sampler. I found it in an old box in the closet of the spare room Ma had fixed up in the barn, when I was searching for my raincoat just before I left home. Ma said a school friend, a little Baltimore girl who was ‘up Mounting’ summering, and who fell ill and stayed all winter and went to school with Ma, made it for her.” And Alfy handed the square of linen to Mrs. [Pg 121] Calvert. Aunt Betty took it up and carefully examined it while Dorothy looked over her shoulder and tried to see it too.

“Why,” exclaimed Mrs. Calvert, “this is beautiful work! Just beautiful! And what is the name? Dorothy dear, will you see if you can find my glasses? I put them in my work bag, which I put in the tray of the trunk. Yes, way down in the right hand corner.”

Dorothy crossed over to the trunk and immediately found the desired bag, and opening it took out the glasses. “Here they are, Aunt Betty,” she said, handing them to her.

Aunt Betty put the glasses on and proceeded carefully to examine the sampler.

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “I have it now! The name is in this corner, and as far as I can make it out is ‘Hannah.’ ‘Hannah’ something. ‘Morrow.’ Maybe that’s it.”

“Let me see,” interrupted Dorothy, “maybe I can make it out. I think the first letter is ‘W,’ not ‘M,’” and turning to Alfy, “what did Ma Babcock say about the name?”

“Ma said that it was Hannah somebody, and that she was a poor sickly girl. She lived in [Pg 122] Baltimore and married a man who did not treat her well, and died shortly after. I forget what she said her last name was. But she said she married a man whose name was ‘Halley’ or ‘Haley,’” answered Alfy.

“Oh, Aunt Betty, I have it!” exclaimed Dorothy joyously. “I have it! It’s ‘Woodrow,’ ‘W-o-o-d-r-o-w, Woodrow.’”

“Yes, that’s it. I recollect, now, ma saying, ‘Hannah Woodrow,’” chimed in Alfy.

“I wonder,” said Aunt Betty, slowly, for she had been thinking, “I wonder if it could be? You see, little Lem, Lem Haley, had no mother or father, and just lived with his uncle, who abused him terribly. It was he we found that night in the forest when we were camping. Do you think it could be possible that this sampler was made by his mother? Poor, unfortunate woman.”

“Maybe we have some clue to work on now,” said Dorothy. “Wouldn’t it be odd if it was his mother who made this sampler? She could sew well if it was, for there are many hard and difficult stitches in that.”

“And,” added Alfy, “Ma said she was a rich girl; her folks had lots of money, ’cause she dressed so nicely. And they paid Grandma Brown good board, so ma said.” [Pg 123]

“May I have the sampler, Alfy?” asked Mrs. Calvert.

“Yes, indeed,” answered Alfy. “Ma Babcock said for me to give it to you, as maybe you would be interested in it.”

“I am going to take it to my lawyer and see what he says about it. You say you think that Mrs. Haley, or Hannah Woodrow, is dead?” added Aunt Betty.

“Yes, ma said that she had not heard from her in so long that she was sure that the poor unfortunate lady was dead,” answered Alfaretta.

“I have felt all along that there was some dreadful catastrophe or mystery about little Lem. His uncle was such a hard, cruel man, and little Lem knew very little or nothing about his early life or parents. All that he knew was that he was bound out to this harsh and cruel man whom he called uncle, and made to work very hard, too hard, indeed, for a child, for his board,” remarked Aunt Betty.

“I do hope we can find out something about his people. He is such a good boy, and now he goes to school and he is such an apt pupil,” added Dorothy. [Pg 124]

“Come now, we must dress and arrange our things and see what we need. You girls please dress as quickly as possible and each make out a list of what you have lost. In that way I can tell at a glance what is needed, and we can go shopping this afternoon. I will also send Jim to my lawyer with a note, and this sampler,” remarked Aunt Betty. And they all hurried away to dress.

Aunt Betty, finishing first, rang for Jim. Jim came to her and she said, “Jim, here is a sampler that Ma Babcock had and let Alfy bring to me. It was made by a girl named Hannah Woodrow, who married a man named Haley, who was cruel to her. It is supposed that the unfortunate woman died. The girl was a Baltimore girl who spent a year with Mrs. Babcock’s mother and attended school with Ma Babcock. She is thought to have been rich. I wonder if in any way she could have been related to little Lem Haley. We must try to trace up all facts and get to the bottom of things. I have written a letter, and I thought you would not mind taking it and the sampler to my lawyer.”

“Where is it?” asked Jim. “I will go gladly.”

“You go to Mr. Van Zandt, at 115 Broadway,” replied Mrs. Calvert. “Give him the package and the letter and tell him I am going out of town to-morrow at noon to Washington, and that I will send him a complete route list later on as soon as all our plans are made.” [Pg 125]

“All right,” answered Jim, taking the package and putting the letter into his coat pocket. “I will not be back directly, if that makes no difference to you. I have a little shopping I should like to do this afternoon.” So saying, Jim left on his errand.

At Mrs. Calvert’s suggestion the girls began making out a list of things that were missing so that they could replace them that afternoon if possible.

Suddenly Dorothy rushed into the room where Aunt Betty was quietly seated reading and trying to collect her nerves that she said had been shattered by the experiences of the night before.

“Aunt Betty, dear Aunt Betty, I can’t find my locket!” she cried. “Alfy and I have hunted all over. We searched everything before we came to you with the news. We didn’t want to bother you till we were sure that we hadn’t merely mislaid it.”

“Are you sure, dear, you have looked all over everything you have?” questioned Aunt Betty. [Pg 126]

“Yes, and there is no trace of it anywhere,” replied the girl. “And it’s the only locket I have and has the pictures of mother and father in it. The only pictures we have of them.”

“Well, dear, don’t let’s give up hope yet. Let me go with you and look,” answered her aunt.

“Dear Aunt Betty, I am sure it isn’t in there. I always wear it. You know I do. Ever since you gave it to me it has been my most cherished possession,” bewailed Dorothy.

“No, it isn’t anywhere in there,” said Alfy, decidedly, walking into the room at that moment. “I, myself, have searched everywhere, and you know how thorough I am, Mrs. Calvert.”

“Maybe it’s upstairs in our old rooms,” suggested Aunt Betty. “They might have mislaid it.”

“I will ring for a maid and then Alfy and I will go up with her and look,” answered Dorothy, immediately acting on the suggestion.

“It must be up there, dear, as everything else came down safely, and all my jewelry is intact,” added Mrs. Calvert.

“I do hope it is. It has given me such a scare,” rejoined Alfy. [Pg 127]

“Come along, Alfy; we are going up now,” said Dorothy, as the maid appeared in answer to her summons.

“We’ll be right down, Aunt Betty.” And with that the girls departed.

In a few moments they came back, and by just glancing at them Aunt Betty knew that the quest had failed.

“No, it is nowhere there,” said Dorothy sadly, “nowhere there.”

“Ring for the manager, dear, and I will see him and see what he suggests doing. The locket is of no value to anyone else. Its main value is in the pictures. I am very sorry I have no other copy of them. I have a picture of your father when he was younger, a mere boy at our Baltimore home, Bellevieu, but I never had another picture of your mother, dear,” said Aunt Betty.

The manager came now in response to their call, and Aunt Betty told him of the loss of the locket, and wherein its value lay. He was very sorry indeed to hear of the loss, but felt hopeful that he could restore the locket to them in the course of an hour or two.

Dorothy turned to Aunt Betty as the manager left the room, and flung herself weeping into her lap. [Pg 128]

“Dear, dear child,” soothed Aunt Betty, “don’t be foolish, dear. There are still hopes of its being found.”

“But they are the only pictures I ever had of them,” bemoaned the little girl. The dear old lady took the young girl in her arms and comforted her with hopeful suggestion and loving words of encouragement.

CHAPTER XI. [Pg 129]

THE TOUR BEGINS.

On his way downtown, Jim paused in front of Lebolt’s on Fifth avenue, one of New York’s biggest jewelry houses. The windows were full of attractive pieces of jewelry. One thing in particular caught his eye, a little pendant of gold and pearls. He thought at once of Dorothy and wanted very much to give her something—something nice because of the previous day’s happenings—something that would help her to remember him very often—a little token of his regard.

He went inside and inquired of a clerk where he could see pendants, and was directed to a near counter. He was shown many, and after having quite a hard time choosing which he liked best at a price he could afford to pay he finally decided on a little bunch of grapes formed of a cluster of pearls, with the leaves and vine of gold hung on a slender chain—altogether a very dainty and appropriate gift. And he left the store thinking of how he would present this to Dorothy, for he wanted no one to know of his reasons for giving it to her but himself—and she. [Pg 130]

Taking a car he soon came to the vicinity of the lawyer’s office and looking over the bulletin at the entrance he located a sign with his name upon it. On reaching a small outer office he asked of a pleasant faced girl sitting there, “Can I see Mr. Van Zandt? I have a package and letter to deliver to him personally.”

“Mr. Van Zandt,” answered the girl, “is just now very busy. He is conferring with another

lawyer, and I cannot disturb him, as he left word that on no account and for no one should I bother him. He will not be much longer, and if you would care to wait for a half hour, I am sure that you could see him then."

"I will wait," said Jim in reply. The girl then showed him into a little library off to one side of the office where there were some easy chairs. Picking out one that looked particularly comfortable to him he took up a magazine from the well laden table, and seating himself started to read.

After waiting half an hour or more, he was finally admitted into a room wherein sat Mr. Van Zandt, at a desk strewn entirely with legal papers.

"Mr. Van Zandt, I am from Mrs. Calvert. She sent me here with a letter and package for you," said Jim. [Pg 131]

"Most opportune, most opportune," answered Mr. Van Zandt, gravely, taking the letter and package from Jim.

"Excuse me, young man, excuse me, while I see what Mrs. Calvert has to say," he added, breaking the seal of Aunt Betty's letter and slowly reading its contents. "Ah! So you are the Jim she speaks of in the letter, and says I may question concerning these matters?"

"Yes, indeed," responded Jim. "Is there anything you would like to ask me?"

"No. Not that I just think of now. But I have a little story to tell you. Listen carefully and see if you can repeat the same to Mrs. Calvert, when you see her later this afternoon," replied Mr. Van Zandt. "This was told me by a fellow colleague, the man you no doubt saw leave this office as you entered it. Strange how things come about. Long years ago there was an English family named Winchester, a father and mother and six children, four of them girls and two boys. The parents were very strict with their children, and one boy, the oldest, ran away from home, and was never heard of by the old people again. The youngest girl had a very pretty love affair, but because her parents disapproved, and I believe they would have disapproved of a saint from heaven if he wished to marry their child Marrie, she took the vows and became a sister. Two died very young, and the other two daughters lived to be old maids, and in time all died. [Pg 132]

"The runaway son married, so much we have learned, and had one very beautiful daughter, who after, mother fashion, also ran away and married. The daughter's name was Dorothy Winchester. The man she married was a Calvert. These two died early deaths, leaving behind, so 'tis said, a little daughter named after the mother, Dorothy Winchester Calvert."

"Our Dorothy," whispered Jim.

"Now, it seems to me that Mrs. Calvert was sister-in-law to the Calvert that married the beautiful Dorothy Winchester. And from what I know, Dorothy Calvert, Mrs. Calvert's ward, is the child of the former two. But as a large estate, consisting of much property in England and a great deal of money, is left to the heir or heirs of this Dorothy Winchester, we shall have to have legal proof that this girl is the right child. And when the right proof is found, my colleague will turn over to me the various papers and deeds to the estate. And after proving herself the legal heir of this estate, Miss Calvert may have to take a trip to England to see the London solicitors and straighten matters out there. They have been working on this estate for many years now, and finally, but only recently traced the son to America. That is how things have come to this point now. Will you tell Mrs. Calvert and Dorothy that I would like to see them at their earliest convenience, bringing letters, pictures and any other form of proof they may have with them?" [Pg 133]

"I will tell them that, sir."

"Very well. Good afternoon, young man, good afternoon," and Mr. Van Zandt closed the interview.

Jim, after leaving Mr. Van Zandt, hurried back to the hotel, all the time thinking of the wonderful story he had to tell to Dorothy. He also wondered just how things would stand between them if Dorothy became a great English heiress. On reaching the hotel he went straight up to the girl's rooms and there found Dorothy weeping in Aunt Betty's lap.

"I have such good news, such wonderful news," cried Jim. "I can't wait to tell you. Why, Dorothy, what has happened? Tell me," he added, catching sight of Dorothy at her aunt's feet, her face in her lap. [Pg 134]

Just then Dorothy smiled up at him and said, "Nothing. I was just a little foolish. Go on and tell us all your wonderful news. I would rather hear good news than tell sad, any day."

"I have just come from your lawyer's, Mr. Van Zandt's, where I heard a most wonderful

story. I gave him the letter and package. He read the former, and said he would give the matter attention. I had to wait for over a half hour. He was conferring with a colleague," continued Jim.

"Oh, do hurry and get to the real story part," said the ever impatient Alfaretta.

"Be still, Alfy. How can Jim tell us while you are talking?" commanded Dorothy.

"To go on where I left off," continued Jim, "Mr. Van Zandt said that his colleague told him a story which he would tell me and which I was to repeat to you.

"It seems that many years ago a family named Winchester had a large estate and plenty of money in England. They had children, and one, the eldest, ran away, came to America and [Pg 135] married. He had a little daughter who grew up to be very beautiful. Her name was Dorothy Winchester."

At this point in the story, Aunt Betty heaved a great sigh, and grew quite pale.

"The beautiful young girl ran off with a handsome young man whose name was Calvert. And, Mrs. Calvert, the lawyer thought that to be your brother-in-law. The young couple suffered early deaths, leaving a child, a girl named after the mother, Dorothy Winchester Calvert. That, dear, is you," and Jim paused to see the effect of his words.

Dorothy had risen, and coming to him, placed her hands in his and said, "Is this all true or just a joke?" looking eagerly in his eyes for the answer.

"Yes," answered Jim, with an attempt at gaiety, "yes, all true."

"Then do I understand that all Dorothy has to do is to prove she is Dorothy Winchester Calvert and she will come into this inheritance?" said Aunt Betty.

"Yes. Mr. Van Zandt said for me to tell you that he would like to see you and Dorothy as early as possible in the morning, and for you to bring with you any proofs, such as letters, [Pg 136] pictures, etc., which you have handy in your possession," instructed Jim.

The word pictures immediately recalled to Dorothy her late misfortune, and she turned to Aunt Betty, saying, "Dear Aunt Betty, there is all my proof gone—the pictures in that locket. They would have been just what was needed, and now the locket is gone."

"Why has the locket gone?" questioned Jim.

"That is the sad news we had to tell you when you came in with the good news," said Mrs. Calvert. "Dorothy has either mislaid or someone has stolen her locket, the one I gave her with the pictures of her father and mother in it."

"There," interrupted Alfy. "There is someone knocking. Maybe it is the manager returning with the locket. It's an hour since he said that he would have it back to Dorothy in that time."

The manager entered and came over to Mrs. Calvert's chair, and said, "I am very sorry, madam, but I have not been able to recover mademoiselle's trinket. It is nowhere to be found. I have had three maids searched, three of them, who readily admitted going into the suite upstairs. The maids were very angry, and threatened to leave my employ. Nothing [Pg 137] could be found. We have found no trace of it at all. All we can do, madam, is to hope. I will get a detective and have him try to locate the thief. Is it of great value?"

"Just now we have had news that makes the locket of precious value. An estate, a large inheritance, hangs upon its recovery, as therein lies the only proof we have, or, I should say, did have," answered Mrs. Calvert.

"We will do all we can," continued the manager, "and make every effort to restore the locket as quickly as possible." He then departed, and prepared to have the lost article traced without any delay.

"I have my list of clothes and things that are missing and will have to be replaced all made out," said Alfy to Mrs. Calvert.

"Very good," answered Aunt Betty. "Come into your room and I will look over your things and verify the list and see if you need anything else beside what you have written down." Alfy and Aunt Betty went off to see about the outlay necessary to replace the loss Alfy sustained from the fire.

No sooner had they gone than Jim came over to Dorothy, looked into her eyes and said, [Pg 138] "Girl, will this—this estate, make any difference—if the large fortune comes to you? I was so glad to hear the news, and be the one to tell you of it while I was there with Mr. Van Zandt,

but somehow on my way back to the hotel I became sorry, sorry because it will mean that you will be a great English heiress, and I—I—”

“You, Jim? You will always be my great big Jim,” said Dorothy, with a sweet, sincere smile. “But isn’t it too bad that the locket just disappeared when we needed it? And, fortune or no fortune, it’s the only picture I had of my own mother.”

“Girl,” said Jim, softly, taking the small purple velvet box out of his vest pocket, “I brought you this. It’s only a little remembrance of what has gone between us. Just a little token of my eternal regard for you. I wish it could have been more.” And he placed the little jewel box in Dorothy’s hands. He watched her carefully, noting the pleasure in her face when she opened the box and saw the dainty pendant encased in the white satin. Carefully she drew it out.

“Oh, what a beauty!” exclaimed the girl. “Jim, dear, you are so good and thoughtful. It’s just as good and dainty as it can be, and far too good for me.” [Pg 139]

“Let me clasp it around your neck for you,” he replied. “I am glad you like it.”

But when he had his arms around the girl’s neck, clasping the slender chain in place, Jim could not resist the temptation of drawing her close to him. She did not resist, so he held her closer for a moment in a fond embrace, and then raising her head, their lips met in a loving kiss.

“My little girl,” murmured Jim. “My dear little girl.” Then releasing her he said, “I chose this pendant because I knew you would not accept a ring.” Dorothy shook her head, but made no audible response.

“Not until you have had plenty of time to know your own mind, but that you should have by the time you have returned from your trip. Then, Dorothy girl, you will give me my answer?”

“Perhaps, Jim,” whispered Dorothy. “Perhaps then I will.”

“Can’t we keep the reason, the real reason, secret. We can have this one secret from everyone else, can’t we? Tell them all it is a little parting gift from me. Then when you come back, girl, you can tell them, if you decide to—if you can love me enough. Until then it’s our secret,” said Jim. [Pg 140]

“I must go show it to Aunt Betty and Alfy. It’s such a beautiful pendant I want everyone to see it,” said Dorothy. “And I must get my things collected, for you see I have a lot to do. I wonder if I can prove anything without the locket.”

“Maybe they will accept Aunt Betty’s word for things. But the hard part of it all is that you go away to-morrow for such a long trip,” said Jim. “And, Dorothy, how I shall miss you! I won’t know what to do without you.”

“Yes, you will,” responded Dorothy. “You will have to work and work very hard at your new position.”

“Yes, indeed I will,” laughed Jim, “very hard indeed. If I want to get married soon, I shall have to economize and save all I can.”

“Foolish boy,” said Dorothy. “Good-bye; I am going to leave you here all, all alone,” and she ran over to Jim, put her hands in his and looked up at him, saying, “You are a dear, good boy, and I shall prize my pendant highly, and wear it always, and when I do think of you.”

“That’s all I could ask,” answered Jim. “And, girl, please do take care of yourself and be careful all through this trip. I regret so much that I can’t be along with you.” [Pg 141]

“Dorothy! Dorothy!” called Aunt Betty, from the girl’s room.

“Yes, Aunt Betty, I am coming,” answered Dorothy. As she left the room she threw a kiss with her dainty finger tips to Jim.

That afternoon was spent in ordering things they all needed, and as time saving and convenient much was done by telephone. Then in trying on various things as they came all wrapped up in attractive bundles from the stores.

Aunt Betty bought Alfy a complete new outfit, as her things were entirely ruined, and she was more than delighted with each new article. There was a plain gray suit, and one just like it for Dorothy. Alfy insisted that they would be mistaken for twins in them. And Aunt Betty ordered as a surprise to the girl a plain grey felt outing hat, which was to come in the morning.

Dorothy had a few new shirt waists and a couple of pairs of slippers; also two new gowns, one pale yellow chiffon trimmed with a little gold lace; the other a very pale shell pink crepe de chine and shadow lace. These were for her to use on the stage, and at any private affairs that might come up. [Pg 142]

Alfy was very much pleased with a pale blue evening dress, as she had never had one before in all her life. This pretty little party dress was very simple, being made of pale blue chiffon over a shell pink satin slip, and the only trimming it had was one large rose of pink shade, catching the skirt in a dainty fold, and a few dainty pink rose buds edging the neck and sleeves.

When she tried it on she ran carefully to Dorothy and exclaimed, “Dorothy, dear, just see my new dress! Isn’t it wonderful? Do you like it? Do you think it is becoming? And look at these!” and she held up a new pair of pink satin slippers, and gloves to match.

Dorothy laughed gayly, saying, “Dear, dear Alfy, they are beautiful things, and I have never seen you look quite so fine before.”

“I must show Jim,” she answered. And off she went to the next room, where Jim sat thinking and dreaming. “What do you think of me?” she asked him.

Jim looked up, saw Alfy, and said, “You look like a very fine young lady who has just stepped out of a picture.” And he made a mental note of the fact that the girl had no ornament about her neck, and made a resolution to get up early and go out the next morning and buy Alfy a string of coral beads that he thought were just needed to finish her costume. These he would give Alfy for her parting gift. [Pg 143]

The next morning Jim carried out his purpose and bought the string of corals, pale pink, graduated beads, a string just long enough to go around the girl’s neck. And for Mrs. Calvert he bought a set of collar and belt pins to match in heavy dull gold.

These two gifts he labeled and sent up to them. He was busy that morning moving his possessions to Mrs. Quarren’s so that he would be all ready to occupy his room there that evening. He was to meet Dorothy and the rest of her party at the Pennsylvania station at noon time.

Mrs. Calvert, Dorothy and Alfaretta, as early as possible, went down to the lawyer’s office.

“Mr. Van Zandt will receive you in his room right away. He expected you,” said the pleasant faced girl, as Aunt Betty and the two girls walked into the office.

“Mr. Van Zandt, this is my ward and niece, Miss Dorothy Winchester Calvert and her friend, Miss Alfaretta Babcock,” said Aunt Betty, introducing the two girls. [Pg 144]

“So you are the fortunate Miss Dorothy Winchester Calvert,” the lawyer gravely said. “Let me see, little miss, how about the proof I must have? Proof is what is needed now. My colleague has to be satisfied. So do the London solicitors.”

“Until yesterday, Mr. Van Zandt, Dorothy always wore a locket around her neck in which were her mother’s and father’s pictures. We were unfortunately caught in a hotel fire, and some of our things were destroyed. This locket has been missing since the fire. The hotel people have since then done their utmost to trace the missing article, whose value now is priceless, and nothing has been seen of it. Detectives are now working on the case.”

“Most unfortunate—most unfortunate,” commented Mr. Van Zandt. “Have you no other proof?”

“There is my word, some old letters, and a picture of Dorothy’s father taken when he was quite young, which I have at Bellevieu. I will send for them and have Jim bring them to you. In the meantime, he has promised to attend to the tracing of the locket, and will report to you about it,” answered Aunt Betty. [Pg 145]

“I will let you know, too, Mrs. Calvert, how my colleague takes this news, and,” added the lawyer, “I would like you and Miss Dorothy to sign a number of papers, and Miss Babcock can sign as a witness for Miss Dorothy.”

Before long they had all affixed their signatures to quite a number of important looking papers. Alfaretta felt very consequential and trembled visibly.

This did not take long, and, bidding Mr. Van Zandt good-bye, they were soon hastening to the Pennsylvania depot, to await the coming of Jim, and the others of the troupe who were to travel with them.

Dorothy hoped that Mr. Ludlow would not forget their private car, as she was anxious to

see it. Aunt Betty was to have charge of it, Ruth, Alfy, and Dorothy being in her care for the entire trip.

Alfy was slowly counting the minutes off. She wanted to thank Jim, as she thought more of the little string of corals than anything else in the world just then. They had pleased her beyond words. Dorothy was glad, too, because in giving Alfy the string of corals and Aunt [Pg 146] Betty the pins it detracted from the strangeness of his giving such a lovely present to her. Aunt Betty and Alfy were both hearty in praise of Dorothy's new ornament, and commented on Jim's taste in selecting it.

At the Pennsylvania station they found Jim waiting.

"What did Mr. Van Zandt say?" he questioned, coming to meet them. "I have tended to your trunks, and put them and your suit cases in your private car. Mr. Ludlow and his gathering party are over in the other side of the station, and I will take you over to them in a few minutes."

"We can't very well prove Dorothy's identity without that locket. It is most necessary for Mr. Van Zandt to have it. I told him," informed Mrs. Calvert, "that you would keep track of the search, and bring it to him immediately it is found. Also, Jim, I must write to Bellevieu and have some things, a picture of Mr. Calvert and one or two letters I have there, forwarded to you. Will you see that they are placed in Mr. Van Zandt's hands safely? We had to sign a great many papers. The trouble is in convincing Mr. Van Zandt's colleague and the London solicitors who have the property in their hands." [Pg 147]

"I will certainly do my level best," answered Jim, "to get the locket back, and will let you know of everything that comes up."

Then they all walked slowly across the immense waiting room of the station, and in a far secluded corner found Mr. Ludlow and Ruth, among a group of chattering people, some old, some young, and Dorothy wondered just who belonged to the company and who did not.

Mr. Ludlow came forward. With him was a tall, dark young man. "Mrs. Calvert," said he, "let me introduce Mr. Dauntrey. Mr. Dauntrey is our treasurer. This is Miss Dorothy Calvert, of whom you have often heard me speak, and her friend, Miss Babcock. Mr. Dauntrey, ladies."

"I am sure I am very pleased to meet you all, and I am sure we shall all be firm friends before long," said Mr. Dauntrey, pleasantly, his eyes lingering longer on Dorothy than any of the rest.

Just then Ruth rushed up to Dorothy and exclaimed, "Dear, dear Dorothy, I have been hearing wonderful tales about you—about how you saved your precious violin from the fire, and then were gallantly rescued by Jim, our new hero. Oh, tell me all about it! I am dying to [Pg 148] hear it all from you! It must have been very thrilling. Oh, why is it I never get into any such wonderful adventures?"

"I will tell you what little there is to tell when we get started on our trip. We shall have lots of time on the train," answered the girl.

"Yes, indeed," said Ruth, "and I shall see that you do not forget your promise. Come over here and let me introduce you to some of the members of our company. I sing. You play the violin. That blonde lady over there, Miss Mary Robbia, has a wonderful contralto voice. The little girl over there, Florence Winter, is a dancer. She does all kinds of classical dances and is considered very wonderful. And Mr. Carlton is the pianist. He is the man standing over there talking to the lady in black."

Dorothy looked at each person as Ruth pointed them out, and felt that she would enjoy her trip very much, for they all looked like nice, congenial people. Mr. Ludlow came up to her then and presented Mrs. Calvert, Dorothy and Alfy to all the members of the company, each in turn, Miss Robbia, Miss Winter and Mr. Carlton.

They then all said good-bye to all their friends and relatives who had come to see them off, [Pg 149] and hastened to board their car, which was to start in a few minutes.

"Good-bye, my little girl," whispered Jim, kissing a stray lock of Dorothy's hair as he swung off the car.

The car gave one jerk and then started out. The girls waved good-bye from the car windows till they could no longer see the ones they were leaving behind.

It would take the remainder of the afternoon to reach Washington, and there they were to meet one or two more members of the company, and to learn of the final plans for the whole trip.

CHAPTER XII. [Pg 150]

IN WASHINGTON.

The train ride passed quickly enough, and just gave Aunt Betty time for a rest. Between intervals of reading, Dorothy told Ruth of all the previous day's happenings, and before they knew it they had arrived in Washington.

Mr. Dauntrey came to Dorothy and volunteered to take care of their baggage. Aunt Betty had packed the suit cases for all three of them, so she gave him these, saying, "If you will have these in the hotel bus, Mr. Dauntrey, I will be obliged. We shall not get our trunk up to the hotel till late this evening, I heard Mr. Ludlow say."

"What hotel do we stop at, Mr. Dauntrey?" inquired Ruth.

"At the Willard, Miss Boothington," he answered, politely adding, "I will come back for your suit cases and tend to you in just a few seconds if you will wait in the car for me."

"Thank you," the girl answered, going back into the car to gather her things together. [Pg 151] "There, that is all, I guess, a bag, a hat box and one suit case. I can manage to exist with that much for a few days."

"Come along. Just follow me," cried Mr. Ludlow, just loud enough for all to hear him. "This way. I want to get you all taken care of and over to the hotel as quickly as possible. I have made reservations and I hope everything will be ready at once for us."

"Come Ruth," sang out Dorothy, as she and Aunt Betty and Alfaretta made their way after Mr. Ludlow. "Come or you will be left behind."

"I promised I'd wait here for Mr. Dauntrey," answered Ruth. "He is coming back for me. My luggage is all here, and I can't manage it."

"Very well, we will wait for you in the stage," answered Dorothy, and linking her arm in Alfaretta's, followed close after Mrs. Calvert, who was walking just in front with Mr. Ludlow.

"There's Mr. Dauntrey," whispered Alfaretta. "He's with that little dancer, Miss Winters."

"So he is," whispered Dorothy, "I hope he has not forgotten Ruth. Mr. Ludlow usually attends to Ruth himself; I wonder why he has not thought of her?" [Pg 152]

"Maybe he is provoked at her," answered Alfy, very softly so as the couple just in front would not hear them. "He looked at her real cross like, at the Pennsylvania station to-day. She was standing, talking very earnestly with Mr. Dauntrey, and Mr. Ludlow called to her twice and she never heard him."

"Maybe that's why. But see, there he goes back. I guess he has gone after Ruth now," replied Dorothy.

"Here we are. Now all get in. We must hurry," announced Mr. Ludlow. "Are we all here? Let me see—Mrs. Calvert, Dorothy, Alfaretta, Miss Winters, Miss Robbia and Mr. Carleton," as the pianist came in sight carrying two suit cases, "but where is Ruth? Ruth and Mr. Dauntrey, where are they?"

"Mr. Dauntrey has just gone back after Ruth. She was gathering her luggage together as I left the car. Mr. Dauntrey said he would hurry back and get her if she would wait," answered Dorothy.

Just then Ruth and Mr. Dauntrey came in sight. The girl held his arm and was looking up into his face, chatting pleasantly, while in back a porter, very much laden down with Ruth's [Pg 153] belongings, trailed along after them.

The occupants of the bus caught just then a sentence spoken by a passing couple. "See the little bride and groom here on their honeymoon." At these words Mr. Ludlow frowned deeply and looked very cross indeed. He spoke not a word to Ruth as she was handed into the bus by Mr. Dauntrey, but quickly got in and shut the door behind him.

In a few minutes they had reached the hotel. Mr. Ludlow registered for the party and then the keys were supplied for the rooms assigned to them. Mrs. Calvert and the girls went quickly upstairs and dressed for dinner. The evening meal is always quite a function in Washington. The people for the most part dress in evening clothes. The hotels are almost always crowded with the government people, senators, representatives and officers of

various degrees.

Mrs. Calvert went down first and sent a card to Jim telling him of their safe arrival, then the girls joined her.

Mr. Ludlow had arranged for a dinner party. They found some of the company waiting in the lounging room. Soon they were all assembled and Mr. Ludlow and Mrs. Calvert led them into the brilliant dining room where they all had a very gay dinner. [Pg 154]

Mr. Ludlow suggested that they visit the Library of Congress, as the evening was a very favorable hour for such a visit. At that time the beautiful interior decorations were seen to great advantage under the brilliant illumination.

“Come, let us get our wraps,” said Mrs. Calvert. “The building closes about ten and there is much of interest to be seen there.”

“Very well,” answered Dorothy. “Do you want your black wrap? I will get it. You sit here.”

“Yes, dear. The black one,” answered Aunt Betty, seating herself and waiting for Dorothy to return.

“Come Alfy,” called Dorothy, and the girls quickly disappeared down the long, brilliantly lighted corridor which was crowded with guests. They were gone but a few moments and returned with their wraps securely fastened and carrying Aunt Betty’s.

“Let me help you into it,” said a cheery voice behind them. Turning, they saw, much to their surprise, Mr. Dauntrey.

“Come with me. I have already secured a taxi, and it will just hold four. The others can follow.” [Pg 155]

He took Mrs. Calvert’s arm and gallantly helped her into the taxicab, then Dorothy, and then Alfaretta, each with the same niceness of manner. He then quickly got in himself, taking the one vacant seat beside Dorothy. He closed the door and off they started.

The entrances to the library are in the front, facing the Capitol. A grand staircase leads up to the doorways of the central pavilion, giving access to the main floor. Up this staircase the quartette slowly climbed.

“Just look!” exclaimed Dorothy, when they had reached the top. “Just look around. See all the lights of the Capitol over there. Isn’t it all very beautiful?”

“And look down at the fountain!” cried Alfy. “See how the sea-creatures are blowing water from their mouths, and in the centre ‘Apollo.’”

“No, if I may correct you, that is Neptune,” said Mr. Dauntrey. “I have a guide book here. It is freely placed at your disposal, ladies.”

“I think every one that visits the Capitol should have a guide book,” said Aunt Betty. “It adds immeasurably to one’s pleasure. I have an old one at the hotel, and I have been looking it over. I read it through the last time I was here, not so many years ago. I do not recall the publisher’s name.” [Pg 156]

“The one I have here is Rand, McNally Company’s,” said Mr. Dauntrey.

“And so was mine, I remember now, and it was fine, too,” replied Aunt Betty.

“Although that is not Apollo,” said Mr. Dauntrey, “your mention of the name reminds me of a western politician who once visited here. He had great wealth, but little education, and when someone in his presence spoke of a statue of Apollo, he said, ‘Oh, yes, I have one on my parlor mantle. On one end I have Apollo, and on the other, Appolinaris.’”

“An amusing anecdote, and I don’t doubt a real one,” said Aunt Betty, laughing with the others, “but isn’t that a wonderful old fountain? See the beautiful effects produced by the water as it is thrown in cross lines from all those miniature turtles, sea serpents and what not, that are supposed to populate ocean and stream.”

They stepped up the last tread and entered a long corridor, stretching along the front and forming an exaggerated vestibule. They gazed between piers of Italian marble supporting arches, an entrancing vista. In heavy brackets they noted pairs of figures, advanced somewhat from the walls, “Minerva in War,” armed with sword and torch, and “Minerva in Peace,” equipped with scroll and globe. [Pg 157]

Before these, greatly admiring them, the girls stood, and Mrs. Calvert said, “Dorothy, those are the most admired ornaments in the whole building, but you can see them again as you

pass out. Come, let's go inside."

"Yes, if you enjoy great art, Miss Dorothy," spoke up Mr. Dauntrey, "I will be pleased to personally conduct you through the Art Museum. Art, too, is my one hobby. To be happy I must always have the beautiful, always the beautiful."

Passing on through the screen of arches, they entered the main hall, in the centre of which ran a magnificent stairway leading to the second floor and rotunda gallery.

"Oh!" gasped Alfaretta. "Isn't the floor lovely? All little colored marbles. I hate to step on it. What is that brass disk for?"

"Those little pieces of colored marbles are the essential materials for mosaic work, and the brass rayed disk is to show the points of the compass," said Mr. Dauntrey, kindly looking at [Pg 158] the girl with an amused expression.

"Look!" cried Dorothy, "over that way, way far back. See the carved figures?"

"Yes," answered Aunt Betty. "The one thing the arch typifies is study. The youth eager to learn and the aged man contemplating the fruits of knowledge. It is a very famous group. I have a postcard picture of it that a relative sent me and I always remembered and liked it."

"Here is something I always thought was interesting, on this side," said Mr. Dauntrey, leading them to the other side of the hall. "These two boys sitting beside the map of Africa and America. The one in the feathered head-dress and other accoutrements represents the original inhabitants of our country, the American Indian, the other, showing the lack of dress and the war equipment of the ignorant African. Then those two opposite, the one typifying the Mongolian tribes of Asia, the other in classic gown, surrounded by types of civilization indicating the pre-eminence of the Caucasian race in all things, such, for instance, as your chosen profession, music."

"That would be a good way to study geography," said Alfy. "Then you would hardly ever fail [Pg 159] if you had those interesting figures to look at."

Aunt Betty then called their attention to the ceiling which was elaborately ornamented with carvings and stucco work with symbols of arts and sciences. The southern walls were full of rare and beautiful paintings, the most striking of these being, "Lyric Poetry," painted by Walker. It represents Lyric Poetry in an encompassing forest, striking a lyre and surrounded by Pathos, Beauty, Truth, Devotion, and playful Mirth.

The east end of this hall which looks out on the reading rooms is reserved for Senators and members of the House of Representatives. It is decorated in subjects chosen from Greek mythology.

"Come in here," said Dorothy, entering the periodical or public reading room. "See here, any one, no matter where he is from, can find one of his home papers."

"Can any one stay here and read anything they want, and as long as they want?" inquired Alfy.

"Yes. It is free to anyone," answered Mrs. Calvert.

Next they passed into an exhibition hall, where in cases of glass made like a table they saw [Pg 160] a great number of rare and curious books representing the beginning time of printing and bookmaking. There were a great many early printed Bibles and specimens of famous special editions of Bibles. Some of them, so they learned, dated back to the fifteenth century and were of much value on account of their rarity. One table in this room especially interested Dorothy. It contained manuscripts, autographs and curious prints relating to the history of our United States.

The print room interested Alfy greatly. This room is devoted to an extensive exhibit of the art of making pictures mechanically. Here are a great series of prints illustrating the development of lithography, and the processes a lithograph goes through whether printed in one or in varied color. Also here are examples of every sort of engraving upon wood, copper and steel. About the walls hang examples of etchings and engravings.

They then entered the Rotunda Galleries. They paused for a moment to look at two paintings there, one of Joy and the other of Sadness.

"I like Joy the best by far," exclaimed Alfy. Joy, here, was represented by a light-haired, [Pg 161] cheerful woman, amid flowers and happy in the sunshine. She went nearer the picture and read out loud the beautiful words of Milton's famous "L'Allegro."

"Come thou goddess, fair and

free,
In Heaven ycleped Euphroysine,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth.

Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek."

"I learned most of that poem by heart when I went to school at Oak Knowe," said Dorothy.

"Indeed, and so did I," answered Mr. Dauntrey, "at school but not at Oak Knowe," he laughed. "But my favorite was the other poem, 'Il Penserose.'"

"The other picture represents that," said Mrs. Calvert.

"Listen while I recite to you the lines that inspired that picture," said Mr. Dauntrey, and in a wonderful voice he brought out each shade of meaning: [Pg 162]

"Hail, thou goddess, sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!

Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in their eyes,
There held in holy passion still
Forget thyself to marble...."

The stack rooms or apartments where the books are kept open out on each side of the rotunda. The cases rise way up to the roof and are filled with adjustable shelves. There are decks at intervals of every few feet from top to bottom by which the attendants reach the books.

Each of these stacks will hold eight hundred thousand books, and although they may be consulted by any one, very few are ever lost, for only members of Congress and about thirty other officials can take books out of the library.

"As there is a constant call for books of reference from the Capitol when legislators often want a volume for instant use, an underground tunnel has been made between the two buildings. This contains a cable carrier upon which books can be sent back and forth," explained Mr. Dauntrey. "But haven't you seen enough of the library now?" [Pg 163]

"There is Mr. Ludlow!" exclaimed Dorothy, "and I think he is calling us."

"Yes, let us go over to him," added Mrs. Calvert. "Come."

"Ah, here you all are," said Mr. Ludlow. "I called to you just now because there is one painting I would like to have you all see before you go upstairs to the restaurant."

"Is it here?" questioned Dorothy.

"No. You follow me and I will bring you to it in just a few seconds," answered Mr. Ludlow.

"Here we are. I want you all to follow this series of pictures."

"It is called the evolution of the book," added Mrs. Calvert.

The series begins with a picture representing the means that the prehistoric men took to commemorate an event singly—the creation of the cairn, nothing more nor less than the

piling up of stones. Then comes a picture illustrating oral tradition—an Arab story writer of the desert. The third represents an Egyptian carving hyroglyphics on a tomb. These are the forerunners and the next is picture writing, represented by an American Indian painting some tribal story or event. In lieu of paper he uses a skin. The fifth is shown by a figure of a monk sitting by the embrasure of his cell, laboriously decorating the pages of some sacred book of the Middle Ages. And finally, the initial attainment of modern methods is shown by a scene in the shop of Guttenburg, where the original printer is seen examining a proof sheet, while an employe looks over his shoulder, and another assistant has the lever of a crudely constructed press in hand. [Pg 164]

They all thought this series of pictures a beautiful one, and very interesting.

Dorothy commented, “If they had not discovered how to print and make books, I wonder if we would have had a library like this one here, filled with stones all covered with hyroglyphics?”

“I hardly think so,” answered Mr. Ludlow, “for we could never get so much stone in a building. But come now. We will go upstairs to the little restaurant and sit down and rest for a few minutes.” [Pg 165]

So taking the elevator they reached the restaurant which is located in the upper floor of the building, and finding a large table, they seated themselves.

They ordered ice cream for the girls, and the men took lemonade.

While refreshing themselves, Mr. Ludlow said, “I would like to see you all in the morning at ten o’clock. I will then disclose our plans to you for the next few weeks. Also, to-morrow, our number will be increased by three more singers who will join us here. They are Miss Dozzi and Mrs. Helmholz and Signor de Reinzzi.”

Every one said they would be on time in the morning, and started to go back to the hotel. On the way out from the library, Dorothy asked, “Mr. Ludlow, are all these pictures and pieces of statuary done by Italians and other foreigners?”

“No, indeed,” he answered. “The decorations are wholly the work of American architects, painters and sculptors, more than fifty of whom participated in the work. So that, you see, the library is an exhibit of the native art and ability of the citizens of the United States and a memorial to them.”

CHAPTER XIII. [Pg 166]

SIGHT-SEEING.

The next morning they all hurried to the private sitting room of Mr. Ludlow’s suite, where he had asked them to assemble.

“Aunt Betty and Alfy,” called Dorothy, “both of you must come too, so you can hear what Mr. Ludlow has to say, for you know you belong to the company, too.”

Ruth rushed up to Dorothy and whispered, “I think you were very mean, keeping Mr. Dauntrey all to yourself last night, and making me stay with Mr. Ludlow. He was so cross. I hope he is better natured to-day, or when we rehearse this afternoon we will all have trouble.”

“I didn’t take Mr. Dauntrey,” answered Dorothy in a very surprised tone of voice. “I didn’t seek his company. He just took us and put us in a taxicab and that’s all.”

“Sh!” whispered Ruth, “here he is now. Isn’t he a handsome man?”

“I don’t particularly care for his style. He is too effeminate looking. Come over here and sit down by Aunt Betty and I,” and Dorothy started to walk over to where the others sat. Ruth did not follow her, however, but remained just where she was. [Pg 167]

“And how is Miss Ruth, to-day?” inquired Mr. Dauntrey. “I am quite longing for our real work to start so I can hear you sing. I am sure it will be a great pleasure.”

Mr. Ludlow entered just then as Ruth looked up to Mr. Dauntrey, and murmured, “Ah, that was so nice of you to say.”

“Are you all here?” inquired Mr. Ludlow. “Let me take a little account of you.” Mentally he

ran over the small list of people. “All ready then. All sit down and make yourselves comfortable. I will only detain you a few minutes now. We are going to have a very important recital in the new National Theatre to-morrow night. I have a little typewritten letter for each of you. I will give these to Mr. Dauntrey and he will hand them to you.” Turning to Mr. Dauntrey he handed him a number of white envelopes, saying: “There now, don’t neglect to give each one the proper envelope.”

Turning once more to the rest of them, he continued, “If by any chance you don’t happen to like the instructions contained in those envelopes, report at once to Mr. Dauntrey and he will take up the matter with me, or refer you to me.” [Pg 168]

Mr. Ludlow had had many dealings with performers before, and he knew from experience that it was better to give instructions this way. It avoided open contentions which were likely when one artist thought he or she was slighted, and enabled each one to know exactly what they had to do, for there was no mistaking written orders.

“The new National Theatre,” continued Mr. Ludlow, “is on Pennsylvania avenue near Thirteenth street, and is of great capacity and comfort. I hope you will all do your best for I have written to the President, and have asked him to accept, as a token of our respect, a box for that night. I hope he honors us with his presence, and it may afford you all an opportunity to meet him personally. I expect this concert to be a big thing for us. This city is favorably disposed toward classical concerts, and Mr. Dauntrey has worked hard sending out special announcements for us.

“I expect each of you to do your very best and look your very best. Always look your best. Looks go a great way. If people see you enter the stage confidently and look nice—nice and neat, not gaudy, not cheap or overdressed, just good simple dresses, and not made in outlandish styles—their first impression is very apt to be a lasting one. There, I think that is enough of a lecture. I plan to go from here to Pittsburgh, and, with several stops, on to Chicago. From Chicago on to St. Louis, and from there with a half dozen stops, if we are successful, to San Francisco. Just what we will do then I can’t tell now. But I think that is enough to know now.” [Pg 169]

“But what hotels are we to stop in at those places, Mr. Ludlow?” inquired Miss Winters.

“I suppose all you fair ladies will want to have a list of the hotels in advance,” laughed Mr. Ludlow, “and you shall have duplicate route lists with dates, which you can send to your friends so you can have mail each morning. I may want you to give two concerts here in Washington, but I am not sure yet,” added Mr. Ludlow. “We also may have to run down to Mount Vernon and give a concert there, so I want you all to be ready to render something different than what you are to use to-morrow. You can each select your own piece. Is there anything now you want to ask me?” he said finally, turning so as to see them all. [Pg 170]

“Well,” he continued, “if there is nothing else we will adjourn till this afternoon when I have made appointments with some of you to come here alone so that I may have an idea of how you are doing. If you all would care to, I think it would be a good thing if we visited the Capitol now. You are privileged in each city to do as much sight-seeing as you can and care to without getting over tired.”

They were all appreciative of this courtesy, and thought that that would make their tour a very very pleasant one. Just as soon as Mr. Dauntrey had handed them their envelopes, they departed for their rooms to get hats and coats and be ready to start at once. Aunt Betty also had her guide book, and in a very short time they were all ready for a visit to the Capitol.

The Capitol building commands a central and slightly hilltop position. The grounds in front of the building are perfectly level, but in the rear slope downwards towards the Potomac flats. In the northwestern part of the park is an ivy-covered rest-house, one window of which looks into a grotto. [Pg 171]

Ruth thought this a pretty spot indeed, and exclaimed, “Oh, just see here, isn’t this a romantic spot? I could sit here for hours and dream.”

“Wouldn’t that be rather lonesome, Miss Ruth?” said Mr. Dauntrey to her, softly. “Wouldn’t you rather have someone else here with you?”

Ruth did not answer this question, but just gave him an adorable little glance.

“The ground immediately in front of the Capitol is the plaza,” said Mr. Ludlow. “Here vast crowds assemble to witness presidential inaugurations.”

Three flights of broad steps led up to the main entrance, an architecturally effective feature. The southern wing contains the House of Representatives and the northern one the Senate chamber.

“The central portico,” remarked Mrs. Calvert, “I would like to have you notice particularly. It dates back from 1825. The allegorical group cut in sandstone was designed by the President, John Quincy Adams.”

“What does it represent?” questioned Alfy.

“The group represents the genius of our beloved America,” answered Mrs. Calvert. [Pg 172]
“America is resting her shield upon an altar, while an eagle rests at her feet. She is listening to hope, and points in response to Justice.”

“I think you have told us a very good story of that piece, Mrs. Calvert, and as you are just as well, perhaps better acquainted with this place than I am, do you mind explaining the things occasionally, so as to help me out?” asked Mr. Ludlow.

“Why, it is a pleasure to me, I assure you,” answered Mrs. Calvert, gracefully. “You see I have been here often and I have my indispensable Rand, McNally guide book.”

“Right here where you are standing,” interrupted Mr. Dauntrey, for he wished them to understand that he had been to Washington before and knew something of the place, “is where all the presidents of the United States since the time of Jackson have been inaugurated, the chief justice adminstrating the oath of office here in full view of the onlookers.”

The large bronze doors were thrown back, and all entered the building itself. The entrance takes one immediately into the rotunda, which is of enormous size. The floor is of sandstone, the rotunda being nearly 100 feet in diameter, and almost twice that high. A [Pg 173]
balcony runs around it, and strangely interesting is the fact that this balcony has a very good whispering echo. The decoration of this huge place is confined mostly to the walls, but there are a few pieces of statuary on the floor.

The great wall space is given to historical pictures of considerable size, and all are familiar to everyone through their reproduction on postals, currency and postage stamps.

The whole party made a tour of the room with much interest, viewing the canvases.

“We might divide these pictures into two classes,” said Mr. Ludlow, “the early historical and revolutionary. The former are, I suspect, to a degree imaginative, but the latter are accurately true to the times and scenes they depict. In the first group are the following: ‘The Landing of Columbus at San Salvador in 1492,’ ‘The Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto in 1541,’ ‘The Baptism of Pocahontas at Jamestown in 1613,’ and, the last of this group, ‘The Farewell Service on Board the Speedwell.’ This shows an unseaworthy old port now called Lyden, Holland—for America, bearing the first colony of pilgrims who were [Pg 174]
finally landed on Plymouth Rock by the Mayflower.”

“Then,” Mrs. Calvert pointed out, “there follows the group of Revolutionary pictures. Beside each picture of this group is an outline key which gives the names of the people shown. The first is ‘The Signing of the Declaration of Independence’ in the old hall in Philadelphia in 1776. The second one is the ‘Surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga’ to General Gates. This picture was made from sketches made on the very spot by Colonel Trumbull, who was a close friend of Washington. He was present at the scene of the next picture also, ‘The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis.’ The British are seen marching between the lines of the Americans and their French allies.

“The fourth is the ‘Resignation of Washington’ as commander-in-chief of his well-tried army, always a rather pathetic scene, it seems to me.”

“How interesting. I could spend hours here, but suppose we must not.”

“Where next?” inquired Dorothy.

“We will go through this door and into what was the original Hall of Representatives, and is [Pg 175]
now the Statuary Hall,” answered Mrs. Calvert.

The room which they now entered was semi-circular in shape, and whose ceiling is half a dome beneath which is a spacious gallery now filled with a library.

“The House of Representatives used this hall quite generally for fifty years, from 1808 on,” said Mr. Ludlow. “Here Clay, Webster, Adams, Calhoun, Randolph, Cass, and many others won world-wide fame, and made the walls ring with their fiery eloquence. Here were many fierce and bitter wrangles over vexed questions, turbulent scenes, displays of sectional feelings. Too bad they had no talking machines in those days to deal out impassioned oratory for future generations.”

“What is that star set in the floor for?” inquired Ruth; whose interest in oratory of past ages

was limited.

“That marks the spot where John Quincy Adams, then a representative from his home, Massachusetts, was prostrated at his desk. See, the date is February 1, 1848,” read Dorothy.

“Where did all these statues come from?” questioned Alfaretta.

“Most of them were bought and placed here, and some of them, I think, were donated,” [Pg 176] answered Aunt Betty.

“This statuary hall,” continued Mr. Ludlow, “has great acoustic properties.”

“Shall we get a Capitol guide?” asked Mrs. Calvert. “They say they can amuse one greatly, for they know each place where these strange things can be heard.”

“Yes, I will go and find one. You stay here till I come back,” added Mr. Ludlow, turning to the others. In a few moments he was back, accompanied by a young man in uniform.

The guide showed them where they could hear curious echoes, whispers distinct at a distance, and the ability to hear slight sounds that are inaudible at your elbow. They all tried these experiments. Ruth took her place at one corner of the room and Dorothy in the other corner at the same side of the room. The guide told them that they could converse in a low tone, yet each heard distinctly what the other said.

Ruth started off by saying, “Dorothy, do you believe what this guide is telling us or do you think he is fooling us?”

Dorothy was greatly surprised when she found she could hear quite plainly what Ruth said, [Pg 177] and answered, “I am surprised to say I do.”

At this ambiguous answer they all laughed. Then, one by one, they tried the experiment, each finding how perfectly it worked out.

Leaving Statuary Hall by the door under the arch, they traversed the corridor to the present Hall of Representatives. It is an oblong room of liberal size. The ceiling is a framework of iron, bronzed and gilded, and inlaid with glass upon which the coats-of-arms of the States are painted. The light effect is beautiful; the colors are mellowed rather than obscured.

The Speaker’s raised desk is against the southern wall and below this are the marble desks of the official reporters. The latter keep a stenographic record of everything done or said, to be published the next morning so that those who are absent or pay little attention to what is going on may still keep posted on the progress of events. The sergeant-at-arms is within easy call. This latter officer is called the Speaker’s policeman—the representative of the physical force, and his symbol of authority is the mace, which reposes on a marble pedestal at the right of the speaker.

“The mace was adopted by the House in the first Congress,” explained Mr. Ludlow. “It has [Pg 178] been in use ever since.”

“How do they use it?” questioned Dorothy.

“When it is placed upon its pedestal,” he answered, “it signifies that the House is in session, and under the Speaker’s authority.”

“I suppose I ought to know, but who is the Speaker, and what does he do?” asked Alfaretta.

“The Speaker,” continued Mr. Ludlow, “is the head of the House, elected by vote of the members.”

“And I have a question,” said Ruth. “What is a mace?”

“In this case, the mace is a bundle of black rods fastened with transverse bands of silver. On its top is a silver globe, surmounted by a silver eagle,” answered Mr. Ludlow, “and when the sergeant-at-arms is executing the commands of the Speaker, he is required to bear aloft the mace in his hands, unlike the House of Parliament, where there is much form and ceremony, there is little else here than quiet dignity.”

Grouped in concentric semi-circles are the desks of the Representatives, all small, uniform and handsome.

“The Republican party all sit on the Speaker’s left and the Democrats on the right,” [Pg 179] volunteered Mr. Dauntrey.

“My, but there are a lot of seats,” said Alfy. “Who uses them?”

“In the galleries,” said Mr. Ludlow. “Those over the Speaker’s head are for the press. The others are for onlookers, some for diplomats, friends of the Congressmen, and some for ladies. They hold more than a thousand people, I think.”

Going downstairs they came to the House lobby. This apartment is richly furnished and contains many portraits, most of them being crayon drawings of the Speakers of the past. Passing through this room and out, one comes to the committee rooms in one of which is hung a notable collection of paintings of the principal forts of the United States.

From this corridor, the party descended the eastern grand staircase to a basement corridor which extends from end to end of the Capitol on this ground floor. This they traversed till they came to the Senate chamber. The white marble pillars in this at once attracted their attention.

Mr. Ludlow said, “I want you all to examine these marble pillars carefully and notice that though they are of Corinthian mold, their floriated capitals represent leaves of American plants, the one most used being the tobacco leaf.” [Pg 180]

Passing onward, to the right, they saw the old Supreme Court chamber, now used as a law library. All the corridors at this end are bright, and the walls and ceilings are very elaborately decorated with mural designs in the Italian manner, being daintily drawn and brightly colored. Among them are many portraits of early men of note, in medallions, and a long series of charming drawings in colors of American birds and flowers.

The vestibule of the Senate post office is particularly picturesque, having over the post office door a large painting of Fulton, indicating his first steamboat, “The Claremont,” passing the palisades of the Hudson.

A stairway leads on up to the main floor, where corridors completely extend around the Senate chamber, which occupies the center of its wing. Here the ceiling, in contrast with the one of the House, is flat, with broad panels of glass, painted with emblems of the army, the navy and the arts. The walls are of marble, paneled, the doors of choice mahogany, the carpet green, which sets off well the mahogany desks of quaint pattern. Each desk bears a silver plate with the occupant’s name engraved upon it. [Pg 181]

“Do the Republicans sit on the left of the Speaker here, and the Democrats on the right, as in the House?” questioned Alfaretta, very proud of herself for having remembered what had been told her in the other room.

“Yes, but there is no Speaker in the Senate,” answered Mr. Ludlow.

“Who is it, then, that uses that beautifully carved high backed chair on that little platform there?” asked Dorothy.

“The president of the Senate is the Vice-President of the United States,” said Mrs. Calvert, smiling and thinking that the girls ought to know more about these things, for they were shockingly lacking in knowledge of all the fundamental principles of the workings of the government.

“Who are all these statues of?” asked Alfaretta, pointing to the niches in the walls.

“These are statues of all the vice-presidents,” answered Mrs. Calvert again.

“Outside here are many interesting things that you will all like to see,” said Mr. Ludlow. “To the right here is the famous portrait of Washington, and opposite, one of John Adams.” [Pg 182]

“Is that Benjamin Franklin?” inquired Ruth, looking at a large marble statue at the foot of the eastern staircase, when they had passed through the door situated between the two portraits.

“Yes, and the picture on the wall of the stair landing is a very famous one. It is of Commander Perry at the battle of Lake Erie. Perry is seen transferring himself and his flag from his sinking flagship ‘Lawrence’ to the ‘Niagara,’ when he won that great victory. This transfer was made under fire. Perry’s younger brother, Matthew, then a midshipman, is depicted here as entreating his brother and commander not to expose himself too recklessly,” said Mr. Ludlow in the way of explaining this picture.

“And the faces of the sailors are drawn from once well-known employes about the Capitol,” added Aunt Betty. “My guide book tells me that.”

“This vestibule opens at its inner end into the Senate reception room. The one thing of interest in this room,” said Mr. Ludlow, when they had entered, “is the picture on the south wall. It is of Washington, in conference with Jefferson and Hamilton.” [Pg 183]

“Isn’t the room pretty! What luxurious chairs, soft sofas, beautiful rugs, and those cream colored curtains!” exclaimed Ruth.

“Whose room is this?” asked Dorothy, who was becoming tired, and, wanting to move on more rapidly, had gone ahead.

“This next room is the President’s room,” answered Aunt Betty. “It is the custom of the President to sit here during the last day of a Congressional session in order to be ready to sign bills requiring immediate attention. The portraits are those of Washington and his first cabinet members.”

From here they ascended to the gallery floor by way of the western grand staircase, at the foot of which stands the statue of John Hancock. In the wall of the landing is Walker’s painting, “The Storming of Chepultepec.” The scene is during the Mexican War, when it was captured by Scott’s army.

The rooms here in the gallery are numerous committee rooms not open to the public, so they all passed on down the corridor to the interesting rooms that contain Morau’s celebrated pictures of the canyons of the Colorado and of the Yellowstone, which were painted by actual study of the scenes. Those familiar with these marvelous regions of the country recognize that the coloring is by no means overly vivid, and that the drawings are most accurate and natural. [Pg 184]

In the adjoining hall is the painting of the encounter between the Monitor and the Merrimac. This picture is the only exception to the rule that no reminder of the Civil War should be placed in the Capitol; an exception due to the fact that this was in reality a drawn battle, where the courage of the contestants was conspicuously equal, and where the naval methods of old found their grave. Its historic interest is, therefore, world-wide.

“The bust, there, Dorothy,” said Aunty Betty, “is of John A. Dix, afterward a major general. It was he, who, when he was Secretary of the Treasury early in the uncivil war, sent to one of his special representatives in a Southern State the famous order containing the words, ‘If anyone attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot,’ which so thrilled patriotic hearts.”

“From here let us go to the Supreme Court,” said Mr. Ludlow. “That will finish our tour of the Capitol.” [Pg 185]

A small elevator took them down to the main floor, where they walked along the corridor, viewing the portraits of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry.

The Supreme Court of the United States now uses the chamber in the old Capitol which was originally designed for the Senate. The background is a row of columns of variegated gray Potomac marble, with white Ionic capitals. In the centre is the chair of the chief justice, behind which are draped crimson curtains surmounted by a hovering eagle. On the dias below is the long “bench” of the most august court in the land.

“One formal custom here will be of interest,” said Mr. Dauntrey. “On court days the justices enter the room in procession precisely at noon. They wear voluminous black silk gowns, and sit in a prescribed order with the chief justice, of course, in the centre.”

“There. I think we have made a very careful tour of the Capitol. I think we have missed nothing at all of importance,” said Mr. Ludlow. “But I guess by now, you are all tired and anxious to be back to the hotel.” [Pg 186]

“What time is it, I wonder?” said Dorothy to herself, and turning to Mr. Ludlow said, “Mr. Ludlow, I feel as if it were time for lunch.”

“Why, it’s one-thirty o’clock,” said Mr. Ludlow. “I am surprised that the time has gone so quickly, so let’s hurry back to the hotel, for we are already late.”

All were hungry and anxious to get back to their luncheon, but no one regretted a single moment spent in this most interesting place.

CHAPTER XIV. [Pg 187]

HIGH HONOR.

That afternoon Dorothy devoted to practice, giving special attention to the three pieces she was to play at the concert, two of which had been given place on the program. The third

was to be held in readiness in case she needed to respond to an encore. Aunt Betty and Alfy listened to her and expressed their approval. They were never limited in their praise of her work, which always seemed to them beyond criticism.

“Good-bye, for a while,” called Dorothy, at the end of a stanza. “I will only be gone a few minutes, I hope. Mr. Ludlow, in my letter of instructions, told me to come to him at four o’clock. I have to play over my selections to him so he can criticize them.”

Dorothy walked slowly down the hall and knocked on the sitting room door. In a moment, to her surprise, Mr. Dauntrey opened it.

“Good afternoon,” said he. “Now, I shall have the pleasure of listening to you play, I hope.” [Pg 188]

“Mr. Ludlow said that I was to come here at four o’clock. I think he wants me to play my selections over for him,” answered Dorothy.

“Yes, you are right,” said Mr. Ludlow, from his large easy rocking chair by the open window, which overlooked a court. “Yes. Stand over there and start in at once.”

Dorothy, thus enjoined, took up her violin and began playing. She finished her first piece without any interruptions on the part of Mr. Ludlow. She was about to start the second piece when he called to her to stop.

“Play the introduction to that piece again and a little louder, also a little firmer,” he ordered.

She did as she was told.

“That’s a little better,” he said, when she had finished. “But I should play the introduction still louder, so as to make a marked contrast when the melody proper starts in, by playing that very softly, like someone singing way off in the distance. And one more thing; in the last part, when you have that staccato melody, play that sharper. Now, try the piece all over again.”

Dorothy answered, “Yes,” and then played again, trying to do just as Mr. Ludlow asked her to, and when she finished she stood still, saying nothing, just waiting to hear what Mr. Ludlow would say. If she expected a word of praise she was to be disappointed. [Pg 189]

“Very well, try the next one,” was all Mr. Ludlow said.

So the girl once more took up her violin, and filled the room with melody. This time she played her piece, so she thought, very poorly, in part, because of Mr. Dauntrey. She seemed to feel his eyes on her, and it made her nervous.

“Very well,” said Mr. Ludlow, much to her surprise. “That will be all for this afternoon. And, Miss Dorothy, try not to get nervous or excited to-night. I expect you to do your very best.”

“I will try,” smiled back Dorothy. “Good afternoon.”

Just as she reached the door, she saw Ruth, who stepped back into the shadow of the hall.

Ruth questioned, “Is he cross? And is Mr. Dauntrey there?”

“Mr. Ludlow isn’t cross, but he’s very business-like. And Mr. Dauntrey is in there, and I wish he hadn’t been,” answered Dorothy.

“Oh, dear,” exclaimed Ruth, “I just know he will be so cross with me, for if Mr. Dauntrey is in there I just can’t sing. He thinks I am a wonderful singer, and I know that I’m not. Still, I hate to have him think that I can’t sing at all.” [Pg 190]

“You will do all right, dear,” comforted Dorothy. “Just think you are alone, and forget everything and everybody.”

“Very well,” answered Ruth, “and good-bye. I must go in and bear it,” saying which she walked up to the door and knocked.

Dorothy walked down the hall toward her own rooms, then she turned, took the elevator downstairs, and bought a postal, one showing a picture of the capitol. This she took to her writing desk, addressed it, and wrote just this, “Arrived safe. Visited the capitol this morning. Will write later. With love, Dorothy.”

She placed a stamp on it and mailed it, then hurried upstairs to her room again.

“I am rather tired,” she said to her aunt and Alfy, who were reading, “I think I shall rest a few minutes before I dress for dinner. We need to have dinner real early to-night, as we are expected to be at the National Theater at 7.30 p. m. Mr. Ludlow is to give us each a

program, then, and tell us of any last orders he may have for us."

"Shall I get your things all out and have everything all ready for you?" inquired Alfy. [Pg 191]

"Yes, please."

"What dress do you want to wear?" asked Alfy.

"I think you had better wear the pink one, dear," suggested Mrs. Calvert.

"Very well, the pink one, Alfy," called Dorothy.

"I will have all the things you need ready; shoes—I mean slippers, stockings, handkerchiefs, and gloves," called back Alfy, as by this time Dorothy had reached her room, and was preparing for her rest.

Both Mrs. Calvert and Alfaretta continued to read for quite some time, and finally when she thought it was time for Alfy to get dressed, Aunt Betty said:

"Alfy, I think you had better start to get dressed, now, and as you are to lay out Dorothy's things for her, I do not think you will have any too much time."

"Surely, Aunt Betty, I will begin at once. I was so interested in my book that I forgot my duties," answered Alfy, and she started into the next room and commenced getting [Pg 192] Dorothy's things ready first.

When she had finished this task, she walked back into the sitting room again and inquired, "Aunt Betty, I have finished getting Dorothy's things ready. Will you please now tell me what you would like to have me wear?"

"I think you might wear your little white dress, with the pretty blue sash and ribbon of the same color, for your hair," answered Mrs. Calvert. "And you might wear white shoes and stockings. We are merely going to be part of the audience, to-night, so I hardly think we need dress very much."

"All right," answered Alfy, cheerily, and started away again, humming a little tune under her breath. She was pleased to think she could wear her new white dress, with the pretty blue sash. And she thought she would ask Dorothy to tie the blue ribbon around her hair, as Dorothy always did such things so much daintier than she did. Still singing, she started to dress in earnest.

It wasn't long before Dorothy awoke from her nap, and soon the two girls were dressed and ready to help each other with the finishing touches. Together they made short and quick [Pg 193] work of this.

Mrs. Calvert looked up as they entered the room, and said, "Come here, and kiss me, dears. You both look very sweet; very pretty, indeed."

"Do you and Alfy want to be audience again, while I play over my pieces once more?" asked Dorothy. "I'm sure Mr. Ludlow didn't quite like the way I played one of them this afternoon."

"Of course we do," answered Aunt Betty. "We will each sit down and listen very attentively."

"I will play first the last piece on the program," announced Dorothy.

"Very well," said Mrs. Calvert, smiling encouragingly at the girl.

Dorothy gave careful attention to her work, and played one after the other of the three selections through, pausing long enough between each piece so that they might know she was about to begin the next. The one Mr. Ludlow had taken exception to and criticised, that afternoon, she played last, paying strict attention to the parts he had indicated as needing correction.

When she had finished, she laid down her violin, and came and stood in front of her aunt, questioning:

"Do you think I played them well enough? Did I do better than I did this afternoon before I [Pg 194] went in to see Mr. Ludlow, and did you notice the difference in the playing of the last piece?"

"My, what a lot of questions," said Aunt Betty, laughing. "Now, to answer them all: Yes, I do think you played much better just now than you did before. And I think Mr. Ludlow's corrections in that last piece improve it greatly. You see, he considers your work from the viewpoint of the audience."

“I am glad you like the correction. I think it is better by far, myself. But I just wanted to get your opinion on it before I was quite satisfied,” replied Dorothy. “I guess, to change the subject, that we are all ready for dinner, so let’s go down; maybe some of the others are ready also.”

They found that all of the party were already at dinner, so they joined them in a quiet meal. Each seemed imbued with the responsibility that rested on their shoulders.

Dorothy, leaving her aunt and Alfaretta to follow her to the theater, started early with Ruth and Mr. Ludlow.

On the way to the theater, Mr. Ludlow said, “Just one final word of instruction: Stand either a little to the right or a little to the left of the centre of the stage; never just in the centre. It looks better from the house side. And try not to get nervous. Mr. Dauntrey will give you each a program. And now, I think you are all right.” [Pg 195]

Mr. Dauntrey, joining them on their arrival, gave each a program. Dorothy noted that she was to be the third, and was quite pleased to find that she came in the first half of the program. She always liked to play and then go out and sit with her aunt and listen to the remainder of the recital. The programs were beautifully printed in gold and color, on a heavy white paper, on the cover of which was an eagle. The sheets were tied together with a red, white and blue ribbon. The contents read as follows:

PART I.

1. Songs—
   “Ave Maria” — Gounod
   “La Palonia” — Gradier
   Miss Mary Robbia.
2. Piano Solo—
   “Am Meer” — Schubert
   “Caprice Brilliant” — Leybach
   Mr. C. B. Carleton.
3. Violin Solo— [Pg 196]
   Adagio from “Moonlight Sonata” — Beethoven
   Meistersinger — Wagner
   Miss Dorothy Calvert.
4. Songs—
   “Chanson de Florian” — Godard
   “Ah, That We Two Were a-Maying” — Smith
   Miss Ruth Boothington.

PART II.

5. Classical Dances—
   “Hungarian Dance” — Brahms
   “Dance of the Sylphs” — Berlioz
   Miss Florence Winter.
6. Trio Songs—
   “The Psalms” — Faure
   “Serenade” — Schubert
   “Song of the Toreador” — Bizet
   “Lost Chord” — Sullivan

   Rendered by Trio: Miss Dozzi, Mrs. Helmholz, Signor de Peiuzzi.

“Are you going out in front to sit with your aunt and Alfaretta, after you have finished?” inquired Ruth, who was standing beside Dorothy.

“Yes, do you want to come out with me?” Dorothy asked. [Pg 197]

“Yes. If I may,” answered Ruth. “Will you wait here in the wings till I have finished singing, and then we can go out together. I come right after you on the program.”

“I am anxious to see Miss Winter’s dance,” said Dorothy.

“And so am I, and to hear that trio sing,” answered Ruth.

“Do you want to see the stage?” called Mr. Dauntrey. “Come now, if you do. Mr. Ludlow

wants you all to go and try it out; that is, I mean, practice making an entrance."

The girls walked over in the direction in which Mr. Dauntrey led.

"Oh!" exclaimed Ruth, when the vista of the stage came into view. "Isn't it pretty!"

"It is, indeed," acquiesced Dorothy.

The stage was a spacious one. To the right was placed the grand piano, around which palms were artistically arranged. In the centre, and way to the rear, as a background, hung a large American flag. On each side of the flag ran a regular column of palms. Little plants and flowers were on the stage in such profusion as to transform it into a veritable fairyland. [Pg 198]

"Wasn't that a nice idea to put the flag back there?" said Ruth.

"I think the stage decorations are very artistic, and I am sure with such surroundings, everyone should do their very best," said Mr. Dauntrey.

Just then they looked at the clock in the wings and saw that it was 8.15 p. m., the time announced to commence. They all walked off the stage and back into the wings.

As the curtain arose, Miss Robbia advanced to do her part.

Just then Dorothy heard Mr. Ludlow say, "I think the President is here."

"Oh, I hope he does come," answered Miss Ruth.

But Dorothy, as she went back to await her turn, was not quite so sure. It seemed a serious thing to play before the greatest dignitary in the land.

The first number at last was finished, then the second, then it was Dorothy's turn. When she was on the stage, she looked out into the audience and there, sure enough, in the large, beautifully decorated box, sat the President and his party.

Surely the presence of such a notable guest should prompt her to do her best. She [Pg 199] wondered if the fact of his being there would make her nervous. Then she thought of Jim and of what he would say, and then once launched upon her theme, she forgot everything else. Her whole soul, it seemed to the audience, was engulfed in her art. Never had instrument fashioned by hand been more responsive to human touch.

When she had finished playing, she heard vaguely the applause, and went out again before the curtain to bow her acknowledgment. Then a large bunch of American beauty roses were handed to her. A very pretty picture indeed did she make with the large bouquet of flowers in her arms.

When the first half of the concert was over, Mr. Ludlow came back and said: "The President would like Miss Ruth and Miss Dorothy to come to his box; he would like to congratulate you both."

"Ah, that is pleasing, indeed," exclaimed Dorothy.

"Surely we are honored," added Ruth. They followed Mr. Ludlow out to the President's box, where he and his family and a few friends sat. When they reached the box, the President [Pg 200] rose and said, smilingly:

"I want to congratulate you young people on your success. It has been a great pleasure for me to hear you. Your playing, Miss Calvert, was entrancing."

All the eyes of the audience were now turned on the presidential box, and there was a craning of necks, trying to see what was going on there.

The incident was soon over, the President had shaken hands with each, and Dorothy at last found time to look at the card attached to her roses. She imagined Aunt Betty had sent them to her. But she was very much surprised and greatly pleased when she saw Jim's name on them, and wondered how he could have sent them. She hugged them close to her and kissed each pretty rose.

Just then Ruth came up and said, "I am ready now, dear, let's go out in front. My! What beautiful flowers you have. Who sent them to you?"

"A friend," answered Dorothy, blushing.

"Wasn't *he* thoughtful to remember to telegraph them here for you," laughed Ruth. "I wish I had a friend to send me beautiful flowers," she added.

"Who gave you those beautiful violets you are wearing, that just match your eyes?" [Pg 201] questioned Dorothy.

“Oh, Mr. Ludlow sent them. He always does, because he knows I love violets, but that’s different from having American beauty roses sent to one,” Ruth replied.

By this time they were around in front and had quietly sat down in the two seats reserved for them beside Aunt Betty and Alfaretta. Miss Winter had come on the stage preparatory to performing her dances.

She was a very pretty little girl, with blonde hair, and had a small, but well formed figure. The stage was cleared and the lights dull. She danced about the stage in such a light, breezy way that it seemed to the audience that she was wafted about by a spring breeze. She danced most artistically, and her rendering of the two dances was so perfect that the audience applauded again and again, though in response, she just made some curtain bows and retired.

The trio, which Ruth so wished to hear, came next. Their rendition was a long and exquisite one, and Ruth now realized why Mr. Ludlow had put them last. She turned to Dorothy and whispered, “Aren’t they wonderful!” [Pg 202]

“Yes,” answered Dorothy. “They are the best we have.”

“That’s why,” explained Ruth, “Mr. Ludlow put them last, so they would leave a good impression of the whole concert in the people’s mind. I feel as if I just couldn’t sing at all.”

The concert was now over, and the audience indicated by the volume of applause that rang out that it was a great success. Everyone had done just what they thought was their very best, and many had received beautiful flowers. It wasn’t long before they were all home.

CHAPTER XV. [Pg 203]

MT. VERNON.

As Mr. Ludlow had planned for them to visit Mount Vernon and the White House the next day it necessitated their packing partly, so as to be ready to take the train for the next city in which they were to give a concert. As the concert had been such a great success here, they were very hopeful regarding the rest of the tour.

The next morning they were all ready in time for the 10 a. m. boat for Mount Vernon. They had agreed the night before to see Mount Vernon first and leave the White House till last, as the majority cared more to see the former.

On their way they passed the City of Alexandria, and were told that here the Union troops began the invasion of Virginia soil, and here fell Elsworth the first notable victim of the war.

The old red brick hotel, where he pulled down the flag of the Confederates was pointed out to the party by the guide. Also the guide pointed out to them Christ Church, which Washington and his family had attended. [Pg 204]

Then, a little further on, among some peach orchards, begins the Mount Vernon estate, which in Washington’s time contained about eight thousand acres. The estate is on the right bank of the Potomac, just sixteen miles below Washington.

The land was part of an extensive grant to John Washington, the first of the family who came to America in middle of the seventeenth century. The estate descended to George, when he was barely more than a boy. He continued to develop and beautify the property until the breaking out of the war of 1776. Then the ability he had shown in the Virginia militia called him to the service of the United Colonies. He returned to Mount Vernon at the close of the war, but had to leave it, and take up his duties as first President of the Republic.

He was buried upon his estate and the family declined to accept the subsequent invitation of Congress to transfer the body to the undercroft of the Capitol.

After Mrs. Washington’s death, the property descended finally to John Augustine Washington, who proposed to dispose of it. A Southern lady, Miss Ann Pamela Cunningham, secured the refusal, and after failing to interest Congress in her proposal that the Government should buy and preserve it as a memorial, succeeded in arousing the women of the country. An association of these women, named the “Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union,” with representatives from every State was incorporated, and in 1858 paid $200,000 for the central portion of the property, some 200 acres, covenanting to hold it in [Pg 205]

perpetuity. An admission fee of 25 cents charged all visitors goes to the payment of current expenses.

The tomb of Washington is the first object of attention. It stands immediately at the head of the path from the landing. Its position, small dimensions, and plain form of brick, were indicated by Washington in his will.

The front part, closed by plain iron gates, through which anyone may look, contains two plain sarcophagi, each excavated from a single block of marble. The one in the centre of the little enclosure contains the remains of the Father of His Country, within the little mahogany coffin in which they were originally put. At the left is that of Martha Washington. [Pg 206] Four times a year these iron gates are opened by the authorities, and wreaths and other floral offerings are deposited therein.

The mansion itself, stands upon considerable eminence, overlooking broad reaches of the historic Potomac. It is built of oak and pictures have made its architectural features familiar everywhere.

When Mount Vernon was acquired by the ladies' association, it was not only out of repair, but the furniture had been distributed to various heirs, or sold and scattered. An effort was made to preserve as much as possible, and to restore as closely as might be the original homelike appearance of the house. It has been impossible to do this absolutely, and a great many other articles of furniture, adornment and historical interest have been added. In order to do this, the various State branches of the association were invited to undertake to furnish one room each, and many have done so. The names of these States are associated with the apartments they have taken charge of. A considerable quantity of furniture, as well as personal relics of George and Martha Washington, are here, however, especially in the [Pg 207] bedrooms where they died.

"Ah," exclaimed Dorothy as she entered the hall. "Just look at those swords. Did they all belong to Washington?"

"Yes, dear, the one in the middle of the three," answered Mrs. Calvert, "was the one he wore when he resigned his commission at Annapolis, and when he was inaugurated at New York."

"And what is this key hanging here for?" asked Alfaretta.

"That key has a most interesting history," answered Mr. Ludlow. "That is the key to the Bastile, that prison in Paris, which was so justly hated by the people, and which was demolished by the mob. Lafayette sent it to Washington in a letter."

Next they turned to the east and entered the music room. This room is under the care of the State of Ohio.

"Oh, just see all the things in here!" cried Dorothy. "Look at that dear harpsichord."

"That harpsichord was given to Nellie Custis by Washington," answered Aunt Betty.

They next entered the west parlor. Above the mantel piece is carved the coat-of-arms of the family. The carpet here is a rug presented by Louis XVI to Washington. It was woven to [Pg 208] order, in dark green with orange stars; its center piece is the seal of the United States, and the border is a floriated design. This room was refurnished by the State of Illinois.

"Look, dear, see the spinet there," said Mrs. Calvert to Dorothy.

"Yes, and what beautiful candlesticks those are standing there on that queer table," answered Dorothy.

"What is this next room?" inquired Alfaretta.

"This room," answered Aunt Betty, "was Mrs. Washington's sitting room, and was refurnished in the manner of the period by Georgia. But the dining room is what I want you to especially notice. The furniture here was that originally used by Washington—"

"Next is Washington's library, for I see books in there," announced Ruth.

"This is one of the most important rooms in the house," said Mr. Ludlow, as they entered the banquet hall.

Its length is the whole width of the mansion, and its richly decorated ceiling is full two stories high.

"The ornate fireplace and mantel of Italian marble and workmanship once occupied a place [Pg 209] in a country home in England," said Mrs. Calvert; "someone brought it over the ocean and

gave it to Washington, and it is worth examining."

They now ascended the stairs to the second floor to visit the bedrooms.

"Let's go first to the bedroom where Washington died," said Mr. Ludlow. "It is almost exactly as it was when he lived here."

"There is the large four-poster," said Dorothy.

"Yes, dear, and these pillows here on the chairs were worked by Martha Washington herself," added Aunt Betty.

They next went to see the room where Martha Washington died. It is directly above the one occupied by Washington. This is fitted up as nearly as possible as it was when occupied by Martha, but only the corner washstand really belonged to her.

They visited the other bedrooms, noticing the important things of interest in them, and then started back to the city, where they had late luncheon and went out immediately after to visit the White House. They had very little time left and wanted to get just a glimpse of the President's home. [Pg 210]

Everyone is familiar with the appearance of the White House. The grounds consist of some eight acres sloping down to the Potomac. The immediate gardens were early attended to as is shown by the size of the trees.

One park, near the house, known as the white lot, is open to the public, and here, in warm weather, the marine band gives outdoor concerts. Here also is the sloping terrace just behind the White House, that the children of the city gather upon on Easter to roll their colored eggs.

Coming up from Pennsylvania avenue along the semi-circular drive that leads up from the open gates, they entered the stately vestibule through the front portico. The middle upper window from which Lincoln made so many impromptu but memorable addresses during the war was pointed out. The doorkeepers here direct callers upon the President up the broad staircase. They formed the company into one party and conducted them, under their guidance, around the building.

They were taken into the East room, originally designed for a banquet hall, which is used now as a state reception room. It has eight beautiful marble mantels, surmounted by tall mirrors, and large crystal chandeliers from each of the three great panels of the ceiling. [Pg 211]

Full length portraits of George and Martha Washington are among the pictures on the wall. Every visitor is told that Mrs. Madison cut the former painting from out the frame with a pair of shears to preserve it from the enemy when she fled from the town in 1814. But in her own letters describing her flight she says that Mr. Custis, the nephew of Washington, hastened over from Arlington to save the precious portrait and that a servant cut the outer frame with an axe so the canvas could be removed, stretched on the inner frame.

Adjoining the East room is the Green room, named so from the general color scheme which has been traditional. The ceiling is ornamented with an exquisite design in which musical instruments are entwined in a garland with cherubs and flowers.

Next to this, and somewhat larger and oval, is the Blue room. The ornaments here are presents from the French. The mantel clock was a present from Napoleon to Lafayette, and was given by the latter to the United States. The fine vases were presented by the president of the French Republic, on the occasion of the opening of the Franco-American cable. It is here the President stands when holding receptions and ceremonials. [Pg 212]

The Red room, west of the Blue room, is square and the same size as the Green parlor. It is more homelike than the others because of its piano and mantel ornaments, abundant furniture and pictures. It is used as a reception room and private parlor by the ladies of the mansion.

In the State dining room at the end of the corridor, elaborate dinners are usually given once or twice a week, during the winter, and they are brilliant affairs. Plants and flowers from the conservatories are supplied in limitless quantities and the table is laden with a rare display of plate, porcelain and cut glass. It presents a beautiful appearance and is an effective setting for the elaborate toilets of the ladies and their glittering jewels.

The table service is exceedingly beautiful and is adorned with various representations of the flora and fauna of America. The new set of cut glass, consisting of five hundred and twenty separate pieces, was made especially for the White House, and on each piece, from the mammoth centerpiece and punch bowl to the tiny salt cellars, is engraved the coat-of-arms of the United States. The table can be made to accommodate as many as fifty-four [Pg 213]

persons, but the usual number of guests is from thirty to forty.

A door leads into the conservatory, which is always a beauty spot. Just opposite the state dining room is the private or family dining room.

The offices of the President and his secretaries are on the second floor at the eastern end. The President's room and Cabinet room are in the executive office west of the White House, so the guide told them, and a large force of watchmen including police officers are on duty inside the mansion at all hours, and a continuous patrol is maintained by the local police of the grounds immediately surrounding the mansion.

Thinking they had seen as much as they could safely spare time for, they hurried away back to the hotel, where they all hastily packed the rest of their things and sent them at once to the station. They soon started on their considerable journey, and almost nightly concerts till they should reach Chicago.

CHAPTER XVI.

[Pg 214]

THE LAKE CITY.

About a week later, they arrived one day, late in the afternoon, in Chicago, and at once took a bus from the station to the hotel, the Blackstone. They were to sing at the Auditorium that evening. The concert they gave originally in Washington was to be repeated. As all were now familiar with their task, they did not have to practice unless so disposed.

Mr. Ludlow and his assistant hurried off to the Auditorium to see about decorations and to meet the committee that had charge of selling tickets there.

Mrs. Calvert, Dorothy, and Alfaretta hurried up to their rooms to get their things straightened out. Alfy found, having packed hurriedly that morning, that their dresses were badly wrinkled. She said to Mrs. Calvert:

"Aunt Betty, what shall I do? My dresses are very much mussed, and I guess Dorothy's are in the same condition."

[Pg 215]

"I have a little electric iron in my trunk that I always carry with me for just that purpose, when I travel, because one's things are very apt to get wrinkled no matter how much care one takes of them," answered Aunt Betty.

"May I have it?" questioned Alfaretta, eagerly, for she was always very fond of ironing, and always was very proud of her skill in that direction, for more than once Ma Babcock had praised her by saying even she couldn't have done as well herself. "I would love to iron the things all out nice, and make them look like new."

"Certainly, I will get it for you. You unscrew the electric light bulb and take it out, and then put the small disk in place and screw it tight. Then turn on the current, and place the piece with the wire attached into the socket. Then in a few minutes the iron will be hot enough to use," directed Aunt Betty.

Alfy started off to look for things to press; ribbons, belts, ties, collars and the dresses that they wished to wear that night. These she laid on the bed, and Aunt Betty left her there, as happy and content as she could be in having found some way in which she could be useful.

[Pg 216]

When Dorothy was all alone at last, she opened a letter that the clerk had given her when she arrived, and read as follows:

> DEAR, DEAR GIRL:
>
> I received your postal and letter from Washington, but was rather disappointed not to have had another letter from you ere this. But I suppose you have been very busy sight-seeing in all the places you have been, and then you must have given up considerable time to practicing for your concerts. I know that you have little time while you are traveling about.
>
> I read the accounts of the first concert in the New York papers, and they all referred to it as being a great success. I am very proud of you, dear.
>
> As yet I have heard nothing at all from the detectives concerning your locket and chain, but I have heard of a new detective, a private man. A fellow in the office was telling me about his good work in many cases; it seems that he is a

friend of this fellow's. The chap is a nice boy and is under me in my work. His name is Billie Clarke, and he lives uptown in New York. He has invited me up to his home to meet his mother and sister, some time next week. I shall go because it is very lonely here in this big city without you, dear. I miss you, little sweetheart, in a hundred different ways. [Pg 217]

Mr. Van Zandt telephoned me and said that he had submitted the proof he had concerning you, to his colleague, who would comment upon it a little later, and would submit it to the London solicitors; and just as soon as I hear anything about the result I will write to you.

I asked him if he had been able to do anything in the line of tracing up little Lem's people, but he said that he couldn't say much as he had just started, and had found but very few traces. So that is something we will still have to hope for, though I am sure he will do his best to solve that mystery.

I like my new work very much indeed. There is a lot to learn, and I spend all my evenings reading up on matters I am not quite strong in, but, in time, I certainly hope to make good.

And, dearest, I hope to save up all I can, against that day when I will surely be the happiest man on earth. You know what day I mean, dear girl.

Mrs. Quarren has been just great to me, and has done everything she could to make my room seem homelike. The meals here are wonderful, and if I keep on eating as much as I have this last week, I shall be fat when you come back here again. [Pg 218]

Now, dear, please, please write to me. You know how very lonely I am, and how anxious I am about you. Write and tell me all the news.

I love you, girl, always.

Your own,
JIM.

Dorothy read the letter once, and sighed, "Dear, dear Jim," and then she slowly read the letter through again, kissed the signature, blushing as she did so. She then got up, walked to the writing desk, a pretty little mahogany one, fitted out nicely, selected some paper and started to write. She thought, "I will just write a little note to Jim to thank him for sending me those beautiful American beauty roses that everyone admired. I ought to have done so before." Her letter was as follows:

DEAR JIM:

The clerk just handed me your letter as I came into the hotel, for we just arrived in Chicago. I was very glad to hear from you.

Most of all, I want to thank you so very much for those flowers. They were just beautiful, and it pleased me so, to think of your remembering that we were to have the concert, and then sending those flowers to me by telegraph. [Pg 219]

The President was at the concert, and in the intermission we went to his box, spoke to him, and shook hands with him. I carried your flowers with me all the time.

I am going to rest for a while after I write this letter, as we give a concert here to-night at the Auditorium.

The members of the company that joined us at Washington are very fine. There is a trio, and their singing is exquisite; also a Miss Winters, who is a wonderful dancer. She fairly floats about the stage, and makes a very pretty picture.

The whole company is very good, indeed, and I guess we are doing very well, judging from the applause we earn. Mr. Ludlow seems pleased with the finances. You know Mr. Dauntrey takes care of those and helps Mr. Ludlow in general. Although the latter is very considerate and helpful, I don't know just why it is, but there is something I don't quite like about him. He is so very handsome that most girls, including Ruth, are raving about him. [Pg 220]

We have a few busy days. A concert every night and train by day. We go from here to St. Louis, and then to the Coast. I am anxious to get to San Francisco. I want to look up that old house there on the bluff that we had that year we

took Aunt Betty there for her health when Monty Sharp was with us. Do you remember, Jim?

I am so sorry about that locket, but I know that you will find it, and then we can clear up the whole affair.

And so you think that perhaps Mr. Van Zandt will find out all about poor little Lem's parents just from that sampler that Alfy found in the attic? I do so hope so.

Aunt Betty and Alfy, I know, would wish to be remembered, if they knew I was writing, so I will send their love anyway.

Now, isn't this a nice, long, newsy letter?

I have to practice a little now, so I will stop.

I am yours, as ever,

DOROTHY.

She read the letter she had just written over again, and then sealed it. She then opened the door, stepped into the hall and dropped it into the mail box chute near the elevator. Then she returned to the room to dress and rest before the concert. [Pg 221]

In a little while Alfy entered and found her dressing.

"See what I have been doing," she said, gayly, holding up the dresses she had just finished pressing so that Dorothy could see and admire them.

"You dear girl," commented Dorothy, going over and kissing her. "You are always doing something for me. Thank you, dear, for pressing my dress. Doesn't it look nice now?—like new again."

"Is there anything else that you would like to have pressed, now that I am working?" Alfy inquired.

"Why, there is that blue waist that I have been wearing in the train. It is very mussy," added Dorothy, "but if you are in a hurry, don't bother with it; I really can get along without it."

"Give it to me," responded Alfy. "I just love ironing, and will have it done in no time. I might as well press mine while I am about it, too." And taking Dorothy's waist from her, she quickly found her own, and started off with them.

The girls were soon ready, and then went down the stair with Mrs. Calvert. [Pg 222]

Mr. Ludlow called for Dorothy at seven o'clock that evening, and they started for the Auditorium.

The stage, this time, was decorated with huge bunches of chrysanthemums, and large green palms that hung their great, fan-like leaves in a regular bower effect over the stage, making a very effective background for the performance. The programs here were, of course, inside much like the Washington ones, but this time the cover was of heavy, dark brown manila paper, embossed into a large dull gold chrysanthemum, and tied with a yellow ribbon bow at the top end. They were very pretty and effective.

The committee of ladies that had charge of selling the seats here in Chicago had arranged to have the programs sold. They had selected ten very pretty and charming debutantes, and had provided them with pretty little dainty satin bags, with yellow chrysanthemums handpainted on them. These bags were hung over their shoulders by yellow ribbons. The whole effect was very pretty and artistic. The girls were to charge twenty-five cents for the programs, and the money they slipped into a little pocket in the bag which held them. [Pg 223]

During the intermission, most of the people retired to the cosy little tea-room in front of the place, where cool and refreshing drinks as well as ice creams and ices were served at a moderately low fee.

There the girls met many charming Chicago people, and the committee of ladies made it very pleasant for them by introducing them to almost everyone. A most informal and successful evening, they all agreed they had spent.

The next day was Sunday, and as a few of their number were visiting friends in Chicago, the rest of them decided to spend the day sight-seeing.

The trio, for so they were always called by the rest, all had gone to visit relatives, and little

Miss Winter had promised to visit a friend who lived in a suburb of the city. So the rest of the company felt quite lost, and thought the best way to amuse themselves in this large, strange city was to go sight-seeing and become acquainted with it.

"Did you know," said Mr. Ludlow as the little party started out on a tour of the city, "that Chicago is especially famous for its highly developed and extensive boulevard systems and [Pg 224] parks? The public parks cover an area of over four thousand acres and are being added to every year."

"Yes," responded Mrs. Calvert, "and the great boulevards of the city encircle the metropolis and connect parks and squares. These great roads, splendidly paved and shaded by trees, and lined with ornamental lamp posts, are throughout the year favorite highways for the automobilists."

About ten minutes' walk from the hotel brought them to Grant Park on the lake front. There the Art Institute attracted their attention, and they found the building open.

"The center of art interests in Chicago is located here," said Mr. Ludlow. "This building contains the Museum of Fine Arts and the School of Design. Its collections and the building and its work are entirely conducted on voluntary subscriptions."

"I have heard that the Art School here is the largest one in America," said Mrs. Calvert.

They visited the various rooms in the museum, including the Hall collection of casts of ancient and modern sculpture, and the Higinbotham collection of Naples bronzes, the rooms containing French sculpture and musical instruments, scarabæae, Egyptian [Pg 225] antiques, Greek vases of glass and terra-cotta, and found all very interesting.

They then visited Blackstone Hall, containing the great Blackstone collection of architectural casts chiefly from French subjects. Then the paintings of George Inness. These canvases are so diverse and representative that it is highly improbable that another equally significant group of works by Inness will ever come into market again.

From the north side of Grant Park and extending south to Garfield boulevard near Washington Park is Michigan Boulevard. This historic drive, part of which was once an Indian trail, is a main artery of automobile travel from the lake front hotel districts to the south parks.

The party then took a surface car to Jackson Park, which was a short distance. It was the site of the world's Columbian Exposition.

"The Field Museum of Natural History was the Fine Arts Building in the Exposition of 1893," said Mr. Ludlow. "Let's visit that part first."

This museum was established soon after the close of the world's Columbian Exposition, and occupies one of the largest and most beautiful buildings in the whole exposition group [Pg 226] covering two acres. The building is classic Greek in style, constructed with brick and steel, covered with ornamental stucco, in imitation of marble.

Marshall Field, whose name the institution perpetuates, was the person who made the building possible by his generosity. He gave about one and a half million dollars. Then at his death in 1906, he left the institution eight million dollars, one-half for endowment, and the other half for a magnificent permanent building, worthy of the unrivaled scientific collections which it contains.

The nucleus of the material now on view was gathered by gift and purchase from exhibitions at the world's Columbian Exposition.

From here they walked to the Wooded Island, an interesting feature of which is the Cahokia Court House, reputed to be the oldest public building in the whole Mississippi valley.

It was built, it is said, about the year 1716, at Cahokia, Illinois, and has served in various public capacities. At different periods it was employed for both civil and military purposes, and is recognized as the oldest county seat building (Saint Clair County, Illinois) in the [Pg 227] original Northwest Territory.

The building is constructed of squared walnut logs, set on end in the early French manner of stockade construction, the logs being held together with wooden pins. Three flags, French, English and American, float from the flagstaff of the Old Cahokia Court House, daily.

Within the building are a number of photographs of the original documents which pertain to its interesting history.

The Japanese buildings, representing three periods of Japanese history, remain in their original site at the north end of Wooded Island, and near them is a tiny garden in formal Japanese style.

The United States Life Saving Station is near the lake shore and was one of the interesting government exhibitions, and has ever since been maintained as a regular life saving station.

La Rabida, at the south end of the park on the lake shore is an exact reproduction of an ancient Spanish convent, where Columbus was at one time sheltered and befriended, in the days before he was able to secure aid from the Spanish court.

"And an interesting reminder of Columbus can be seen in those three small caravels," said Mr. Ludlow. "Do you know their names? They are reproductions of the small craft that brought Columbus and his followers on their first voyage to the New World." [Pg 228]

Dorothy, who had remembered reading an article on Columbus in a recent magazine, exclaimed joyfully, "I know, the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria."

"Right," laughed Mr. Ludlow.

"Oh, I am hungry," said Alfy, suddenly, "I am most starved. What time is it, I wonder? I feel as if it were way past dinner time."

Mr. Ludlow consulted his watch and said, "It is just six forty-five."

"I guess we had better start back to the hotel, now," broke in Mrs. Calvert. "I am rather tired and hungry, too."

"We have seen quite a lot of the city and we can go into the shopping district and see that in the morning. There are some few things I would like to purchase," remarked Dorothy.

"I would like to visit Marshall Field's. I have always heard so much about it and I would like to see if these Chicagoans really know what a good store is."

"You will find that Marshall Field's is indeed a very wonderful store. Just like our New York stores, though, but a trifle better, anyway," said Mrs. Calvert. "Yes, I think you will all agree with me, when you visit that wonderful store in the morning." [Pg 229]

They hurried back to the hotel and prepared for dinner, after which Mr. Ludlow took Ruth, Dorothy and Alfaretta to church. Aunt Betty stayed home, being too tired to go out.

CHAPTER XVII. [Pg 230]

THE ACCIDENT.

On Monday morning the company divided into little parties and went shopping, each to secure their own special needs.

Dorothy, Ruth, Alfaretta and Mrs. Calvert made one party. They went direct to Marshall Field's and were admittedly amazed by what they saw, so stupendous is the place. They were surprised to find the store's capacity so large and everything so fine, of such good quality, reasonably priced and conveniently arranged.

Mrs. Calvert bought a belt and a pair of gloves, and met such courteous attention and carefulness among the shop-girls as to be very much impressed. She said to Dorothy:

"Dear, I never before found shopping so pleasant. I wish I could always get everything I wished at Chicago, and especially here in this store, for it is directed wonderfully well."

"I would like to send some souvenir postcards," broke in Alfy. "Do you suppose I can get them here?" [Pg 231]

"Yes, indeed," answered Dorothy. "I saw them, a large counter full of all kinds of views in and around the city; they were near the door which we entered."

"You can write them right here, and send them off from the store," added Aunt Betty.

"Come along then," directed Ruth. "All this way who want post cards."

They made their way to the counter where the cards were displayed and immediately were engaged in selecting views of the things and places they had seen in the city.

“Here is a very pretty card,” said Ruth. “It has the La Rabida on it. You remember the convent we saw in Jackson Park yesterday, where they had all of those Columbus relics?”

“Yes, and did you see this one?” asked Dorothy, holding up a card to view. “It’s the little Japanese Garden on the Wooded Island in the same park.”

“Look!” exclaimed Alfy, showing them all another card, “here is one of the Art Institute!”

Mrs. Calvert, who had been searching through the various cards, said, “I think these three are very interesting, this of the store, this one of our hotel, and this other of the Life Saving Station in the park.” [Pg 232]

“Well, have you all selected those you wish?” said Dorothy. “Because, if you have, we can all go over there to the writing room and send them all right off.”

“What a beautifully appointed room,” said Mrs. Calvert, as they entered the spacious, well lighted writing room, with the mahogany desks and generous supply of good quality writing paper, pens, ink-wells, etc. There was also in the corner a stamp machine, in which one deposits the right change and secures the desired number of stamps in return.

“I want to send cards to Ma and Pa Babcock. Ma always likes me to, so she can show them down at Liza Jane’s,” said Alfy.

“I would like to send one to Gerald Banks and his sister, and, of course, to Jim,” said Dorothy.

“I think there are just two I wish to send. I want to send one to Mrs. Quarren,” rejoined Ruth, “and if you do not mind, I think I should like to send one to Jim, also.”

“Of course I don’t object,” laughed Dorothy. “Jim would be pleased to think you had remembered him. But let me see which one you are going to send him so I may send him a different one.” [Pg 233]

“Very well,” answered Ruth. “I will send the one of the hotel.”

“And I,” responded Dorothy, “will send the one of the lake and Wooded Island in Jackson Park.”

“I think I shall send Jim a card also,” said Mrs. Calvert. “But I shall send him the one of the store. My list is just a little longer than all you girls’ lists. I shall send cards to Frau and Herr Deichenberg, little Lemuel and old Ephraim, and Jim, whom I mentioned before.”

“Shall I get the stamps?” said Ruth.

“Can I go with you?” asked Alfy. “I want to see how the machine works.”

“Certainly, come on,” added Ruth. “How many shall we need?”

“You had better get fifteen,” answered Mrs. Calvert.

“You see,” remarked Ruth to Alfaretta, “that one can only deposit nickels and dimes in the slot.”

“What are you going to put in?” questioned Alfy.

“I am going to deposit first a dime and then a nickel in the slot that’s marked for one cent stamps,” replied Ruth, suiting her actions to her words and picking up the stamps which the machine dropped into the receiving tray. [Pg 234]

“That’s real fun,” said Alfaretta. “I’d always buy stamps here, but Ma Babcock would not like it.”

“Why not?” asked Ruth.

“Because Ma always wants to talk, and would not think she had her money’s worth without it.”

They put the stamps on the cards and then mailed them in the large gilt mail box near the door in the corner.

“I guess it’s most time for us to go back to the hotel for luncheon,” said Aunt Betty.

“Almost,” replied Ruth, looking at her small gold watch. “It’s now just eleven-thirty.”

“I want to get some blue ribbon,” said Dorothy, “before we leave for the hotel.”

“And I must get a veil,” added Ruth.

The girls departed on their quests and in less than two minutes met Mrs. Calvert at the door and all went back together to the hotel for luncheon. It was a quiet mid-day meal, and as soon as it was over they had to devote their attention to their trunks, as they were to leave that afternoon for their next stopping place. [Pg 235]

Mr. Dauntrey and Mr. Ludlow attended to the baggage and the tickets and very soon all were ready.

Just as they were leaving the hotel to go to the station, Mr. Dauntrey singled Ruth out, and approaching her, said, “Will you come and walk down with me?”

“With pleasure,” said the girl, suiting her steps to his, and they started slowly to stroll down to the station.

“I have a box of Huyler’s here for you,” remarked Mr. Dauntrey. “I thought perhaps you would like it. I thought it would be nice for you to have on the train.”

“Why thank you ever so much. You are very kind.”

“Not half as kind as I would like to be, if you would only afford me the opportunity.”

Ruth made some answer that turned the conversation to some less personal subject. She kept up a run of chatter about indifferent matters.

So many people were upon the streets and so many conveyances on the roadways that progress was slow, and when they reached the station they found Mr. Ludlow very much provoked that Ruth should have kept them all waiting, nearly causing the loss of their train. [Pg 236]

“Couldn’t you have walked a little faster, Ruth?” Mr. Ludlow asked. “Or taken the stage to the station if you were so tired? This must not happen again.”

Ruth, who disliked being reprimanded before everybody, angrily exclaimed, “Well, you didn’t have to wait here for me, I am sure, for you might have known that Mr. Dauntrey is capable of taking care of me, and, aside from that, I think I can take pretty good care of myself.”

Mr. Ludlow did not reply, but hurried them to their private car, the others of the party having preceded him. Very shortly they were speeding on their way.

Mrs. Calvert read a book, and Dorothy and Alfy were merrily chatting over their trip, so Ruth turned away from Mr. Ludlow and busied herself talking to Mr. Dauntrey and nibbling his chocolates and bon bons.

Mr. Ludlow, who had most of the time been looking out of the window, turned to Mrs. Calvert and said, “I think it looks as if we were going to have a bad storm. It looks to me as if the clouds have been following us up, and I’m afraid we are going to get it in a little while good and plenty.” [Pg 237]

Mrs. Calvert looked out of the window and saw the storm clouds approaching and gathering for the downpour, and then her eyes wandered to the river beside which the train ran.

“Just look!” she exclaimed, pointing to the water. “Look, quick, at the river!”

“That is quite remarkable,” said Mr. Ludlow. “Just see how high the water is and how fast it is flowing.”

“Why it seems to be rising higher and higher by the minute as we go along,” responded Mrs. Calvert. “I can’t understand it, can you?”

“Oh!” shrieked Ruth at this moment, clinging to Mr. Dauntrey’s hand. “Oh, what an awful flash of lightning! Oh, how I hate an electric storm! Lightning scares me half to death.”

“I like it,” replied Alfy, looking across the dark, turbulent, swiftly moving stream. “I always like to watch it. And ‘up mounting’ we do have some awful storms. You remember them, don’t you, Dorothy?”

“Of course I do. Sometimes, though, I used to get a little scared. They used to be so very bad,” said the girl, and all the people in the car jumped as a loud crash of thunder followed a blazing streak of lightning. The thunder seemed right under their feet and was so loud and so sudden that all were startled for a minute. [Pg 238]

Ruth jumped up and grabbed Mr. Ludlow around the neck and hid her face in his shoulder, moaning, “Oh, oh, I don’t like this at all.”

Mr. Ludlow, although he did not like to see the girl so overcome with nervousness, was decidedly happy that she should turn to him, and hoped perhaps that the storm would last

forever, if he could continue to hold Ruth to him.

This awful clap was followed by another flash of lightning which lit up the car brighter than daylight. Mrs. Calvert, who was facing the window, looked out and gasped, “Oh, why don’t they stop the train?”

Then they all heard a mighty splash and the train gave a terrible lurch and threw those standing over on the floor and those sitting had a hard time to keep their places.

All the lights immediately went out and Alfy shouted, “We are struck!”

Some of the party shrieked and one or two fainted dead away. None could see the others in the terrible, black darkness in which they were enveloped. [Pg 239]

At last, after a prolonged silence that seemed ages, Mrs. Calvert said. “Is any one hurt?”

Everyone began to collect their scattered thoughts by this time, and Mr. Ludlow had managed to rise from his fallen position and get Ruth up and into a seat. He grouped about in the pitch blackness into which they had been plunged and finally found his chair. He deftly managed to retain Ruth’s hand in his, in order to reassure her.

The answer Mrs. Calvert received in general was that everyone was safe and physically unharmed and mentally as near right as could be expected.

Mrs. Calvert then asked, “Did anyone see out of the window when the flash of lightning lit up this car?” And when she had received answer that no one had, she continued: “I happened to be sitting facing the window and when the flash came I saw out very plainly.”

“What did you see?” questioned Mr. Ludlow, in a firm voice.

“The river,” responded Mrs. Calvert. “The river was up to the tracks.”

The fact was suggestive of further danger, and then Dorothy questioned, “What was the crash? And why did the train lurch so? And why are all the lights out?” [Pg 240]

“Maybe,” suggested Alfy, “maybe we were struck with lightning. Do you think so, Aunt Betty?”

“I don’t know,” she replied. “I can’t understand where the train hands can be. They should be here to tell us what has happened.”

“Do you suppose we have struck another train?” questioned Dorothy.

“Oh,” groaned Ruth. “I wish we could have some lights. It’s so dark I am afraid something will happen, and maybe some one will be killed.”

“Hush, child,” remarked Mr. Ludlow. “Just be thankful things are no worse than they are, that we are all safe alive and none of us are hurt.”

Ruth subsided to silence and sobbed beneath her breath. Just then, George, the old negro porter, broke in on the excited party and endeavored to tell what was the matter.

“Lord o’ Mercy, massa!” he exclaimed. “De train am wrecked. The ingin and one ob de baggage cars did fall off these track, plump, splash, right in de water.”

“That’s what the crash and splash and jerk was that we felt. The water was so high that it probably came up on the tracks here, and the engine and baggage car jumped the weakened trestle into the water. I wonder how it was it didn’t pull the rest of the train into the water also,” said Mr. Ludlow. [Pg 241]

Just then the conductor and a brakeman passing from the next car through their own explained what had occurred to Mr. Ludlow and the other interested listeners.

First lighting the gas lamps to dispel the semi-darkness, the conductor said, “Sir, you see the lightning struck the train right between the first passenger car and the baggage, severing the connection, and leaving the engine and baggage car free to go ahead. They did, and running a little farther ahead it jumped the track, but no one was hurt. The shock somehow set the brakes, and brought the remaining cars to a stop. It’s lucky we held to the tracks, sir, it is indeed.”

“Did anyone in the passenger cars get hurt?” questioned Mr. Ludlow.

“No, sir, only a few fainted,” answered the conductor.

“What are we going to do now? We have no power to go ahead, and we can’t even go back. We can’t move. Are we to stay right where we are, conductor?” [Pg 242]

“For a time, we must,” was the answer.

“When is another train due here?” questioned Mrs. Calvert.

“A train is due to come through this way in an hour and a half, madam,” said the conductor. “But that will not help us any to go ahead. We have sent word back and may expect help from the nearest station. Some arrangement can likely be made to switch us off on a branch road, and by a circuitous route we can get back again to our line.”

“And how about our concert to-night?”

“If help is promptly sent we may get you there on time.”

“We were due at five o’clock,” said Mr. Ludlow.

“We can’t promise you anything definite now,” said the conductor, as he went about his duties.

“All we can do is to just sit still and hope for aid, and that it will come in time,” said Mrs. Calvert.

“I’m afraid that’s all, except to be thankful that we were not killed,” suggested Mr. Ludlow.

The exact idea of their position was finally grasped by all, and everyone breathed a little prayer for having been saved so miraculously. They all quieted down and prepared to sit there and wait, and hope for the arrival of a train bringing aid. An hour and a half, so they had been told, and that hour and a half seemed the longest hour and a half that most of them had ever experienced. [Pg 243]

Finally they heard a shout from one of the brakemen, a glad shout, a joyous sign, they thought, and then the conductor came through and announced, “Sir, a small repair train has just come up to us. They sent it out very promptly, as they thought that we might be in even more serious need than we are.”

“Can it take us back, then?” asked Mr. Ludlow, and the rest of the company sighed in relief, because they now knew that they were safe and would eventually be pulled out of their present position.

“It can take back two cars, sir,” answered the conductor, “and would you object, sir, if I put some other passengers in here with you?”

“Not at all,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “Bring in as many as you wish. We will be only too glad to have them.”

The conductor departed, returning in a little time, accompanied by about a dozen women and half as many small children, saying, “I brought the women and young ones, as I thought that they would be more comfortable in here.” [Pg 244]

Dorothy and Ruth, alert and interested, forgot their own discomfort in rendering aid to others, anxious and in distress.

“They have connected the little repair train engine to the two cars,” the conductor announced, “and we will be off in a short time now. We are going back up the road a little way and branch off, and so recover the main line. We think we will get you to your destination in time for your concert.”

This was done, but with little time to spare, and if all the artists were not quite up to their usual standard of excellence that night, the experience of the afternoon was quite sufficient excuse.

The remainder of the trip to St. Louis was without event of note. The accident on the train was not without its advantages in the way of publicity, and their concerts drew large audiences. In St. Louis two concerts were given, both being very successful.

CHAPTER XVIII. [Pg 245]

CONCLUSION.

In the sequence of events the tour came to an end. A twenty-weeks’ season had been successfully carried through. There had been, of course, hampering and untoward conditions to surmount. An occasional discordant note was struck. Mr. Carleton, who acted

as accompanist when no orchestra was employed, turned out to be rather an arbitrary individual, and had caused Ruth, particularly, many a heart-ache. Dorothy, with her winning responsiveness to an artistic temperament, felt that she had less cause to complain.

Her affair with Jim had not of late been plain sailing. She had not written to him very often or a bit regularly, and he had entered a rather arbitrary protest, so she thought, and one letter at least, that she had addressed to him had gone astray. Then Jim reached the conclusion that his letters were not appreciated, and that absence had caused an estrangement. He nursed his resentment into a cauldron of bitterness, and with the [Pg 246] perverseness of lovers built mountains of molehills. Not but that such ephemeral erections may, and oftimes do, cast a shadow that will blot out true regard.

Without a tried and certain knowledge of her heart as concerned Jim, Dorothy had found the ever gentlemanly attentions of Mr. Dauntrey very agreeable. Ruth, on such occasions, was inclined to resentful looks and acts, of which, however, Dorothy was sublimely ignorant.

One day, journeying from Sacramento to San Francisco, it had been observed that Mr. Dauntrey and Alfy were in close consultation, an unusual event for those two to find a subject of mutual interest. Later, in a spirit of fun, Dorothy chided her companion.

“So you have won over Mr. Dauntrey,” cried Dorothy, laughing.

“Nonsense,” said Alfy, but blushing rosily.

“But for two hours on the train you monopolized him entirely. What did you find to talk about?”

“Well, for one thing, we were talking about you,” was the defensive response.

“About me, Alfy, what could you have been saying about me?” [Pg 247]

“I was telling him,” said Alfy, hesitatingly, “about your English inheritance.”

“Oh, but I wonder you did that. I asked that nothing be said about it. For, as you know, nothing has ever come of the matter, and nothing may. The locket has never been found, and the lawyer says that there are other ‘seemingly insurmountable requirements.’ My, what big words. I wonder I could string them all together.”

“Well,” went on Alfy, in her further defense, “he asked about you, and I couldn’t see that there was any harm.”

“No real harm, Alfy. And I hoped for Aunt Betty’s sake that there was an inheritance assured. She is so worried about Bellevieu. The mortgages and taxes seem to eat up everything. I have given her, of course, all of my earnings, but she says things are still going badly.”

“What are we to do now?” asked Alfy, seeking another subject. “Go home?”

“Mr. Ludlow has made some arrangements for Ruth to sing and for me to play here in San Francisco, at private houses of the rich. As you know, all of the others except Mr. Dauntrey, [Pg 248] have gone east, their contracts expired.”

Their conversation was interrupted, now, by Aunt Betty, who came into the room.

“Here is a much belated letter,” she exclaimed, “the envelope all marked up with forwarding addresses. It must have been traveling about for quite some time.”

“It’s from Jim,” cried Dorothy, and quickly broke the seal. The postmark the letter bore was a date fully two months back, and the first few lines were, to the recipient very pleasing ones, till she remembered that they were written before their late disagreement. But the major part of the letter bore upon a subject that concerned them all, and this she read aloud.

“It’s about Lem,” cried Dorothy. “Mr. Van Zandt has made some quite wonderful discoveries. And just to think, it all comes about through that sampler you found, Alfy. But let me read:

> “I have some interesting news concerning Lemuel Haley, the boy your camping party found in the thick woods crying that night. It was a lucky thing for the boy that Mrs. Babcock gave Alfaretta that sampler, for from just such a simple little thing as that, we have been able to trace all of Lem’s family [Pg 249] history, bringing out a sufficient, although I will not say good, reason for his uncle’s mistreatment of him.

"Lemuel Haley's mother was Hannah Woodrow. The very same girl that summered with Mrs. Babcock, and remained there attending the little village school for one whole year. She was a very delicate girl, not particularly pretty and very shy. She had large limpid brown eyes, and was of small build.

"She returned to Baltimore, after her year in the mountains, and lived the regulation life of a wealthy farmer's daughter. There Mr. Haley, a traveling salesman, so he told her family, fell in love with her or—her money, and when both her father and mother died quite suddenly, the traveling salesman made it his business to woo the lonely girl. He wished to marry her immediately and protect her, so he told her, and was so persistent that the poor distracted, grief-stricken girl finally gave him her promise, and within a month of her parents' death married him. At once he proceeded to dissipate her fortune, and, to make a long story short, the poor girl died when Lem was born. The father was later killed by an accident.

"Lem's only relative, it was found, was an uncle who lived in the South. This [Pg 250] man volunteered to take the little one, and was made legal guardian and controller of the remnant of the fortune. The child was a weak, delicate boy, and this uncle, a cruel, planning man, figured that if he worked Lem very hard all the time, he would eventually break down, and then he would come in for the child's money. Thus, the poor boy was driven to desperation, and finally ran away. You know better than I do, the incidents connected with his rescue.

"I have prepared all necessary legal papers as to the facts, to prove that Mr. Haley was and is an unfit guardian for the child, and will present these to the court."

This pleasing news was interestedly discussed, and a happy future argued for the boy.

The following morning, Mr. Dauntrey was early at the breakfast table, with a proposition that the party should visit Tamalpais. The day was beautifully clear, and on no other is a trip to the mountain's summit interesting. Mr. Ludlow could not go, but the ladies accepted with alacrity, and a prompt start was made. Glorious sights indeed are revealed, as the railroad winds its way to the apex of this peak, the highest so near an American city. [Pg 251]

Lunch was served at the summit house, but Dorothy was so interested in the views obtainable from the various vantage points that she wandered away from the others while they were still seated at the table.

When her absence was noted, Mr. Dauntrey sought her out, at first unsuccessfully, then seeking for her in a secluded view point seldom visited, he heard her voice, and found that, in her anxiety to attain a high rock, she had lost her footing, and catching for a support had sprained her ankle. She had as well badly torn her dress.

Her rescuer was all gallantry and courtesy, and assisted her to a seat near at hand. He would have carried her to the train platform, but this proffer Dorothy declined.

"I shall be able to walk, shortly," she explained. "It is not a severe sprain and the pain is bearable, and only acute when I put my weight on my foot."

"A few moments' rest will help to set you right," said Mr. Dauntrey, and then added, looking into her eyes, "Do you know, I wish you had been in some real serious danger, and [Pg 252] that I had been privileged to render aid."

"I thank you for what you have done, and now let's go to the others," quickly interposed the girl. But one effort to rest her weight upon her foot dissuaded her from any further immediate endeavor, and so she sought, unsuccessfully, to turn the conversation in other directions.

"Do you know," he repeated, "that I would like to render such service that you would never wish for any other servitor?"

"Please," said Dorothy, "let's talk about the wonderful view of sea and forest and the heaven above."

"I am intense in my admiration of all that is beautiful, and above all, permit me to say that I admire the beautiful Dorothy." She raised her hand in protest, but he continued. "May I quote for you a little gem that is aptly expressive of my sentiments?"

"Well," laughed Dorothy, quizzically looking at her foot, "I am at your mercy."

The man by her side did not venture to touch her hand, which rested on the bench almost

beside his own, but, with earnest intensity of his manner, he leaned forward and looked longingly, nay lovingly, into her eyes till they fell before his gaze. His face, handsome and animated, his voice musical and well modulated. Every word was spoken slowly as if to admit of certain assimilation. [Pg 253]

"May my Heaven be
A rosary bower,
With one sweet angel,
And that one—
Thee!"

There was a moment's pause.

"Miss Calvert," he went on, "I would that my heaven might begin on earth. It will, if you will be mine."

Dorothy, like all other girls, under similar circumstances, had felt for a moment the compliment of a man's love, then all at once she recalled the conversation between Alfy and her quondam lover, and with her quick intuition, she had recognized her possible inheritance as the probable cause of Mr. Dauntrey's sudden declaration. Still she would not be unkind.

"Oh, my foot pains me unbearably. Please, Mr. Dauntrey, get Alfy to come and help me."

"Just one little word of hope and I fly."

"No, Mr. Dauntrey, I can but say at once, and frankly and firmly, too, no," and with that she made pretense to such suffering from the injured foot that the suppliant for her hand had but, with the best grace he could muster, to comply with her very reasonable request. [Pg 254]

Dorothy, when the others came, was able, leaning lightly on Alfy's arm, to accompany them to the train, and soon was happily interested in the wonderful panorama spread before their eyes on the return journey.

The base of the mountain reached, there was some delay, and Mr. Dauntrey walked about with Ruth, the two in earnest conversation. Aunt Betty and Dorothy sat quietly, while the former made as presentable as she could the torn garment worn by the girl.

"You will have to discard this gown, and substitute for traveling your light mohair. Fortunately, the weather is warm enough now. You have not had it on for a long time." To Alfy was referred this decision, with results that will develop later.

Alfy was interested, albeit horrified, and held irresistibly spellbound, by the "sausage" man, selling, as the placard said, "Hot Dogs." A half dozen wooley canines were exhibited on the counter and elsewhere about, and when an order for a frankfurter sandwich was given, one of the dogs was grabbed up and caused to disappear into a mechanical contrivance with a large wheel, which was then turned and there were barkings and such grumblings as might be expected from an animal suffering dire and distressing annihilation. Then from an opening, the much aproned proprietor handed forth the promised sandwich. [Pg 255]

At the hotel that afternoon, the girl's injured foot was cared for by her aunt. "We want no medicine-man," she said, "for I know of the most effective home remedy, guaranteed to cure in twenty-four hours. I have secured the ingredients from the hotel kitchen."

"What may they be?" inquired Dorothy.

"Lard and salt. The former spread on, and about the injured ankle, and liberally sprinkled with salt. Then securely bandaged."

"It certainly is simple, and I will surely be able to play at the reception to-morrow afternoon?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"Aunty, we are so seldom by ourselves, and Ruth and Alfy have gone out. I want to have a long talk with you."

Dorothy lay resting, her injured foot supported, while her aunt sat beside her, caressingly stroking her hair and forehead. [Pg 256]

First, the young girl spoke of Mr. Dauntrey and of her experience of that day. The humorous aspect of the circumstances appealed alike to both. Then the inheritance was discussed, and Aunt Betty deplored again the unfortunate loss of the locket and the lacking

“insurmountable requirements,” in the way of some missing papers. Concerning the latter, Aunt Betty had some hopes that among her accumulated correspondence and documents at Bellevieu, there might be found helpful data bearing on the subject.

“Unless some good fortune is happily vouchsafed us,” deplored Aunt Betty sorrowfully, “I greatly fear that Bellevieu will be lost.”

“Mr. Van Zandt wrote, however,” encouraged Dorothy, “that it would be well worth while for us to go to England, and that personally presenting myself might ‘achieve results otherwise unattainable.’ You see, I have remembered his words.”

“I am determined upon that,” responded Aunt Betty, “and I am arranging that we shall go within a month after we get back east. I have a little surprise for you, too. Molly Breckenridge is going also. The judge has arranged for her expenses.” [Pg 257]

The reader, who would wish to still further follow the fortunes of our heroine will find in “Dorothy in England,” a volume of startling interest and sweet sentiment.

Dorothy was most appreciative of her aunt’s thoughtfulness, and now she unburdened her mind of her secret. She told her of her strong regard for Jim, of his expressed love for her, and of her own inability to just exactly determine if her feelings were the equivalent of his. She wished for Jim every happiness, and she shared in his ambitions. They had had a difference, and she was most unhappy, and yet there was an intangible something that restrained her from seeking a reconciliation.

The good, motherly woman, who was her confessor, knew perhaps better than the girl herself, the strength of her regard for Jim, and knew that the heart’s promptings are seldom influenced. With this wisdom for a guide, she counselled wisely and satisfyingly. Time, and right doing, would remedy and set square all that was untoward.

Folded in each other’s arms in harmony of feeling, they were suddenly broken in upon by [Pg 258] Alfy.

“What do you think,” she cried. “You told me to get out your light traveling dress. You had not worn it since that day of the fire in New York, and what do you think!” she excitedly repeated, “in the fold of the skirt I found this!” and she held forth the long missing locket.

So it unquestionably was. The gown had been put away, and in the folds of the skirt had been caught, and so long retained, the locket.

A word more and our story ends. The journey east was uneventful. At Baltimore, Aunt Betty and the girls said good-bye to Mr. Ludlow and Mr. Dauntrey. Ruth was to visit a day at Bellevieu and then go on with Alfy to New York.

THE END.

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