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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BRENDA'S WARD ***

Brenda's Ward

A Sequel to "Amy in Acadia"

By Helen Leah Reed

Author of "The Brenda Books," "Irma and Nap," "Amy in Acadia," etc.

**Illustrated from Drawings by
Frank T. Merrill**

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"As Martine courtesied her thanks for this compliment, she backed gracefully."

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["As Martine courtesied her thanks for this compliment, she backed gracefully"](#)

["The real Memorial is here,' said Elinor, reverently, passing from one tablet to another"](#)

"This little scarf—it is Roman, too,—is just the thing for Julius Cæsar"

"Aunt Nabby seemed to be making little dolls of clay"

"The old captain proved very talkative"

"While Martine was sketching, Clare fluttered about"

Brenda's Ward

CHAPTER I

A NEW HOME

"It's simply perfect."

"I thought you would like it, Martine."

"Like it! I should say so, but it isn't 'it,' it's everything,—the room, the house, you, Boston. Really, you don't know how glad I am to be here, Brenda—I mean Mrs. Weston."

"What nonsense!"

"That I should like things?"

"No, that you should call me 'Mrs. Weston.' It's bad enough to be growing old, so don't try to make me feel like a grandmother. Truly, I can't believe that I am a day older than when I was sixteen, and yet when I was sixteen, eighteen seemed the end of everything worth while. I could not imagine myself old, and serious, and—twenty."

Martine smiled at Brenda's emphasis of the last word, and as she smiled she laid her hand on her friend's arm.

"Come," she said, "just look in this mirror. A person who did not know could not tell which is the older, you or I."

"Again, nonsense!"

Yet even as she spoke Brenda could but admit to herself that Martine had an air of dignity suited to one much older than a girl of seventeen. But if she had thought Martine altogether grown up, she quickly changed her opinion, for at this very moment Martine sank on the floor beside her, and as her laughter re-echoed through the rooms Brenda was driven to say:

"My dear, don't talk to me about being grown up. You act precisely like a child of ten. What in the world is the matter?"

"Nothing, oh nothing; that is, almost nothing. Only look and you will laugh too."

Glancing where Martine pointed, Brenda saw something really amusing. Before a pier-glass in the hall a sallow girl with glossy black hair piled high on her head was standing. She wore a pink satin gown that heightened her sallowness. It was cut square in the neck, and her elbow sleeves displayed a pair of skinny arms.

"Who is she?" whispered Martine, recovering her breath.

"Why, that, oh that is Angelina."

Martine, fascinated by the vision in the glass, continued to watch the strange little figure, bowing, gesticulating, turning now to this side now to that, while her lips moved as if she were talking to herself.

"Who is Angelina?" asked Martine.

"Oh, Angelina, don't you know her? She is to help me for a week while Maggie is away taking care of her sick aunt."

"Do you call that 'helping'?" and again Martine pointed toward the pier-glass.

"She did not hear me come in; she thought I would ring," replied Brenda. "She thinks I am still downtown. She was to go to the door and has been waiting to hear me ring."

"Would she go to the door looking like that?"

"Oh, I hope not. She'd probably call through the tube and hurry on a coat, or do something of that kind. Yet no one is ever surprised at Angelina's doings. Let me tell you about her. Years ago Nora and some of the rest of us pulled her little brother Manuel from under the feet of a horse, and in a few days we went to visit the family at the North End. You can't imagine how poor they were.

Then we had a club and worked for a bazaar to raise money to get them out into the country."

"Oh, yes, Amy told me something about that, though it all happened before she knew you, I think she said."

"Well, in the end Angelina became my cousin Julia's protégée. She has learned a great deal about housework at the Mansion School, but she is always yearning for something beyond. Lately she has been taking lessons in elocution."

"That's it, then, she's rehearsing now," cried Martine. "Oh, I hope Maggie will stay away longer than you expect. I think we might have great sport with Angelina."

"My dear," remonstrated Brenda, "remember that for the present you are my ward. I can't have you trifling with Angelina, although she can be very funny."

The sound of voices had at last penetrated Angelina's ears, and she fled to her room.

"Oh, my," she thought, "I wonder if Mrs. Weston saw me?" In her secret heart Angelina hoped that she had been observed.

"And Miss Martine, she's almost as stylish as Mrs. Weston. I wonder what she thought of this dress—gown," she added, correcting herself. "I almost wish I'd been saying that soliloquy out loud. Then I could have asked them if they thought I used just the right inflections and gestures. Perhaps Miss Brenda would let me recite it all to her some time. She's more sympathetic than Miss Julia was. Now I know if I should ask Miss Julia she'd say I mustn't give that recital, and I'm sure she wouldn't approve of this gown. But Miss Brenda, why I shouldn't wonder if she'd go to it herself, and Miss Martine, I've heard how she spends money like water, and she'll probably buy a lot of tickets."

As Angelina fled to her room Martine, rising from the floor, sat down on a divan beside Brenda.

"If you wish to please me, do find another place for Maggie and keep Angelina. She'll be so entertaining, and poor Maggie always looks half ready to cry."

"Oh, I couldn't part with Maggie, and more than a week of Angelina would be too much even for you."

"Well, I will tell you at the end of this week. I am going to work so hard at school that I ought to have as much amusement as possible at home. Still I know I am going to be perfectly happy with you this winter, although I can remember the time when I should just have hated to spend a winter in Boston. Even now if it wasn't for you—"

"But you had decided to spend the winter here before you ran across me."

"No, my dear Mrs. Weston, my parents had decided that a year or two of Boston school would be the making of me. They had heard, as you know, of a dragon who had a boarding-house on the hill, who would look after me within an inch of my life. Wasn't it strange, though, that she should have been taken ill this autumn? I suppose you wouldn't let me say 'providential.'"

"Certainly not! She was so ill that she had to go South for the winter."

"Then that is providential for her. How much better the South must be for her than this bleak Boston. Besides, if she had been able to continue her home for helpless Western schoolgirls, I should not have had the delight of sharing your charming apartment."

"Nor should I have had the pleasure of the company of a charming ward."

As Martine courtesied her thanks for this compliment, she backed gracefully, and neither she nor Brenda realized that she was approaching too near a table of bric-à-brac, until it toppled over with a crash.

"Oh what have I done! No wedding presents smashed, I hope." There was a touch of dismay in Martine's voice.

"Not a thing that could break." Brenda's smile was reassuring. "Silver or brass, everyone of them. That's one thing I have already learned, not to have breakable things, if one values them, within anyone's reach. It's awfully disagreeable to have to blame anyone for what you could have prevented by a little care, and I never can let anybody replace what she has broken. Maggie is rather a breaker, and so my china and glass ornaments I set on high shelves."

The noise of the falling table brought Angelina upon the scene. She had made what Martine called a "lightning change," and appeared in a dark gown and spotless collar and cuffs.

"Why, are you in?" she said innocently, as she entered the room. "I didn't know but what it might be a burglar or something—" She looked from one to the other anxiously, and then catching sight of the overturned table, began to busy herself picking up the scattered ornaments.

"Oh, dear," sighed Brenda, "will Angelina ever learn to be perfectly honest?" But her only words alone were. "Yes, we have been in some time; I thought you might have heard us." The implied reproof silenced Angelina, and soon the three separated without a word having been said about the private rehearsal.

That the volatile Brenda Weston should undertake the charge of Martine Stratford for the winter

at first surprised many of their friends, and yet this had come about in a perfectly natural way. When Martine returned from her summer with Amy in Acadia, her mother, who met her in Boston, was so much better that it seemed almost possible for her to spend the winter at home. But at last her physician prescribed a few months of travel, and as Martine's school work had already been unduly interrupted, it was thought wiser for her to carry out the plans already more than half formed that she should stay in Boston to attend Miss Crawdon's school. It was therefore a disappointment to Mrs. Stratford just before school opened to hear that Mrs. Montgomery, Martine's so-called "dragon," was ill. For several years the latter had been in the habit of having a few girls from a distance board with her while they attended school in Boston. When Mrs. Montgomery could not take her, Martine's parents thought that they must altogether give up the Boston plan. Mrs. Blair, a cousin of Martine's mother, with whom she had stayed in the spring, was now in Europe. Mrs. Redmond, in whose charge they would have liked to put Martine, had engaged a boarding-place in Wellesley, to be near her daughter in college; and had there been no other reason against Martine's living in Wellesley also, her parents objected to her going back and forth daily on the trains. The case seemed hopeless for Martine's staying in Boston until Brenda Weston came to the rescue.

Brenda was for a few days at the large hotel overlooking the park, where also Mr. and Mrs. Stratford and Martine were staying. Martine had heard much of Brenda, though she had never met her until one afternoon when Amy came to call. Delighted to have the opportunity, she immediately introduced Brenda to her Chicago friends. This happened to be the very day when Martine was feeling most discouraged regarding her school plans. For although the young girl sometimes scoffed at Boston, she really wished to spend the winter there. Her summer's companionship with Amy and Priscilla had increased her ambition, and she was anxious to study at Miss Crawdon's.

Very naturally, then, she confided her troubles to Brenda. Brenda sympathized with her, but made no suggestion until she had talked the matter over with her own family and with Martine's mother. When Mrs. Stratford told Martine that Brenda had offered to take her under her wing for the winter, Martine, overjoyed, rushed to Brenda's room to express her thanks.

"I can't tell you how delighted I am at the thought of living with you in that dear little flat. It will be much more fun than anything else I could possibly do."

Brenda looked at her keenly, shaking her head in mock reproof.

"You are not coming to me just for fun. Your mother says that this must be a very serious year for you, that you did not do so very well in school last year, and that—"

"There, there, Brenda,—I mean Mrs. Weston, dear,—I can be terribly serious. You will see for yourself. But still you want me to have a *little* fun, just a little—"

"Oh, yes; I am not a regular dragon, but I understand the importance of work."

With a sudden movement Martine, who had been standing behind Brenda, threw her arms over Brenda's head, placed her hands over Brenda's mouth, thus silencing her for the moment.

"Now listen, listen," she cried; "listen, please! Of course I am only too glad to be your ward, and I will be as good as good can be. I would promise anything rather than go to boarding-school, or live with Mrs. Blair, or board in a house full of girls. Lucian hopes I'll stay in Boston because he is a little lonely sometimes at college, and I wish to stay with you, and you are so sweet to give me the chance that I really won't make any trouble for you."

So it was settled, and Mr. and Mrs. Stratford went home, quite satisfied to leave Martine in Brenda's care. They would have been better pleased had Mrs. Redmond been able to take complete charge of their daughter; but as it was, Mrs. Redmond promised to have Martine constantly in mind and to help her when any emergency arose.

It was Martine's one regret, when she took up her abode with Brenda, that she had not become Brenda's ward early enough in the season to help her furnish.

"It must have been such fun," she said one day soon after her arrival, "to shop for all these pretty things, and decide on wallpapers and rugs, and fit them into their little corners and nooks."

"You know I didn't have to go shopping for all my belongings; you have no idea what quantities of things were given me."

"Oh, I can imagine, just by looking around. Wedding presents are so fascinating."

"But still," continued Brenda, "there were certain things I had to buy, chairs and tables, for example, and it was hard sometimes to decide between Mission styles and mahogany, and whether the bedstead should be brass or painted iron for the smaller rooms; and then the kitchen furnishings were puzzling. Of course I'm not perfectly satisfied with everything, but, on the whole, we must be contented until we have a house."

"Oh, how can you speak of a house! This is ever so much better. It's the prettiest flat I ever saw; don't you just love to be up here in the top? You can see over everything, even to the river, and down the avenue and up the avenue; it's more like Paris than anything I've seen since I was in Europe."

"I do enjoy the view," replied Brenda. "I should hate to be shut in in a narrow street. I don't like it

here quite as well as in our old house on the water side of Beacon street, where my room had such a broad outlook."

"You must have hated to leave home."

"In a way I did, but though mamma tried to persuade me to stay with her this winter, I felt that I just must begin to keep house myself."

"You ought to be very happy that you are so near your mother." Martine spoke wistfully; although she wouldn't have admitted it for the world, she was beginning to be homesick. Chicago seemed altogether too far away.

"It is pleasant," replied Brenda, "to be able to run in and out there when I please. Besides, my sister and her children are there, and I am awfully fond of the little girls."

"Naturally. But that reminds me, though there isn't any real connection with what we've been talking about, you haven't shown me your kitchen. Can't we go out there now?"

"Why, yes,"—then Brenda's face clouded,— "if the cook—"

"Oh, Brenda Weston! You are afraid of the cook."

Brenda colored. "Not afraid; only you know cooks are so queer, and of course dinners have to be just so, and she's apt to spoil things if anything annoys her. But this is her afternoon out."

"Then we can go and look through everything," and Martine thereupon followed Brenda through the long narrow hall to the little kitchen at the very end of the suite.

"You see," explained Brenda, as they entered the cook's domain, "though this is not an old house, the kitchen needed some improvements that I learned are necessary when I lived at the Mansion. It's astonishing how many things men forget when they build houses. Now, out here, there was an old-fashioned closed-in wooden sink, but I had it replaced with this open one at our expense, and this tiling put all around the walls, and here, this was my idea and this," and one by one she pointed out many little things that might have escaped Martine's notice.

"I learned so much," continued Brenda, "that year at the Mansion School. You see a year ago last spring I was very low-spirited. Everything seemed so gloomy after the war began, so I went for a while to help Julia with her girls; and hardly anyone, hardly Julia herself, realized that I was learning. But I was, and somehow things that I didn't know I had noticed sank into my mind, and when we began to get this apartment ready, I was really practical; even my mother said so. Arthur was pleased, and my sister Anna was perfectly astonished. You know she has lived mostly in studios, or in houses where someone else did the planning, and this year at home with mother she has no responsibility, so she can't understand how I know so much about housekeeping."

"It *is* strange, it seems strange to me," responded Martine. "No one would ever expect you to know a thing."

"Why not? Do I appear a perfect ignoramus?" There was indignation in Brenda's tone.

"Oh, no, of course not; only kitchens are so different, so—well, I shouldn't expect you to know about kitchen work."

"Then, I confess, there's one thing I don't understand very well. I really cannot cook. Sometimes I think it's on account of the cooking class we used to have; it was too much like work, and so I didn't try to remember what I was taught. That's why I'm afraid of the cook, for if she should leave suddenly, I don't know what I should do."

"I know what *I'd* do," responded Martine, quickly. "I'd go to a restaurant; it's ever so much more fun than dining at home. Why, when I was visiting my cousin in New York, we went somewhere nearly every evening. Of course there isn't a Sherry's or a Waldorf-Astoria here—"

"Oh, I don't want to dine at restaurants when I've a house of my own. Besides, I'm going to learn—look!" and Brenda opened the door of a small closet. "These are all electric things," and she pointed to a row of silver kettles and chafing-dishes. "We have two plugs in the dining-room wall and can cook almost anything without going into the kitchen. But come, I've something to show you in my own room now." As they turned away Martine exclaimed, "If you have a good recipe book, with all those shiny saucepans, I'm sure you needn't care whether you have a cook or not."

"I'm not so sure," responded Brenda, "and I can't help being just a little afraid."

"Pshaw! How absurd!—as if you could really be afraid of anything," retorted Martine with a smile.

Now, interesting though Martine found her life under Brenda's roof, she soon realized that her winter was not to be one wholly of pleasure. Her studies had been carried on so irregularly for a year or two that she now perceived that she must settle down to regular work. School had been in session a week or two before she returned to Miss Crawdon's; this fact was not altogether in her favor, and she found herself a little behind the girls in her class. But Martine was resolute, and when she once set herself at a task in genuine earnest, she was likely to go ahead with a will. So, for the first month she studied diligently; it was to her advantage that she had not many Boston acquaintances.

Brenda, in her new position of guide and philosopher as well as friend, gave Martine much good advice. One day in a serious mood she expressed the hope that Martine would not think of ending her studies at Miss Crawdon's school.

"It's astonishing," she said, "how many girls are beginning to fit for college, though when I was in school many of us thought my cousin Julia queer because she studied Greek and wished to go to Radcliffe; yet really she wasn't queer at all, only rather more interesting than most people."

"I should like so much to see her, everyone seems so fond of her," responded Martine. "When will she come back from Europe?"

"Not before summer, I think. She worked so hard at the Mansion School last year that we all hope she'll get all she can out of this journey. She's studying, of course, for she never can be perfectly idle; but I am glad to say that she has gone back to her music, for that is the thing she has the most talent for."

"Oh, dear," sighed Martine, "how delightful it must be to know that you have a talent for anything. It seems to me sometimes that I haven't a particle of talent. I can do several things passably well, but no one thing better than another. Mother thinks that the Boston air is going to develop some special talent of mine, but which or what, nobody knows. For my own part, as I said before, I am sure that I have no talent."

"Don't be so severe toward yourself," expostulated Brenda. "I am sure of one thing—you have a talent for being pleasant and amusing."

"I'm not quite sure that that is exactly a compliment."

"But, really, I mean it to be one."

CHAPTER II

A STRANGE MEETING

One Saturday morning after a rainy Friday, Martine looked out the window.

"How refreshing to have a fine day again. Really, when it poured yesterday I thought it would rain forever, and I had such a funny adventure, Brenda Weston, that if you hadn't been out when I came home I should have told you on the spot. Adventures are like buckwheat cakes, so much better when they are fresh from the griddle, and this was a kind of frying-pan affair."

"I am afraid I don't understand. What was it?"

"Something that happened after the Rehearsal. I slipped away from Priscilla and her aunt and there was a great crowd going down the steps yesterday, so that of course I got separated from Priscilla and her aunt."

"It seems to me that's a way you have," Brenda tried to speak severely.

"Oh, yes," sighed Martine, "Mrs. Tilworth is quite resigned now. Generally I separate myself from her only about every other week, but yesterday I wanted some soda water, and I knew she would never condescend to go into a drug shop or let Priscilla go with me. However, when I was once in the street the rain was falling in such torrents that I made a beeline for a Crosstown car that I saw coming. I had had some trouble in getting away from Mrs. Tilworth, for she kept not only her eagle eye, but her arm on me as long as she could; she meant to bring me home in a cab, but after all I managed to wriggle away. I don't know why I thought I ought to run for my car, but I did, and so did another girl, only the trouble was, that she was coming from the opposite direction. Of course you can see what happened. I didn't mean to knock her down, for she was shorter than I and we were both furious."

"Because she was shorter than you?"

"Oh, I don't see now why we were both so mad, only she knocked my hat off, that one with the light blue feathers, and it went sailing down the asphalt, and my umbrella jabbed into her face. 'You're terribly clumsy; I should think you might see what you're doing. You might have put my eye out,' I heard her say in the savagest kind of a tone. Just then I caught sight of my hat, and all I could do was to laugh and laugh, and she thought I was laughing at her, and turned her back on me in a regular frigid Boston way, holding her handkerchief to her eye."

"How could so much happen while two people were getting on a car?"

"Getting on a car! Naturally we missed the car. It didn't wait for us to settle matters. I suppose that was partly what made her so cross. But I wish you could have seen my hat when finally I picked it up."

"I'm glad I didn't, if it was ruined. I have some responsibility for your clothes. No wonder Mrs. Tilworth tries to keep her eye on you!"

"She has to try pretty hard, I can assure you," retorted Martine.

"You should take things more seriously," rejoined Brenda. "In future please come home at least as far as Copley Square with her and Priscilla, but now—yes, now let us go in and look at the table." And with her hand in Brenda's arm, Martine led the way to the dining-room. The sight that met her eye there was indeed well worth seeing. The polished surface of the round mahogany table shone like a mirror. Covers were laid for nine and the centrepiece and doilies were embroidered in yellow. In a tall green glass in the middle were some large yellow chrysanthemums. The bonbons were in little gilded baskets and the china had yellow blossoms on a white ground.

With housewifely pride Brenda adjusted the blinds. "Yes," she said, "I think that everything will go just as it should. Elinor Naylor, you see, is a sister of one of Arthur's best college friends. I should like to have asked her to dine, but the cousin she is staying with has an engagement for her this evening, and as Arthur will be away next week, a luncheon was the best thing I could manage."

"Oh, it's just the thing," cried Martine; "dinners are so stiff. With the boys coming in to take us out to Cambridge, a luncheon will be far jollier than any dinner."

"I hope so," replied Brenda, "and I wonder what this Elinor Naylor is like. She was out when I called, but she writes a beautiful note, and from what I have heard, I imagine that she is rather stately and elegant. But dear me, it's nearly twelve, and with luncheon at one we shall really have to hurry." So with a few last touches to the table Brenda and Martine went to their rooms, and long before one, Brenda, with some trepidation, was waiting in the library for the arrival of her special guest. The Harvard boys, however, were the first to arrive—Fritz Tomkins, and Martine's brother Lucian, and Robert Pringle, Lucian's classmate. Next came Priscilla and Amy, the former somewhat abashed at hearing the laughter from the little library, and wondering if she could be late, until Amy reassured her. Priscilla bore some good-natured chaffing from her host, who seeing her glance at her watch, could not forbear teasing her.

"Yes," he said, "I can read the workings of a guilty conscience. Here we've been waiting for you this long time. The goose is burning up in the oven—"

"There isn't any goose in the house, Arthur, except you," protested Brenda.

"I am so sorry," began Priscilla, apologetically. "It was because Amy—"

"Don't throw the blame on another," protested Mr. Weston, solemnly.

"I don't mean to blame her. We both thought it was earlier, and besides," fortified by a glance at her watch, Priscilla spoke with more decision, "my watch says 'a quarter before one.'"

"That's what our clock says too," interposed Brenda, kindly. "Arthur was only teasing. Our guest, evidently, does not mean to be too early."

"If she's like her brother, she's a punctilious person and will arrive promptly at five minutes before one."

Strange to say, the longer hand had just marked five minutes of one when Angelina announced "Miss Elinor Naylor." A minute or two later the young lady entered the room, and after the other introductions had been made, Martine's turn came last.

As she greeted all the others, Miss Elinor Naylor had extended her hand very cordially, but when Brenda led Martine to her, her arm fell automatically to her side. Martine at the same time reddened deeply, and it was not often that Martine was so perceptibly embarrassed. Each girl, however, said a polite word or two, and in a few moments all went out to the little dining-room.

After they were seated, the conversation at first was not general, and I am afraid that anyone who had overheard the words exchanged between any two speakers might have called what was said rather commonplace. In a short time, however, some question arose regarding a recent Yale victory, and at once Arthur and Fritz plunged into an ardent discussion in which, soon, all took part.

"Oh, of course," said Arthur; "it's more than six to one. I know you are all against me. I can't even depend on Brenda, and so, Miss Naylor, I must turn to you as my one supporter in this controversy."

"You can depend on me," replied the guest; "whatever a Yale man says is bound to be true."

"The real Yale spirit," commented Martine. "I didn't know that girls had it as well as their brothers."

There was an unamiable tinge in Martine's tone that Brenda, too much occupied with things more important, did not notice. The more observant Arthur, however, had seen that Martine and Elinor had had little to say to each other, although they had been placed at table where they could easily have said more.

"You two young things," he said at last, "by which I mean our visitors from Chicago and Philadelphia, look at each other as if you had met before and were afraid to speak until you had found the clew to the previous meeting. Is that the case?"

Elinor was silent, but after a second Martine replied,

"No, not exactly; that is—" Then Martine came to a pause suddenly and answered some question

that Robert Pringle, on her right hand, had asked her. Any embarrassment that she or Elinor might have felt was speedily ended by something with which they personally had nothing to do.

Now it happened that although Maggie had returned to her post of duty in Brenda's household, the latter had decided that things would move more smoothly with two waitresses, and so Angelina had been called in to assist at the little luncheon. All would have gone on well had not a spirit of emulation taken possession of the two helpers, so that each seemed anxious to reach Elinor first. Twice, as they entered through the swing door, one almost abreast of the other, although Brenda had previously given them their directions, they both started to serve the special guest with her oysters, and only Brenda's warning glance prevented Maggie's plate from being placed on top of the one that Angelina had already set before Elinor. This incident ruffled the spirits of the two waitresses, and when they entered with their cups of bouillon, each was determined to reach Elinor before the other. The result of their exertions might have been more disastrous. As it was, Elinor did not suffer, though Martine, looking up suddenly, expected to see Maggie's cup splash over Elinor's light gown. Luckily—for Elinor—Maggie lost her nerve soon enough to drop her bouillon cup to the floor, and though the crash of china and the splash of liquid on the polished floor startled all at the table, Elinor escaped a drenching.

Although everyone knew that there had been an accident, everyone tried to look unconcerned. Maggie, crestfallen, gathered up the pieces; Angelina, with her head high, as if such a catastrophe could never occur to her, went back to the kitchen for other cups—and only Martine giggled.

"Your best Dresden," murmured Amy to Brenda. The latter shook her head. Arthur glanced at her approvingly.

"And mistress of herself, though china fall," and at the hackneyed quotation, all smiled. Then the luncheon went on for two courses with only one waitress, for Maggie had betaken herself to her sure refuge, a flood of tears, and she returned only with the salad.

"Now," said Mr. Weston, "since the ice is broken—I mean, the china—you can see how much livelier we are. During the oysters you were altogether too quiet for young people, and I wondered if this was wholly because your host is a Yale man. It's painful to me sometimes to find myself in the midst of a Harvard crowd."

"Oh, we are magnanimous, and since you've become a Bostonian, we can forgive you Yale's recent football victory," replied Fritz.

"Then I can confess that my cheering played a large part in gaining the victory. I try to be as modest as I can about it," responded Arthur Weston.

"Wait till the baseball season comes," interposed Robert Pringle, "and then you'll see another side of Yale."

"I wish we girls could have seen the game," cried Martine. "I can't see why they played it at New Haven; it was the one Saturday of the whole autumn when I had to stay in Boston."

"Why, it was New Haven's turn to have the game; you know Harvard and Yale have them on their own fields every other year," said Elinor, as if explaining something that Martine did not understand.

"Oh, indeed," began Martine, sarcastically; then, remembering that she was to a degree Elinor's hostess, she murmured in an aside to Robert, "As if I did not know that better than she."

"It's strange," continued Elinor, in a placid tone, "that I know so little of Harvard; we generally rush through Boston on our way to Bar Harbor. Once we drove round, one hot summer day in vacation, but I can only remember a Memorial Hall and some queer old brick buildings." Possibly Elinor's adjectives did not please Martine, for the latter spoke up quickly.

"They're not queer, but historic; we think everything of Harvard here in Boston."

"Oh, naturally," replied Elinor, in her most languid tone.

"So say we all of us," cried Robert Pringle, while Amy and Fritz, who had been carrying on an animated discussion, looked up quickly. "What's wrong?" asked Fritz, innocently.

"Nothing, nothing," and Brenda, hastening to change the subject, asked suddenly, "Did you bring your automobile, Lucian?"

"Of course. I only wish I could take you all to Cambridge in it."

"Who's going in which?" asked Amy a little later, as they stood at the door, before which were Lucian's automobile and Robert Pringle's dogcart.

"Oh, the automobile for me!" cried Martine, impulsively.

"Will you go in the automobile?" asked Lucian politely, turning toward Elinor.

"Yes, indeed, I should like to, thank you," replied the guest.

"Priscilla is coming in the dogcart with me," said Mr. Weston.

"Then I think I'll drive with Priscilla," added Martine.

"Such affection!" exclaimed Amy. "To give up the automobile because you prefer Priscilla's company!"

"It isn't that I like Rome more, but Cæsar less," rejoined Martine, garbling her quotation and looking toward the automobile, where Elinor had already taken her seat.

Amy understood, and decided to give Martine a bit of advice at the first opportunity; for the present she and Brenda, with Fritz and Lucian, went in the automobile with Elinor, while Arthur and Robert Pringle accompanied Martine and Priscilla. The automobile speeded out through the Avenue across a corner of Brighton, that Elinor might have a good view of Soldiers Field. The dogcart proceeded over Harvard Bridge, and Martine tried to make Priscilla take a wager as to which vehicle would first reach the College Yard.

When at last, however, they drew up before the Johnston Gate, Lucian and his party were waiting there, having left the automobile at the garage.

"As we're going to explore these unknown regions on foot," said Lucian, "we can't allow you to drive haughtily around. There's a boy, Robert, to take your trap over to the stable. And so," he added, after Martine and Priscilla had alighted, "the elephant now goes round, the band begins to play; in other words, let the procession move in through the great gate. It was given by a Chicago man," he concluded. "That's why I'm proud to have you see it."

After the gate had received its share of admiration, "Here are your 'queer old brick buildings,' Miss Naylor," cried Fritz. "Every brick has a history, but I can't show you the college pump. It was blown up by anarchists, who probably meant to blow up one of the buildings."

"How shocking!" said the sympathetic Elinor.

"That they did not blow up the buildings?"

"Oh, no, but that they should behave so badly. I trust they were punished."

"Oh, they were blown up too."

"Really?"

Although Elinor gazed directly at Fritz, there was no suspicion in her calm blue eye.

"Doesn't she remind you of my cousin, Edith Blair?" whispered Martine to Amy.

"I can't say that they look much alike."

"Oh, Amy, please don't be literal, too. I mean she believes everything Fritz says, and between him and Mr. Weston she'll have a hard time."

"And a strange opinion of Harvard," added Brenda, who had joined the two speakers.

As the majority of the party, including Elinor, were now out of hearing, Brenda thought this a good time to ask Martine to explain her prejudice against Elinor, "who seems a pleasant and dignified girl," she concluded.

"Yes, that's it; she's too dignified for her size, she ought to be bright and jolly and—"

"But remember, please, that she's among strangers. You can't dislike her simply because she's quiet and dignified, so you might as well confess."

"Well, then," replied Martine, "if I must, I must; but you'll understand, when I tell you that she's the girl who knocked my hat off."

Amy looked puzzled and Brenda smiled as she responded, "Oh, the girl whom you tried to knock down with your umbrella. I suppose that is what has made that scratch on her face. No wonder she is on her dignity with you."

"I shouldn't have cared," retorted Martine, "if she hadn't refused to shake hands with me to-day. Surely everyone must have noticed that, and it's she who ought to apologize for destroying my third best hat."

Then, as she recalled the sight of the hat with the pale blue feathers sliding along on the asphalt, Martine laughed heartily, and from that moment, in her mind, all was peace between her and Elinor.

"I didn't mean to get so far ahead," explained Lucian, as the others came up to the spot where he and Fritz were standing with Elinor. "But Miss Naylor is delighted with Holden."

"Yes," murmured Elinor, "it is the cunningest little building! I should like to pick it up and carry it off as a souvenir. It's too bad that it isn't the very oldest of all the buildings now standing."

"No, Massachusetts has that honor, but Holden is the first to take its name from an English benefactor," said Fritz.

"It seems too bad that nothing remains of the original Harvard, but the fire of 1764 swept them all away. Massachusetts is older than that, and so are one or two others now standing. The old buildings are not particularly beautiful," Robert Pringle apologized.

"But they look like New England," interrupted Martine, "so practical and business-like and

angular; that's why I like them."

"There must be some interesting stories connected with them," said Elinor, sentimentally.

"Oh, yes, stories, quantities of them. What would you like to hear?" asked Fritz, with an eagerness that showed he was ready to manufacture any tale or legend that Elinor might desire.

"Did the college go on during the Revolution?" asked Elinor. "I know Washington had his headquarters in Cambridge."

"The library was sent up to Andover for safety, and the students to the Concord Reformatory."

"Oh, Fritz," protested Amy, "if you are not careful, Miss Naylor will believe you."

"Why not?" asked Fritz, innocently. "It's history that they were sent to Concord, and why not to the Reformatory? They must have needed it, if they were like some of the present students, and they would have been sent there surely had Concord possessed a reformatory in those benighted years."

Upon this Lucian insisted that Miss Naylor must accept him only as her Harvard guide; otherwise she would get an utterly wrong impression.

"Let me tell you," he began, "about the squirrels. Really, they are of more consequence than most other dwellers in the Yard. They will eat anything, from mushrooms to pâté de foie gras, and although it's rather expensive, we try to give them whatever they demand. The tree trunks here are probably filled with treasures that they have hidden away; some of them even are fond of books, and I heard of one who had an intimate acquaintance with Greek roots. No nuts are too hard for them to crack; they are real philosophers, and here," he cried as he threw some acorns on the grass, "they are so tame one doesn't have even to throw salt on their tails to catch them."

Upon this, with a deft movement, he picked up a bushy-tailed gray squirrel that had been attracted by the bait he had thrown down, and as he held it toward Elinor, "Here," he exclaimed, "if you wish a souvenir of Harvard, is the real thing," and extending his arm, he pressed the little creature's head against Elinor's cheek. Then, to everyone's surprise, Elinor Naylor, the dignified Miss Elinor Naylor of Philadelphia, screamed loudly, and turning her back on Lucian, ran up to Martine, who happened to be nearest her, and laid her head on Martine's arm, crying loudly, "Take it away, take it away, it's just like a big rat."

Lucian, decidedly crestfallen at this little episode, let the squirrel whisk itself away, while he walked up to Elinor to offer his apologies. In his heart he was saying, "Thank heaven that Martine has some nerve," and Martine herself, by a sudden revulsion of feeling, at once became the champion of the girl she had recently been criticising.

Elinor accepted Lucian's apologies very graciously. "I know that I am foolish," she said, "but I never have liked those little creepy animals; they all seem to be like rats and mice, except at a distance."

"You were certainly very thoughtless, Lucian." Martine spoke in a tone of deep reproof, and during the remainder of their walk she had Elinor hanging on her arm.

The suite of rooms occupied by Lucian and Robert Pringle was in a dormitory outside the Yard, in the neighborhood of the old ballground, Jarvis Field. To reach it the party went across the Memorial Delta, past the statue of John Harvard—concerning which the boys had various strange tales to tell—and along a quiet street on which were several other dormitories.

"How delightful! This suite is much more attractive than Joe's rooms at Yale, as I remember them," cried Elinor.

"Yes," sighed Arthur Weston, "Joe and I were not sybarites. We went in for hard work, plain living, and high thinking," and he looked reproachfully toward Lucian and Robert.

"We work too, I can assure you," insisted Robert. "Of course we had to furnish up a little."

"Work! I should say so," added Lucian. "Don't judge us by our surroundings."

"We'll try not to," retorted Martine, "for this tea-table is almost too ladylike for two tall boys like you."

"Oh, when we're alone we never look at the tea-table. We fold it up and keep it in the closet. Today we brought it out only for you girls," and Lucian bowed profoundly to his guests.

"I think that your belongings are rather frivolous," and Brenda took the little silver tea caddy in her hand.

"Oh, I picked that up in Holland; it's a mere trifle," cried Robert.

"These things are wasted on boys," added Martine, examining the little coffee spoons that lay on the tray.

Amy, walking round the room, gazed critically at the two or three water-color sketches and the fine photographs hanging on the walls, and she thought that the easy-chairs, the broad divan, and all the other handsome belongings were really too elaborate for the rooms of boys under twenty.

"But there's one good thing," she said aloud; "you have plenty of books, Lucian, and you have made an excellent choice in many cases."

"Yes," replied Lucian, "thanks to Fritz, our library has made a good beginning; he took it in hand last spring, and what do you think? Fritz says that if it hadn't been for you, he couldn't have helped us half as well. So, Miss Amy Redmond, when you praise our library, indirectly you praise yourself."

Before their hour in Lucian's room was over, few things in the sitting-room had escaped the scrutiny of the three younger girls. They handled the steins on the mantelpiece, read the certificates of membership in various clubs and athletic societies, and admired the photographs of all, and finally Martine struck up a few chords on the piano, which Lucian and Robert recognizing, accompanied with a jolly college song. At Lucian's request Priscilla made tea, and although, while the water was boiling, she wondered whether she would remember just what proportion of tea should be used for each cup of water, she passed through the ordeal successfully and was highly praised for her skill.

When the boys indiscreetly offered Elinor her choice among the sights they might see before their return to the city, Elinor too promptly chose the Botanic Garden. In spite of their sophomoric air of worldly wisdom, Robert and Lucian could not quite conceal their dismay at this suggestion, especially as she expressed a desire to see the Shakespeare garden, of which they knew nothing.

"In that case I fear that you will have to lose the glass flowers, as the garden is in just the opposite direction," said Lucian, politely.

"The glass flowers!" cried Elinor, perceiving that her former suggestion had not been received with favor. "Why, of course I would much rather see the glass flowers." And so the whole party set out toward the great museum.

"Not to throw cold water on the efforts of Lucian to guide you to the best that Cambridge offers," said Fritz, "I must tell you that a visit to the glass flowers is almost commonplace. They share with tourists from afar the attraction of Bunker Hill; in the minds of many not to have seen the glass flowers is not to have seen Cambridge. If you wish to be original, pass them by."

"Thank you," replied Elinor; "but really I never have cared especially to be original."

Later, after Elinor had seen not only the glass flowers but many of the other treasures in the great museum, she admitted that even Yale had little better to offer. From the museum the party went on to Memorial Hall.

"It's a pity that you cannot wait a little longer, it would be such fun to see the students at dinner," sighed Martine, for whom human nature always had more interest than tablets and pictures.

"I should love to stay, but I promised to be at my cousin's before six. Yet there is so much to see here in Memorial, these windows and portraits are so fascinating, that it's very hard to go away without studying them all more carefully."

Elinor had barely time for a glance at the portraits and the stained glass windows in the great hall.

"It's the finest hall I ever saw," said the girl from Philadelphia; "I like everything about it except —"

"Except what? This is an age of improvements, and if you'll just mention what you have in mind, so far as Lucian and I can carry out your suggestion it shall be accomplished," and Robert Pringle bowed low to Elinor. Elinor seemed so embarrassed by this mock courtesy that Martine hastened to her rescue. The older members of the party were out of hearing.

"You are as great a tease now as Lucian. I could mention dozens of things that could be done to improve Memorial Hall, handsome as it is." Martine cast about in her mind for something to strengthen her assertion. Up to this moment she had never realized any special imperfection in the great building. But now—

"For example!" she exclaimed emphatically, "just look at these dining-tables in a hall like this. It's casting your pearls before swine. They ought to be taken away."

"Well, I'm glad that Robert and I board at a club table. I should hate to be included in your group of swine, whom you wish to have taken away—"

"Oh, Lucian!"

It was now Elinor's turn to come to Martine's rescue.

"Why, that is just what I meant. I think that the tables ought to be taken away. It seems a pity that Memorial Hall should be a mere dining-room. I should like to see it quite clear of them."

"Then you must come here Class Day. Can't you wait for ours? I'll show you Memorial Hall as it should be—filled with youth and beauty dancing, and not a tablecloth in sight."

"Oh, it doesn't seem the place for dancing either," and Elinor gazed solemnly at one of the class windows, on which were portrayed Epaminondas and Sir Philip Sidney, as examples of valor.

"You must remember, Miss Naylor, that in the long waits between courses, the undergraduates who board here have a fine chance to study these windows, with their lessons of patriotism and valor. This food for reflection goes a long way toward making them forget the real nature of the food served here—"

"Come, come, Robert! Remember you are talking to a Yale girl, and not an ingenuous Harvard maiden. We must not have derogatory reports get abroad."

But Elinor and Martine had no intention of wasting their time listening to Robert's nonsense, and were now pushing through the doors into the transept.

"The real Memorial is here," said Elinor, reverently, passing from one tablet to another, on which were inscribed the names of those Harvard men who fell in the Civil War.



"The real Memorial is here," said Elinor, reverently, passing from one tablet to another.

"A short life hath Nature given to man, but the remembrance of a life nobly rendered up is eternal!" she murmured, translating one of the inscriptions on the wall.

"Oh!" sighed Martine. "How wonderful that you can translate Latin at sight! I have taken a tremendous fancy to Latin, but now I'm only in the beginning of Virgil, and I have to look up every other word, and you are not much older than I."

In her admiration for Elinor's ability, she wondered if Elinor had realized the prejudice she had felt when they started on their drive. How strange that in a few hours her feeling toward anyone should change so completely.

Lucian and Robert, slightly bored by the girls' interest in the inscriptions, walked to the door, where they almost ran into Brenda, Fritz, and the rest of the party, who had been strolling through the Yard.

"Your vehicles are here!" cried Fritz. "They are just around the corner—"

"Good enough," responded Lucian. "It's rather boresome taking visitors around Memorial—Oh, they won't hear!" he concluded, as Brenda raised a warning finger. "Come, Martine," he cried in a louder voice, "we are all waiting."

Reluctantly Elinor and Martine turned toward the others. Each had just made the discovery that her companion was a very entertaining girl.

"Who's going in the auto?" asked Lucian.

"Oh, Elinor and I, certainly."

Martine was some distance ahead of Elinor.

"But I thought that was why you scorned the auto coming out to Cambridge—because you didn't wish to ride with Elinor."

"Oh, everything is changed now. She is one of the most charming girls."

"Then she has forgiven you for knocking her down and hitting her with your umbrella?"

"Why, we haven't even spoken of it, though she knows that I know that she—"

"Come, girls, tumble in!" cried Lucian, and Lucian had so many remarkable Harvard tales to tell as they speeded along that neither had time to refer to the rainy-day episode and their first strange meeting.

CHAPTER III

PRISCILLA'S PRIDE

"Why, I never lose my temper! What do you mean?"

"That *is* what I mean. You seldom lose your temper; I should hardly say 'never.' Neither does Priscilla."

"Well, then, why won't she let me pay for the photographs?" Martine looked keenly at Amy, who had been spending an hour with her that afternoon, as if she expected to read the answer in her friend's eyes.

"I cannot tell you Priscilla's reasons, but her spirit of independence."

"Spirit of independence! Boys of '76! How tired I am of American history! Priscilla is just like one of her own Pilgrim Fathers—only more so. Probably any one of them would have let a friend pay for one of those neat silhouettes, especially if the friend had insisted on having it made, or taken, or cut, or whatever it was that they did to make silhouettes; but Priscilla is a great deal harder than Plymouth Rock, and that is saying no little."

"All the same, you and Priscilla will have to settle this affair for yourselves," and rising from her seat, after a few words of farewell, Amy left Martine to reflect on the matter they had been discussing.

Now the dispute between Priscilla and Martine, if worth dignifying by so serious a name, was not of a kind likely to make lasting trouble between friends. For some time Martine had been teasing Priscilla to have her photograph taken, and Priscilla had never given a decided answer. At last one day, as they passed a fashionable gallery, Martine had insisted that the two should go in merely to look at samples of the photographer's work. On the impulse Martine decided that it would be great fun for them to be taken together. Vainly Priscilla protested that her costume was not suitable, that she didn't feel in the mood for sitting; Martine carried her point and two or three negatives were made of Priscilla and Martine sitting or standing, side by side. Then two or three were made of the two girls, each by herself. When the proofs were sent home, the photographs of Priscilla were exceedingly good. But Priscilla hesitating about ordering the finished pictures, she did not give the whole reason to Martine. Her hesitation came from the fact that the artist was expensive and that she had already exceeded her allowance for Christmas presents.

"I do not think that I can really afford them," she said at last to Martine one day, when the latter asked her if she had made her choice among the negatives. "I should simply love," she added, "to have some for my mother and a few of my relations Christmas, but I shall have to wait a little before deciding."

Yet while she spoke she retained in her hand one proof that seemed to meet her approval.

"Then this is the one you prefer?" said Martine, taking it gently in her own hand.

"Yes, I haven't had a photograph since I was a small girl, but I am sure that mother would be delighted with this one."

A week later a box came by mail to Priscilla. Opening it she found not only a half dozen of the photographs in which she and Martine were taken together, but also a dozen of the single heads, finished in the most expensive style. For a moment she was rather upset by the packet. "Of course there's some mistake," she said. "The man must have thought that I meant to give an order like Martine's, but I can never in the world afford these, and mother would be displeased with me for ordering them. There is only one thing—I'm sure to have some money given me at Christmas, and I can use some, or all of it, to pay this bill."

No bill was contained in the package, and after a few days, when Priscilla went to the photographer's to ask for it, she was told that it was already paid. Then she sought Martine, who

did not deny that she had paid the bill.

"Why, it was the proper thing for me to do," she said. "It was I who had the photographs taken, and I who ordered them finished. I can't see that you have much to do with the matter now, except to send the photographs as Christmas cards. I can tell you they'll go like hot cakes, for they are just as good as they can be."

But Priscilla was firm, and though Martine tried to be firmer, she could not get her friend to promise to accept the pictures as a gift.

"They are really not a gift, either," urged Martine, "for I myself wanted to be in a group with you, and you stood there only to oblige me; so certainly you've earned something for your trouble, and as to the single heads, I wanted a separate picture of you, and while the photographer was about it, it didn't cost much more for a dozen than for one."

Again Priscilla presented her side, adding only that she must ask Martine to wait until after Christmas for the sum she had spent.

"If I didn't like the photographs," she concluded, "the whole thing would be different; but I do like them, and I can send them away as Christmas gifts, and so I must pay the bill."

"But it came to me."

"For my photographs?"

"No, for mine; I had them taken. They wouldn't have been printed if I hadn't ordered them."

"Oh, but mine are mine."

"Why, of course they are yours—at least all that were sent to your house."

"I can't bear to be obliged to anyone else for them."

"That's one of your greatest faults, Priscilla; you hate to be obliged to anybody for anything."

So for the present the discussion was dropped, though each friend was determined that in the end she would carry her own point.

This steadfast holding to her purpose was what Martine called Priscilla's "ill-temper," in describing the affair to Amy. Though she inwardly approved of her friend's independence, she felt that after she had approved of it Priscilla ought then to be ready to yield to her.

"It is strange," she said, "that I can never get Priscilla to accept anything from me. 'Pride goeth before destruction,' and that will be the way with Priscilla. Something will surely happen to her if she keeps on like this."

In the early summer, a few months before, Priscilla and Martine had first become really acquainted, when as travelling companions they made a journey with Amy and her mother. For some time the two seemed far from congenial; each looked at life from a very different standpoint. Priscilla, brought up rather strictly and economically, prided herself, perhaps unduly, on her unworldliness, and found it hard to understand the extravagant, fun-loving Martine. But each girl at last accepted the other's good qualities, and before they had left Canadian soil the two had begun to be good friends. When Martine's plans were finally settled, Priscilla was delighted that she and the young Chicagoan were to be at the same school.

Now Priscilla, although for a long time she had spent several weeks of each year in Boston with her aunt, Mrs. Tilworth, had made few friends among the girls of her own age whose parents her mother or her aunt knew. Her natural shyness stood in her way when they came to call on her, and when she returned their calls she progressed no further.

Often she was invited to their parties, and when she could not escape it, she accepted their invitations. Though she took part in their games in a quiet way, no one paid much attention to the pale little girl who always seemed ill at ease.

One awful day Mrs. Tilworth decided that she must give a party for Priscilla; in vain Priscilla protested that she hated parties. The invitations were written and sent out, and on the appointed afternoon Priscilla, in a ruffled muslin gown, had to stand beside her aunt to receive her guests. When she had safely passed through this ordeal she slipped away to a corner, where she sat for a while looking on. When she found that no one tried to draw her out, she managed to slip still farther away. "They don't need me," she murmured. Later, when they looked for her, that she might take her place at the head of the table—for it was a children's party, with a sit-down supper at six o'clock—there was a great uproar when she could not be found. At last two or three of the children went to Priscilla's room, and entering without knocking, they saw her seated in an easy-chair by the droplight on the little centre table. She was so engrossed in the book she was reading that at first she did not hear them, and when one of them snatched the volume out of her hand to read the title, they discovered that it was a little history of Mary Queen of Scots.

"Those children tired me," she explained later to her aunt. "They played so hard, and I just thought I'd go upstairs and read for a while."

Somehow the story got out. Mrs. Tilworth repeated it to one of the older girls, and for a long time Priscilla was called behind her back "Mary Queen of Scots," only someone said, "She will never

lose her head, her neck is so stiff."

Martine, when Brenda told her of this story, could not help laughing, in spite of her desire to be loyal to her friend.

"Priscilla is still stiff-necked," she said, "but already since she's had my acquaintance she's been forced to unbend a little, and before another summer comes round her education will be much further advanced."

Priscilla was conscious of her own shyness, and often envied those girls who seemed to have so much fun together.

"I shouldn't expect Priscilla to be very cheerful while she lives with Mrs. Tilworth; the house is really gloomy; it has plenty of windows, but the curtains are always pulled down, and the furniture is so heavy and primly arranged that it naturally affects Priscilla's disposition."

What Martine said was true to a great extent. Mrs. Tilworth's house was halfway up the hill, not so very far from the Mansion School, but its whole aspect, inside and out, was far less attractive than Mrs. DuLaunuy's. It was furnished in the heavy style of about fifty years ago, lacking the elegance of real antiquity. Priscilla's room was large and overfurnished, with its great black walnut bedstead and marble-top table and heavy rocking-chairs. But it wasn't exactly a young girl's room, and the gilt-framed steel engravings on the wall gave her no inspiration for study or work. Secretly she envied Martine her cheerful room in Brenda's apartment, with its couch covered in pink and white cretonne, its white enamelled dressing-table and oval mirror, brass bedstead, and rattan chairs cushioned to match the divan. She did not express her envy of these pretty belongings, lest she should appear ungrateful to Mrs. Tilworth; for she knew that her aunt wished her to be comfortable and happy, according to her own standard of comfort and happiness. Indeed most people who knew Mrs. Tilworth thought Priscilla exceedingly fortunate in having so good a home offered her at a time when her mother was especially burdened with care.

Although Mrs. Tilworth had never expressed herself on the subject, Martine believed that she did not approve of persons who lived in apartments. The little original prejudice that she had against Martine as an outsider was probably somewhat stronger from this fact.

"I should think," she had said to Priscilla, "that Mrs. Stratford must have been greatly disappointed that Mrs. Montgomery could not take Martine this winter; it would have been so much better for her to live in a house."

"But an apartment is just as pleasant," Priscilla had responded, "and it's a fine thing that Brenda Weston was able to take her. Brenda lives in a flat because it's more economical."

"Don't say 'flat'; you've learned that from Martine; in Boston we always say 'apartment.' But an apartment on the Avenue is not economical, my dear child. A whole house on Chestnut Street would cost no more, and though I would not make anyone else's business my own, I can't understand how anyone who might live in a house can prefer a few rooms high up in the air."

"It's very homelike there," sighed Priscilla, casting a glance around the large, gloomy dining-room, where they sat at dinner. "I always enjoy myself at Brenda's—"

Mrs. Tilworth, noticing the sigh, looked sharply at her niece. "I hope you are perfectly happy with me," she said.

"Oh, yes, indeed I am; you are certainly very kind."

Yet even as she spoke, Priscilla realized that in some ways she wasn't benefiting as she should from her aunt's kindness, and she began to wonder if the fault might not lie a little with herself.

A few days after the discussion about the photographs, Priscilla came to school with a letter in her hand.

"It's from Eunice," she said, as she and Martine sat together near a window, a quarter of an hour before the time for the school to begin.

"Oh, read me what she says," urged Martine. "Her letters are always entertaining, because they are so old-fashioned."

Eunice Airton was a young girl near Priscilla's age, whose acquaintance Mrs. Redmond and her party had made during their stay in Annapolis. She was especially Priscilla's friend, while her brother Balfour was Martine's ideal of an independent college boy; and it was rather because she hoped to hear some news of Balfour that Martine urged Priscilla to read the letter.

"I am sorry to say," wrote Eunice, "that I hardly think it will be possible for me to go to college. It will be very difficult for me to overcome the prejudices of my mother, who still does not think it is quite proper for a girl to have the same education as a man. But the fact that you are planning to go to college will have much weight with her, for, as you perhaps know, she thinks you quite a model and says that she never can realize that you are an American."

Martine smiled at this expression of Mrs. Airton's opinion, which indeed she had heard more than once before. "Eunice," she said to Priscilla, "is too polite to repeat all that her mother said in speaking of you. She probably contrasted you with me, whom, I am sure, she considers the typical Yankee girl."

"Oh, no, of course not," protested Priscilla, continuing to read Eunice's letter.

"Before I tell you of any of my own personal affairs, I must mention something that will interest you more deeply. There is an Acadian family living in Annapolis, and whom do you suppose they have had visiting them lately? Why, the little Yvonne, the blind girl, of whom I have heard you speak, who is the special protégée, if I remember, of Miss Stratford. It is indeed due to her kindness, I understand, that Yvonne has been able to make this journey from Meteghan, and I am told that she is to stay here three months under the care of a physician who thinks that he can help her eyes. She is also to take lessons on the piano, as those who are interested in her think that it is better for her to let her voice rest for the present, but to play the piano well enough to accompany her songs will some time be a great advantage to her."

"There," exclaimed Martine, excitedly, "that's a fine idea! I wonder who suggested it to the Babets. It isn't likely that the doctor can do so very much for her eyes, but it will be splendid for her to get a start in music. When I see papa at Christmas I intend to persuade him to have Yvonne brought to Boston for a year."

"Oh, that would be a great expense," said Priscilla, "and someone would have to take care of her."

"That could be managed easily enough, if I can only get papa thoroughly interested."

"I think he has already done his part, for it's through the money he gave you for Yvonne that she is able to be in Annapolis now."

"I wonder how Eunice used her money; did she ever tell you, Priscilla?"

"No," replied Priscilla; "but she may have helped her mother about the mortgage, and perhaps she may have put a little aside for a college nest-egg. She is so practical."

"It's wonderful—isn't it, Priscilla?—that you should have met a girl you approve of so thoroughly in a corner of the world that isn't Plymouth or even Boston."

Priscilla, as she folded up her letter, looked questioningly at Martine. There was something that she did not quite understand in Martine's attitude toward Eunice.

Whatever question she had in mind remained for the time unspoken. It was time for school to begin, and they hurried to their places.

CHAPTER IV

CHANGES

The first week in December a strange thing happened. Brenda had received a letter with a Washington postmark, yet this in itself was not remarkable. Such letters came to her daily, for Arthur had gone to Washington on business a day or two after the trip to Harvard. But her manner, as she rapidly scanned this particular letter, was so unusual that Martine, watching her, knew that it brought news out of the ordinary.

The slight frown on Brenda's face deepened as she read the four or five pages, and when she had finished she flung the letter down on the floor.

"Oh—it seems too bad," she sighed, in response to Martine's look of surprise. "Just as we are settled, to have to give everything up!"

"Give up—what?" asked the puzzled Martine.

"Why this—everything—our apartment—Boston—oh, dear—of course I knew it might come—but I hoped next year."

As Brenda finished there were tears in her eyes, and still Martine did not wholly understand.

"Of course I am sorry," said Martine, "since it's something that troubles you. But would you please tell me what it is all about?"

"Well—it's Arthur's business," she explained. "A promotion that he has expected has come. It took him some time to find out what he really could do after he left college. The office in San Francisco is more important just now than the one in Boston. He is needed there for six months—and we must go at once—yes," she concluded, looking at the letter a second time. "We must be there by the first of January. Well, fortunately, we need not give up this apartment, for we have a two years' lease, and it wouldn't be worth while to sublet it, as we may return in six months. So you see, my dear, that things might be worse. I shall have to pack only my clothes and small belongings, and after all, it will be rather fun to see a new corner of the world."

"What you say sounds practical—except—you seem to have forgotten *me*."

"Oh, you poor child, how selfish I am! Why you could just stay on here with the cook and Maggie, or Angelina, if you prefer her."

"Brenda Weston! You know that would never do! I mean other people would say it would never

do."

"There, there, child, don't worry," said Brenda, assuming her most elderly manner. "I will write to your mother, and between us something delightful will be arranged. What a shame you are in school," she concluded, forgetting for the moment her position as Martine's temporary guardian. "Except for that you might go to San Francisco, or even travel with your mother."

"I am growing fond of school," replied Martine, as she returned to her book. "Even to go to California I wouldn't give it up, but if it's really settled that you are going, I must write home at once."

In a few days Brenda and Martine both received answers to their letters to Mrs. Stratford. To Martine what her mother wrote was even more surprising than Brenda's change of plans.

"Your father has to go to South America on very important business. It is too long a journey for me, although I am much stronger than a year ago. We think the wisest plan would be for me to go to Boston to be near you and Lucian, and I am writing Mrs. Weston to see if we may not engage her apartment for the next six months."

"Hurrah!" cried Martine, turning to Brenda, who had just finished reading the letter Mrs. Stratford had written her. "Of course you'll say 'yes.' Oh, how perfectly happy I shall be to have mother with me."

"Of course I will say 'yes.' But please spare my feelings; if you are too happy you will forget to miss me."

"Oh, never, never; but then mother must be feeling much stronger, and I have seen her so little the past few years. She has been under the doctor's care or travelling, and our Chicago house has been closed so long, and hotels are so unhomelike. But now, with this apartment to ourselves, and Lucian coming in from college—oh! it will be delightful."

Again Brenda protested that Martine was unfeeling in counting her out so completely.

"But I can't count you in, when you calmly and deliberately plan to turn your back on Boston and me. You know that I shall miss you, but to have mother here—of course that makes all the difference in the world."

For the Christmas holidays Lucian and Martine joined Mr. and Mrs. Stratford in New York. A day or two after Christmas, Mr. Stratford sailed for England, whence he was to embark for South America. Martine could but notice that the sadness that her father showed during these last days seemed due to something besides the fact that he was to be absent from his family for a few months. He had often before gone on long journeys, but usually he made an effort to have his departure particularly cheerful.

"Your father is worried," her mother said; "his business is not going just as it should. He hopes that this visit to South America will straighten out some things. If it does not—well, we needn't talk of the future now. I am glad that we are all together this Christmas. You and Lucian must do all you can to divert your father, he has so much to trouble him."

Martine took this advice to heart, and though Mr. Stratford spent some hours each day downtown, after luncheon she always insisted that he must entertain her. By this she meant that she must entertain him, and in consequence she thought out all kinds of odd ways of amusing him. One day they sailed on the Ferry to Staten Island to visit Sailors' Snug Harbor. Another afternoon they went up to Van Cortland Park to see the old Van Cortland house. One day they wandered for an hour in the Bowery, but Martine admitted that this wasn't as entertaining an expedition as she had imagined it would be from the accounts she had read of it. The shops on the whole seemed commonplace, and the crowded cross-streets of the East Side looked far more interesting, as she caught glimpses of them in passing.

She had to let these glimpses satisfy her, as she had promised her mother not to explore any out-of-the-way corners of the tenement district; and so obedient was she in this that she would not even go inside a certain Bowery pawnshop in whose windows she saw a fascinating little guitar. Instead she urged her father to price it, and when he came outside with it under his arm she accepted it with delight.

"It's neither a violin nor a guitar," Mr. Stratford explained, "but the little instrument that the Sandwich Islanders love."

Martine was delighted by this account of her new treasure, and she carried it home with great pride. But unconventional expeditions were not the only pleasures that Martine shared with her father. One day Mrs. Stratford drove with them through the Park up beyond Riverside and Grant's tomb. Two or three afternoons they spent with relatives, of whom Mr. Stratford had a number in New York. Lucian was little with his father during the holidays. Classmates at Ardsley and Trenton and Germantown claimed short visits from him. But on Christmas Day he joined his parents at the small uptown hotel where they were staying.

"Martine," he said as they sat at breakfast, "Elinor Naylor was at the Harbins' dance night before last in Germantown. She took a lot of trouble to introduce me to some of her best friends just because I was your brother. I tell you what—you made a great impression on her."

"I certainly did—the first time we met," responded Martine, smiling, and Lucian did not quite

understand, because his sister had never really explained the circumstances under which she and Elinor had first met. With slight urging from Martine, however, Lucian plunged into a description of the Harbins' dance, and though boy-like he could not describe what Elinor wore, he declared that whatever it was it just suited her, and that she certainly was a regular peach, "and the funniest thing about it is that you don't think about her being pretty when you first see her. It's only when you begin to remember her that you realize how good-looking she is."

"Poor Priscilla," sighed Martine in mock sorrow, "I fear her nose is out of joint."

"Oh, no—at least, what do you mean?" asked Lucian, and at this moment the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Stratford put an end to their fun.

The Christmas breakfast, in spite of Martine's efforts, passed off rather quietly. Her parents both seemed sad and disinclined to talk. Even the unobservant Lucian at last noticed this and tried to turn the conversation into cheerful and impersonal channels, with poor success. Their Christmas dinner was at the house of an elderly cousin of the Stratfords in Washington Square. The guests were nearly all relatives of Martine's father, and the young visitor received abundant criticism, favorable or unfavorable, according to the dispositions of the various critics.

But even those who thought Martine a little forward or too self-possessed for a girl of her age could but admire her frank, cheery manner and the consideration that she constantly showed for older people. The less conservative found her charming and complimented her on her clever way of telling a story. Some said she looked like her father, some like her mother, and the oldest cousin of them all, taking her aside said, "You are just like your father's mother when she was your age. She had your coloring and your bright brown eyes. I knew her well when I was a girl. She was said to be the image of her French grandmother, and I can wish you nothing better than to grow up like her," and as the old lady kissed her Martine felt her own eyes moistening.

"I am glad that I have some French blood in my veins," she said a little later; "the Huguenots were so wonderful. I wish that papa and I had time to go up to New Rochelle, for although I believe there's little left there of the Huguenots now except the name, I should like to see the place because my forefathers lived there."

Lucian found the Washington-Square dinner rather a bore, although he managed to conceal his feelings until with his family he was back at the hotel.

"They might have asked at least one girl near my age," Lucian said. "No wonder you were such a belle, Martine, among all those antiquities," a compliment that Martine refused to accept until Lucian admitted that she possessed qualities that would make her popular even in a younger crowd.

One of Martine's Christmas gifts did not surprise her,—a complete set of brushes, mirror and little boxes to replace those she had lost in the Windsor fire. This did, however, surprise Lucian, who knew that his father had promised Martine a full set of silver.

"Why, how is this?" he asked, as Martine spread out her new possessions before him on a table. "Is plain black wood more in fashion than silver? It must be, or you wouldn't have it."

"But this is pretty; don't you think so?" asked Martine, always anxious for her brother's approval.

"It's rather neat, with your initial in silver, but it couldn't have cost as much as the other, and I thought you always preferred the most expensive things." For the moment Martine did not explain that her preference was still for the silver, but that she had chosen the other because of a chance word or two from her mother on her tendency toward extravagance.

"I know you have generally whatever you wish, Martine, and your father and I generally give you what you ask. You are seldom unreasonable, although we may have been overindulgent. For now —"

Here Mrs. Stratford broke off suddenly.

"But now, mamma, are things very different? I know we usually stay at a larger hotel, and still—"

"Oh, no, dear. Things are not very different. Perhaps they will not be. Yet your father has so much care now that you will surely do your best to relieve him from needless burdens."

Therefore, when Mr. Stratford took Martine downtown to choose her present, she could not be shaken from her determination to have something simpler than silver.

"It will be so much better in case I am caught in another fire, papa. Things that are burnt up are gone forever, and as I seem to be a rather unlucky person, this plainer set is much better—and besides I like it, papa."

In the end it seemed to Martine that Mr. Stratford was rather pleased by her choice, for when the matter was decided he patted her hand gently as he slipped it within his arm, saying,—

"After all, daughter, you are getting to be a very sensible girl. I have noticed a great change within the past year."

"Oh, thank you, papa. Do you really think I've improved? Then it's partly on account of the company I have kept. I am sure of that."

"I am pleased that you are on the right track, and when I am far from you, as I shall be now for some time, it will be a great satisfaction to think that you are doing your best."

A few days later Martine and Lucian, with their mother, stood on the dock watching the receding ocean-liner that was carrying Mr. Stratford to England. There was a great lump in Martine's throat as she wiped away her tears with the handkerchief that a moment before she had been waving frantically at her father.

"Goose, goose!" whispered Lucian. "You are too big a girl to cry."

"Oh, I hate saying good-bye," murmured Martine.

"Why, we've hardly been together—all four of us—for years."

"That's just it! It's been so pleasant lately—and now to have father in South America!—it's just dreadful."

"Nonsense, child! South America isn't so very far away. The trouble is, you've had too long a vacation. It's well we're going back to Boston to-morrow, and that in a day or two you'll be at your books again."

"At my books!—as if I were a six-year-old! I can't see why Harvard College gives even a day's vacation to its students, since their chief use of time seems to be to tease their sisters," and with this little burst of temper Martine's tears were blown away.

CHAPTER V

ANOTHER PARTING

To Martine the return to Boston after Christmas was far from cheerful. Not only was she still under the shadow of the parting with her father, but she began to feel that the approaching departure of Brenda would be rather hard to bear.

While her mother was spending a day or two with friends outside the city, Martine had to stand by and watch Brenda bidding good-bye to her family and friends. Her trunks were packed. The walls and mantelpieces were denuded of many little pictures and ornaments; for at the last she had decided that it was wiser to take some of her more personal belongings with her to make her new abode more homelike.

"I haven't taken a thing that you or your mother would need," Brenda explained; "only the little presents that have special associations for us. Your mother wrote me that she had a box or two of her own ornaments and pictures coming, so that she, too, could be reminded of home."

"Well, I wish our boxes were here now. It makes me so homesick to see those empty places on the wall. I don't see how you can be so cheerful."

"But everyone has been so kind. I didn't know how much everyone cared for me. So much has been done for me the past two weeks that I have hardly had time to pack. Arthur went back to Washington in despair yesterday. He is to join mother and me in New York. He said if we should try to start from Boston we'd never get off. Some one would plan some special function just to detain us."

"I wish that we *could* detain you."

"You couldn't do it now," rejoined the optimistic Brenda. "After all, when a thing is finally settled, I believe that I really love change. I shall miss Lettice and my other little niece—she's a dear if she is only a baby—but you know I have a niece and namesake in California, and my mother and father say they will come out in March—so there will be a very short separation."

"And what about me?" asked Martine, in much the same tone she had used when Brenda first spoke of going away.

"Oh, you? Why you are better off than you have been for years, with your mother to take care of you—and Lucian so near—"

"And no guardian," wailed Martine, in mock sorrow. "Don't flatter yourself that you can get rid of me so easily."

"I shall write you and think of you. You will still be my ward, no matter where I am. There, there," as Martine leaned over her to touch her lips gently to her forehead. "Don't act as if we were parting forever. Maggie's red eyes are a constant reproach to me. So please wait until I am out of sight before you bid me good-bye."

In spite of her optimism Brenda was far from happy in leaving Boston, her friends, and her pretty apartment, even for a limited time. Sometimes she thought that the various functions in her honor made her going all the harder.

Nora Gostar, who had taken Julia's place at the head of the Mansion School, gave a tea to which

were invited all the former pupils. Not all, naturally, were able to attend, for some of the girls were in situations from which they could not be spared.

"I wish we had a picture such as they give with patent medicines 'before' and 'after' taking," said Brenda. "I can assure you it would be worth framing and taking to California. Do you remember what an untidy little creature Luisa was when she first entered the Mansion School, and how thin and forlorn Gretchen looked, and Maggie, who always lost her head when she had an order given her, and Haleema—why isn't she here to-day?"

"Oh, Haleema—haven't you heard? She has gone to Lowell to live. Her husband is a prosperous rug-merchant and he is very proud of her ability as a housekeeper. He has promised to contribute something toward sending her younger sister here for a couple of years."

"I knew she had married," replied Brenda, "but I had not heard of her removal to Lowell. It's delightful to know how well most of these girls have turned out. Even Mrs. Blair admits that the Mansion School is a useful institution."

"Yes," said Nora, laughing. "She gave us a handsome donation this year. We accepted it gratefully as conscience money for her not letting Edith work with us."

"Nora!" cried Brenda, impulsively. "You are a wonder! Of all our four, you are the one best fitted to shine in society. But here you go on with this work as meekly as if there were nothing else for you to do."

"There was no one else to take Julia's place this year," replied Nora, quietly, "and it would have been a great pity either to let the school run down or to allow Julia to give up her year in Europe. What fun she will have when she goes with the Eltons to Greece, and I am sure that when she comes back next year we shall all be the better for her trip. She will have so much to tell us."

"Nora, you are a brick!" cried Brenda. "You never have been abroad yourself, yet you never utter a word of envy for anyone else's good time."

"Besides," continued Nora, "you are wrong about my shining in society. I doubt if I should really care for it, even if I had the money to keep up that kind of thing. You wouldn't wish me to be like Belle, reported in all those silly newspapers as visiting Mrs. This at Lenox, and being the admired of all who saw her with Mrs. That at Newport, and sitting in the front row, as at the Horse Show, in a gown that was perfectly *chic*. Oh, no, I hate that kind of thing, and I sympathize with Edith for refusing to be a mere society girl, such as her mother would like her to be. But we shouldn't be here by ourselves, for you are the special guest, and all the girls, old and new, wish to shake hands with you and hear you talk."

In a moment Brenda was again the centre of an admiring group, for all of whom she had a bright smile and a word that really meant something, while they all took note of her dress and little trinkets, and felt doubly pleased that a person of such elegance should show an interest in them.

So exact were the observations of her young admirers that before she had actually left Boston a hat, a blouse, and a skirt were in process of construction by the deft fingers of three of the girls who had taken special note of the details of her attire at this Mansion tea.

Martine laughed heartily at Brenda's account of the girls at the Mansion.

"I have promised Miss Gostar to go there once a week to give a lesson in water color. It might seem a case of the blind trying to teach the blind if I were to pretend to teach them much. But the aim is, I believe, simply to give them an idea of colors. I wrote to Mrs. Redmond for advice while I was away, and it pleased me immensely to have her say I should probably do more good than harm by this little experiment."

"Of course you will do good. I have an idea that you could make things very clear. In the weeks I lived at the Mansion I learned more than I taught, for I am not a born teacher. But it was wonderful to see what Julia and Miss South accomplished for their first class of girls. I enjoyed my afternoon with the old girls far more than the farewell reception mamma arranged for me, and infinitely more than that stiff dinner at Mrs. Blair's last week."

"If people kill the fatted goose—or was it the fatted calf?—after you reach San Francisco at the same rate they've been doing here, you'll have indigestion."

"No danger, my dear. We shall just be nobody there. Mamma has explained that I must not expect too much. Here everyone knows who I am—I mean everyone I come in contact with. But it will be altogether different in the West. We shall just be part of the great crowd of Easterners who have left home to better their condition."

"Nonsense!"

"But that *is* why we are going West,—because Arthur will get a larger salary and have more rapid promotion. We are willing to give up the things we like best, for a while, and live economically. Oh, dear." And with her usual inconsistency Brenda did not try to straighten out the quaver in her voice as she concluded with a futile smile.

"How I wish we could stay here!"

"Oh, how I wish you could!" moaned Maggie, appearing suddenly on the scene, and the tear-stained face of the latter so amused Brenda that her own melancholy ended in a burst of

laughter.

When Brenda at last was really away, Martine and her mother began to adapt themselves to the new conditions. The cook, of whom Brenda had stood more or less in awe, gave warning promptly when she heard that there was to be a change of mistresses. Maggie, after much tearful and prayerful consideration, as Brenda put it, also decided not to stay with Mrs. Stratford. Only her devotion to Brenda had led her to take this place, as she really desired work that would occupy her simply during the day. Her aunt, she said, was weak and lonely, and she wished to be at home with her evenings.

Angelina, learning Maggie's intention, promptly presented herself as a candidate for the vacant place. Mrs. Stratford hesitated, for Martine had given her an exceedingly humorous account of the Portuguese girl's peculiarities,—an account that did not tend to recommend her as a reliable domestic.

"Of course, mother, she isn't a cut-and-dried housemaid," plead Martine; "but she *is* so amusing, and if we take her I am sure she will stay, for she says she is perfectly devoted to me. I dare say she won't half do the work, for she always has several irons in the fire. But I shall not mind doing my own room, if we have Angelina, and in fact I'll have to do it probably, as she is absent-minded and often forgets to do what she should. But she loves waiting on table, and it's a great thing to have a cheerful person in the house. *Do* say you'll take her, mamma."

"There seems little chance of escape for me. From what Angelina herself says, I should judge that you and she had already settled matters. I do not wish to play the part of a tyrannical parent and so, to please you, just to please you, Martine, I will engage Angelina."

"Thank you, mamma! You *are* an angel. I always knew you were."

"I hope that Angelina is an angel in something besides her name, and I wish that her name were less dressy. Would she care if I should call her plain Mary?"

"Oh, mamma, not 'plain,' at any rate. I thought you understood that Angelina *is* rather dressy in her feelings. She takes the greatest delight in her name. Please don't think of calling her anything else."

So Angelina remained plain Angelina, and on account of her previous experience with Brenda, proved very useful to Mrs. Stratford. For a week or two a succession of cooks passed in and out of the little kitchen, until Martine's mother despaired of ever having the apartment in running order.

In this emergency Angelina was only too proud to show what she could do. She would not admit that she had ever learned anything from anybody. "I'm a natural born cook," she would say; "and if I didn't consider it a menial position, I would become a professional. It's on account of my Spanish blood, I suppose, that I'm able to season things so well. You know in Spain they like things hot and spicy."

"Spanish blood?" questioned Mrs. Stratford, as Angelina turned away. "Aren't the Rosas Portuguese?"

"Yes, mamma, or they were until our war with Spain. Brenda explained it all to me. During the war Angelina thought it would make her more interesting if she called herself Spanish, and now she probably has persuaded herself that she really *is* Spanish. This amuses her and doesn't hurt anyone else."

"But I don't like the idea of her being untruthful. This quality may extend to other things."

"I hope not, mamma. But then we can watch her."

Lucian, when he heard of Angelina's Spanish proclivities, laughed heartily.

"She *is* worth watching," he said. "Each of us must keep an eye on her."

CHAPTER VI

ANGELINA'S COUP

The first occasion for Angelina to make herself spectacularly useful came on the Saturday after New Year's, when Mrs. Stratford invited Priscilla and Mrs. Tilworth to dine. The latter had already shown Mrs. Stratford some little courtesies, such as she felt were due Mrs. Blair's cousin. On account of Martine's growing fondness for Priscilla, Mrs. Stratford was anxious to have the two households on more intimate terms. Lucian and Robert Pringle were also coming home to dinner, and although Mrs. Tilworth was the only outsider, on her account a certain amount of formality had been planned for this little dinner for six.

At about four o'clock on the afternoon Angelina knocked at the door of Martine's room. Her face wore its most solemn expression.

"Why, Angelina, what is the matter? You look as if you had been drawn through a keyhole."

Angelina at first did not reply.

"There, there, speak out! Is it anything very dreadful?"

Martine rose from her little desk, where she had been writing a letter to her father, and as she took a step or two toward the door, Angelina spoke.

"That depends on how you look on it; it's only that the cook's gone."

"Gracious! you don't mean it. But perhaps she has only gone for a walk—"

"Oh, no, Miss Martine. I fear that she's gone for good and all. I've been down to her room, and not a vestige of her possessions remains." Angelina, even in a crisis, had to use long words. "In fact I may say that I heard her trunk being carried away about two o'clock. There it went, thumpity, thump down the stairs—those expressmen are so careless, and I was quite unaware whose trunk it was, or I might have reported it to your mother. But when the luncheon dishes were washed, the cook followed the trunk; at least she is nowhere in sight now, and not a thing done about this evening's dinner. It's the dinner, and not the cook that disturbs me," explained Angelina.

"The dinner! I should say so," responded Martine. "We must get word to Mrs. Tilworth at once. She's the fussiest old—I mean she's a very particular person, and mother wishes everything to be just so when she dines here."

"Of course, Miss Martine. Every guest of Mrs. Stratford's should receive the greatest consideration." Angelina's manner was respectful in the extreme.

"Dear me!" Martine's perplexity showed itself in her wrinkled forehead. "I certainly don't know what's to be done. Mamma and Mrs. Tilworth were to come home together from a meeting in Brookline. Mrs. Tilworth is always taking people to meetings of some kind. Poor mamma didn't want to go, but she couldn't get out of it. There's no way of getting word to them until nearly dinner time. Mrs. Tilworth would think it awfully rude to uninvite her. The only thing is to let her come, and then we can all go out to a hotel or something, and she'll call that very shiftless."

Martine was really excited. She knew Mrs. Tilworth's opinion of people who lived in apartments, and she had had a thrill of pleasant anticipation at the idea of Mrs. Tilworth's finding everything as homelike in their apartment as within the four walls of a detached house.

To have to go outside to a hotel would indeed be ignominious—from Martine's present point of view.

"Do you think Mrs. Stratford is strong enough to go to a hotel to dinner, after being out all the afternoon? I certainly shouldn't advise it."

Angelina spoke with all the impressiveness of one in authority.

"You make me think of a trained nurse, Angelina. But what in the world are we to do?"

"Come with me," cried Angelina, and Martine, following her to the kitchen, noticed as she turned her head that there was a twinkle in Angelina's eye.

"Perhaps there's something in the refrigerator," thought Martine; "refrigerators always are full of things that can be warmed over. We might call it 'luncheon' instead of 'dinner,' and tell Mrs. Tilworth that's the way we do in Chicago. She will believe anything about Western people."

A glance at the refrigerator did not greatly encourage Martine. There were a quantity of cold potatoes, and a great roast of beef for their Sunday dinner, as well as eggs, bacon, milk, and butter.

"How frightfully unattractive it all looks—and smells," cried Martine, slamming the door. "I never could be a good cook, for I hate the sight of raw food. But what *were* we to have for dinner tonight? What *are* we to have now? You wouldn't have brought me out here if you hadn't some plan. It's half-past four, and if anything's to be done, it ought to be doing now."

"Oh, if you request me to take hold," said Angelina, "I shall be only too happy to accept your orders in your mother's place. Come, see!" and removing a cloth that had covered the kitchen table, she showed Martine an inviting array of vegetables and two pairs of small chickens.

"First of all the dessert," she began.

"Before the soup?" asked Martine. Then remembering that if she stood in her mother's place it would be undignified to trifle with Angelina, she waited for the latter to disclose her plans.

"What I mean is this," continued the latter; "you can telephone to the creamery for ice-cream and cake. The cook had orders to make something with a long name, but that's impossible now. Then the black coffee—your brother loves to potter with that electric coffee machine—and there's plenty of crackers and cheese."

"And finger bowls, too," said Martine, laughing, "that will finish the dinner. But how shall we begin? If we begin dinner well, it won't matter how it ends."

"Well, there's no trouble about oysters, now, is there? And the soup—well, instead of the potage something or other that we were going to have, it'll be bouillon with croûtons, and a sprig of

parsley on top; that always looks foreign, and with my Spanish seasoning, Mrs. Tilworth will never know it's plain extract of beef. It won't take me a minute to prepare the minced fish, and you can put it in these little shells to bake when the oven is hot. The salad won't be any trouble, just tomato on a leaf of lettuce. The chickens can be broiled, and there's only one vegetable to boil besides the potatoes. The other things like celery and radishes only need to be put on attractively."

"But what about these lobsters?"

"Oh, yes, that's an idea of my own. They were meant for salad. But if I were you, as long as you've got such a big chafing-dish, I'd have a lobster Neuberger. Mrs. Tilworth will expect something out of the ordinary, and a lobster Neuberger at dinner is very unexpected."

"And very good to eat, and I'll let Robert Pringle cook it at the table."

"Yes, Miss Martine, only I'll prepare the sauce first, so much depends on that."

"You're a genius," said Martine; "but who'll wait on table?"

"Why, I will, Miss Martine, if you'll set it now. I'll have my hands full until dinner is served, and don't tell your mother about the cook until dinner's over. She'll be surprised that the dinner is different from what she ordered. But she won't find anything to be ashamed of."

Seldom, indeed, had Martine worked harder than in the hour succeeding her discovery of the cook's departure. In setting the table she made many little mistakes that Angelina gently but firmly corrected. But at half-past five, just before her mother came home, she surveyed the finished whole with pride, and then hurried away to her room to change her dress as she heard some one opening the door.

"Oh, Lucian," she cried, "if mother asks for Angelina, please say she's busy just now; keep Mrs. Tilworth amused until dinner. I wonder why Prissie's so late."

"I'm not late," and in a moment Priscilla was with her. "I came in without ringing, as the door was partly open."

To Priscilla Martine explained the secret of the dinner.

"Angelina will wait on table, though I don't see how she'll manage. But if there's any chance to help things on, you'll do so, won't you?"

"With pleasure," replied Priscilla, not realizing just what her promise might involve.

As it happened the dinner went on very smoothly from beginning to end, at least almost to the end. Mrs. Tilworth was in her most amiable frame of mind, even condescending to smile at some of the inane jokes perpetrated by the two Sophomores. This was doubtless due to her having a soft spot in her heart for boys in general, as her only son had died when he was six years old.

Mrs. Stratford, it is true, looked somewhat mystified at Angelina's occasional long absences in the kitchen. But at these moments Martine and Priscilla managed to introduce interesting subjects for discussion, whereby their elders were diverted from observing the remissness of their waitress.

Before the dessert, however, the wait was suspiciously long. Mrs. Tilworth, in an aside, had just been complimenting Mrs. Stratford on her daughter's ease of manner, when looking up she saw Martine gesticulating and frowning, apparently at Priscilla. A moment later Priscilla had dashed from the room through the door into the kitchen.

"What's up?" asked Robert.

"What's down?" added Lucian, as a tremendous crash fell on their ears.

"Oh, it's nothing," responded Martine, reddening. She felt Mrs. Tilworth's keen eye upon her and wished that Priscilla had acted less impulsively. Mrs. Stratford fanned herself nervously. There were disadvantages, she began to think, in apartment housekeeping with a limited staff.

In the meanwhile what had happened? When Angelina went to the kitchen for the ices and cakes, a sorry sight presented itself to her.

The cover of the freezer had been left off,—she had meant it to be but a moment, and not the half hour that had really passed. Through her carelessness, not only had the ices begun to soften, but some of the salt and coarse ice from the freezer had drifted in.

In her efforts to repair the damage, much time had passed before Priscilla appeared. Then Priscilla, in her effort to help, had taken hold of one side of the heavy tin to lift it to the table. The edge was slippery, the tin glided from between Priscilla's fingers, and as it crashed back into the tub of ice, a stream of pink and green stickiness spurted over her new blue gown.

"No matter about me," cried poor Priscilla, as Angelina began to mop off the gown. "I must go back to the dining-room. I can hold my handkerchief over the spots. The dinner mustn't be spoiled. My aunt is so critical."

"But there's no dessert. What will they think?" and Angelina looked the picture of despair. For to her no festivity was complete without the finishing touch of pink and white ice-cream.

"I will explain," began Priscilla. "Isn't there anything to come but the ices?"

"Oh yes, cakes and fruit and coffee and cheese." Angelina had already recovered her spirit. "I'll hurry in and attach the coffee machine to the electric light; that will divert them, while you make the explanations. It wouldn't be proper for me in my capacity of waitress to say a word."

So Priscilla, hastening back, explained that the ices had met a mishap, and she wondered if they all wondered what her part had been in the misadventure. No one, however, attached as much importance as Angelina did to the loss of the ices. The coffee machine diverted them all. Even Mrs. Tilworth was interested in watching the water bubble in the crystal globe.

Of them all Priscilla alone was disturbed. She realized, when too late, that she must have misunderstood her friend's signals, and that it had been Martine's duty, and not hers, to go to the kitchen. Moreover, she dreaded the merited reproof from her aunt when the spots on her skirt should be discovered.

Mrs. Stratford was amused rather than displeased when Martine, after the departure of their guests, explained the whole matter.

"I realized that something strange was going on, and though Angelina covered herself with glory so far as the cooking was concerned, she certainly did not appear an expert waitress. Then, my dear, if you had only given me a hint of the situation, I need not have perjured myself to Mrs. Tilworth. She thought everything so exquisitely seasoned that I told her all about the cook, how she had lived at Dr. Gostar's and later at Mrs. Rowe's. I admitted that the menu was a little different from what I had expected, but still—"

"Excuse me, mamma—but why do you suppose the cook left?"

To this question Mrs. Stratford had no answer.

CHAPTER VII

A DROP OF INK

"Somehow I find it awfully hard to settle down to work," said Martine to one of the girls at school a day or two after Washington's Birthday. "I don't know whether it's the holiday—or what."

"It's 'what,' I think; vacations ought not to hurt us, they are meant to set one up."

"How literal you are! Look at Priscilla; she's as busy as can be. She knows how to study at school; but then of course there couldn't have been anything very exciting in a Plymouth holiday; but although she was away only two days I do wonder that she can study so in school."

"It's a sensible thing, all the same, and saves home study. I begrudge more than an hour a day out of school, and if you don't work here, you surely have to spend three or four hours there."

"You'll have to spend more than an hour a day on home work if you are going to prepare that essay. Isn't it outrageous?"

"Well, it's as fair for one as for another. There's no use in talking about it now; we must keep at this translation." And for the next ten minutes the two girls kept their eyes on their Virgils.

Martine and Grace had gone into a small room off the main schoolroom, where a certain amount of conversation was permitted to two girls who happened to be studying together. They were not expected, however, to wander far from the lesson they had set out to prepare, and idle conversation, if overheard, would have carried a reproof. Yet the special essay to which Grace had referred was for the time uppermost in the minds of most of Miss Crawdon's pupils, and to Martine the necessity for writing it was peculiarly disagreeable; she did not pretend to be literary; her brightness and energy expressed themselves in far different ways. She could talk better than most girls, but when it came to putting her thoughts on paper in an extended form, she was really at sea. No one sympathized with her when she protested that it was absolutely impossible for her to write a ten-page essay on the question "Is the pen mightier than the sword?"

"Why, it's what I call the simplest kind of a subject," said Priscilla. "We all know that war is a terrible thing and ought to be done away with, and that a good book accomplishes a great deal more than the most famous battle. That's all the subject means."

"Oh, is it?" queried Martine, somewhat sarcastically. "Well, I'd like to see you fill ten large foolscap pages proving it."

"That's easy enough; just get your thoughts together."

"I can get a few of them together, but when it comes to putting them on paper, that's quite another thing."

Yet in the face of Martine's evident despair, Priscilla still insisted that the subject was not difficult, and that if Martine would simply collect her thoughts, she would soon find words to fill

ten pages.

"Of course you've got to look up authorities on peace and war and some of the poets like Whittier and Tennyson, and Longfellow's 'Ship of State,' and say something about 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and look over your English history pretty carefully."

"Oh, Priscilla, with all my other lessons? It's quite natural for you to know where to find all these authorities and poems, but it's quite another thing for me, and there's likely to be some splendid skating this month; and it's odious to have to stay cooped up in the house when the afternoons are short enough at the best."

But at last Martine had to yield to necessity, and less than a week before the day when the essays were to be handed in she sat down for one last, and it may be said first, great effort.

Lucian, happening in from Cambridge, laughed as he saw her forlorn face as she sat at a table littered with papers.

"What a ridiculous fuss," he cried, "about a little composition."

"It isn't a little composition; it's an essay."

"Well, what's the difference? You ought to have daily themes, then you'd know."

"We do, we have them once a week, every Monday morning."

"Daily themes,—once a week!" and again Lucian laughed.

"You needn't laugh, Lucian. Of course it's easy enough to write; that isn't the trouble; but it's getting things together."

"What things?"

"My ideas. Oh, if I were only Priscilla."

"Well, you are not; she's altogether different. But what's this?" cried Lucian, picking up a paper from the table.

"Oh, that's one of Priscilla's last year's essays. It's perfectly splendid, and she thought it might help me to look it over."

"Why don't you get her to help you in some other way?"

"Oh, that wouldn't do. We're supposed to do this all alone. It's a kind of test. You see the little themes are different. We write accounts of things we see, or that somebody tells us; but Miss Crawdon likes things we observe, and I am always seeing something funny. Everyone laughs at what I write. But I just can't do a long logical essay, and I don't want mine to be the very worst in the class."

"Of course not." Lucian's tone was more sympathetic than usual. "There can't be any harm in my helping you." And he took up a pencil.

"I'm not sure," responded Martine; "but still a brother, I suppose, is different from anyone else."

"Naturally," said Lucian, undisturbed by any scruples.

In a moment the two were at work, or rather Lucian was working, while Martine listened intently.

"First of all," he began, in a professorial manner, "you must think out your subject carefully and sub-divide it—so—and so. Then, well, whenever you have a thought, write it down on a piece of paper or a card—if I were you I'd buy a box of blank cards." Martine instantly resolved to pay a visit to a wholesale stationer's, and Lucian spent a few moments in cogitation and then wrote down a number of headings on small squares of paper. He had never before had so good a chance to expose the methods of his favorite English course.

"See, now, you kind of shuffle and arrange your headings, and you begin to think of other funny little things to put in, and write them out on large sheets, and before you know it, it's almost done. Now try."

Martine tried. Lucian's method was something like a game, and under his guidance she made a fair beginning. Before they had fairly started on the essay, Lucian talked learnedly about "clearness," and "force," and "elegance," and Martine listened, somewhat dazzled by her brother's show of knowledge.

"Well, Harvard has done you some good, after all, Lucian. As a sophomore you seem to be making up for what you lost in your freshman year."

"There, there, child, no twitting on facts. Of course Harvard has done a great deal for me. Why else should I go to college?"

"I wonder what college would do for me. What would you think of my going to Radcliffe, for example?" Martine looked anxiously at her brother; she had known boys who positively opposed their sister's ambitions in this direction.

"Well, if you could get in," said Lucian, "I think it would be a mighty good thing."

The "if" nettled Martine.

"What other girls do I suppose I could do too."

"Oh, yes; and if you should turn out like Miss Amy Redmond, or if you'd work like Priscilla, why I'd be proud enough of you."

"Ah, Amy's a brick," responded Martine, "but I didn't know that you really admired Priscilla. Robert Pringle says she's just the kind boys don't like."

"Oh, Robert is too fresh; he can't settle everything, though he thinks he can. But here, we can't waste time. Remember that you're trying to prove your point."

"Yes, the point of the sword," said Martine.

"No frivolity, child." And by their united efforts they made a draft of the essay, which Lucian copied out in his peculiar back hand, and later Martine, still further expanding what he presented to her, was able to produce ten pages that were not only fairly logical, according to Lucian's standards, but in addition had various humorous little touches from the hand of Martine. Priscilla was so busy with her own work that she hardly had time to observe that Martine had ceased to complain at what she had at first called "an outrageous task."

On the morning when the essays were handed in, Miss Crawdon made a short speech to the class. "You will be interested, I am sure, to hear that I have decided to award a prize for the best essay. I did not suggest this in advance, because in a general way I do not approve of school competition. You have worked under natural conditions, and although only one girl will have a prize, I am sure all the others will see nothing unfair in this distinction, since all have had an equal chance. All have worked independently without help from anyone, and none have been tempted to put themselves under too severe a strain. I ought to say that the prize, which consists of the new two-volume 'Life of Tennyson,' is a gift from Mrs. Edward Elton. You remember that she was one of our teachers here a few years ago and that English was her specialty. When she left this school she helped establish the Mansion School in the house of her grandmother, Madame DuLaunuy. For more than a year she and Mr. Elton have been travelling abroad, but she writes to me often about the school, and her interest in our English work still continues."

In the brief interval following Miss Crawdon's speech, those girls who had known the former Miss South said one or two agreeable things about her to the others, and it pleased Martine to recall that Mr. Elton was a cousin of Brenda's. But she was not altogether pleased that the essay with which Lucian had helped her was to compete for a prize. In this special case Martine was not quite sure of the precise line between right and wrong, and until she could decide this for herself, she thought it not worth while to discuss the matter with others.

Now it happened, strangely enough, that the essay which in a small way had been a snare for Martine also caused some trouble for Priscilla. The beginning came on the Friday after the essays were handed in. In the early afternoon Priscilla had an errand to do for her aunt at the farther end of Commonwealth Avenue. There was no Symphony this week, and she enjoyed the change. As she walked homeward, she was in an unusually happy mood. It was one of those mild days in late January that seemed to be preparing the way for an early spring. The path under the trees in the middle of the park was rather wet from melting snow and ice, and after trying it for a few steps, Priscilla preferred the sidewalk. There she walked down between the rows of nurses with their baby carriages, or little children in charge. "A prize baby show" Martine had called it. Priscilla enjoyed the show and thought of her little brothers and sisters at home as she stopped at intervals to speak to some child she knew. From the Avenue she crossed the Garden and stood for a moment on the bridge to watch the ice breaking in the pond; and she continued her walk along the mall of the Common, until she was opposite Spruce Street. Turning into the narrower streets, when at last she reached her aunt's house, it seemed particularly gloomy, and she wished that she might have stayed out in the sun an hour longer. But she realized that the task before her could not be postponed. The weekly theme must be ready on Monday, and nothing could be accomplished unless she set herself at work. Filling her fountain pen carefully she sat down at a small table near the window and began her task.

Although Priscilla frowned slightly, as almost any girl will frown when writing a theme, the frown was not very deep. She expected no real difficulties at the present stage of her work, as she had already made a good draft in pencil, and it only remained now for her to copy it.

At first her pen fairly flew over the paper, but after a time, as it may happen even with more accomplished authors, she grew a little weary, and rising, she walked to the window. Then she took a few steps around the room, at the same time idly flourishing her pen. The habits of fountain pens are indeed hard to understand. There certainly seemed to be no reason why Priscilla's pen should have chosen the particular moment when she stood beside her bureau for a catastrophe. Priscilla herself was almost petrified with horror as she gazed at the great black spot on the immaculate bureau-scarf. How could one little drop of ink, falling carelessly from a pen held upside down, spread itself into such a big spot?

After her first resentment against the pen, which she quickly laid down on the blotter on her table, Priscilla's irritation took a new form.

"I always hated that bureau-scarf. I always thought it foolish of aunt Tilworth to put it in my room. She has told me a dozen times that it was made by a favorite cousin who can never make

any more like it because she's dead. I can't bear to think what she will say when she sees this."

Priscilla went closer to the bureau. Fortunately the spot was on the plain material, some distance from the embroidery. It almost looked as if she might wash it out—if ink ever could be washed out. If it should stay, how could she ever explain the accident to her aunt, since it was an unwritten law of the house that ink was to be used only in the library?

"This might help a little," she murmured, tearing off a small piece from her blotter, and applying it to the spot. But the ink had been so thoroughly absorbed that her efforts made no impression. Then she remembered something she had read and rushed to the kitchen.

"A glass of milk, is it?" exclaimed the crabbed old cook; "and why didn't you send the housemaid?" But Priscilla secured the milk, and while she was busily mopping the spot, Martine appeared on the scene.

"You queer child, what are you doing? That milk will certainly spoil the bureau."

"Oh no, it's marble underneath."

"But what are you doing? Oh, that spot? But you'll never get it out that way. You must use salts, salts of something, I forget its name, only it's deadly poison. They'll know what it is when you ask at the druggist's."

"Nothing would induce me to touch poison. Please don't suggest such a thing."

"But you're not going to taste it or give it to anyone. Just think what your aunt would say if she saw that spot!"

"That's just what I have been thinking," said poor Priscilla, feebly. "I hate to have her know how careless I have been."

"Then let me go—no, I am going anyway, I want to see how surprised the druggist will be when I ask for this salts of something or other."

"He can't appear very surprised if you don't know its name."

"Oh, I'll tell him it's a deadly poison, and that I want it immediately. Good-bye, Prissie dear, I'll soon be back, alive or dead."

"Now cheer up, Miss Doleful," cried Martine, when she returned ten minutes later. "I got it easily enough, and the man hardly seemed surprised, though he put a little poison label on the box."

Priscilla handled the box gingerly.

"There, there," cried Martine, "it won't hurt you! Give it back!" And taking off the cover, she disclosed some innocent looking crystals.

Moistening a few of these, she spread the pasty mass on the spot.

"My, how it stings! My tongue is burning."

"You didn't taste it! I thought you said it was poison?"

"Oh, I got some on my fingers. But I know it won't hurt. But there," scraping the crystals from the spot, "it hasn't done a bit of good."

"Yes, it has done a little. I think the ink is not quite so black. But a brown spot is about as bad as a black one."

"I'll tell you what we ought to do," and Martine read the label on the box.

"We should spread this out in the sun. Then something chemical will happen, and the ink will fade away."

"This ink will *never* fade. I am sure of that, and besides there's no sun to-day, and there won't be, because it's after four o'clock."

"To-morrow will do just as well," said Martine.

"If aunt Tilworth doesn't happen to come in."

"What are you afraid of, my dear Prissie? You surely don't expect your aunt to whip you like a baby?"

"Of course not. My aunt doesn't mean to be unkind, only she is very particular."

"I should say so. Her house shows that she was meant to be a regular old maid. How I should love to stir things up a little. I don't suppose you dropped that ink on purpose, though the room certainly looks far less prim than when I saw it a day or two ago."

Priscilla bore Martine's teasing fairly well, but at last she said firmly, "I have wasted a lot of time over this ink-spot. Now I must go back to my work. I haven't even prepared my lessons for Monday. I know you will excuse me, Martine, and I am ever so much obliged for your help."

"On this hint I'll act," replied Martine, gayly. "Your spot is certainly worse than the one in Macbeth, though I won't use the language that Macbeth—or was it her Ladyship?—used

regarding it. But don't worry, Prissie dear. I will arrange things so that no one will know what happened." And suiting her action to her words, Martine carefully replaced the scarf on the table and set a large pincushion over the ink-spot, so that not a vestige of the spot, or of the attempts to remove it, could be seen.

Then with a word or two more of absurd advice to Priscilla, Martine, bidding her friend good-bye, tripped lightly downstairs.

When Martine reached the lower story all was still. Priscilla had said that her aunt was at a meeting. Evidently she had not yet returned.

On her way downstairs a mischievous plan had been forming in Martine's brain.

"I'll never have a better chance," she said to herself, and she tiptoed into the drawing-room.

A noise from the direction of the dining-room made her start. Then glancing around she took heart.

"I think I can do it," she murmured, "before any one appears on the scene."

Again she felt discouraged as she noted how massive, how immovable most of the furniture appeared. A large centre-table in the middle of the room pleased her; she pushed it from its place into a distant corner. Over it she threw a scarf that had decorated a sofa. Then from the great bookcase in the hall she took two or three volumes that she laid on the table open and face downward.

"Everything seems glued to the walls," she murmured, "and these tidies are so ugly. There can't be much harm in folding them up and putting them under the sofa."

Then she paused. "This little scarf—it is Roman, too,—is just the thing for Julius Cæsar." And tying the striped scarf around the neck of the great conqueror, she bolstered the bust on an easy-chair, draping an afghan around him to conceal his lack of body and limbs.



"This little scarf—it is Roman, too,—is just the thing for Julius Cæsar."

Then with one or two minor touches to the room she hurried away.

CHAPTER VIII

A PRIZE WINNER

While Martine was thus mischievously occupied, Priscilla, unconscious of what was going on, continued her work.

She had not heard her aunt come in, but when she went down to dinner she instantly realized that Mrs. Tilworth was displeased. Was there any possibility that the injury to the bureau-scarf had been discovered? At once Priscilla dismissed that thought, knowing Mrs. Tilworth could not have been in her room, as she herself had not left it.

As the young girl turned toward the dining-room Mrs. Tilworth laid her hand on her shoulder.

"This way, please," she said briefly, pointing toward the room where Julius Cæsar was enthroned in his easy-chair.

Priscilla could not suppress a smile at the absurd sight.

"Then you did it?"

"I? Why of course not! I haven't been downstairs."

Then Priscilla stopped. She remembered her visit to the kitchen, and for the present she was not anxious to explain the glass of milk.

"But who could have done this ridiculous thing? An earthquake couldn't have done much more."

Priscilla hardly dared glance around the dishevelled room. Some of the results accomplished by Martine were foolish, others were improvements on the original arrangement of things.

"You must have had a visitor," continued Mrs. Tilworth, pursuing her search for information.

Priscilla was silent. She perceived that Martine had been the mischief-maker, and for the moment she was indignant with her friend. Martine might have realized that an act of this kind would bring Mrs. Tilworth's wrath on Priscilla as well as on the absent perpetrator of the mischief.

"Then it was Martine Stratford!" continued Mrs. Tilworth. "I am glad that you had no hand in this foolishness, Priscilla. For I take your word that you have not been downstairs. But I am disappointed in Martine. She has attractive manners, and lately she seemed to be toning down. Certainly she appeared very well at the dinner the other evening. Her mother, too, is a sensible woman. So it must be her father who spoils Martine. The girl has had a training very different from yours, and her sense of responsibility is small."

"She didn't mean anything, I am sure of that," protested Priscilla.

"Didn't mean anything! That's just the trouble. After this I must ask you to see less of Martine. Really I ought not to have let you spend so much time with her."

"Mamma knows all about Martine. She does not object."

"She *will* object when she learns how disrespectful Martine has been to me. As if I did not know how to arrange my own furniture."

Again Priscilla felt like smiling. Martine's hints had been understood, even though they might not be followed.

Mrs. Tilworth was a fair-minded woman, and after expressing herself clearly on the subject of Martine's misdeeds, she did not try to make her niece more uncomfortable. Nevertheless, Priscilla's dinner hour that evening was far from cheerful. She wondered if it might not be wiser, as well as more honest, to tell her aunt of her own mishap of the afternoon. Yet the more she thought of it, the less inclined was she to do this. She clung to the hope that with a further effort she could make the scarf as good as new.

That night she dreamed of wading through rivers of ink, and in her dreams she saw the bust of Julius Cæsar sitting on a bridge with many small black ink-spots mottling the bald head.

In the intervals between her dreams she tossed about restlessly, and she thought of all the little criticisms that she had ever heard anyone make about Mrs. Tilworth.

"After all, she isn't my real aunt," she murmured; "only my uncle's widow, and I suppose she just hates to have me here. But she has a kind of family pride, and thinks that it will help mamma. I know the house is furnished queerly. I heard mamma say that it is neither antique, nor modern—only second-rate. Those black walnut things are always ugly, even Martine knows better."

Yet in all her ruminations Priscilla had to admit that Mrs. Tilworth had always treated her kindly. She had no real grievance against her aunt. She was merely afraid of the reproof that her carelessness merited.

Now it was one of Mrs. Tilworth's theories that a girl should make her own bed and dust her own furniture. It was a theory, too, that she put into practice. Except on sweeping days, Priscilla took entire care of her own room. Sometimes she begrudged the time that she had to spend in this way. But on the morning after Martine's visit she was pleased that no housemaid had the right to handle the things on her bureau. Now, as this was Saturday morning, Priscilla took more time than usual dusting and arranging things generally. She did not dare move the corpulent

pincushion lest someone should come in upon her while she was examining the ink mark. She knew that her aunt had a morning engagement, and while she worked she listened eagerly for the closing of the front door that would show that her aunt had departed.

But alas for her calculations! While she was still dusting her mantle-piece, Mrs. Tilworth, with hat and coat on, entered the room.

"My dear," began Mrs. Tilworth, kindly, "you must not take to yourself all that I said about Martine Stratford. You and she are really very different, and although I cannot say that her acquaintance was forced upon you, still it came about almost by accident. Had you not both gone to Acadia in Mrs. Redmond's care, you never would have known each other so well. You are not careless—I see you have been putting your room in order. It looks very well, but this pincushion is too near the edge. Dear me, what is this?"

Poor Priscilla reddened as Mrs. Tilworth gazed in horror at the spot that the cushion had concealed.

Her aunt's praise in the first place had been unexpected, and now she felt that she could hardly bear her reproof.

"What is this?" continued Mrs. Tilworth, picking up one of the tiny crystals from the cloth and touching it to the tip of her tongue. "As I thought, oxalic acid."

"Martine called it salts of lemon."

"So this is some of Martine's work, too. Perhaps she forgot to tell you that the salts, or the acid, whichever you choose to call it, is bound to eat a great hole in linen—and this the most valued of all my bureau covers. Ah, Priscilla, I thought you could be trusted." And pushing back the smaller articles that rested on it, Mrs. Tilworth flung the scarf over her arm and walked away with it—ink-spot and all.

Priscilla was now more deeply disturbed than before. In no way was she willing to have Martine blamed for what she had not done. Her friend was already sufficiently disgraced in Mrs. Tilworth's eyes. But now, even if she wished, she could not explain. Mrs. Tilworth had gone away for the day. In her heart of hearts Priscilla knew that even had her aunt been at home she would have found it difficult to explain things in their true light. For at the best she must appear extremely careless, and quite unworthy the confidence that Mrs. Tilworth had just expressed. Few girls are willing at a moment's notice to pull themselves down from a pedestal on which they may have been placed.

When Mrs. Tilworth and she were together on Saturday evening, Priscilla still found it hard to make the explanation that she knew was Martine's due, and she found the task no easier on Sunday. Monday was the day when the results of the prize contest were to be announced, and the usually calm Priscilla was inwardly perturbed. Her rank in English was high, and she could not help wondering if there might not be a chance that the prize would fall to her.

"What became of your spot?" asked Martine, mischievously, as she met Priscilla.

"Hush," replied Priscilla; "don't talk about it now, it's too, too disturbing. But I finished my theme for to-day," she continued more brightly, "and now I suppose we shall hear the result of the prize essays."

"If I had known prizes were to be given for these essays, I might not have sent mine in."

"Are you afraid that you'll get the prize? Really, I think there's no danger."

Marie Taggart was noted for her sharp tongue, and Martine controlled the quick reply that rose to her own lips.

"Come, Priscilla," she cried, turning to her friend, "let me lead you to your seat, so that I can be free to hunt about for a laurel wreath. I should hate to be unprepared when the prize is awarded you."

There was an expectant air throughout the class as Miss Crawdon arose to announce the result of the essay contest. A moment or two later Priscilla's name was called by Miss Crawdon, and as she stepped forward to receive the prize, no one in the school begrudged her what they knew she had gained by careful and conscientious effort. But everyone, even Martine herself, was amazed when Miss Crawdon added, "I have here a small card of honorable mention for two girls, one of them Martine Stratford and the other Inez Galbraith, who are only second to the prize-winner; and although their side of the argument, 'The sword is mightier than the pen' is the less popular, I am glad to commend them for the independence shown in their work."

Martine's brow contracted as she heard Miss Crawdon's words. She had little pleasure in the commendation bestowed on her, for suddenly she realized that in letting Lucian help her she had probably done wrong. It is true she had thought out each point for herself, following in many cases Lucian's suggestion, and she had added many things that her brother had not thought of; yet, with it all, she was quite sure that, but for Lucian's help, she never in the world could have written the essay. Therefore the smiles of approval that met her as she went to her seat almost stung her, and Priscilla later, at recess, was surprised at Martine's irritability when she asked her how she had managed to deceive them all by pretending that she could not write.

Yet Martine had no intention of cultivating an over-sensitive Puritan conscience. She was an honest girl on the whole, never intentionally untruthful, although sometimes lacking, perhaps, in frankness. This latter quality was the one that Priscilla had especially criticised during their journey through Acadia. In the present instance Martine was not quite sure to what extent she was right, to what extent wrong. If only she could talk it all over with Priscilla.

"Priscilla, I know, will advise my telling Miss Crawdon, and then perhaps the whole thing would have to be explained to the school, and I should feel awfully mortified. It isn't as if I had won a real prize, or kept anyone else out of anything—and I have worked hard enough over my English to get something. So I'll just imagine it's all right and let it go."

Yet in spite of her determination to think little about the affair, Martine's conscience was not quite clear, and at recess Priscilla noticed a certain change in her manner.

Things were not bettered when Martine reminded Priscilla that she had promised to go home with her after school on Monday or Tuesday.

"Monday is better than Tuesday, so you must come to-day, and we can telephone your aunt, that she needn't wonder at your mysterious disappearance."

"Thank you, really I cannot, I am busy, I must go downtown, and besides—" So Priscilla stumbled along, to Martine's great astonishment.

"Oh, I thought you always enjoyed coming home with me. I am sure you have often said so; but you needn't if you don't want to."

Martine's air of injured innocence sat ill upon her. She could not explain to Priscilla why she was so anxious to have her spend the afternoon with her. She could not fully explain this anxiety to herself, although the real reason was her hope that a talk with Priscilla might settle that little problem of right and wrong connected with the prize essay.

If Martine was annoyed by Priscilla's refusal, poor Priscilla was deeply disturbed by the turn of affairs. Not for a moment did it occur to her that she might disregard her aunt's injunction in relation to Martine. Priscilla had been brought up so strictly that, as Martine sometimes said, she did not think it possible to disobey "the powers that be," whether teachers, parent, or guardian. In Boston Mrs. Tilworth stood in her mother's place, and in consequence whatever she said was law. In the present instance, however, obedience was a little harder than usual, because she knew that Mrs. Tilworth's severity toward her friend came from an error of judgment. Foolish though Martine had been, she was much better than Mrs. Tilworth thought her, and Priscilla knew that it lay with her to correct her aunt's impression.

"Good-bye, Martine," said Priscilla, as they parted at the corner below the school. "Really and truly, I am sorry not to go home with you."

"There, my dear child, someday or other I always have to believe you; but all the same you are very ridiculous and disobliging not to come with me," and although she smiled as she spoke, Martine's voice still held a little bitterness as she turned away from Priscilla and went down the hill. Through the week the two went their separate ways—at least out of school. In their classes and at recess they were still the best of friends. But neither said a word to the other about visiting her. Priscilla, conscious of her aunt's disapproval of Martine, was tongue-tied, and Martine's sense of wounded dignity lasted longer than usual.

On Friday Martine did not go to the Symphony rehearsal, and this in itself was not strange, as she not only was not fond of music, but found the restraint of Mrs. Tilworth's presence rather irksome. In her absence her mother, however, usually occupied her seat, and thus the ticket was not wasted. Martine justified her own absences by telling Priscilla that it would be selfish in her to monopolize the seat when really her mother enjoyed the concert far more than she did.

Nevertheless, until this particular week, it had always been her habit to talk the matter over with Priscilla, and often at the last moment she would yield to the persuasions of the latter that this particular symphony, or that particular soloist was too fine for her to miss.

But when on Friday morning Martine said nothing whatever about the rehearsal, and when on Friday afternoon neither she nor her mother occupied the seat next Priscilla's, the latter felt that the time had come for her to speak.

It is to be feared that that particular symphony meant little to Mrs. Tilworth's niece. Discord, not harmony, filled her mind. She hardly noticed the execution of the great pianist who was the soloist of the day, and when her aunt put a question, her answers were so vague that Mrs. Tilworth, glancing at her keenly, said,

"I fear you have been working too hard this winter. It will do you good to go down to Plymouth Easter."

The kindness in her aunt's tone encouraged Priscilla, and that evening after dinner she told the whole story of the spot of ink. When she had finished, to her great surprise, the dignified Mrs. Tilworth began to laugh.

"Excuse me, my dear, but it seems to me you have made much ado about a small matter. It is true that I value that bureau cover, and I consider you most careless in handling your pen, but that you should think me an ogre—"

"Oh, I do not, only I knew I had been careless. I meant to tell you, but I thought I could get it out first."

"That was your mistake, child. A good laundress could have removed the ink if she had had the cover before any one else experimented with it. As it is, the oxalic acid weakened the fibre so that we have had to darn it. When you see it, you will admit that the work has been done very well, but everything would have gone much better had you told me in the first place."

"Yes, aunt, I know it, and I deserve punishment. But what I wanted to say was about Martine. I know she was silly in doing what she did in the drawing-room, but although she seems so grown up, sometimes she acts just like a child. Why, I really believe she has forgotten all about last Saturday; at least she hasn't said a word to me, and she can't understand why I don't go to her house, and I can't ask her here, and I do wish that you'd let me."

"I did not mean to forbid you to go to Martine's," responded Mrs. Tilworth. "I should be sorry to do that, for, as you know, I like Mrs. Stratford. I merely advised you to see less of Martine. There are other girls who ought to be just as companionable—some indeed whom you might like better, if you would make the effort."

"I had to make an effort to like Martine at first, and now that I am used to her, I can't grow intimate with anyone else."

"Very well, my dear, I think still that you are a little tired. If Martine sees fit to apologize for last Saturday, we can turn over the pages of that chapter."

"Then I may go to see her to-morrow?"

"I never forbade you to go."

"Oh, thank you, aunt Sarah," and as Mrs. Tilworth watched Priscilla's expression brighten, she wondered if in some way she had not been wrong in thinking the child overworked.

CHAPTER IX

WORD FROM BRENDA

Martine was at home when Priscilla called on Saturday morning.

"It's really very condescending in your ladyship to come," she began; "and it's a wonder that you found me. I was to take a riding-lesson to-day, but by good luck I found when I telephoned yesterday that I could have an hour to myself then. So here I have Saturday free, with nothing on my mind but your visit and Brenda's letter."

"Oh, have you heard again from Mrs. Weston?"

"Yes; isn't she a dear to write to me when she has so many people who really belong to her. She says she considers I belong to her, and that she's going to call me her ward until I really come out, and, of course, I shall consider myself her ward always. You've no idea how much I learned from her this autumn. If she had been a stiff, frumpy thing, I just couldn't have paid the least attention to her. I only wish mamma would let me do my hair up like Mrs. Weston's, but she says I'm too young. Well, in a year I shall be a perfect model of style à la Brenda."

"But what is in the letter?"

"I can't say there's so much actual news, only it makes you just long to get out of this cold, bleak climate. Only think of picking roses by the bushel in March, and sitting out in the sun without a wrap."

"In San Francisco?" questioned Priscilla. "Why, I heard my cousin say that it was always too cold for thin gowns there, and that the winds were something terrible."

"Oh, my dear child, you are so literal. No, this is down in Monterey, where there are wonderful gardens. Let me read:

"We are thankful that the rainy season is almost over, for when it rains there is apt to be a perfect flood, and we stay indoors for days. Sometimes it rains in the morning as if it would never stop, and then in the afternoon the sun comes out beautifully and the flowers look as if they had grown inches. But after the middle of June there will be no more rain until winter, and we can camp or plan excursions without casting a thought to the weather. Life, however, is not entirely play with us. Arthur is very busy, and often in the evenings he is too tired to go out. Consequently we are reading together a number of improving things, and when I get back to Boston I am almost sure that every one will say, "How much she knows!" I feel as if my new stock of learning must show on the surface even before anyone has time to discover it by talking with me. Arthur says he doesn't object to it at all, and won't do so unless I have to wear eyeglasses, which every one knows I always did hate."

"The letter certainly sounds like her; when she got started she always talked in that breathless way."

"San Francisco is the most picturesque city I ever saw," continued Martine, reading Brenda's letter, "all up and down hills, so that you feel as if you were riding over the waves of the ocean when you go out in a cable-car.

"From some of the high places where you go up to get a view, very often you only see things dimly through a fog, and then the towers and spires seem parts of castles and you can imagine you are in Europe.

"But although I am perfectly contented here, I often wish I were in Boston, and it makes me too blue for anything to remember that except for business I might now be living in the dearest little apartment in the world. I hope you and your mother enjoy it, Martine, as much as I did, and that you and Priscilla are still great friends."

Martine let the sheet of paper fall from her hand.

"Are we good friends, Prissie dear?" she asked, leaning forward and resting her hand on Priscilla's arm.

"Why, of course, Martine; that's why I came. You see it was all on account of that acid, or salts, or whatever you call it, and the ink-spot, and—yes—and Julius Cæsar."

"Julius Cæsar?" For a moment Martine appeared to be mystified.

"Oh, yes," she spoke with a smile, "Julius and the Roman scarf, and the other improvements that I made in the drawing-room. Mrs. Tilworth blamed you."

"No, no, not for that. She knew I couldn't be so silly."

"Thanks, my dear. Then she blamed me. To be honest, I had hardly thought about my misbehavior since then. I had a vague idea that you would go down before your aunt came in and restore things to their proper condition. Now I perceive I must apologize. It's written all over you that Mrs. Tilworth will believe me a reprobate until I do so. So that is why you have been so very stiff and Plymouthy this week. Oh, Prissie, Prissie!"

Priscilla made no reply. Now, as always, she found it difficult to reply to Martine's teasing.

"You must stay here to luncheon, Prissie," continued Martine, "and this afternoon we'll have some fun. You must have had a very dull week without me. Dear me, this drawer is too full," she continued, as she endeavored to close a drawer of her desk on the top of which she had just placed Brenda's letter.

"Let me help you," and Priscilla rushed over to Martine's side, but between them they only managed to pull drawer and contents to the floor.

"There, I will leave you to yourself, Prissie," said Martine; "you are better than I at straightening things out. I am going out to the dining-room to speak to Angelina."

As Priscilla carefully replaced the scattered contents of the drawer she refrained from looking at the letters and other papers that lay before her. She acted thus from habit rather than because she thought there was any need of this carefulness just now. She had not come upon the drawer by accident, and therefore she was at liberty to look at anything that attracted her attention. Just as Priscilla's own reflections had taken this turn, she allowed her eye to rest on a half sheet of foolscap that she had last picked up. The handwriting upon it was not Martine's, and almost without realizing what she was doing, she began to read a sentence or two. Then somewhat startled, she folded the paper, and quickly put it back in the drawer.

"Oh, I wish I hadn't seen it!" she thought. "It was Lucian's handwriting, and yet it seemed to be an outline of Martine's essay. I wonder if he wrote it for her. They say he does so well in English. I wish I hadn't seen it. It doesn't seem like Martine."

Priscilla was genuinely distressed, and when Martine returned, her feeling had taken the form of embarrassment. When Martine spoke to her, she replied with hesitation, and her manner had some of its old awkwardness.

"There," exclaimed Martine, with some acrimony, "you are really rather provoking. Here I have been telephoning and planning a good time for you, and you begin to seem as iceberg-y as you seemed at Yarmouth last summer. Now listen, first of all I have apologized to your aunt by telephone."

"Oh, Martine!"

"Yes, and she says it's all right, and she has forgiven me on condition that I never disturb Julius Cæsar again. It was really very good of her, when you consider that she couldn't see my blushes of repentance. So that is settled. Secondly, you are to stay here for dinner, and go with us to a recital this evening."

"A recital, and who is 'us'?"

"Oh, Lucian, and Robert, and me, or 'I,' whichever is most grammatical. As to the recital, why, haven't you heard that Angelina intends to distinguish herself in elocution? All her little surplus goes for voice-training, and things of that kind—and her recital's to-night. I should have invited you before, only you have been so high and mighty all the week."

"But did my aunt say I could go? She doesn't approve of evening things generally—except parties, on Friday or Saturday evenings."

"Well, thank goodness, there's no stupid party this evening."

"But I'll have to go home to dress."

"Oh, Prissie, Prissie! surely you are not growing vain. What you have on is suitable for any occasion. Observe that I speak as one in authority. Mamma would say the same. The recital is not to be given at the Somerset or the Touraine, but somewhere in the outskirts, where 'glad clothes,' as the boys call them, would be quite out of place."

"Very well," and Priscilla resigned herself to Martine's stronger will. "I suppose it's all right."

"There, dear iceberg, I am glad to see that you have begun to thaw. I hope Lucian and Robert will be as amiable. They have no idea what is before them, except that I am going to take them somewhere. Once in a while Lucian is too amiable to refuse what I ask, and this will be one of the times. For my own part, I shall be as thankful as mamma when the affair is over, for Angelina has been hopping about like a chicken with its head chopped off for a month past. What little mind she has has been fixed on her recitations, and I only hope she'll do herself proud."

"Oh, Martine," protested Priscilla, "how can you use so much slang! Just think how Mrs. Redmond and Amy used to talk to you last summer."

"Yes, and you too, Prissie dear, and this winter, my own mother. But when you begin to deteriorate, you will know that there are moments when one's spirits must have a safety valve, and slang is mine."

Priscilla shook her head.

"So now, my dear Prissie, to show that I am not lost to all refining influences, let me suggest an hour at the Art Museum. I love pictures as dearly as I do not love music, and there are several favorites of mine there that I haven't seen for a month. Put on your hat and coat, and we'll be there in five minutes."

When they were out in the clear air Martine's tone changed.

"Priscilla," she said gently, "do you know I am a little worried about father? He writes as if his business was not going well. He does not say it in exactly those words, but he has written only once, and the letter was far from cheerful. Either it is his business, or he doesn't feel well—and he is so far away. It seems to me now that we oughtn't to have let him go."

"But could you have helped it?" asked the practical Priscilla.

"Perhaps one of us could have gone with him—Lucian or I. South America seems so far away."

Priscilla's sympathy was readily aroused, and she gave it generously to Martine.

"It must be very, very hard for you to have your father so far away, especially if you think that he is not quite well. I know how it was when papa was in Cuba. It just seemed as if I couldn't bear it, and yet I suppose that there was nothing I could do, even if I had been there."

For a moment both girls were silent, though they realized that a bond of sympathy was drawing them more closely together.

Then Priscilla essayed the part of comforter.

"You feel worse about your father because he is so far away. They say far-off fields look green, but I think that far-off worries are harder to bear than those near at hand. I mean when the people or things we worry about are so far away that we can't understand exactly what is going on."

"Thank you, Priscilla, for your sympathy. I dare say you are right, and yet I cannot help wishing that I understood things better. I am old enough to help—if only I really knew how."

"The way will show itself if you are really needed. That is one of the small things I have learned the past year," responded Priscilla.

"Priscilla, you have helped me; you are a philosopher," cried Martine.

In their hour at the Art Museum Martine recovered her spirits. She really knew something about paintings, and her favorites were chosen with discrimination. She lingered long and silently before those she loved best, and gave reasons for her preferences that would have done credit to a connoisseur.

"I don't see how you ever learned so much," said Priscilla. "I feel like a perfect ignoramus before you when you talk of these things."

"I did not mean to pose as an expert; you make me feel as if I had been too bumptious," replied Martine. "It's only because we've travelled so much that I know something of art. I have picked it up little by little; even last summer, in spite of our efforts to devote ourselves to history, I gained a lot from Mrs. Redmond about color values, and light and shade."

"It's a great thing to know just what pictures to like," responded Priscilla. "I like some paintings

more than others, but I never know why."

"Neither do I, my dear child, when we come right down to facts. I know why I *ought* to like certain things, but often those are the paintings that I like least. It's with pictures as with people, we admire many that we do not care for, and when we care very much, it's often because we really cannot help ourselves."

"You and I are so different," mused Priscilla, "I often wonder why you like me."

"Priscilla," cried Martine, "don't try to be a philosopher until you have left school."

Yet hardly an hour before Martine had been praising Priscilla for her philosophy.

CHAPTER X

THE RECITAL

For a few weeks after Angelina's *coup* she had little further opportunity to show her skill. The successor of the eloping cook proved a capable, steady person, so in love with her new place that to Angelina's disgust she hardly ever even took the afternoon and evening off to which she was entitled. For it had always been Angelina's custom in the absence of the cook to entertain some of her own friends in Mrs. Stratford's dining-room, and to provide them with refreshments of her own concoction.

For doing this she would have justified herself (had she thought she needed justification) by saying that no one had ever forbidden her to have company—and anyway, Miss Martine would never object.

In this opinion she was quite correct. But, unfortunately, Mrs. Stratford, and not her daughter, was in charge, and the former, unlike Martine, did not find the Portuguese girl a perpetual source of amusement. Neither was Angelina as popular with the new cook as she had hoped to be. Her blandishments had never availed so little to get her what she wanted.

"And why she's so anxious to get me out of the house, I can in no ways understand, Mrs. Stratford, and me as quiet as can be, and never saying nothing to her when she sits there reading them novels with the big pictures on the cover, or making faces over the pomes she's learning."

"Oh, I don't believe she's anxious to have you out of the way—only—"

"Yes'm, it's just that. She's wishing to fill the place up with company of her own, and because I keep an eye to the ice-chest she isn't at all pleased. I know what girls is, ma'am, and that Angelina, she's always up to something."

Martine, when her mother repeated the substance of the cook's words, laughed lightly.

"Oh, it's much more entertaining to have one person in the house who's up to something. If they were all as stupid as the cook, how dull it would be. But I can tell you what's the matter with Angelina—she is going to give a recital."

"A recital?"

"Yes. It seems she has been taking elocution lessons ever since she had any money of her own to spend."

"Did Miss Bourne encourage this kind of thing?"

"Oh, no, she disapproved, but she just couldn't stop her. Brenda Weston told me all about it. Brenda thought there was no great harm in Angelina's amusing herself this way."

"But elocution lessons must cost so—"

"Yes, that's what Miss Bourne said, and she didn't want Angelina to go on the stage, as she threatened."

"Angelina on the stage!"

"Yes, mamma. She has even confided to me that she has been answering advertisements of companies that want soubrettes. Of course I told her it was dreadful, and she's promised to give up that idea for the present. But I have taken some tickets for her recital."

"My dear, I wish you hadn't encouraged her."

"Oh, anything else would have seemed mean, and she didn't dare try to sell you any."

After Martine's explanation, Mrs. Stratford was more patient with Angelina. How could she expect regular work from her until after the recital!

This was the affair that Martine persuaded Priscilla to attend with her, as well as Lucian and Robert. The four other tickets that she had bought in addition to those needed for her party lay unused in her desk drawer. No one to whom she had offered them cared for them. The recital

was to be given in a place too far away.

"You are sure we are on the right car?" Martine asked, after the four had been some time on their way.

"You said Chelsea, didn't you? well, this car is bound for the Chelsea Ferry," replied Lucian.

"Chelsea," exclaimed Priscilla, "I didn't know we were going there! Isn't that awfully far away? I oughtn't to go outside of Boston."

"But this is only across the harbor, and Angelina says the hall is a very short way from the dock."

"Oh, very well," and Priscilla sank back in her seat. She must continue with her friends and since they were prepared to go to Chelsea, she could only resign herself to their plans.

She did not like the ferry-boat. She did not enjoy the walk to the hall. Robert's jokes failed to amuse her, and even Lucian's college stories grew tiresome. To tell the truth, Priscilla dreaded the explanation she must give her aunt. Mrs. Tilworth had readily acceded to her dining with Martine. She had objected only slightly over the telephone when Priscilla had asked if she might go to a recital with Martine and her brother. Priscilla had telephoned even after Martine had obtained Mrs. Tilworth's consent.

"I am sorry that it is not to be a musical affair. I do not care for miscellaneous programs. But there will be less harm in wasting time Saturday than any other evening, but I must ask you to be home early. I like to have the house locked at ten."

"Yes, aunt," and as Mrs. Tilworth had asked no questions about the performers, Priscilla was spared the necessity of telling her that Angelina would be the chief attraction. Yet of one thing she was now sure, as the four journeyed Chelseaward—Mrs. Tilworth would be displeased if she should be out late, and to return early from Chelsea, why, that surely was an impossibility.

"I wonder what your Portuguese calls a short walk," growled Lucian, after they had wandered about for some time after leaving the ferry. "Thus far, every one we have asked has given us a different location. Do you know, Martine, this whole undertaking is a fool thing? Who but you would ever have thought of coming to Chelsea for amusement?"

"Thank you, Taps," responded Martine, sweetly, knowing that the old nickname would stir Lucian's anger even more. She did not dread Lucian's anger, for it never flamed very high, and while it lasted it was sometimes rather funny.

"You have good company," continued Martine, in a calm tone, ill-calculated to soothe an irritated brother. "Priscilla and I have to walk just as far as you, and you ought to appreciate our being with you."

Ungallant Lucian did not reply, and the laugh with which the girls received some remark of Robert's did not please him.

"It may seem funny to you to be wandering around the streets of Chelsea, but it would be more to the point, Martine, if you would gather your wits together, and remember the hall where this foolish entertainment is to hold forth."

At this moment by some subtle working of her mind light came to Martine, and the next moment she had whispered the forgotten name of the hall to Robert. Upon this Robert shot ahead of the others, and when Lucian caught up with him, he was standing in front of a corner drug-store.

"Come," he said, seizing Lucian's arm, "I'll show you where to go. We're ever so far out of our way. If you had left it all to me, we should have been there long ago."

Turning the corner beyond the drug-store, and walking a few steps along a street parallel to the one on which they had looked for the hall, the four young people were soon at the entrance of a large building, the lower story of which was occupied by a grocery shop.

In front of the shop was a group of half-grown boys.

"Got a ticket, Mister?" said one of them, holding the green pasteboard card to Lucian.

Lucian, who was really an amiable youth, had quickly recovered from his annoyance with Martine, and would not gratify Robert by showing vexation that the latter had been more successful in finding the hall. He suspected the truth—that Martine had helped Robert, and since they were now at the hall, what did it matter?

"Got a ticket, Mister?" A second boy held out his hand to Lucian.

"Of course, that's why we're here," replied Lucian. "Are you selling them?"

"No, we're giving them away. We want an aujence," was the astonishing response.

"What *does* he mean?"

"We'll soon know, Martine," said Priscilla, following the two others up a long flight of dimly-lit stairs.

"Did you ever?" Martine gazed around the hall as they entered; "there are not ten people here."

"Just thirty." Priscilla was nothing if not accurate.

"But I thought Angelina said she had sold two hundred tickets, Martine."

"Expected to sell them, Lucian, though, to tell the truth, I thought she *had* sold them."

"I'll wager she gave away half the seats that are occupied now. Those are Portuguese faces down in the front."

"I paid for mine."

"I know that, Martine. You always had a foolish habit of getting rid of your allowance almost as soon as you received it."

"That reminds me," asked Robert, "is this a charitable performance? It would have been more charitable to let us stay quietly in our rooms. Just think what a fine four hours of study Lucian and I could have put in this evening."

"Yes, you are so apt to study Saturday evening," interposed Martine; "but to answer your question, I can't say that this is wholly charitable. Part of it is for a girls' club over here—I mean part of the profits—and the rest—"

"Here's a poster," interrupted Lucian; "let's see what it says."

"It's easy enough to read. It must have been meant for bill-board decoration. Big black letters on green paper. Listen!" and after reading aloud place and date, Lucian continued:

**MISS ANGELINA ROSA
THE EMINENT MONOLOGUIST,
WILL GIVE ONE OF HER CHOICE RECITALS
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE GIRLS' EXCELSIOR CLUB
AND A HALF-ORPHAN**

"A half-orphan!" shouted Robert. "What in the world—?"

"Why, she means herself, of course; her father is dead."

"Oh, I see!" and then, after the fashion of young people, the four began to giggle.

"Hush! the audience will be disturbed." Priscilla was the first to recover herself.

"What audience?" asked Martine, looking around the almost empty hall.

"It's fifteen minutes past eight." Lucian closed his watch with a snap. "There's something happening. I wonder what it is. Two or three of those foreigners have gone behind the curtain."

At half-past eight Angelina had not appeared. Lucian proposed going home. Martine thought she ought to find Angelina to learn if anything serious had happened. Some of the boys in the front seats scuffled angrily. The hall was neither well heated, nor well lit. Every one was uncomfortable.

"I think that we really ought to go home," whispered Priscilla, half-timidly, to Lucian. But just at this moment the curtain was pushed aside, and Angelina appeared in the centre of the stage.

In her pink satin gown with its tawdry trimmings at neck and sleeves, she looked "blacker and skinnier than ever," as Lucian put it. Just behind her walked a man who stumbled over her train, and then with a bow began to speak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is most unfortunate that this lady and I may not be able to give our entertainment as advertised."

Hisses from the front soon interrupted the speaker.

"What has he to do with it?"

Lucian looked again at the poster where "Mr. Smithkins, accompanist" appeared in small letters at the bottom.

Mr. Smithkins resumed his speech: "The fact is there's been some misunderstanding with the owner of this hall, who refuses to let us proceed until the rent has been paid in advance."

"Yes, every cent of it," and a stout woman with a red face and a bonnet trimmed with purple flowers pushed her way from behind. Angelina waved a large red fan nervously, but otherwise did not appear discomposed. She was at least the centre of the stage and although the audience was small, all eyes were certainly fixed on her.

The eloquence of the stout lady quite drowned the words of Mr. Smithkins, making vain efforts to give his version of the situation. But after the hubbub had subsided, it was fairly clear to those present that Angelina had failed to pay the fifteen dollars she had promised in advance for the hall. Moreover, it was even clearer that Mrs. Stinton, the owner of the building, meant not only to stop the entertainment, but also to prevent Angelina's "skipping," without giving her her due.

"Will they arrest her?" asked Priscilla, anxiously.

"Oh, no, of course not; Angelina must pay the money."

"But you heard Mr. Smithkins say that she had been disappointed in the sale of tickets, and hadn't a cent even to pay him, and if he could afford to wait, Mrs. Stinton ought to be able to wait too."

"Give us a song or a pome," called a voice from the rear of the hall. The boys, who had been lounging at the door, were now inside.

Lucian and Robert rose from their seats.

"Excuse us for a moment," said the latter to Martine as the two made their way out into the aisle.

"Why, they're going behind the scenes," said Priscilla, in surprise. Still more surprised was she when Lucian, raising the curtain, beckoned to Mrs. Stinton. The latter, impressed by the young man's appearance, went behind the curtain, and Mr. Smithkins, anxious to understand what was going on, followed her. Thus Angelina, to her own great satisfaction, was left in possession of the stage.

When Mr. Smithkins, a little later, appeared before the audience, he had the pleasure to announce, as he phrased it, that Mrs. Stinton's demands had been paid in full by a friend of the talented Miss Rosa, and that the performance would go on as advertised.

In promising this, however, Mr. Smithkins went a little too far. The cold hall, the low-necked gown, the long wait in which the young monologist had heroically concealed her anxiety, all proved a great strain for Angelina.

Although she began bravely enough with what she considered the gem of the repertoire, the monologue was given quite tamely, and though she continued it to the end she was evidently glad to stop. It was at this point that Mr. Smithkins showed himself of especial service, as he seated himself at the cracked piano. There he pounded out a number of popular airs to the great delight of the audience, and received far greater applause than poor Angelina.

Nevertheless, when Angelina appeared for the second time, there fell at her feet a large bouquet of carnations, for which she bowed her acknowledgments several times.

It was all very pathetic as well as absurd. The dimly-lit, cold hall, the empty seats, the little figure bowing on the platform. Martine, always ready to see the amusing side of things, began to laugh. The rest of her party, even the considerate Priscilla, echoed the laugh. Then it spread to the front seats, and when Angelina was in the midst of her second selection, one in which she meant to move her audience to tears, all she could hear was one prolonged giggle. Poor Angelina! This laughter was the last straw. Still holding the flowers and the fan, she threw one angry glance toward the house, and then turning her back on friend and foe alike fled behind the curtain.

"There, Martine, you've done it. It was your giggling that set them off. You ought to go behind and console her." Lucian seemed in earnest.

"It's half-past nine." Robert looked at his watch.

"Then we ought to start for home. We are so far away."

There was nervousness in Priscilla's tone.

Martine had made no effort to go to Angelina.

"How is the prima donna to get to town?" asked Lucian. "Are you going to look after her, Martine?"

"Oh, no, her brother John is here. He is that tall, good-looking youth, standing near the door. She can depend on him."

"Then we may start," continued Lucian, "even if the show isn't wholly over. We cannot wait for further instalments."

"We've had more than the value of our money," added Robert. "Mrs. Stinton's performance alone was worth the price."

"Yes, girls, you should have heard her express her surprise and gratitude when we gave her the fifteen dollars, and when we told her we were Harvard students, she could hardly believe it."

"But what did Angelina think?"

"Oh, we told her, Martine, that you had sent it, and that she must pay it back gradually. So you see that you, dear sister, will make the most out of this evening, as we'll let you keep whatever she pays back."

With Angelina's *fiasco* to talk over, the four found the journey back to town much less tiresome than the "voyage," as Martine called it, to Chelsea. It seemed shorter, perhaps, because Robert discovered that they could return to Boston by a bridge instead of the ferry. When at last they left Priscilla at her door, it was not as late as it might have been if Angelina had carried out her full program.

CHAPTER XI

MARTINE'S ALTRUISM

In spite of her love of fun, Martine was considerate enough not to tease Angelina about her recital. Later, by degrees of her own accord, the little Portuguese told the story. After all, there was not much to tell. She had depended on a few posters scattered at random to fill the hall. She had thought that the girls of the Excelsior Club would sell many tickets. But she had fixed the price so high that the girls could neither afford to buy them, nor succeed in disposing of them to their friends.

Moreover, on the night of the recital, a Grand Army fair was holding an auction to which admission was free, and thither every one with a penny to spend had rushed, hoping for bargains. Even if Angelina had been a well-known elocutionist, she would have had difficulty in drawing people from the greater attraction.

"But I never thought," she said, "that some of the people who regularly bought tickets from me would never pay for them, just because they thought it was too much trouble to go when they found out how far away the hall was. My brother John bought and paid for tickets, and so did you, Miss Martine, and with the tickets I sold I just made out to pay Mr. Smithkins the ten dollars I'd promised him. But it was very embarrassing about the hall—and if it hadn't been for your fifteen dollars, I don't know what I should have done."

Martine did not explain her brother's part in the matter.

"Of course, that Mrs. Stinton could have charged it as well as not. It wouldn't have been anything to her. They say she owns a whole block of houses down by the ferry. But it's my last of the Excelsior Club. I consider they went back on me."

"I hope you have learned a lesson, Angelina. You ought not to have promised to pay for the hall until you were sure of getting enough money out of a recital. You should have waited—"

"But I couldn't give a recital without a hall, and I should have paid if I'd sold more tickets."

"Well, this ought to be the last of your recitals."

"Didn't I do well?" asked Angelina, anxiously.

"Oh, that isn't the point."

Martine did not care at this moment to give her precise opinion of Angelina's dramatic ability.

"But you see, this must have cost you a great deal, and you ought to save your money—everybody ought, and life is more serious—there, Angelina—I'll leave it all to mamma. She'll advise you," concluded Martine, feeling that she was getting into deep water, in advocating principles that she herself had not always been able to live up to.

The experience of that memorable Saturday, combined with the advice given by Mrs. Stratford, so far influenced Angelina that for the time she devoted herself exclusively to her household duties, ceased to take elocution lessons, and began to save money. At first she offered to pay Martine a dollar a week, but when the latter learned that Angelina had other debts, she urged her to consider them first.

"I can wait," she said, "and when you have finished paying for that pink satin dress—it would be a good idea for you to make your mother a present."

Nora Gostar, who always kept closely in touch with the Rosas at their home in Shiloh, had asked Martine to influence Angelina to do more for her family.

"Ever since the Four Club years ago began to help the Rosas, Angelina has taken it for granted that the public would look after them. It is true that on the whole they are now fairly prosperous. With her boarders and her garden Mrs. Rosa makes both ends meet, and John always has something to spare for his brothers and sisters. It is only Angelina who seems ready to escape all responsibility. You will remind her, won't you, Martine?"

"Yes," said Martine, "but some people say I haven't enough sense of responsibility myself."

"My dear, then no one has observed you lately. You certainly have taken hold splendidly of the girls in your painting class. Two or three of them, you know, have been called 'hard cases.' No one else ever could interest them, and yet they seem perfectly devoted to you."

"Oh, they are so amusing," said Martine, "that I can't help throwing myself into the work, and then I find out what they want to do, and let them do it. It's silly to make people do things they dislike. Of course," she added, with some embarrassment, "I am aware that this wouldn't be the right principle if I were a real artist, and were trying to make artists out of them. Some of them can't even draw, but they do take an interest in color, and so I am always hunting for good pictures in black and white—and their color effects sometimes are quite wonderful."

Martine did not explain that not a little of her own pocket money was spent for pictures suitable

to her rather original method of conducting the class. Photographs and lithographs cost money, and though Amy remonstrated that it was contrary to art to gild the lily, Martine replied that the end would justify her means.

Among her six little pupils only one showed marked talent. She was a Russian girl who had been in Boston but a year, and her gift took the form of a genius for making caricatures.

Her pencil was constantly in her hand, and even with her brush she could outline figures and scenes on the margins of her pictures that would send the others into fits of uproarious laughter.

"Esther, Esther," Martine said one day, "you should never make fun of older people. Who is that tall, thin person, with the lorgnette in her hand?"

"That's teacher," explained one of the others, "the teacher in our school. It's her dead image, ain't it?" and the friend to whom she turned for confirmation, nodded, adding—

"When she's mad she puts her glasses up just so—and we all feel cheaper 'n thirty cents."

"I hope you don't make fun of me this way, Esther, behind my back."

"Oh, no'm, you ain't a teacher."

As Martine was already aware that her girls always spoke of her as "the young lady," this doubtful compliment passed without criticism. Neither in her heart did she think it wise to criticise the little girl's caricatures.

She was delighted when Mrs. Redmond, after looking at Esther's drawings, said that the child had real talent. Then without further delay, without indeed consulting anyone, Martine engaged an expensive teacher to give Esther drawing lessons once a week. Mrs. Redmond would have taught her gratuitously, had she not felt that the little girl's peculiar talent would be best developed by a teacher who made a specialty of figure drawing.

Before Mr. Stratford's departure for England Martine had suggested that he add to the sum he had given her for Yvonne. To the little Acadienne had gone one third of three hundred dollars. This was a sum that Mr. Stratford had asked his daughter to share with her two friends Amy and Priscilla, and expend on the three young people in whom they had taken a special interest during their trip through Acadia.

It had surprised Martine not a little when her usually generous father had hesitated about granting her little request for Yvonne.

"Send her ten dollars from your own Christmas money, dear child, and later I will add to it. Your desire to help her pleases me very much, but just now I would rather not promise a large sum."

"But I did not mean *very* large, papa; only enough for Alexander Babet to bring her up here and stay for a few months, until the doctors know what can be done for her eyes. It would make you happier, wouldn't it, papa, to know that she could see perfectly?"

"Indeed it would, Martine, but just now I would rather postpone anything of this kind. Besides, even if I were a second Cræsus, I should be more inclined to wait until I could have more thorough knowledge of the condition of the Babet family."

"Oh, papa, surely you believe what I have told you—that Yvonne is almost blind, and that she has the most beautiful voice."

"Yes, my dear, but I know also that the Acadians are thrifty, and that the Babets will spend your gift so carefully, that it will go farther than five hundred dollars with most people. Some day we shall do more for Yvonne, but for the present she must be content with what she has."

So positively did Mr. Stratford speak, that Martine, too, had to be content. She managed, however, not only to send the money that Mr. Stratford had suggested, but a box of slightly worn garments that could be adapted to the use of the little blind girl. She remembered Yvonne's love for pretty things, and what she sent had only enough of the newness worn off to enable the box to pass the watchful customs officials of Nova Scotia.

Priscilla did not pretend to be as altruistic as Martine, though both professed to take Amy for their model. Yet letters between Eunice and Priscilla passed back and forth constantly, and after reading them Priscilla was apt to sigh, and fall into a brown study; for Eunice, having for the first time found a confidante of her own age, opened her heart almost too freely, and in emphasizing the disappointments of her daily life, sometimes threw a cloud over her friend. This is a mistake made by some young letter-writers. They write intensely of personal disappointments that soon pass away. Yet the letter that they send seems to give permanence to their troubles, and if the person to whom they write is sensitive, she pictures the absent one as continually unhappy.

Eunice and Balfour Airton were brother and sister living with their mother in Annapolis. They had been able to make pleasanter than it might have been the stay of Mrs. Redmond and the three girls in the old town.

Eunice and Priscilla had soon become warm friends, and after their comparatively short acquaintance parted almost in tears. The Airtons were descended from Tories who had gone to Nova Scotia after the Revolution, and had always been highly respected. Even before the death of Eunice's father, however, they had lost much of their property, and were under a heavy strain to

make both ends meet. Balfour Airton, who was a year or two older than Martine, was working his way through college. In his vacations he served as clerk in a grocery shop. Indeed, Martine had made his acquaintance one day when lost in the fog on the North Mountain. She had been rescued by Balfour, who fortunately drove up in his grocery cart.

Balfour proved a most companionable boy, and his energy and industry made a great impression on Martine, when she contrasted him with the idler college boys whom she knew.

By a combination of proofs needless to describe here, Martine discovered that she and the Airtons were third cousins, since their great-great-grandfather and hers, Thomas Blair, was the Tory exile who had gone to Nova Scotia after the Revolution. In the same way Edith Blair, Brenda's great friend, was a cousin of Eunice and Balfour, and Martine's first impulse on returning home had been to urge her father and Mr. Blair to provide for Balfour, so that he no longer need earn his way through college.

Fortunately enough, before she had spoken to her father, she talked the matter over with Mrs. Redmond.

"My dear Martine, I sincerely hope that you will change your mind about this. Or, if you do not, hope that your father and Mr. Blair will be hard-hearted enough to refuse your request."

"How hard-hearted *you* are, Mrs. Redmond!"

"No, indeed, not hard-hearted—only hard-headed."

"What do you mean?"

"I am looking strictly to the practical side. In the first place, you would risk the loss of Balfour's friendship, if you should put him in the position of a pauper—for this is the light in which he might regard your interference."

"Oh, no, not a pauper!"

"Well, Balfour is very proud—and in the second place, he could not afford to risk his independence, as he must, if he should accept money from strangers."

"But they wouldn't be strangers; in the South third cousins are very near."

"Well, this isn't the South, and the relationship is on your mother's side, and Mrs. Blair's. Balfour would probably regard the men as strangers. Think over what I have said, Martine, and remember Balfour's disposition."

"It is because he is so bright and industrious that I think it a shame that he should not have as good a chance as Lucian or Robert."

"Balfour has the best possible chance. In the end his friends will be proud of him, and he will be thankful that no one took away his independence."

Martine was sufficiently impressed by what Mrs. Redmond had said to give up for the time the plan she had formed of getting help for Balfour.

When she saw that her father was not quite ready to do what she had planned for Yvonne, she was glad that she had not thrown on him the extra burden of considering the case of Balfour. She decided, however, to interest Lucian in Eunice's brother. In spite of Lucian's fondness for teasing Martine, he was really devoted to her. He was apt in the end to be influenced by her, although in the beginning often pretending to resist her influence.

In his Freshman year, Lucian was drifting into the extravagant habits of an idle group from the preparatory school where he had fitted for Harvard. Fortunately, however, at the critical moment he came under the ken of Fritz Tomkins—a Junior. Between the two there then sprang up a friendship rather unusual in its way. For even at Harvard Freshmen and Juniors are seldom intimate. So it happened that when the summer came, instead of going to Europe with two or three of his classmates, Lucian really preferred a trip with Fritz. The two went to Nova Scotia, and the constant companionship with the sensible Fritz had given Lucian new views of life, or not to put it too seriously—of the value of time and money. Fritz himself was gay and light-hearted, fond of teasing his old friend Amy Redmond, and willing always to have others laugh at him. But beneath all his apparent frivolity was a depth of purpose that those who knew him best fully realized.

CHAPTER XII

PUZZLES

In the weeks immediately after the recital Martine and Priscilla were both so occupied with their studies and their little duties and pleasures that they saw less than usual of each other. Martine, on whom care sat rather lightly, ceased for the time to worry about her father.

She noticed, it is true, that her mother did not read her father's last letter, which arrived about a

week after her conversation with Priscilla.

"Is everything going on properly?" she asked eagerly, as her mother folded the letter within its envelope.

"I hope for the best, dear. It seems too bad that your father had to go away at this time. It was a long, hard journey, and there are still difficulties before him."

"Oh, I wish we could help, Lucian and I, I mean."

"You can help; indeed you have helped me immensely, by being bright and cheerful and—"

"Yes, and economical. Once in a while it seems strange to have to stop and think of money. I bought two-dollar seats for the Paderewski matinee, although the three-dollar seats were much better, but I thought that as I had invited Priscilla and Grace—as well as Miss Mings—our history teacher—and as we were to go to the Somerset afterwards, I ought to be economical."

Even Mrs. Stratford smiled at Martine's intended economy, as she said, "But my dear, I think perhaps it would have been wiser to pass this matinee by. You are not fond of instrumental music, and the whole thing means spending more money than you ought to spend in this way at present."

"Then I'll take it out of my allowance. Of course I meant to anyway. I don't honestly care much about Paderewski myself, but Priscilla does, and most of the girls are wild about him, and everyone is going, so I should feel very silly to have to say I hadn't been."

"Very well, my dear, I cannot criticise you, for I gave you my permission, but in future you must think more about the cost of things."

"Yes, mamma! indeed I often think of economizing, for even though it is pleasant here, living in an apartment with only Angelina and a cook is very different from being in our house at home, and I know we're here to save money. How some of the people we know would stare to see us trying to help with the work! why, the week the cook left I actually saw you washing dishes."

Mrs. Stratford smiled faintly; some of her Boston experiences had been trying, but she had said little to Martine about them.

"So far as I am concerned," added Martine, "I have enjoyed everything in Boston. I have learned lots about cooking, and if it wasn't for school, sometimes I think we could manage just with Angelina. But I am going to economize so that papa will hardly know me when he comes home in June. I can get along with only one tailor-made suit, and perhaps two or three new silks this spring. But I do hope we can plan something worth while for the summer. Wouldn't you like the Yellowstone, with our own special guide, papa, Lucian, and all of us, and I could invite Priscilla, and we might have a few weeks in one of those big hotels among the mountains. What sport it would be!"

Martine paused, almost out of breath.

"We can't make many plans until we hear from your father," replied Mrs. Stratford, quietly, "but what you suggest isn't exactly in the direction of economy."

"Oh, I didn't suppose we'd have to economize always. Then you ought to speak to Lucian, mamma, he has ordered a new touring car."

"That is the worst of indulging a boy from the cradle," and Mrs. Stratford sighed. "Last year your father told him he might have a new car this spring, and Lucian thinks he's very moderate because he is keeping within the two-thousand-dollar limit. I don't like to stop him, for if things come out as well as they may, he can have it."

"Two thousand dollars!" exclaimed Martine, to whom figures usually did not mean much. "That is a large sum! Why, it would put a boy through college."

She was thinking of Balfour Airton, and all that this amount of money would do for him.

"Mrs. Blair," continued Martine's mother, "calls Lucian very moderate in his college expenses. He stands well in his classes, too. She says that Philip spent three times as much."

"And he had to leave Harvard without a degree!"

"He has made it up since, and he is doing splendidly in business."

"Edith says it's Pamela's influence that has done so much for him."

"He was lucky enough to find a girl like her to marry him."

"She certainly is a superior woman—even if she is country-born and a college graduate, as Mrs. Blair would say," responded Martine, smiling. "If only they lived nearer, I should spend half my time with cousin Pamela—if she'd let me, but Lincoln seems far away in the winter. That's one thing we'd gain from Lucian's new car; those out-of-town places would seem close at hand."

Lucian, when Martine spoke to him about his car, admitted that he had ordered it, and he tried to laugh away her concern over family affairs. But his efforts in this direction were not really successful, and he saw that his sister was still troubled in spite of his argument that, if things

were really going badly, he would have heard more from his father.

"He'd be the last one to wish me to countermand the order. Why, every fellow in our set has a new machine this spring. I thought I was doing something to send my order in so early, though of course if worse comes to worse, I can get rid of it easily enough. Mine is to be ready in June, and I know a fellow who would take it off my hands gladly enough, as he can't get his until August. I'm going to pray, however, that things won't come to that pass."

Martine, fortunately, was not inclined to borrow trouble, and although she by no means forgot the little conversation with her mother regarding her father's business, remembering it did not depress her. Life in the spring, even in a bleak New England spring, holds so many pleasant things for a girl of seventeen that intangible troubles are not likely to prevent her enjoyment of the present.

Martine was popular at school, and her invitations far exceeded those of the majority of her classmates. The younger girls liked her because she was always cheerful, and never snubbed them. The older girls admired her because she had an air of knowing the world, and was ever ready with some amusing story. She was popular without having many intimate friends, and Priscilla was proud of the distinction of being the one girl who knew Martine the best. Here and there, naturally enough, there were girls who did not care especially for Martine. There were one or two who professed an inherent dislike of outsiders, as a class, and there were others who found fault with Martine in particular. They said that she was forward, that she was patronizing, and that her liberality in the spending of money was merely a way of "showing off" of which they did not approve. But the fact that Martine, at the beginning of the school year, had been dubbed "Brenda's ward" was more effectual than any other one thing in placing her within the inner circle of the school. In spite of the years that had elapsed since Brenda was a pupil at Miss Crawdon's, she and her doings were still remembered. Older sisters had talked to younger sisters about her, and everyone knew that she had been the most popular girl of her day. She was still spoken of most habitually as "Brenda," even by those who had not known her well. For in Boston the unmarried names of girls cling to them longer than in most cities, and those who immediately recalled "Brenda Barlow" had to think twice when "Mrs. Arthur Weston" was named.

Priscilla, who was nothing if not exact, remonstrated occasionally with girls who spoke of Martine as "Brenda's ward."

"She never was really her ward, you know, only Brenda was to chaperone her, and now that Mrs. Weston has gone away, it seems to me that the name ought to be dropped."

The girls to whom Priscilla spoke only laughed at her.

"My dear child," said Marie Taggart, "from the way you cling to her, I judge you would rather have Martine called 'Priscilla's ward,' but Brenda is so far away that you mustn't be jealous of her, really and truly you must not."

After this Priscilla said no more on this subject, although an observer would have noticed that she herself never spoke of her friend by the obnoxious title.

When Mrs. Stratford and Martine first took possession of Brenda's little apartment, Brenda's mother and sister, Mrs. Barlow and Mrs. Weston, added much to their pleasure by introducing them to their large circle of relatives and friends and in other ways, as Mrs. Barlow put it, "adopting" them in Brenda's place. But before January had come to an end the whole Barlow household was itself preparing to move. His physician had prescribed a change of air for Mr. Barlow, and after a few weeks in Florida the family intended to travel West, to join Brenda in California in the late spring.

It happened, therefore, that the special groups to whom Mrs. Barlow had introduced the Stratfords felt no personal responsibility for them. This was not because they did not find the Chicagoans interesting, but because the latter seemed able to make their own friends without the help of a third person.

"It would be a great bore, mamma," Martine had protested, when one or two of Mrs. Barlow's friends urged that the young girl should join a certain exclusive dancing-class. "It would be a great bore if we had to act as if we were real old Bostonians. We are not, and though some of the sewing circles and dancing-classes, and afternoon-readings are offered us kindly, I do prefer to be independent and know only the people I want to know and do only the things I really wish to do. Anything else would be a nuisance, so please don't let anyone make social engagements for me."

Mrs. Stratford herself was not strong, and she really preferred a quiet life. Later she saw that Martine herself had been very wise in her attitude of independence. Martine indeed was happy enough—happy in her school acquaintances, happy in her friendship with Priscilla, and happier in her affection for Amy. It is true that Amy in this her last year of college was too busy to give much time to Martine, but when occasionally they had a half-day together, no one could have doubted their perfect understanding of each other.

On the morning before the matinee to which Mrs. Stratford had referred, or to be more exact, at twelve o'clock on the very day of the great Paderewski recital, Martine ran out to the letter-box to post two or three notes. Angelina could have taken them for her, or she might better have followed the custom of the house, which was to give them to the hall-boy. But Martine had not

been out that morning, as illness among her drawing pupils had occasioned a postponement of the usual Saturday lesson. She had therefore seized on the letters as an excuse for getting a breath of the fresh spring air that came in through the half-open windows, tantalizing her and urging her to leave the house.

"I half wish I were not going to the recital," she said to herself, "on a mild sunny day like this I begrudge the hours I must spend in a crowded hall, and though I won't have to pretend to be in a seventh heaven over the music, yet it will weary me to have to show a proper degree of appreciation in the presence of my guests." So ran the course of Martine's thoughts as she approached the letter-box. After a turn or two in the mall under the trees, she walked back slowly toward the house.

"After all," she mused, "mamma was probably right. I have been extravagant. The tickets have really cost a pretty sum, counting premiums and all. For what is the good in inviting guests, unless one has the very best seats?"

This thought of the seats inclined Martine to look again at her tickets, and as soon as she reached her room she went to her desk to look at them.

"Mamma," she called, "you haven't by any chance seen a narrow envelope with my Paderewski tickets?"

"No, my dear," replied her mother, "surely you haven't lost them?"

"Oh, no, I remember now, I put them in a larger envelope; they were lying here with my letters."

A moment later Martine stood before her mother with dismay written on her face. "What do you suppose I have done? it's too foolish and too annoying for anything. I can't find the envelope with the tickets and I really believe that I dropped it into the letter-box."

"Oh, Martine, I thought you'd outgrown those careless habits!"

"I thought so too, but there's no use in crying about spilled milk; I will try to do what I can to get the tickets from the postman."

"There again you talk like a baby," said Mrs. Stratford. "Surely you must know that no postman can give you anything from a letter-box simply because you ask for it."

"Well, I can try, that is if there's time."

"But it's half-past twelve now, and if you are to meet Priscilla at half-past one, you will have all you can do to dress and keep your appointment."

"But, mamma, what *can* I do without tickets? It will be terrible if we can't get in, and how everyone will laugh at me. And they were such good seats in the house."

"I am sorry for you, my child, but I can say little to help you."

While they were speaking, Martine had been making a rapid calculation. The only result at which she arrived was the impossibility of recovering the lost envelope.

"There's one thing I can do," she said. "I'll dress as quickly as I can and run over to the branch postoffice; then I'll beg them to look over their mail and see if an envelope is there with the tickets I describe."

"Of course you can try, but I feel sure that you will not succeed."

"Then what shall I do, mamma? It will be terrible to disappoint three people I've invited to so important an affair as this."

"There is only one thing, my dear. If you fail to recover the tickets, you can pay single admissions at the door, and if you remember the number of your seats or in a general way where they are, you can take possession of them."

"Thank you, mamma, that certainly is the only way, but dear me, four single admissions at one dollar apiece; this is something I hadn't planned for, and I intended to be so economical the rest of the spring."

As quickly as she could, Martine hastened away to the postoffice, only to find that the mail from the box in which she had deposited her letters would not reach the office until half-past two, and that even then it was doubtful if the envelope would be given to her immediately. The only way, then, of saving her reputation as a hostess was to follow her mother's suggestion. She met her friends as she had planned, paid for admission to the hall and after some discussion with a rather obtuse usher at last found herself in possession of her own seats. It is to be feared that her impressions of the great pianist were sadly blurred that afternoon. Her brain was automatically working out problems of expenditure. She was trying to plan in what way she could economize to make up for the extravagance of this Paderewski matinee—to make up not only for this, but for various other needless expenses that she had lately incurred. So abstracted was she that she failed to join in the applause repeatedly showered on the musician, and on leaving the hall, she had very little to say to her friends. At the hotel afterwards, however, she brightened up and confided to Priscilla and Grace the way in which she had lost the tickets.

"I think you managed very well," said Priscilla, "I should not have had the least idea what to do if

anything like that happened to me."

"Neither should I," added Grace, "but you are always clever about things, Martine."

"Oh, no, it was all mamma; I felt quite sure at first that I should have to telephone you not to meet me, but 'all's well that ends well,' and I'm so glad that that stupid usher let us have our seats; for you know they told me at the box office that actually there wasn't a seat to sell in the whole house, and ours were about the last admissions."

"You were fortunate enough," said Miss Mings who had listened with considerable amusement to Martine's entertaining account of her mistake adventure.

"Our afternoon with you has been so pleasant that I should have been very sorry to lose it."

"Oh, I should have made it up in some way," responded Martine. "We were bound to have this little tea here, and we might have taken a drive through the Park instead of hearing Paderewski. Truly, now, it would have been more fun, wouldn't it, Priscilla?"

Honest Priscilla shook her head.

"Nothing could have been more delightful than this concert, though of course if we had had to give it up I should have made the best of it."

"As you do of everything, Prissie dear. I only wish that I were half as amiable as you."

Martine's economy did not extend very far. She refrained from doing some things that she would like to have done, when to do them meant going outside of her regular allowance. But each month's spending money was soon laid out on the various little things that pleased her fancy, and as she heard no more of depressing business conditions, she almost forgot her mother's warning.

A week after the matinee Martine received a letter from Elinor Naylor.

"Listen, mother," she said, "isn't this the funniest thing? Elinor says that a few days ago she received an unsealed letter from me—at least the envelope was unsealed, but there wasn't a scrap of writing inside. Instead there were four tickets for a concert by Paderewski. She wondered why I sent them as she didn't receive them until the day after the date on the tickets. Now she returns them—and here they are! Isn't it ridiculous?"

"Your carelessness certainly was ridiculous."

"I understand it all now," cried Martine. "I had addressed and stamped an envelope to Elinor, as I sometimes do when I am intending to write. Then when I wanted to put my tickets away, I picked up this envelope without looking at the addressed side. Of course the tickets went safely to Philadelphia."

"Until I looked at the date," Martine read from Elinor's letter, "I thought you had heard of my intention of coming to Boston, and meant me to hear Paderewski. But as I do not leave home until next week, there must be some other explanation."

"I had no idea that Elinor was coming here," said Martine. "But I am delighted. If she can manage it, mightn't I have her here to spend a day or two with me? I know you would like her."

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs. Stratford, and when Elinor accepted her invitation, Martine was delighted. Although Elinor could spare her only two days, both girls made the most of their time, and parted the best of friends, greatly to their own amusement. For both Elinor and Martine, whose friendship was of sudden growth, had begun their acquaintance with more or less prejudice. The acquaintance had developed into friendship chiefly through correspondence, as both girls had a gift for writing interesting letters.

A chance commission which Elinor had entrusted to Martine the day of their drive to Cambridge had occasioned the first interchange of letters after Elinor's return to Philadelphia, and in the succeeding months they had continued to write once a fortnight. Thus their friendship had developed without their having seen much of each other, and Elinor's flying visit was delightful to them both in showing them how much they really had in common.

CHAPTER XIII

AT PLYMOUTH

"Mother," said Martine, a week before Easter, "I have a splendid plan."

"Well, my dear, what is it?"

"Wouldn't it be fine to take Priscilla to New York for the holidays? Just think! she has never been there—and at her age—!"

Mrs. Stratford could but laugh at Martine's seriousness.

"I imagine many persons twice Priscilla's age have never been in New York."

"Oh, yes—but Boston is so near—and Priscilla ought to go because she has the strangest notions about New York people—that they are all frivolous, with nothing to do but amuse themselves. I would like to have her at the Waldorf for a few days. Wouldn't she open her eyes? I am just crazy to take her!"

"I fear it isn't feasible, my dear, to go away now."

"But you like New York, and a change always benefits you."

"Oh, yes."

"You like Priscilla, too?"

"Certainly. She is an excellent companion for you. You balance each other perfectly, and I should be glad to have you spend your holidays together. But New York—no, my dear, we must be careful this spring about spending money—your father has had losses and expenses."

Something in her mother's tone impressed Martine, something in her words, too, as well as in her tone. She had seldom heard either her father or her mother talk of economy, except in occasional instances when she herself had been carelessly extravagant. Now the mention of her father stirred her.

"Oh, I hope that wasn't why papa went away, on account of money. Of course I know we have to be more economical—but a trip to New York is so short, and we always have travelled so much."

"I know it, dear. But, fortunately, neither of us needs change just now. There is much in Boston that you have not yet seen, and I can imagine your spending the vacation delightfully without leaving the city."

"Oh, I am sure I could, mamma; and now that you have spoken of it, I should just love to economize. I don't need a new spring hat—the one I had last season is as good as new—and if you would let the cook go—I am sure that Angelina and I could do all the work." Martine spoke anxiously, even excitedly. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes bright.

"There is no need of any desperate economy just yet. But if you and Lucian can be contented with me, I can promise you a pleasant vacation."

"I am sure of it, mamma; let us make some plans now."

But the plans that Martine and her mother made were not destined to be carried out—at least, during this particular vacation. For a couple of days before school closed an invitation came from Mrs. Danforth, urging Martine to spend a week at Plymouth. Immediately New York lost all its attractiveness for Martine. To visit Plymouth was her one desire.

"It will be delightful, Puritan Prissie"—even now she could not resist her love of teasing—"to see the place where you were 'raised,' as they say down South. I wonder if there's something in the air to make Plymouth people different from others. To be sure, you are the only one I've ever seen."

"Am I so very different from other people?" Priscilla spoke as if not altogether pleased with Martine's words.

"Not too different—only you are fearfully conscientious, and you fuss too much over little things, and you know how to economize—which I wish I did. But for all that, you are not half bad, and your mother is perfectly lovely to invite a girl she has never seen to spend a week with her. You must have given a good account of me."

"Of course, Martine, and she has heard of you from others—if only you wouldn't make fun of everything."

"I won't, I promise you I won't."

Martine looked keenly at her friend, wondering if she really feared that she would be so thoughtless.

"I suppose I was rather mean last summer," she reflected, "and it's natural, perhaps, for Priscilla to lack confidence in me."

When they were ready to start Martine was somewhat disappointed that they could not go to Plymouth by boat.

"A train seems so prosaic," she said; "and now when I am going to historic ground, I should like to be able to jump ashore—just as the Pilgrims did."

"I didn't suppose you'd take so much interest. Last summer—"

"Now, Prissie! After all my efforts this winter, surely you might admit that I have improved. Why, now, I've wholly forgotten that we ever had a French and English question to dispute over. Before we reach Plymouth I'll be as good a Puritan as you."

Mrs. Tilworth and Lucian saw the two girls safely on board their train. But from Boston to Plymouth Priscilla and Martine travelled alone. They had so much to talk of that the journey seemed short enough, and Martine was surprised when the conductor called Plymouth.

Hardly had Priscilla's foot touched the platform, when a whirlwind of heads and arms seemed to engulf her.

"Say, I'm going to ride up in the carriage—"

"No, I am!"

"What did Aunt Sarah send us?"

"Oh, Priscilla, I'm so glad you're home. The yellow cat has four of the cunningest kittens!"

"Yes, and we've had to muzzle Carlo, because a mad dog from Kingston ran through town the other day."

"There, there," and Priscilla disentangled herself from the arms of the children. "Martine, these are my little brothers and sister. There are only three of them—though they sound like a regiment. Children, this is my great friend, Martine Stratford."

The children looked up brightly, and held out their hands.

"We are very glad to see you," said Marcus, the elder boy.

"We hope you'll stay a long time," added George, the second.

Little Lucy was too shy to speak to the newcomer, but she held up her head, as if expecting the kiss that Martine promptly bestowed on her.

The resemblance between the three children was very striking, and they all looked like Priscilla, with their calm, blue eyes and blonde hair.

"Say, Priscilla," exclaimed Marcus, recovering from the awful moment of being introduced to a stranger. "Say, now, I *can* ride up with you, can't I?"

"It's my turn," interposed George. "'Tisn't fair for you to ride every time."

"Lucy can come with us," replied Priscilla. "There's no room for you boys."

"Let them all come with us," cried Martine. "We won't mind being crowded."

"Of course, I don't mind," responded Priscilla. "I was thinking of you."

The carriage into which the children climbed was an old-fashioned carryall, the driver an elderly man, who addressed Priscilla without formality.

"What did Aunt Sarah send me?" persisted George, as they drove along.

"But, my dear, it isn't long since you had your Christmas presents," protested Priscilla.

"You never come home without bringing something."

"Wait and see," said Priscilla, squeezing Lucy. "It seems as if I hadn't seen a child for a year."

"You were here Christmas; you didn't go away until New Year's," said the literal Marcus.

"I mean that I haven't had a chance to talk to a child, not to mention squeezing one," responded the smiling Priscilla.

"Aren't there any little girls in Boston?" asked Lucy, timidly. "Haven't your friends any sisters and brothers?"

"Martine hasn't, and she's my best friend."

"Oh, how too bad!"

"That I'm Priscilla's best friend?"

"No; that you haven't brothers and sisters."

"I have a big brother, but he's in college."

"Oh!"

"Here we are! There's mother at the door."

In her delight, Priscilla was almost ready to jump from the carriage before it had fully stopped. Again Martine stared at her friend. Could this be the cool, unemotional Priscilla? The greetings of mother and daughter could have been no warmer had they been separated for years instead of months.

"There, there, Priscilla, Martine will think we have forgotten her—I should know you, my dear—and Mrs. Danforth held out both hands to Martine, "from Priscilla's enthusiastic descriptions of you. I can see you are just what she said you were."

From that moment when Mrs. Danforth kissed her lightly on the forehead, Martine felt perfectly at home.

As Martine had approached the Danforth house, she had noticed that the house was a large,

square wooden structure, painted brown. The paint, indeed, was faded in spots, and the general aspect was rather dingy.

Once inside the house, Martine, without meaning to be critical, was slightly impressed by the general air of shabbiness. The carpets were dull from the trampling of many little feet, the furniture was simple, the pictures old-fashioned, and the gilt frames somewhat tarnished. But there were books everywhere, in the open bookshelves in hall and sitting-room. Open fires were blazing in large fireplaces.

When Priscilla led her to her own room there was the same air of homelikeness, from the easy-chair drawn up before the fire to the large bowls of mayflowers on mantelpiece and dressing-table.

After supper, when all gathered around her, Lucy on her knee, the boys hanging over her chair, to hear what she had to tell about Chicago—for this was their special request—Martine felt as if she had known the Danforths all her life.

As to Priscilla—Martine now really understood why Eunice Airton and Priscilla had been so much to each other. Far apart though Plymouth and Annapolis were, the Danforth household had an atmosphere very similar to that of the Airton family. It was true that Eunice had no younger brothers or sister, nor was Mrs. Danforth quite as old-fashioned as Mrs. Airton in manner and speech.

Mrs. Danforth, indeed, seemed to Martine more like some one she had always known, and she soon felt completely at home with her. The evening passed quickly away, as they sat around the open fire, and the children were allowed to extend their bed-hour an hour beyond the usual time.

"Who is going to be my guide?" asked Martine, before they separated for the night.

"That depends on what you want to see," responded Marcus, cautiously.

"You are not very gallant," protested Mrs. Danforth. "You should be very proud to guide a young lady from the city wherever she wishes to go."

"I *am* proud," interposed George. "I'll go anywhere."

"Well," said the cautious Marcus, "I only meant that I don't want to go up on Burial Hill. It's very stupid looking at those old gravestones, and there aren't any real Pilgrims there, at least not any worth mentioning."

"But there's a lovely view," said Priscilla, "and the first fort stood up there, and some people like old gravestones."

"To be perfectly frank," said Martine, "I don't care so very much for them, unless the inscriptions are entertaining. Don't look shocked, Prissie, epitaphs can be very amusing sometimes. But what would you like to show me, Marcus?"

"Oh, I'd like to take you out into the woods for mayflowers, for one thing, and over to Duxbury to see the Standish monument for another; but I just hate poking about the town, looking for old houses and ruins the way some people do; for we haven't any ruins here."

"Then I suppose you wouldn't condescend to show me Plymouth Rock? For that, of course, is one of the things I *must* see."

"Oh, I'll take you there!" interrupted George; "let's go right after breakfast."

"Very well, I'll be ready; and thank you for your invitation."

And Martine, bending toward the little fellow, kissed him good-night. As she turned away, George reddened with delight; it was pleasant to be treated as if he were as old as Marcus; for Marcus, his elder by two years, had a brotherly habit of making him feel himself to be of the slightest consequence in the estimation of strangers.

Promptly after breakfast Martine set out with George.

"I know you won't mind my leaving you, Priscilla," she said. "You and your mother must have so many things to talk over."

"Thank you; a little later I will go join you, but I know that George will show you just what you wish to see;" and Priscilla kissed Martine good-bye.

At her first sight of the rock, the Plymouth Rock of history and poetry, Martine gave a gasp of surprise. It was so much smaller than she had expected. The little guide-book that Mrs. Danforth had put in her hands told her that from 1775 to 1880 the rock had been in two pieces, and that one piece was for a long time exhibited in Pilgrim Hall; but at last a generous son of Plymouth, feeling that the rock deserved greater honor, had had the two pieces put together on a spot that was probably very near the place that it occupied in 1620, and had had it protected by granite canopy and an iron fence.

"Why, it looks as though I could almost carry it away myself; it's hardly large enough for a good-sized man to stand on."

"Oh, two or three men could stand on it," said the literal George, who thereupon began to make

calculations to convince Martine of her error.

Martine, somewhat amused by George's earnestness, began to tease the little fellow.

"Do you really believe that this rock was here in the time of the Pilgrim Fathers?"

"Why, yes, where else could it have been?"

To this question Martine had no answer ready, and before she had made a second attempt to puzzle George, an old gentleman who had been standing near them stepped up.

"You are not skeptical, young lady, about the famous rock?"

"Oh, no," replied Martine; "I don't know enough about it to be skeptical."

The old gentleman glanced at her quizzically.

"There is more philosophy in that remark than you perhaps realize, young lady. But this is really *the* rock, the only one to be found the whole length of this sandy shore. So it must be the rock on which the Mayflower's passengers landed."

"I wonder why they didn't just step out on the beach," persisted Martine. "I should think that would have been ever so much more comfortable than hopping down on this rock."

"Others besides you have intimated the same thing," persisted the old gentleman; "but you must admit that a rock is a better foundation for the sentiment of a nation to base itself on than a sandy beach. Even our foreign-born children pin much of their patriotism to Plymouth Rock."

"Do you believe—?"

"My dear young lady, in George's presence, at least, you must not intimate that it is possible to believe anything about Plymouth Rock except what is usually taught in school histories."

Martine looked earnestly at the old gentleman. She could not tell whether he was in jest or in earnest, but there was something in his face that she liked. She felt as if she had always known him. He seemed really like an old friend.

"Mr. Stacy," interposed George, "I never know exactly what you mean, but I am sure that the school histories are true."

"Surely, my dear, but I can see that this young lady wishes to go back of the printed book. She would like to know why we think this is the rock of the Pilgrims. So, as there is no one else here to inform her, the duty seems to have fallen on me. We pin our faith to the rock," he continued, "on account of the testimony of Elder Faunce, a truthful man, who, in the first half of the eighteenth century—1743, I believe—made a vigorous protest when certain individuals began to build a wharf, which would have covered the rock. He said that this stone had been pointed out to him by his father as the one on which the founders of the colony had landed. It is true that John Faunce, the father, did not come over on the Mayflower, and what he knew of the landing he must have heard from others. But as he had arrived in Plymouth in 1623, he must have had his information on the best authority. Elder Faunce, the son of John Faunce, was forty years old when the last of the Mayflower passengers died, and if the story of the rock was not true, doubtless he would have heard some one contradict it."

"Did they build the wharf?" asked Martine.

"I believe they did. But the rock was kept in sight, and eventually became the step of a warehouse. Later, as I dare say you have heard, it was broken in two pieces, and it is only since 1880 that we have had it restored here to a spot very near where the Mayflower landed—and protected," he concluded, with a smile, "so that the relic hunters can't carry it off bodily. It's a wonder that some one hasn't tried to get it for one of the World's Fairs now so prevalent in the country."

"I should hate to see it carted around like the Liberty Bell, although we were glad enough to have it in Chicago."

"So you are from Chicago," said Mr. Stacy; "then I must try to make you think that Plymouth is the centre of the earth. From your being with George I thought you were one of Priscilla's Boston friends. By the way, perhaps you may recall the lines in Miles Standish, where John Alden and others went down to the seashore:

"Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as a door,
Into a world unknown—the cornerstone of a nation!"

I always thought that a fine line, though it isn't quoted as often as it might be; 'the cornerstone of a nation,'" repeated Mr. Stacy. "Well, Priscilla and I always have a pretty little quarrel over this particular doorstep. You know she is very proud of her descent from Priscilla and John Alden."

"So am I," piped up little George.

"Of course, my boy, just as I am of descending from Mary Chilton. Well, traditions are somewhat confused as to who stepped first on Plymouth Rock—providing anyone of the Mayflower people really stepped on it at all. The honors are divided apparently between Mary Chilton and John Alden. I'd like to give them to a lady—Priscilla, for example, but in that case I should have to

slight another lady, my ancestress, Mary Chilton; so there you have the two horns of a dilemma."

"Oh, I know better than that," cried George; "Mary Chilton wasn't in it, of course she wasn't."

"In what, my child? or are you merely indulging in slang?"

"Oh, you know, Mr. Stacy, she wasn't in that first shallop that went ashore from Clark's Island. Of course a woman wouldn't come out in a little boat, when they were trying to find a landing-place. No, of course it was John Alden."

"Your reasoning is pretty reasonable—for a little boy," said Mr. Stacy. "But, my dear Miss Chicago," he continued, "if you are on a sight-seeing walk, let me go with you. I need not say to an up-to-date young lady that none of the houses of the original Pilgrims are here, though as we walk along we shall pass near the sites of many of them. The old Plymouth was chiefly down here near the water, not so very far from the rock. This is the first street, close to the brook that ran down from Billington Sea."

"It must be very pleasant in summer," and Martine glanced down the long tree-lined street. The trees were budding, but the leaves were not yet out.

"It is a calm, shady street," rejoined Mr. Stacy; "sometimes we wish the electric cars were not so near, but the curse has been partly taken off by the names they bear. Probably you have noticed 'Priscilla,' 'Pilgrim,' 'Samoset,' and the other historical names. Perhaps it is just as well there are none of the old houses left. The descendants of forefathers might have been ashamed of them, of the houses—I mean. Perhaps you remember Holmes' lines on the subject. The Autocrat had the faculty of hitting the nail on the head and in speaking of the Pilgrim, he says:—

"His home was a freezing cabin
Too bare for a freezing rat,
Its roof was thatched with ragged grass,
And bald enough for that.
The hole that served for casement
Was glazed with a ragged hat."

But this description applies only to the very first houses. Those that were built for the next twenty or thirty years were plain enough, but comfortable. Plymouth never had many of the elaborate Colonial houses that are shown in some of the New England towns."

"I wish one or two of those oldest houses were left," said Martine. "Isn't there even one?"

"Why, I believe you are really interested in old Plymouth," said Mr. Stacy, smiling at Martine. "If you don't mind walking with me I'll show you the oldest house now standing. But this old Doten house was built only a few years before 1660, and is very little changed from its original appearance, at least so far as the outside is concerned."

"The trees look as if they might be almost as old as the house," said Martine, as they stood before the little low-roofed house in Sandwich Street in front of which two great trees with gnarled trunks stood as sentinels.

"Say, Martine, let's go up to the Monument," whispered George. "I'm afraid Mr. Stacy will want to take us up on Burial Hill."

Mr. Stacy heard the loud whisper, and Martine herself was amused at George's entreaty.

"Why, that was what Marcus didn't want to do, and you said you would go anywhere with me."

"I want to show you something myself. You can go with Mr. Stacy to the hill some other day."

"There, George, you have suggested just what I had in mind. Please tell your mother that I hope to come over to see Priscilla and her friend this evening. Then we can arrange about our visit to Burial Hill."

After Mr. Stacy had said good-bye Martine and George retraced their steps, and climbed the hill to the monument to the Forefathers.

"There's nine acres in the park," explained George, "and the monument is eighty-one feet high. That's the figure of Faith on top, and I think the whole thing is fine, don't you?"

"It certainly *is* fine," responded Martine, amused at George's eagerness.

"You know down at Provincetown they say the Pilgrims landed there first, and they're going to build a monument that will beat this all to pieces. But I don't believe they can, do you, Miss Martine?"

"No," said Martine, "indeed I do not."

Whereupon, after she had sufficiently admired the historic bas-reliefs depicting scenes in the lives of the Forefathers, George led his guest down the hill, well pleased with her appreciation of his favorite work of art.

CHAPTER XIV

TALES AND RELICS

True to his promise Mr. Stacy called on Priscilla and Martine the second evening of their stay in Plymouth. He proved even more entertaining as a story-teller than as a guide.

"What he doesn't know about old-colony life isn't worth knowing," Priscilla had said, and Mr. Stacy certainly proved the truth of these words. Of Bradford and Carver and Winslow and Brewster he spoke as familiarly as if they were brothers. He made them live again as he talked, bringing out little facts that he said every schoolgirl and boy ought to know, though Martine had to admit that if she had ever known these things, they were now half forgotten. Priscilla modestly concealed her own store of information, but Martine, remembering how eagerly her friend had drunk in all that Amy and Balfour had had to tell the summer before about the English and the Acadians in Nova Scotia, knew that Priscilla was probably hardly second to Mr. Stacy in her knowledge of Puritan history.

"Oh, please, Mr. Stacy, tell us one of your witch stories," demanded Marcus, as they sat around the blazing fire.

"A witch story! Do you wish me to frighten the young lady from Chicago?"

"A witch story!" repeated Martine; "why, I thought the witches were only in Salem. I supposed people down here were too sensible to believe in witches."

"Few localities are so sensible as to escape all delusion. A vague belief in evil spirits and witches existed in all the colonies even well-through the eighteenth century, although the witchcraft persecution was of comparatively short duration."

"I don't care for witchcraft stories," said Priscilla, quietly.

"Well, well!" cried Mr. Stacy, smiling; "between two fires, what shall I do? Mrs. Danforth, you must be umpire."

"Tell them one little unexciting witch story," replied Mrs. Danforth. "Priscilla is too old to be troubled by bad dreams, at least from so small a cause."

"It isn't that," protested staid Priscilla, "only witch stories are so silly."

"Oh, if that's the only thing against them," cried Martine, "please tell me as many as you can. I love silly things—sometimes. So please tell us a story, Mr. Stacy."

"Really," rejoined Mr. Stacy, "I should hardly know what to say, if the rules of hospitality did not provide me with an excuse. It is fair, I imagine, to regard Miss Martine as a guest of Plymouth in general, as well as of the Danforth family in particular, therefore, fair lady, I yield to your demand. But what I am going to tell you is neither very exciting, nor very silly. It merely shows how recently in this corner of the globe the plain people retained some of the mediæval belief in witches. For I knew a man who in his youth knew a man who believed this story. On the outskirts of Plymouth once lived an old woman whom people called a witch, and once when she was calling at a certain house, Jenny, a girl of twelve, placed the broom with which she was sweeping, under Aunt Nabby's chair. Aunt Nabby was the reputed witch, and if you know anything about witches, you must know that to offer one a broomstick can only be regarded as an insult. So in this case Aunt Nabby, when she perceived what Jenny had done, rose in anger, and vowed that she would get even with Jenny and her family."

"Did she?" asked George, who was always over-anxious to hear the conclusion of a story.

"Wait," replied Mr. Stacy, "you will soon hear. In a day or two Jenny became very ill, and the old country doctor could not tell what the matter was. She seemed to be fading away. 'Perhaps Aunt Nabby has something to do with it,' said poor Mrs. Bonsal, Jenny's mother; and then the doctor, asking what was meant, heard the story of the broomstick. 'Go, John Bonsal,' he said to Jenny's father, 'go to Aunt Nabby's, and find out what she is up to.' When John Bonsal reached Aunt Nabby's house, there was no one in the kitchen but her big black cat, whom some people thought her assistant in evil doing. So John Bonsal went down by the brook, where he found Aunt Nabby so much occupied that she hardly looked up at his approach."

"What was she doing?" asked George.

"Hush," cried Marcus; "listen, and you will find out."

"Well," continued Mr. Stacy, "Aunt Nabby seemed to be making little dolls of clay that she moulded into shape with water from the brook. When she finished these figures or dolls, she stuck a pin or two into them, and John Bonsal understood at once that by means of these dolls she was working a charm on poor Jenny that in time would cause her death, unless he could stop the doll-making. Upon this the angry father raised the horsewhip that he carried in his hand, and thrashed Nabby with might and main. As she cried for mercy, he told her that she should be burned as a witch unless she promised to remove the spell that she had cast over his daughter. At first she refused, but at last she promised. 'Your Jenny shall get well,' she cried, 'and I will work no more charms.' Upon this the big black cat that had followed John Bonsal from the house gave a great howl, and vanished completely from sight."



"Aunt Nabby seemed to be making little dolls of clay."

"Where did he go?" asked George.

"Down to the centre of the earth, probably," replied Mr. Stacy, solemnly. "But it's more to the point that Jenny recovered, and Aunt Nabby was never again known to carry on any of her witcheries."

"Thank you, thank you," cried all the circle, except Priscilla, who still looked as if she thought stories of this kind rather silly.

"Mamma," cried Lucy, after a moment's pause, as if she, too, shared Priscilla's feeling, "let us have something more sensible than witch stories."

"Let us have a charade—you said you had found one in an old book that you would give us."

Mrs. Danforth looked at the clock. "There is just time for one before you go to bed," she said, "and so I will give you the old one you speak of."

George and Lucy clapped their hands with delight. They were fond of guessing-games, particularly when their mother played with them.

"I must tell you," said Mrs. Danforth, picking up a book from the table, "that this is a very short one and must be guessed within five minutes after I have read it." Whereupon she read slowly:

"Just where the heavens grew blue and high,
My first that was so pure and bright,
Ere it could rise into the sky,
Passed in my second out of sight;
Before it vanished from the earth
My whole rose through it at their birth."

"Only five minutes!" complained George; "I don't think that's long enough. I didn't understand what the first was."

Patently Mrs. Danforth read the first two lines, then the second, and finally, at Lucy's request, the last.

"I have it," cried Marcus, before three minutes had passed.

"Can't we have five minutes more? I know I could guess it, if we had time enough."

"You never guess anything, George, no matter how much time there is," exclaimed Marcus.

"Neither does Priscilla," rejoined George; "but if we had more time—"

"Six minutes have passed; you see I have given more than the allotted time," called Mrs. Danforth at last.

"What did you make it, Marcus?"

"Snowballs!" cried Marcus, triumphantly.

"Oh, no!" protested Lucy; "how could it be 'snowballs?' What is yours, Miss Martine?"

Martine handed a slip of paper to Lucy on which she had written a word.

"Yes, yes, that is it. Snowdrops, that is right, isn't it, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear; it is almost too simple a charade to set before our guest. It would have been harder to guess if we had tried to act it. Perhaps to-morrow we can act charades."

When the younger children had gone to bed, Martine enjoyed the quiet hour with Priscilla and Mrs. Danforth and Mr. Stacy.

"I had no idea Plymouth could be so interesting," she said. "I feel that my two or three more days will not be enough for all that I wish to see."

Nevertheless, Martine spent less time in actual sight-seeing than at first she had planned. The second day of her stay was so warm and springlike, that all voted for a mayflower picnic in the beautiful Plymouth woods. The next day was rainy—a genuine southerly storm, and no one cared to venture out.

"In town neither of us would think of staying in simply on account of a storm," protested Martine.

"I know it," responded Priscilla, lazily curling herself up in a corner of the big settle before the open fire. "But this is vacation, and home," she concluded, "and we can't behave just as we would in the city."

Finally, on the fourth day of their stay, under the guidance of Mr. Stacy, the two went up to Burial Hill.

"You won't care if I do not pretend to be awfully interested in the epitaphs," said Martine, frankly. "I wish that Amy were here. She loves old graveyards and inscriptions and everything that has a scrap of history. Now I am fond of funny epitaphs, and I love—oh, what a beautiful view!"

"I am glad that Burial Hill has something of interest to offer you. Even in Plymouth we call this a fine view. Generally, we try to be modest about our possessions, but this really is worth praising."

"It is wonderful!" and Martine gazed in admiration at the expanse of blue water that stretched far, far to the East, with only the tiny Clark's Island to break its continuity.

"It looks almost like a toy town," she added, gazing down at the houses and spires of the old town seeming to nestle at the foot of the hill.

"Those woods toward the West are where the Indians used to lurk, and you can see how wise our forefathers were in placing their fort here near the summit of the hill. You remember, probably, that it was a wooden building made of sawed planks, but the six cannon mounted for its defence made it really formidable to the Indians. From this point the defenders of the town could quickly discover the approach of the enemy. For a time, too, the fort was used as a church."

"That is why they used the hill as a burying-place, I suppose."

"Well, oddly enough, the founders of Plymouth were not buried here. Undoubtedly, the first settlers buried their dead near their dwellings. No stones mark the resting-place of most of the Mayflower passengers. There are memorials to many of them put up in later generations here on Burial Hill by their descendants, and two or three who lived to an advanced age, like John Howland, are buried here. But the earliest gravestone on the hill is that of Edward Gray, who died in 1681."

Priscilla, browsing among the stones, returned to Martine with a shade of disappointment on her face.

"I am really sorry, but I cannot find a single absurd stone. Some are rather quaint, but there are no amusing epitaphs, at least, of the kind you like, Martine. Often as I've been here, I have never looked for that special kind of thing before, but now that I have made you a true report, we might as well turn down toward Memorial Hall."

"Thank you, Priscilla, I hope Mr. Stacy will not think that I care only for entertaining things that make one laugh. I have been more impressed by this old burying-ground than by any other I have ever visited. There is certainly something in the atmosphere that carries one back to the past. If there were anything here to laugh at I couldn't laugh." And silently and reverently Martine followed her friends down the hill into the quiet streets of the little town.

"Now for Pilgrim Hall," said Mr. Stacy, as they walked along the Main Street.

"And what shall we see there?" asked Martine.

"Oh, relics of all kinds—driftwood of the past—some things that will move you to tears, and others that may make you smile."

"Old furniture, I suppose. There are several shiploads of Mayflower furniture scattered through the country, and naturally I would look for a little of it here in Plymouth."

"It would almost seem as if you had been reading my favorite Holmes," rejoined Mr. Stacy. "You perhaps recall his verses about the old punch-bowl that—"

"—Left the Dutchman's shore
With those that in the Mayflower came—a hundred souls and more
Along with all the furniture to fill their new abodes—
To judge by what is still on hand—at least a hundred loads."

"I am not sure," replied Martine, "whether I have heard those particular lines, though the poet's sentiments are mine. Sometimes I wonder if the Pilgrims brought any furniture with them. Or if the things they brought could have lasted through the centuries."

"You will soon be able to judge for yourself. I think you can safely believe in most of the specimens that you see here. At any rate, we people of Plymouth have believed in them so long that they have acquired a certain sanctity."

When they were at last within the dignified hall, Priscilla and Martine flitted about from object to object, the latter asking questions, the former answering them, while Mr. Stacy in one or two instances had to act as umpire.

A chair once owned by Governor Carver, and another brought by William Brewster in the Mayflower, were accepted by Martine without question, and she was equally interested in a cabinet also brought over in the Mayflower by the father of Peregrine White.

"Priscilla," she cried, "your ancestor, John Alden, was particularly generous in his bequests. Here's his Bible, and an autograph of his that must be genuine because it is so hard to read. It seems to me that the Aldens and the Winslows have done well by this exhibition. Isn't this an odd ring, and do you really imagine it was once worn by Governor Edward Winslow?"

"Why, yes," replied Priscilla, "I believe it, if that is what the placard says." And she drew nearer to read the card that was placed beside the ring.

"The sword of Myles Standish! What a story it could tell! Really, Priscilla, these things have a wonderful power of calling up the past—and this little piece of embroidery, just look at the date. It is more than three hundred and fifty years old, and some of the silk threads have kept their colors."

"Please read the verse in the corner," urged Priscilla. "Even when I was a very small girl I used to stand here, and call up pictures of the little Lorena."

As Priscilla finished her sentence, Martine began to repeat the lines embroidered in the old sampler—for such the bit of work must have been.

"Lorena Standish is my name,
Lord, guide my heart that I may do Thy will,
Also fill my hands with such convenient skill
As will conduce to virtue devoid of shame,
And I will give the glory to Thy name."

"It is touching," said Martine.

"A true Puritan maiden," commented Mr. Stacy, approaching the girls. "But come, you cannot linger too long over any one thing, however interesting. I will not blame you if you pass quickly by the Florida bones, and the Indian relics, and other so-called curiosities that hardly belong in Pilgrim Hall. But there are a number of autographs and old books that I wish to explain to you, and you must study carefully Weir's beautiful painting, 'The Embarkation of the Pilgrims,' and Charles Lucy's magnificent 'Departure of the Pilgrims.'"

The pictures held Martine's attention for a long time, and when at last she left the hall, she had a new and tenderer feeling for Plymouth.

"If ever I have time," she murmured in a laughing aside to Mr. Stacy, "I will try to hunt up some Mayflower ancestors, for I can't let Priscilla continue to be so superior to me in this respect."

"Indeed, I don't feel superior," said Priscilla, "but I can't tell you how pleased I am, Martine, that you have stopped making fun of Plymouth and the Pilgrims."

"Dear Prissie, you should not take things so seriously. My fun was only fun, and you were too ready to take it in as earnest."

Martine from the first had no trouble in winning the affection of all the Danforths. George and Marcus struggled for the first place in her affections, and Lucy admitted that she loved her next to her mother and Priscilla. Martine made other friends in Plymouth besides the members of the Danforth family. A number of Mrs. Danforth's special friends called on her, and at an informal tea-party she met all the young people whom Priscilla cared for especially.

"Every one seems to have heard of me, I am awfully pleased that you should have talked to people about me, but why am I called a 'heroine'? Three people have said to me, 'We are so pleased to meet the young heroine we have heard so much about.' What do they mean?"

"It's the fire," cried Lucy. "Priscilla told us not to say too much to you about it, because you were so modest, but everybody knows how brave you were to pull Priscilla out of the burning house."

"The burning house? Oh, at Windsor; but I didn't pull her out. There wasn't the least danger, and I only tapped at the door. Why, I had almost forgotten about it. It was nothing at all, so far as I was concerned."

But Lucy only shook her head, as she repeated shyly, "But we think you a heroine all the same." Nor could any words of Martine's have made her change her mind. Had she not always been taught that the truly great were modest? Martine's very denials were a strong evidence that she was truly great.

There was nothing, therefore, for Martine to do but accept the place on the pedestal where they put her.

In spite of this idealizing, however, Priscilla's younger friends were not afraid of Martine. If they had felt any awe before they saw her it immediately passed away when they had looked into her frank brown eyes, and had heard the clear notes of her ringing laugh.

Pleasanter even than the tea-party to Martine was the second evening that Mr. Stacy spent with her and Priscilla.

"Everything that you haven't told me before about Plymouth and its early days you must tell me now," Martine had said. "When I go back to Boston I wish to astonish my brother by my display of historical knowledge. I am sure that he doesn't know the difference between a Puritan and a Pilgrim, which you have so carefully explained to me, Mr. Stacy; and there are fifty other things that I shall spring on him, and mortify him to death, for Lucian thinks that he knows a lot of history, but as far as I can make out he hasn't got far beyond Charlemagne in his two years at Harvard."

"Yet he went to school first?" asked Mr. Stacy, quizzically.

"Yes, but everyone knows that boys in the fitting schools remember as little as they can of American history—although," with an afterthought, "I will admit that Lucian did take an interest last summer in the English and Acadian history of Nova Scotia."

This mention of Acadia suggested various questions to Mr. Stacy, and soon Martine had plunged into a vivid account of their experiences of the preceding summer.

"I have heard part of this before from the lips of Priscilla," said Mr. Stacy, "and her description of the various protégées gathered in by your party interested me greatly. I know that she has not forgotten Eunice, and, indeed, we all expect to see the little Annapolis girl in Plymouth before many summers have passed. But what about Yvonne and Pierre, who on the whole interest me rather more than Eunice—as much, perhaps, because of their infirmities as on account of their foreign blood?"

"As to Pierre," responded Martine, "Amy hears from him regularly, and he is very happy this winter in his work. A little money that was given him last autumn (Martine did not mention that this was her father's generous gift) has enabled him to have regular drawing lessons from a good teacher to whom he goes twice a week at Yarmouth. He insisted in using part of the money for his mother, and, like all Acadians, she seems to have spent it very thriftily."

"But what of Yvonne? she, I believe, is your especial pet."

"Oh, Yvonne, too, has had a little money to spend, and so the Babets have let her board with friends at Annapolis. Her eyes have had some attention from a good doctor, and she has been taking music lessons. I was hoping to arrange to have Alexander Babet bring Yvonne to Boston for treatment by a specialist, but for the present I have to wait."

Here Martine sighed a deep sigh. This allusion to Yvonne reminded her of her father and his caution about economy. "I wonder if we shall always have to economize and give up the things we wish to do. Mother talked about economy when I spoke of inviting Priscilla to go to New York. I wonder—" and then a question from Mr. Stacy recalled Martine's wandering thoughts.

"You scold me sometimes for being absent-minded," said Priscilla, "but we spoke to you three times before you heard."

"I was only thinking, Prissie," responded Martine; "and I can't do two things at the same time—listen and think."

Martine at last said good-bye to Plymouth with genuine regret—for Plymouth people at least, and for the Danforth family in particular.

"New York wouldn't have been half as much fun," she said as the train steamed out of the station, "because I know it so well."

Priscilla, who had not heard of Martine's New York plan, did not understand her friend's allusion; and as Martine made no further explanation, she had no opportunity for discontent—if the loss of

a trip to New York would have made her discontented.

CHAPTER XV

TROUBLES

The weeks after the Easter visit passed rapidly away. April was melting into May. People called it an early spring.

"It doesn't make much difference to me whether the season is early or late," said Martine one Sunday afternoon, when Lucian and Robert had walked home with her from the afternoon service. "I have to work so hard to keep up with Priscilla that I haven't time to think about anything so commonplace as weather. If I'm not careful, I shall find myself fitting for college."

"Don't," said Robert Pringle.

"Do," cried Lucian. "As I may have said before, if you make half as much of yourself as Amy, nothing could be better for you than college."

"Be yourself," said Robert with an air of wisdom. "Not Amy nor Priscilla, nor any one else. You have the artistic temperament."

"Nonsense," replied Martine, with difficulty repressing a smile. "That's a very sophomoric speech. You've got it out of some of your philosophy courses."

"Or one of the college magazines," growled Lucian. "People who are just beginning to write always love to talk about temperament."

"Well," persisted Robert, "Fritz Tomkins says that Mrs. Redmond says that you have great talent."

"Oh, yes," responded Martine, laughing, "my class at the Mansion considers me a true artist, because I can paint trees and grass that look real; but to tell you the truth, Robert, and to show you that you're not wholly wrong, I will admit that if I hadn't been so busy at school, I should have studied with Mrs. Redmond this spring. I just wish I had time for a sketching class, but fond as I am of riding, I can barely manage an hour's ride twice a week. That reminds me, Lucian," and Martine turned to her brother, "if you can afford a new auto, I surely can afford a new riding-horse. Wherever we go this summer, I mean to ride."

"No, no," cried Lucian, "that is, I probably shall not have the auto, much as I want it."

"Don't worry," said Robert, "you'll get it in season; if it isn't out by June, they'll have it for you in July."

"Oh, that wasn't what I meant," rejoined Lucian, "only—" but at this moment he did not explain what he really had intended to say.

The next evening Lucian came home to dinner.

"What an unexpected honor," said Martine. "I've never known you to favor us with a Monday visit. You look rather glum, too," she added with sisterly frankness. "Is anything the matter?"

"No, no," he said, "nothing special. You shouldn't be so curious."

"I can read you like a book," replied Martine. "You are worrying over your finals and you ought to be ashamed of yourself. If I were a Harvard Sophomore, with all my time to use as I liked, I wouldn't be in such a state of mind over a few questions, for that's all an examination amounts to."

"There, there, Martine, don't worry your brother," interposed Mrs. Stratford, joining them.

"But he is so foolish," continued Martine, "just as if he hadn't as good a chance as anybody else."

"To be perfectly frank," said Lucian at last, "you have no idea, little sister, what you are talking about; so the least said, soonest mended."

Conversation during dinner proceeded cheerfully. Lucian was evidently making an effort to remove the impression that he was troubled about anything.

But a little later, after their mother had left the room, Lucian drew his chair nearer Martine's and began to talk in an undertone.

"You are right, Martine," he said, "I am troubled. I have something serious to say."

Martine's heart beat nervously. She knew that boys in college sometimes did things that they should not do. Lucian had several friends of whom she did not approve. Into what mischief might they not lead him?

"Tell me the worst, Lucian," she said sympathetically. "If it's stealing signs or doing any of those ridiculous Med. Fac. things, of course you were very silly. But I'll help you out if I can, without telling mother, and I'll lend you money, though I have only a very little bit of my own. I am paying

for my clothes out of my allowance this spring. And you know I never used to do that."

"Oh, your money wouldn't help, Martine; it isn't that."

"Well, whatever it is, we'll keep it from mother; she certainly isn't as well as when she first came to Boston."

"I know that," responded Lucian, "and that's the worst of this whole business. You see, it's this, Martine. Father's business is all at sixes and sevens and I had the queerest letter from him this morning; I can hardly make head or tail of it."

Martine took the thin sheet of letter paper from Lucian's hand; the wording was incoherent.

"Why, it doesn't sound like father," she exclaimed, "and what queer, trembling handwriting. I am afraid that he is sick. And if he has lost his money as he says, what are we to do?"

"I haven't an idea in the world. This knocks me all to pieces," and Lucian leaned his head on his hands, the picture of bewilderment.

"We ought to tell mother," Martine's voice trembled, "but perhaps we might as well wait another day; perhaps we can think of some one to advise us, or perhaps some plan will come to us in the night."

"Very well," responded Lucian, "but I can't stay here long and pretend to be cheerful; I'll get out to Cambridge as quickly as I can."

"Lucian made a short stay," said Mrs. Stratford when Martine told her that he had gone. "I agree with you that he is troubled about something. Perhaps he told you what it was."

"Yes," said Martine, "he did give me an idea of it."

Then Mrs. Stratford, knowing that it was not wise to interfere in the confidences of brother and sister, to Martine's relief asked no questions. The next day, however, the secret came out in part at least. Mrs. Stratford received a cable from Rio Janeiro. Its few words carried volumes of trouble. Mr. Stratford was ill, very ill; could some of his family come to him at once? Mrs. Stratford recognized the name of the one who had sent the cable; he was a man with whom her husband had long had business transactions. He would not have cabled unless her husband's condition were really serious. The telephone soon brought Lucian to the house.

"There is only one thing," said Lucian; "by taking the afternoon express I can reach New York this evening, sail by a quick boat to-morrow for England, and go on as soon as possible to Rio Janeiro."

"But we don't know anything about the sailings of the Brazilian boats."

"No matter, mother, the sooner I reach England, the sooner I'll reach Brazil. I must go back to Cambridge now, throw a few things into a steamer trunk, and then, good-bye."

"Oh, Lucian, what a help you are. At first I thought there was no one who could go. I will go down town at once and get a draft for you and meet you at the station; that will be better than stopping here on your way from Cambridge."

These hasty plans were carried out exactly.

"Everything is so hurried," complained Martine, "that I haven't had time yet to cry."

"I have cabled to Rio Janeiro," said Mrs. Stratford, "to cable our bankers in London, if—if—anything happens."

"Oh, nothing will happen," said Lucian cheerfully, "nothing serious, I mean. Only I am sure that it is wise for me to go, for father will need me to help him come home. And now good-bye."

So mother and daughter parted with Lucian, and after this one exciting day, things settled down into their accustomed round. Within a week of Lucian's sailing Mrs. Stratford heard by cable that her husband was no worse.

"It does not say 'better'," she murmured.

"But 'no worse' is better than nothing," said Martine.

"When we consider how little Lucian was here with us, it is strange," said Martine one day, "that we should miss him so. Poor boy, I am sorry that I teased him so about his finals. I am sure that he would rather be in Cambridge working for dear life than tossing about on the ocean, not knowing what news he may hear at the end of his journey. But there's one thing, he rose to the occasion, and I'm so thankful that he has really grown up."

In spite of the anxiety of mother and daughter, each for the sake of the other tried to be cheerful. Martine, until the first of June, was fully occupied with school. Priscilla and her more intimate friends sympathized deeply with her when they heard of her father's illness. Letters from others came to them gradually, and some of Mr. Stratford's business associates were frank with Mrs. Stratford when she asked their opinion on her husband's affairs. One day she called Martine to her for a frank talk.

"It is evident," she said, "that we must live at the very smallest possible expense for the next few

months. I am going to send the cook away at the end of the present week; now that your school is ending, you will not object to supplementing Angelina's work. Angelina sees something dramatic in what she calls 'our fallen fortunes.' She is delighted to be considered housemaid and cook combined. She tells me that I am not to lift my hand, but wear my prettiest dresses all the time so that there'll be one lady in the house, while you and she are doing the work."

"Well, really," cried Martine, "it's a little too much for her to put me immediately on her own level."

"Oh, she doesn't mean it in that way; in fact, what she said was intended only to make me comfortable. If I were a little stronger I would plan to stay in Boston all summer, but I've had a talk with the doctor and he tells me that I need a complete change. We cannot afford any extravagance this summer, and only one plan suggests itself to me."

"What is it, mamma?"

"Simply this. A few years ago, when your father and I were at York Harbor, we fell in love with a little red farm-house that stood on a knoll commanding a view of the sea. We had no particular object in buying it, the land belonging to it was limited, but I had an idea that sometime perhaps we might build a house there. It is quite outside the fashionable section, yet not very far from the electric cars, and the house is in pretty good repair."

"Does any one live there?"

"Well, that is the curious part of it; the owner was an old woman and we let her stay on there, rent free, on condition that she should keep the little garden planted and let us know when any repairs were needed. Last September she died and the house has been unoccupied this winter; it seems to me that this would be an ideal place for us this summer. Even if I were able to stay in the city, I should not approve of your doing so. You need the out-door life to which you are accustomed. We could take enough of our small belongings with us to make the cottage comfortable and homelike. Angelina would be quite equal to the work."

"With my help," interrupted Martine gayly.

"Yes, with your help; and I know you can be very helpful, Martine, when you wish. What do you think of my plan?"

"I think it's perfectly splendid," replied Martine. "I've often heard of York Harbor. Peggy Pratt used to talk about it. I think her family has a cottage there."

"Of course," continued Mrs. Stratford, "you must remember that we shall live very quietly there; for the present I feel that we have no income coming in. We must live on the little money that I have saved until we know just where your father's business stands. Besides, until we know that he is really well, we are under a shadow. At any moment we may hear the worst news, and that, if nothing else, would lead us to live quietly."

"Of course, mamma, of course I understand this perfectly. I have no wish for gayety; really I would rather live quietly. I am so glad that I got only one silk gown, instead of the three I intended. And, luckily, I haven't given away many of my last summer's clothes; so I shall be all fitted out without any expense."

"There, there," cried Mrs. Stratford, "don't think too much about economy—or clothes; we shall do very well, even as things are, if only we hear good news from South America."

It was now June. Priscilla had gone home. Martine's other friends had left the city for the North Shore or the mountains. Some of Lucian's friends in Cambridge dropped in occasionally, and Amy and Mrs. Redmond were as devoted as ever. Amy, however, was very busy with the many duties and pleasures of a Wellesley Senior when Commencement is only a few weeks away. Of all the invitations that she showered on Martine for the various festivities that Wellesley offers in June, Martine accepted only the one that took her to Wellesley Float Day.

"As long as I live," she said afterwards, "I shall never forget the beautiful twilight on the lake, the boats gliding about so mysteriously and gracefully, the music floating over the water, the lights that bathed everything in glory; no, I never expect to see anything more beautiful of its kind," she added mischievously, as a kind of anti-climax, lest Amy, who was listening to her, should be too proud of her college.

But as the long June days wore away, Martine had little time for anything outside her home; she could not deny the fact that her mother was growing paler and thinner. Mrs. Stratford, looking anxiously at Martine, saw a certain change in her daughter.

"The sooner we get away, the better; Martine is worrying about her father, and will not tell me. A change of air and scene will benefit her. I wish that we had not undertaken to have the cottage painted. The last week in June seems too far away."

In their trouble, Martine and her mother were not neglected by their friends. They had not many near relatives, yet invitations came to them from the cousins in New York, from other cousins in Chicago and even from Mrs. Blair; but mother and daughter both preferred the independence that they would find in their cottage at York to the formality of visiting even the best intentioned friends and relatives.

"You may have visitors of your own part of the summer," said Mrs. Stratford. "We shall have at least one spare room in the cottage, and when things are running smoothly there'll be no reason why you should not have Priscilla with you."

"That reminds me," said Martine, "that I've never told you that Mrs. Tilworth and I have really made up. You know she was rather frigid towards me for several weeks this spring; but after my return from Plymouth she told Priscilla that she had changed her mind about me. It seems that I made a great impression on Mr. Stacy during my holidays, and Mr. Stacy, it also seems, is the one person for whose opinion Mrs. Tilworth has an especial regard; consequently Mrs. Tilworth is inclined to accept Mr. Stacy's estimate of me and for the present the war between us is at an end."

"War between you! My dear child, I should be very sorry indeed had there been such a state of affairs; I think myself that you and Priscilla have always been a little wrong in your opinion of Priscilla's aunt."

CHAPTER XVI

THE MISSING TRUNK

It was the Thursday before Class Day, a clear morning, almost cool, with just a suggestion of coming warmth in the air. Martine sank into a chair by the open window, and gazed over the tops of the trees at the long vista of the Avenue. Not for a moment would she have admitted that she was tired, and yet there was a trace of weariness in the sigh with which she sank back in the comfortable easy chair.

As a matter of fact she had been working with a degree of energy that she had seldom shown before. Martine had never been accused of laziness, even in her idler days, yet her energy had never been expended in the prosaic realm of household work. But now the situation was changed, and for the past week she had worked unremittingly, packing, clearing, doing all kinds of little things that would simplify the departure for York a week later. Angelina, it is true, had helped her to the best of her ability, and had even succeeded in subduing some of her own natural flightiness. She was proud of her present position as sole assistant in the little household, and the prospect of continued hard work during the summer in no way troubled her.

If Martine was weary on this particular morning, her weariness was tempered with satisfaction. Everything had gone so smoothly that she would be able to enjoy Class Day without disagreeable remembrances of things left undone.

While she sat by the window, thoroughly enjoying her well-earned rest, she was startled for a moment by feeling two soft hands clasped over her eyes. Before she had had time to wonder long, a soft laugh told her who the newcomer was.

"Why, Elinor Naylor, where in the world—"

"Straight from Bar Harbor," said Elinor, answering the unfinished question, "that is, we arrived early last evening, and I've come here directly from the hotel. Kate Starkweather's brother has a large spread to-morrow, and though I had not intended to come, mamma thinks I ought to see at least one Harvard Class Day—and so here I am."

For a few moments the two talked as rapidly as friends will who have not seen each other for weeks. Elinor told her Class Day plans, and tried to arrange to meet Martine after the statue exercises.

"I do not expect to see very much of Class Day," said Martine, "it would be different if Lucian were here. I am going with Amy to Fritz Tomkins' spread, and to the Pudding because Hazen Andrews is in it. His mother is one of mamma's friends in Chicago. Mrs. Blair thinks I ought to wait until I am eighteen before going at all. But mamma is not so conventional, and she said I might."

"I suppose you are very busy," said Elinor, as she rose to go. "So I hesitate to ask a favor."

"Ask it," cried Martine. "I am not half as busy as I was yesterday. I am sure you won't ask anything I cannot do."

"It's only this," continued Elinor. "My trunk hadn't come this morning, and we could get no information when we telephoned. It would be simply awful if it shouldn't arrive in time for me to go to the Senior spread. Kate and I put our things into the one trunk, and I can't understand why it hasn't come. We gave our checks to an expressman at the station. If only I knew the city a little better, I'd go down town, and find out what has happened to it."

"There," exclaimed Martine, laughing, "Your favor is a very simple one. You would like me to pilot you about—with the greatest pleasure."

"I feared you might be too busy," and Elinor glanced around the room, with its half-filled boxes, and books piled on tables, waiting to be packed.

"I should do little more to-day. My mother is staying with friends in Brookline over Sunday. Angelina is out just now, but I'll leave word with the elevator-boy that I'll be back by one."

Martine was soon ready, and after one more vain effort to learn something by telephone about the trunk, the two set out for the downtown express office. There they were equally unsuccessful, and so continued their journey to the great North Station.

The baggage-master was a trifle impatient. It was a warm day, and a busy season, but the two young girls and their evident anxiety appealed to him.

"It's up to the Express Company," he said at last, "to give you your trunk. I have made a careful search, and no trunk with the number on your claim-check is here. You will find it probably at the hotel. I would advise you to go back."

"You are sure it isn't here?" asked Martine.

"Perfectly sure."

"I know it isn't at the hotel. But of course I can ask again," said Elinor. "I am awfully sorry to have brought you on this wild-goose chase, Martine, we might as well turn about now. The whole thing is very queer."

It seemed queerer when no search, no enquiries produced the missing trunk. One thing only was clear. There was a record that it had been taken from the station. It was perfectly evident that it had not been delivered at the hotel, where, strangely enough, the trunk belonging to Kate's aunt had arrived safely.

"It was a large steamer trunk," said Elinor with a sigh, "but small enough for thieves to carry away. I suppose they took it from the back of the wagon. You shouldn't have thieves in Boston."

"Probably they came from some other city. Philadelphia possibly," retorted Martine. Then, as quickly, "Excuse me Elinor, I did not really mean that. What a pity you and I are not the same size. I would gladly lend you anything of mine you could wear."

"Oh—no—" responded Elinor, "I am sure nothing of yours would fit me. You are so much taller and thinner. Short and dumpy people like me never can wear other people's clothes. It won't be so bad for Kate, when I break the news to her."

"But what will you do?"

"We must go out at once and buy gowns and hats. I begrudge the money just now. Kate won't mind, nor her aunt. They love to spend money for clothes, and can afford anything. I have to be more careful; but after coming so far—I can't be cheated out of Class Day, and this grey gown and dark hat would be utterly out of place."

"Not so very long ago I should have thought it great fun to buy a whole outfit on the spur of the moment," responded Martine, "but the past few weeks I have grown so economical that it seems extravagant to buy anything one doesn't need."

"But I certainly need a muslin gown and a hat, a fan, a parasol, light shoes—"

"There, there, let me lend you a parasol, fan, and some of the other things that don't have to be made to order. Also I have a lovely hat that would fit you like the paper on the wall, if you would borrow it. Please say yes."

With some protests Elinor accepted Martine's offer, and after luncheon, accompanied by Kate and her aunt, they set out for the most fashionable outfitter's. Kate, with Mrs. Starkweather's approval, unrestricted in the matter of money, soon chose a costume complete in every detail. Elinor, wishing to spend less, had greater difficulty in suiting herself.

"By six o'clock surely," said the obliging saleswoman, "everything shall be ready. Two or three workwomen will at once be set on the alterations. This is a special case, and we are glad to do all we can to oblige you."

"Now Elinor, come back with me," urged Martine, "we have half the afternoon before us, and we might as well have a good long talk."

"That will suit me very well. Mrs. Starkweather and Kate have to stay in to see callers. You will not care," she concluded turning to her friends, "if I stay with Martine until five. She is going to lend me a hat, and fan, and other things."

"Provided you return to the hotel by five, you may go with Martine now. We are greatly obliged for your assistance," and Mrs. Starkweather shook hands cordially with the young girl.

The apartment seemed cool and pleasant to the two friends, as they entered it, and Martine sank down in a little willow chair with a sigh of relief.

"Angelina," she called, "Angelina!"

In a moment Angelina stood before her.

"Bring me the large hat-box from my closet, please."

"Certainly, Miss Martine."

"It's handsomer than my own," exclaimed Elinor, as Martine lifted the large white hat from the box, and set it on her friend's head.

"It suits you perfectly. I am so glad I have it!"

Martine did not explain that this was the hat she had herself meant to wear Class Day, and that her second best was not nearly as becoming. Martine was not vain, and it really pleased her that she had something to offer Elinor. The fan, parasol, and other little accessories were quickly chosen from Martine's abundant store, and then the two girls sat down for the promised long talk.

"I know you'll like York," said Elinor. "Every one does."

"Oh,—I dare say,—I remember Peggy Pratt at school was always talking about it. But of course I am not going for fun, and we are to live in the littlest bit of a house, with only Angelina for maid, and I shall hardly have a cent to spend."

"I know, I know," responded Elinor gently, "but spending money is not everything, you can enjoy so many things without it."

"Oh, I dare say, but money helps. You and Kate would have had to give up your Class Day, or wear unsuitable clothes, if you hadn't had money to buy new outfits to-day. Still, I like the idea of the little cottage, and helping mother, and if father only comes back safely, I sha'n't care if we haven't a penny in the world."

"You must have had rather hard work packing up," said Elinor sympathetically; "I suppose Angelina has been more hindrance than help."

"Oh, no—she has surprised us all by taking a real interest. I asked her if she wouldn't rather have a different kind of place for the summer. 'What an idea!' she replied. 'I love hard work when I can get all the credit for it. Wild horses wouldn't keep me away from York. Besides, your mother has got so used to my Spanish flavoring that her health would suffer if I should leave.'"

"She's a case," commented Elinor, "but tell me, is it true that you might have visited Mrs. Stanley at Bar Harbor this summer?"

"Oh, she's papa's cousin," rejoined Martine, "and she *did* invite me. But of course I had no intention of leaving mamma, even if I had been in the mood for a gay place like Mt. Desert. She has been growing paler and thinner, all the spring, and though she might have boarded in some quiet spot, she just couldn't have got along without me."

"Of course not."

"She thought I could accept the invitation for August, but this was out of the question. I doubt that I should have gone out to Cambridge to-morrow, if I hadn't seen that mother would be disappointed if I gave that up. There will be other Class Days, and I can wait. But it isn't as if I had to buy anything—a muslin that I had made in the winter is just the thing, and I haven't had to bother."

"You are very sweet, Martine, about everything, and so different from what I thought of you that day we ran into each other at the car. Didn't I seem a little hateful when we were first introduced at Mrs. Weston's luncheon?"

"Oh—no—only a little stiff, but that was natural, when you think of our first meeting," and Martine laughed at the remembrance. "I can't imagine you out of temper, since I have really known you."

"Not even to-day?"

"To-day?"

"Why, I have been feeling particularly savage about my trunk. You must have noticed how I spoke to the man in the express office."

"He deserved it, but really I didn't notice anything of that kind. You were really polite, considering you had lost a trunk."

"It is really a loss," responded Elinor, "even to Kate, and I wish that some one could explain what happened to it."

"It may simply be mislaid. Ten to one it may turn up to-morrow."

"Oh, I hope not. That would be exasperating, after all the trouble we have had to-day. I would almost rather that the trunk should stay lost. Then we could bring suit for damages."

"You can generally get only a hundred dollars on a single trunk, at least I remember hearing papa say that was all railroads would pay," said Martine sagely, "and what would that be among two?"

"You shouldn't have put all your eggs in one basket."

Elinor and Martine started at the sound of a strange voice, but looking up they saw Angelina standing at the door leading toward the dining-room. She had used a curious falsetto with which at times she liked to experiment.

"I just meant to remind you it's half-past four, and I heard Miss Elinor say she must be back at the hotel by five. You've just barely time, and if you please I'll carry the boxes for you."

Thus Angelina turned aside the reproof that might have been given her for listening at the door.

CHAPTER XVII

CLASS DAY

At the breakfast-table Class Day morning, Martine found an envelope addressed in Elinor's neat handwriting.

"You just must come with us," she read, as she broke the seal; "I had only half as good a time as I might have had last night, thinking of you. There must have been crowds of people you knew there. Kate's brother brought us four tickets for everything—even for Sanders Theatre this morning. So please be ready at ten. Telephone. Hastily, Elinor."

Martine, glancing at the clock, made a rapid calculation. In no way could she double the hours between eight o'clock and one, and she had a morning's work to do before she could rightfully set out on a pleasure-trip.

"Angelina," she called, "please go to the telephone. Call up Miss Naylor, and say that I cannot go with her this morning. Tell her, please, that I will meet her as we agreed in the afternoon."

For a moment Angelina did not move. Telephoning was one of her delights, and Martine wondered why she stood rooted to the spot.

Angelina, however, quickly explained herself.

"Oh, Miss Martine," she cried, "I hate to give a message like that. You just ought to go off and have a good time. It isn't right for you to slave and slave, and you younger than me."

Martine smiled at Angelina's lugubrious expression. She did not wish the latter to see that she was a little downcast at the thought of the quiet morning at home.

"Go, Angelina," she cried, "run quickly; it's a hot day, and I'm thankful enough that I can stay home until noon. Don't wait for an answer. Simply leave the message for Miss Elinor."

Martine's tone was so positive that Angelina had no choice but to obey, and when she returned, Martine was on her knees packing one of her mother's trunks.

"Angelina," she explained, "we have only this morning and to-morrow for the rest of our packing, for I have promised to spend Sunday with the Strothers' in Brookline, where mamma is. You are to go to Shiloh late Saturday afternoon, and on Monday morning you and I must be here promptly at nine, to send off the trunks and boxes. Mamma will stop here with Mrs. Strothers on her way to the station to see that everything is left in perfect condition. So even if we work with all our might this morning we shall barely get through in time."

"There's another helper coming," murmured Angelina.

"Oh, yes, a scrub-woman, who couldn't do the least little thing to help pack the trunks. But hurry with the dishes, Angelina, for you can be a lot of use."

Though she spoke briskly, Martine felt a little depressed—for Martine.

As she lifted trunk-trays, and folded skirts, and packed things in little boxes, she could not help thinking how much pleasanter it would be to spend the morning in Sander's Theatre, listening to witty speeches, or later walking about the college grounds, with Elinor and Kate and half a dozen attendant undergraduates.

"If only mother hadn't been sick—"

Then she suppressed the thought, ashamed of her own selfishness.

At twelve o'clock she glanced around the room with undisguised satisfaction.

"There, Angelina, we can easily finish to-morrow. Only two trunks and one box left, and some little odds and ends to do at the last moment. Oh, dear, I must get away quickly—the rooms look so bare."

The fatigue that Martine had hardly before admitted to herself, almost overcame her while she was dressing. Bending, climbing, wielding a hammer, undoubtedly strengthen the muscles in the long run. Yet the process of muscle-building is often accompanied by sensations that an amateur athlete might pardonably call "weariness."

Consequently, Martine must not be blamed if for a moment her spirit weakened as she looked at the white gown that Angelina had spread out for her on the divan.

"I can't go," she said; "I am too tired. I ought to have waited for Lucian's Class Day, and if he is

never to have a Class Day—why, then I am never to have any fun. If we are so poor that he cannot finish college, then I shall be too poor to go to parties—or—or anything."

There is nothing worse for a girl's spirits than self-pity. As Martine bent over the dress on the divan, a big tear splashed on one end of the silk sash. This was followed by a second tear, and then the absurdity of the situation produced the rainbow. The rainbow in this case was the smile that flashed amid the tears, the smile that made the tears seem absolutely absurd as Martine caught sight of herself in the glass.

"What a baby I am! Here I am going to join two of my best friends who have promised me a splendid time, and just because I am a little tired, I feel as if the world were falling to pieces."

A cool bath—an hour of leisurely dressing—a few compliments from Angelina—and Martine was herself again.

She knew that her mother would not altogether approve of her going alone to Cambridge, and she regretted that she had not allowed Amy to send some one for her, as at first she had suggested.

Just as she was wondering whether, if she could afford a carriage, her mother would approve of her driving to Cambridge alone, she heard Angelina's—

"Walk in, please. Yes, ma'am, she hasn't gone yet," and then she recognized the pleasant voice of Mrs. Redmond, saying,—

"Tell her she need not hurry. I can wait."

"But I can't wait—not a single minute," and Martine, rushing from the little bedroom, almost flung herself into Mrs. Redmond's arms.

"There, there, my dear child—it's a warm day, and our clothes—"

"Will not stand crushing. I know it, and how sweet you look in that soft gray. But I thought you were at Cambridge."

"Oh, no, I was not invited to the feast of reason this morning. I am going out merely for the frivolities of the afternoon. I forgot to write you that I had promised your mother I would call for you. I realized my oversight only as I started. Perhaps you have made other plans?"

"I have been too busy for plans. Mamma forgot to tell me you were coming. An hour ago I thought I was too busy to go to Cambridge, but now—it just delights me to think of going with you."

The ride in an open car over the long bridge soothed Martine. She almost forgot that she had been tired. When Mrs. Redmond drew from her the story of her recent responsibilities, the young girl made light of the difficulties that had beset her. She was always happy with Mrs. Redmond, and the latter's quick understanding of her present trials lessened the trials themselves.

When they reached Harvard Square, Martine's spirits rose.

"There's no doubt I love a crowd," she said. "This makes me think of a country fair, only the people are better dressed, and there are no fakirs."

"My dear child—a country fair!"

"I mean the atmosphere is somewhat the same—oh, there are Amy and Fritz."

Somewhere from the crowd pouring out from one of the smaller college gates, Amy and Fritz were approaching the spot on the sidewalk where Martine and Mrs. Redmond were standing.

"I am delighted to see you, children," said Mrs. Redmond. "I was secretly wondering where we should go next—to Fritz' rooms or to the Pudding."

"Oh, to the Pudding at once," responded Fritz; "you are none too early. As for Amy—"

"I shall never dare look a strawberry in the face again. Early as it is, I have already eaten so many, and, oh, mamma, it is all so delightful. Fritz and I have already been at the Pudding, and now we'll go back with you."

At this point Mrs. Redmond interfered. She assured Fritz that she and Martine were quite able to take care of themselves.

"It is the Senior's day," she said; "and Martine and I are here only incidentally. One of us is too old, and the other too young—almost too young—to be exacting about Class Day. Martine's best time will come when Lucian graduates."

"Run, Amy," exclaimed Martine. "It's delightful to see you and Mr. Tomkins getting on so well. You usually try to send him away somewhere; but now you are ready to go where he goes, and so your mother and I won't detain you for even a minute."

"Let us hurry, then," said Amy, turning to Fritz. "If Martine is in one of her mischievous moods, we cannot tell when she will stop teasing."

"At my rooms at four," cried Fritz, as he and Amy left the others at the entrance to the Pudding

spread.

From this moment for the rest of the day, Martine not only forgot that she was tired, but her recent troubles seemed altogether of the past. In spite of the great crowd, a number of her Chicago friends found Martine in the corner where Mrs. Redmond made her sit. It is true that she had not even a word with Hazen Andrews, her special host, who, like most Seniors, was thoroughly occupied looking after relatives and the girls of the older set, to which Martine did not belong.

She had not many friends among the Seniors, though two or three in their flowing gowns, mortarboards in their hands, came up to speak to her or Mrs. Redmond.

"Isn't it fun?" cried Martine to the latter. "It's like taking a journey somewhere, and running upon all kinds of people that one hasn't seen for a long time—only one seldom sees so many persons one knows on a single journey."

Promptly at four o'clock Mrs. Redmond and Martine met Amy and a number of her friends at Fritz' rooms, and together they all went over to the Memorial delta where the statue exercises were held.

"It's dazzling!" cried Martine, looking about at the tiers and tiers of gayly dressed girls and women; "only more beautiful than a flower garden, because it's more alive, this garden of people. I wish we could see Elinor here."

"My dear little girl, this is a great pleasure," said a voice at Martine's elbow, and turning to the left, to her great surprise, Martine found her neighbor to be a Chicago friend of her father.

"Didn't know I was an old Harvard man! Well, the West does take the starch of culture out of us. I'm going down there among the graduates after a while. I'm holding these seats for my niece and a friend, who thought they could never find it unless I was here as a landmark. They failed to meet me, as people always fail on Class Day. Let me see, Lucian doesn't graduate this year?"

"No, he isn't in Cambridge; he has gone to join father."

"Yes, yes, of course; this has been a hard year for your father."

The tears came to Martine's eyes.

"Bless my soul, child, don't cry. It's coming out all right. Everyone must have some business cares, and up to the present your father has been remarkably successful. But money isn't everything!"

"That's just it," responded Martine. "The money doesn't matter at all—to me. But we are afraid that father is breaking down—that's why Lucian has gone to South America; and we can't hear for some time just how things are."

"Well, well! I didn't realize that things were going so badly—at least you must think they are going badly, or you wouldn't look downcast. A bright girl like you should always look on the bright side of things. But so far as your father's business is concerned, I may tell you that it is likely to take a turn for the better—at present I am not at liberty to say more. It's this news about his health that troubles me. Let me know what you hear from Lucian."

Mr. Gamut's words were more cheering than anything Martine had heard for weeks, and in the few minutes that intervened before the arrival of his niece, he told her a number of interesting stories about earlier Class Days.

"This is a larger gathering, this crowd around the statue, than we used to see at the tree. But give me the tree, and the wreath, and the wild scramble, and the torn flowers that the boys were almost ready to stake their lives for! Sometimes I am afraid we are making everything too refined; a little rough and tumble is good even for the most cultivated students. This confetti!—no, I don't care for it."

Mr. Gamut, on the arrival of his niece, departed to his place among the graduates. The niece was a girl whom Martine had known slightly at home. She had recently come from Chicago, and in consequence, was able to tell Martine various bits of news, which, if not important, at least had some interest for one away from home.

After the mass of students had marched into the enclosure, and had given all the regulation Harvard cheers, Martine felt herself thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the day. She listened intently to the cheers, hummed the air of "Johnny Harvard" while the students sang it. When her own stock of confetti was exhausted, she helped Mrs. Redmond throw hers in the direction of Fritz.

"It's the prettiest sight I ever saw," she cried. "This wonderful shimmering network of ribbons—it's as if we had been caught in a rainbow—and if we were only a little farther away from people, they would seem like real fairies. Oh, I am glad I came!"

"I am glad that you are cheerful again," whispered Mrs. Redmond. "For a moment to-day, I feared that you were going to be blue."

"Well, it was only for a moment. Now I feel happy—almost as happy as Amy. Come, Amy dear, Fritz will never find you in this crowd. Let us return to his rooms as quickly as we can. The

sooner we are there, the sooner we shall go on to the spread."

How Priscilla would have shuddered at the teasing tone that Martine used in addressing Amy. Even though she now understood Martine so much better than formerly, and, indeed, really loved her, Priscilla could not accustom herself to Martine's frivolity of speech and manner toward Amy. Fortunately for her own feelings, Priscilla was safely at Plymouth at this particular moment, and Amy, whom Martine never offended, only smiled indulgently at the younger girl.

They had not long to wait at Fritz' pleasant rooms before he appeared, flushed and triumphant, accompanied by two or three friends.

"Wasn't it fine? We managed to bring you a few sprays of flowers. The bevy of beauty on the seats above almost blinded us. But for that we might have done better, although I can tell you, no one else got more; and we fairly had to fight our way out. Now we are ready to share our trophies. This for you, Amy, and Barton—yours, I believe, are for Miss Martine; but I forget, you have never met. Mr. Barton, Miss Stratford—I always forget that the men I know do not always know the girls I know. But now, Barton, you will escort Mrs. Redmond and Miss Martine to our humble spread—and Helmer—ah, here they are—Miss Naylor, Miss Starkweather—let me present Barton and Helmer, and Jack Underwood. Now we can start—I thought your aunt was coming—ah! lost?"

"Of course she isn't lost, Kate," interposed the practical Elinor. "I am sure that I hear her on the stairs." And to prove that Elinor was right, a moment later the elder Miss Starkweather came panting into the room.

"You should have waited for me, girls; I had such a fright—I was sure you were lost!"

"Not lost—only gone before," interrupted Fritz. "I am sorry I shocked you, Amy," he whispered, catching her look of reproof. "Let us hurry on, ahead of the others."

Martine, walking with Fritz' friend, Barton, across the college yard, felt quite in her element. The young man was by no means bashful, and in a few moments the two were deep in a lively conversation. Martine's fatigue had passed away. Family trials were forgotten.

Fritz Tomkins had united with four or five of his friends in giving a large spread in one of the modern halls outside the yard.

Secretly Martine thought the affair conventional, "like any afternoon tea, with flowers on the table, and candelabra, and all the fashionable bonbons."

"But you wouldn't see so many men at a mere tea, truly I think it's great fun," said the staid Elinor, snuggling into a corner beside Martine. "At the next game I shall hardly know what side I am on. I like Harvard so well, and your hat, Martine, the one I am wearing, you can't imagine how many compliments it has had. You were altogether too good to let me have it. Do you suppose I shall *ever* find that trunk?"

Before Martine could reply, some one came to carry Elinor off for a walk. Martine, left to herself, eagerly watched everything around her.

"I wonder why Fritz pays more attention to Amy than to anyone else. He sees so much of her always that I should think to-day he'd look after other people. Now, I'm sure Amy isn't sentimental."

But just at this moment, Martine caught an expression on Fritz' face as he turned toward Amy that set her thinking. Rising to her feet, she hurried toward Mrs. Redmond.

"Tell me, please, how late you mean to stay. It's dark now, and the lanterns in the yard must be lit. I'd like to see the illumination, and hear the Glee Club sing, but I ought to be home by nine, please. I have a busy day before me."

"Just as you wish, my dear. I will speak to Amy."

A moment later, Amy, Fritz, and Elinor surrounded Martine, protesting against her departure, urging her to go with them to Memorial, to return with them to Fritz' rooms, to watch the illuminations; in short, to do anything but go home.

Martine, however, was firm, and when she started off for the yard with Mrs. Redmond, Mr. Barton went with them.

"It is a glimpse of fairyland," said Martine, as they strolled about through the crowd. "Why do these lines of lanterns make the yard look ten times its usual size? Why do these red lights make every one seem beautiful? Why—"

"Let me continue," interrupted Emmons Barton. "*Why* won't you come over to Memorial? *Why* must you hurry home?"

"Because I am Cinderella," responded Martine gayly. "Because I should hate to lose my glass slipper. Come, Mrs. Redmond, I am sure our car is waiting, if Mr. Barton will only find it for us."

CHAPTER XVIII

AT YORK

The morning after her arrival at York, Martine stood at the door of the little red farm-house. The air was fresh and cool, a delightful contrast to the last day or two of heat in the city that she had just left. A slight mist from the river softened without hiding the view. Through the rolling meadows that stretched before her across the road, she saw the thread of river winding its way toward the sea. The ocean itself was not in sight, though it made itself known in a certain agreeable saltiness of odor that Martine quickly recognized.

Martine gazed across the meadows with a certain pleasant expectancy, such as any young girl in a new place is likely to feel. The houses in the distance looked attractive.

"I wonder if they are summer cottages, or if people really live there. I wonder who has this large house just across the road. It is rather handsome. I hope there are girls in the family. It must be very pleasant there, the garden seems to run down to the river. Our garden needs attention," she concluded, taking a few steps toward the flower beds, where a few stray geraniums and untrimmed rose-bushes were the sole adornments. After a few rather futile efforts to improve the appearance of these beds, Martine turned toward the house.

The red cottage, as she faced it, was far from imposing.

"It's like some of the roadside cottages I have seen in England and Wales. It isn't much larger. I'm glad that it is red instead of white—well I should have had to live in it just the same, but I should have hated a white house. A coat of red paint always makes a house seem picturesque," she concluded.

At this moment Angelina, in a pink calico in which she looked more gypsy-like than ever, ran down the little slope to meet Martine.

"Isn't it lovely," she said, "to be so near the road. We can see the electric cars pass by the corner over there, and hear the train. Didn't you notice the whistle this morning? I did, and it made me think of the city right off."

"I don't often hear an engine whistle in the city."

"Yes, but a steam-engine makes you think of the city. You know that you are not cut off from everything, and that sometime you can go back."

"Why Angelina, I hope that you are not homesick?"

There had been a suspicious quiver in Angelina's voice.

"Not exactly homesick, oh, no, I feel perfectly at home with you and Mrs. Stratford, but still—well, you see, Miss Martine, we haven't as many neighbors as we had in the city. I knew something about every family in the Belhaven, but here I don't see how I'll begin to get acquainted."

"Cheer up, Angelina," said Martine, pleasantly. "Don't let a little thing like that trouble you. A person of your sociable disposition can make acquaintances anywhere. But it's more dignified to proceed slowly. You and I will be busy enough the next few days getting settled. I have an idea that mother may need us now."

"There," cried Angelina, as they stood inside the little entry. "It's small, Miss Martine, but it's real neat, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's neat," and Martine looked at the steep flight of stairs that almost tumbled down into the narrow hall, separating the two front rooms. "It's neat enough, but I am glad we have a strip of red carpet for the stairs. Uncarpeted, the paint might soon wear off, and besides they would be rather noisy. But are you sure that you have finished your kitchen-work, Angelina?"

"Well, I just haven't; I'm glad you reminded me." So Angelina hurried to the back of the house, where soon her voice was heard singing shrilly above the clatter of dishes.

"Martine," said Mrs. Stratford, as her daughter entered the sitting-room at the left of the hall, "the wall paper was very successful. What would this room have been without it?"

"These pale yellow roses certainly brighten it up, and the color is not only cheerful, but increases the size of the room. This little cupboard in the wall is fascinating, and when we get some of our china in, it will be truly æsthetic."

"If only it opened on a piazza," sighed Mrs. Stratford. "It is singular enough that so many New England houses are built without any pretence of a porch or piazza."

"Oh, that can be remedied," responded Martine cheerfully. "There's a very attractive nook between those two trees, and we can send to town for an awning, and if we lay down a rug, and move out a sofa, and some chairs and a table, why we'll have a regular little summer house."

Martine, pausing almost out of breath, noted with regret that her mother did not smile. A shadow crossed Mrs. Stratford's face.

"Mother does not like it here," thought Martine, "neither do I, but I must like it."

"Come, mother," she said aloud, taking her mother by the arm. "Wasn't it a good idea to have the walls of this dining-room painted blue? You see it gets so much sun, and this gives it the effect of coolness."

"I dislike oak furniture." Mrs. Stratford did not answer the question that Martine had put indirectly to her. Her attention was now centred on the ugly extension table and the uncomfortable chairs ranged stiffly around the wall.

"We'll have to put up with the chairs, I suppose, but I have a lovely old blue cotton curtain in one of the trunks that will hide the table and give the room any amount of style."

"You are trying to make the best of everything, my dear, and I dare say you are right. But the house is so much smaller and plainer than I remembered it, that I fear we shall hardly be comfortable."

"Oh, no; come, let me show you, already I have made ever so many plans;" and impressed by Martine's vivacious optimism, Mrs. Stratford at last began to see the pleasanter possibilities of the red cottage.

Martine was not deceiving either her mother or herself in pointing out the best side of things, and yet in her heart there was a certain disappointment in her first survey of "Red Knoll."

"We must have a name for the house," she had said the very afternoon of their arrival. "'Red Farm,' no, that isn't exactly the thing; 'Red Top,' no, the roof isn't red, and besides, that name has been used by some one else. 'Red Knoll'—there, why not, it combines the color of the house and the situation on a knoll—why not, mamma?" and as Mrs. Stratford had no adverse answer, Red Knoll it was from the beginning.

A house needs something besides a picturesque name to make it attractive even to an optimistic girl anxious to see the bright side of things.

The little farm-house that Mr. and Mrs. Stratford had so impulsively bought, was barely large enough for the three persons who were now to make it the summer home. The two square rooms on each side of the front door, if thrown together, would have been smaller than the bedroom which had been Martine's in her father's house. Over them, originally, had been two rooms of equal size. One of these was now to be Mrs. Stratford's bedroom. The other had been divided by a partition into two rooms each, resembling the so-called hall bedroom of many city houses. The one nearest her mother Martine appropriated for herself. The second she named euphemistically the guest-room; but for the present she intended to use it as a studio or writing-room, and had removed one or two other pieces of furniture to make room for a large deal table.

Beyond this room, connected by a narrow door, were two ell rooms, one of which was assigned to Angelina. Downstairs in the ell were kitchen and wash-room, both with white-washed walls.

"A small house, but our own," said Martine cheerfully, as she first walked through it. "I'll try to forget how different it is from the place we used to have at Oconomowoc. When father first sold it, he said some time he would buy a place on the New England coast, but he certainly hadn't Red Knoll in mind then."

As the first evening in their new home came on, Martine felt lonely. The shadows gathering around the little cottage seemed to shut her out from the world.

"Will things ever come right? I feel so—so miserable. I wonder what it is—mother, where are you?"

Two or three times she called, before her mother's voice came to her from a corner of the little garden.

"What are you doing out in the damp?"

"Is it damp, my child? But the sunset was too beautiful to miss. You should have been out here with me. Where were you, dear?"

"Helping Angelina."

"That was right; it will take her some time to get perfectly adjusted. You are going to be a great comfort, Martine."

Her mother's praise sounded sweet to Martine, yet she could not shake off a certain strange feeling, that she would have called homesickness had her mother not been with her.

When they reached the house, they sat for a moment by the open window.

"Mother," cried Martine, "I have an idea—I mean a special idea. Wouldn't it be better after this to have tea later, just as it begins to grow dark. Then we needn't miss the sunset."

"Wouldn't that make Angelina's dish-washing come rather late?"

"Oh, listen, listen," cried Martine, with something of her old eagerness. "It is part of my plan to leave the dish-washing until morning. There are only three of us, and so we need not follow old-fashioned housekeeping rules."

"I am not so sure of that," and Mrs. Stratford shook her head as if in doubt. "But we can try the

late tea to-morrow, so that we can go up in the meadow behind the house for our sunset. It is a better place for a view than my corner of the garden."

It pleased Martine to hear her mother speak so cheerfully.

"I'll try not to mind the melancholy twilights, and all those strange chirping things and the feeling of being shut off in a corner of the world, if only this place is good for mother."

The later tea hour proved feasible, and Martine at the table with her mother after their little stroll to Sunset Hill forgot the melancholy twilight. Nor had she in their busy first week much time for discontent. The village boy whom Mrs. Stratford engaged to unpack their trunks and boxes was bewildered by their number.

"There are some, Angelina, that are not to be unpacked now, please get him to put them in the unfinished ell room."

"Yes, Miss Martine, I know just which they are, and I'll hurry back to help you hang those pictures."

When all the pictures were hung, when artistic draperies covered some of the ugliest chairs, when pretty sofa cushions softened ugly angles, when books and bric-à-brac were distributed in carelessly homelike fashion, and when a number of really valuable rugs were used to tone down the crudeness of the carpets, Angelina surveyed the result with a pride that could not have been greater if she had been the owner of the cottage.

"There," she cried. "It looks just like a city house, only more so, if anything. Don't you think so, Miss Martine, and I do hope you'll have some callers right away. Why, I almost feel as if I was back at the Belhaven when I look from this Cashmere rug to that Arts and Crafts silver bowl on the mantle-piece. No one can say that we haven't shown perfect taste, can they, Miss Martine?"

"I am glad we brought all these things," replied Martine, "mother thought I was packing too much, but if we are to be here three or four months, we must make it seem as homelike as possible."

"It certainly is homelike," continued Angelina, "especially that picture of Miss Brenda. Mrs. Weston, I mean; when I first saw her I always thought she was stylish, and that was years ago. Of course I hadn't been acquainted with many Back Bay ladies then, excepting one that taught in our Sunday School. But still, after all I've known I just think Mrs. Weston's at the very head of them. You are something like her, too, Miss Martine, in fact I should say you're almost as stylish, and to-day when I rode down to the village I saw a lot of young ladies that are just your kind, in white muslins and high-heeled shoes, and I hope they'll call on you soon. As far as I could make out from something I heard some one on the seat behind me say, they were going to a tea, and it's likely to be a gay summer. I'm glad of this for your sake, Miss Martine, for you've been too quiet lately for one of your age."

Martine was not altogether pleased with Angelina's familiarity, though for the moment it seemed hardly worth while to rebuke her.

Consequently Angelina, unreprieved, continued her monologue:

"I noticed a good many people in bathing when I passed the beach, but when I went up I found they were chiefly nurse-maids, employees of the cottagers. There were a lot of pleasant-looking nurses and children playing in the sand, and one that I spoke to, a nurse, I mean, was very accommodating, and told me lots about the cottagers. They bathe at noon every day, and it's a great sight. I presume when I do go in, I'll have to go in with the employees, for I suppose I'll be classed with the nurses and children that generally bathe in the afternoon."

"You'll be classed with the children, if you babble on in this way, Angelina. But as to the bathing, you must ask mother."

"Well, I wish you had been going to that tea, Miss Martine; the young ladies looked just your style. I asked the nurse about it, and she said it was given by Miss Peggy Pratt of Philadelphia."

These last words of Angelina's made more impression than all the others. "Peggy Pratt." Martine felt on further reflection particularly aggrieved.

"Elinor must have written Peggy regarding her summer plans, for Elinor was a person of her word, and she had promised to do this. If Elinor had not promised, of course I should have written myself. But now I am glad I did not, for probably I should have been treated just the same. Yet it doesn't seem just like Peggy."

"Martine," called Mrs. Stratford from her corner a few minutes later, and Martine hurried to her mother's side.

"Sit down, dear," added Mrs. Stratford, then with a shade of anxiety in her voice. "But you look tired. I fear you have been working too hard. Perhaps you did more than your share in preparing this boudoir for me."

"Oh, no, Angelina and Timothy worked much harder than I. But it *is* a cosy corner. Between the awning and the trees, you will be as well shaded from the sun as you would be indoors, and an open window wouldn't begin to give you so much air."

Martine swung herself into the hammock.

"There, I feel like a bird. Mother dear, you called me for something special, what is it?"

"Only to say that Angelina is anxious to know how we will celebrate."

"Celebrate?"

"Yes, Miss Martine." Angelina had reappeared on the scene with Mrs. Stratford's glass of milk. "Celebrate," she repeated. "Why, Miss Martine, you haven't forgotten what day to-morrow is?"

Martine sat upright in the hammock. "I really and truly had, but now you mention it it's the great and glorious Fourth, and what of that?" she concluded, waving her hand dramatically.

"Oh, Miss Martine, it wouldn't be right to pass it by unnoticed. Why at the North End we used to sit up all the night before, and the streets were as full of noise as if a war was going on."

"We couldn't celebrate in exactly that way," responded Martine smiling. "I am almost sure that I won't sit up to-night, and as to fire-crackers, what's the good, unless there's a boy in the house?"

Again the sober expression returned to Martine's face, as this mention of the Fourth brought vividly to mind the many celebrations in which she and Lucian had taken a lively interest. Where was Lucian now? Would the whole family ever be together again?

She came to herself with Angelina's high-pitched voice still ringing in her ears.

"So I felt quite sure that you wouldn't object as the ten weeks is more than past, and as I've paid all that up, why, I made sure you wouldn't mind my spending just a little for fireworks. But I'd like you to look in your little book first."

"I know it's all settled, Angelina, but you can bring me that little red book from the drawer in my writing-table."

While Angelina was in the house, Martine explained to her mother what she had meant by "paying up."

"It is that money Lucian paid for the hall. He told her to give it back to me. So she has been paying a dollar and a half a week. It is Lucian's money, though he wished me to keep it, and I agreed not to let Angelina know that it was he who helped her."

"It is to Angelina's credit that she has paid so promptly."

"It really is, mamma, and I think it has been rather a good thing as it has kept her from spending all her money foolishly. Of course, the hall itself was a foolish expense, yet these last few weeks she has been able to waste only part of her money, but now—"

At this moment Angelina appeared with the little red book, and Martine, quickly turning to the pages with her account, saw to Angelina's satisfaction as well as her own, that the indebtedness for the hall had been cancelled.

"There," cried Angelina, folding up the receipt that Martine with business-like exactness gave her. "I am relieved. Now I can celebrate all I want to, for fire-crackers cost a lot."

"Please don't waste your money on fireworks."

"Really, Angelina, you must not," added Martine.

But Angelina, making no reply either to Mrs. Stratford or Martine—unless a nod and three shakes of the head and a broad smile could be called a reply, flew down the little slope toward the road.

The morning of the Fourth was so quiet that Martine might have forgotten the great and glorious holiday but for Angelina. Before the breakfast dishes were washed, the latter was outside striking torpedoes against the stone that formed the kitchen doorstep.

When Mrs. Stratford went with her books to her retreat under the trees in the garden, she found two small flags standing in the vase that was usually filled with flowers.

When once her mind was turned toward the Fourth, Martine began to recall Independence Days of the past. What fun she and Lucian used to have! Why, they often had been up before sunrise to play with their fire-crackers and torpedoes. Then at night—

"I wonder," mused Martine, "if any other children ever had half the sport we had. Set pieces, and fire balloons, as well as rockets; how indulgent father always was. No wonder I feel blue to-day, and expect too much—when it isn't likely that in this town a single person is thinking about us."

The day, as befitted the holiday, proved hot, and Martine, swinging languidly in the hammock, at length admitted to herself that she was glad that she had no troublesome social engagement to keep, and she maintained this opinion even in face of Angelina's report, after a walk to the village, that there seemed to be a great deal going on.

To oblige Angelina, dinner instead of tea was served at five, and it proved a great success.

"I would like to have served red white and blue ice-cream, but I didn't know how to make it blue, so it's red and white," apologized Angelina.

"I might have supplied the blue this morning," said Martine. "It's too late now." But no one understood her feeble attempt at a pun.

"It seems worse," said Angelina, as they gathered up the dishes, "to leave dinner things to be washed until morning, but if your mother don't mind—"

"I am sure that I don't," said Martine, "and as for mother—why, of course she won't care."

"Well, I have some very important business to attend to—if you'll excuse me."

Upon this Angelina disappeared, and in the pleasant twilight Martine went outside with her mother to the little retreat in the garden.

"I half wish," said Mrs. Stratford, "that we had had a few fireworks. Even if we are shut off from the world, we ought not to forget the Fourth. I didn't suppose there would be much celebrating down here, but see!"

Looking where her mother pointed, Martine saw a great fire balloon soaring slowly into the air. They watched it until it disappeared and as the twilight deepened, they counted many rockets and Roman candles going up in various directions.

Before Martine could decide whether it would be wise to recall the Fourth when Lucian almost put his eye out by blowing into a fire-cracker to see if it was still burning, Angelina appeared on the scene with a number of packages. These she deposited on the slope in front of the house with consequential air.

"Angelina," cried Mrs. Stratford.

"Yes'm," responded Angelina.

"Angelina," called Martine, and without waiting for a reply walked down to where the girl was undoing her packages.

"Then you really have fire-crackers here?"

"Yes, Miss Martine, and rockets, and Roman candles, and fire balloons, at least only one balloon. It didn't seem homelike not to have something doing on the Fourth, and now that I can spend my own money, there's no reason why I shouldn't celebrate."

Martine had no reply for this unanswerable argument, and in a second she, too, was busy helping.

"I might have bought some myself, if I had thought of it in time."

"That's it, if you'd thought of it in time. My, that's fine," and Angelina clapped her hands, as a rocket shot into the air falling in a shower of golden stars.

"I didn't know I could find pleasure in anything so simple," said Martine, returning to her mother's side.

"It only shows how limited our life here is," and Mrs. Stratford sank back in her chair with a sigh.

"Oh, fireworks amuse everybody," rejoined Martine, "but now I must run back to Angelina. The last, she says,—is finest of all—a fire balloon."

After two or three ineffectual efforts Martine and Angelina at last had the pleasure of sending off the balloon. But alas! Instead of pursuing its upward way, it was borne horizontally by a wandering breeze, and at last was lost to sight.

"I know," cried Angelina. "It has gone somewhere behind the buildings of that estate over the way. I must get it." And in a flash she had run toward the large house regarding whose occupants Martine had so often wondered.

"Our celebration is over, I suppose," said Martine to her mother, "but we might as well stay outside a little longer, and see! What magnificent rockets are going up from the estate across the way." A change of intonation carried out Martine's mimicry of Angelina's words.

"Yes, and there's a balloon that puts Angelina's to the blush," and mother and daughter watched the ball of fire dwindling in the upper air, until it was lost apparently among the stars.

It was some time before Angelina returned, breathless.

"Oh, did you see my balloon? Wasn't it magnificent? They said they were proud to help send it up from their estate, and they only wished they had had some of their own. You see it had got kind of twisted after you and I sent it, and went down sideways, right on the lawn in front of their house. They seemed the most elegant people, and I told them how lonely it was for you up here, and you used to things so very different. When I mentioned your names it seemed to me they'd heard of you before, and so I asked them to come to see you."

"Oh, how could you, Angelina, how could you!" cried Martine.

"There, there," said Mrs. Stratford, as she laid her hand on Martine's arm as they turned toward the house. "I have always told you you would spoil Angelina. It's useless to reprove her now, for she won't understand what you mean, but in future you can be more careful."

CHAPTER XIX

SIGHT-SEEING

"York is pretty dull for you, Martine," said Mrs. Stratford a morning or two after the Fourth. "I was hoping you would run across some one you knew here. Wasn't Elinor to write to some of her friends?"

"I thought so, mamma, but either she has forgotten, or they don't think it worth while to travel up to Red Knoll."

"Of course you have many things to interest you about the house, but still it's quiet for you here, Martine."

"It might be livelier," admitted Martine, "but there's a lot of sight-seeing I can do, while waiting for something to turn up. Amy and Priscilla have quite got me into the sight-seeing habit, and it would be a strange New England town that couldn't show something to a seeker for information."

Mrs. Stratford smiled at her daughter's way of putting things. "York really has some history, and the village, as I drove through it the other day, had a pleasant, old-time aspect, though nothing looked ancient enough to take one back even a hundred years."

"Oh, then you didn't notice the little gaol on the hill; labelled sixteen hundred and something, I've forgotten just what, but I believe it's as old as it claims to be, for it looks something like Noah's Ark. If Angelina will stay with you this afternoon, I will see what is to be seen there. They told me at the postoffice that the Historical Society has it in charge and that it's full of curiosities."

While she was speaking, Martine's face had brightened perceptibly, and her enthusiasm pleased her mother. Later in the day she set off, for Angelina, whose habit it was to take the afternoons for her own amusement, willingly accepted Martine's suggestion that she should stay with Mrs. Stratford.

"At any time when you wish it, Miss Martine, I'll be happy to oblige you," said Angelina, with an air better befitting a princess than a domestic employee, the most of whose time should have been at the disposal of her employer.

"I've never really gone to jail before," cried Martine gayly, as she bade her mother good-bye, "but I'll try so to behave myself that I'll have nothing but good to report when I come back."

For a moment or two, before she entered the gaol, Martine surveyed it from the road below. Her comparison of the little building to Noah's Ark really suited it very well.

"I can't say that it's exactly my idea of a prison," she thought, "although those brick walls may be thick enough to balance the wooden ends; and even if a prisoner found it easy to jump from the upper windows to the ground, I dare say that some of the bolts and bars were strong enough to hold dangerous persons."

Once inside the little building, Martine almost forgot that it was a prison, as she walked about gazing at all kinds of odd things that have been brought together to connect the present with the past. Old china, old pictures, autographs, furniture, fans, and other articles of personal adornment, spoke eloquently of bygone days; so eloquently that Martine shortly realized that a feeling of sadness was taking possession of her. She began to picture the people to whom these things had belonged, to wonder who they were, how long they had lived, and why their homes had been broken up.

"For no one with a home," she said to herself, "would ever part with things of this kind." She looked into the old dungeon, the walls of which were eighteen or twenty inches thick, and turned away hastily when another visitor asked her if she wouldn't like to go farther inside. Then she went to the attendant seated at a table in the front room.

"How old is this building?" she asked, rather to make conversation than because she really cared to know.

"It was built in 1653," was the polite answer, "and is said to be the oldest public building in the United States; there are probably some churches and houses still standing that are a little older, but no building used for more than two hundred years continuously for public purposes. It was built by the Massachusetts people when they took possession of this part of the country in the time of Cromwell."

"Indeed!" Martine was not exactly eager for information, but to hear a little more history would help pass the time.

"Of course you know," continued the other, "that York was founded under a grant to Sir Ferdinand Gorges, and it was always strongly Royalist; it's the oldest incorporated city in the United States, and although its mayor and aldermen and other high officials existed chiefly on paper and the place was only a small village even into the eighteenth century, still we are all very proud of our history."

At this moment a voice at Martine's elbow cried, "Bless my soul," in tones that were strangely familiar, and turning about she met the surprised gaze of Mr. Gamut whom she had last seen at the exercises around the Harvard statue on Class Day.

"So it really is you, Miss Martine," said the Mr. Gamut, holding out his hand. "I had no idea that you were in this part of the world."

"We have a little cottage here this summer," responded Martine.

"Are you all together again? Surely your father—"

"Oh, no, my father isn't here; we've had only one letter since I saw you, and that wasn't encouraging."

Against her will, tears came to Martine's eyes.

"There, there, remember what I told you; things are bound to come out all right."

"Oh, I hope so. Mother says that if things were worse we should probably have had a cable."

"That's the way to look at it. Come, walk around with me for a little while. I suppose you know all about these things. My niece wouldn't come with me. She doesn't care for history. A great place this New England! They seem to have saved all their old odds and ends and have a story to fit everything."

"But York is really old and historic," protested Martine, proud of her recently acquired information. "The first settlers here were Royalists and held high positions."

"On paper," said Mr. Gamut with a laugh. "Oh, yes, I know about Sir Ferdinand Gorges and his remarkable charter. Here are some of the coats of arms of the first settlers," exclaimed Mr. Gamut. "Do you suppose they wore them tied around their necks when they first came out?"

"Not exactly," responded Martine, detecting Mr. Gamut's scepticism.

"Well, I'm only a plain western man," continued the latter, "and I rather think that coats of arms and things of that kind didn't trouble the first settlers in spite of all this foolery," and he pointed to the colors blazoned on the shield and scrolls on the walls.

"They're pretty to look at," apologized Martine.

"Oh, yes, and I suppose people of a certain name have an uncertain right to claim these heraldic ornaments, but for my own part, I prefer something more substantial. Things like this appeal to me more," and he led Martine to a little cradle in which Sir William Pepperell slept in his babyhood. "Or even this," and he pointed out a small table at which Handkerchief Moody used to eat by himself.

"Who in the world was 'Handkerchief Moody'?"

"His story is one of the few York tales that I can tell," replied Mr. Gamut, smiling. "And you ought to know it too, young lady, because Hawthorne, in his way, has immortalized it. This Moody was the son of one of the ministers of the old church; he was intended for the law, but having accidentally killed a friend while out hunting, his father persuaded him to enter the ministry. Remorse, however, so preyed on him that he spent his life in comparative solitude, and whenever he went in public, it is said, he covered his face with a handkerchief; different reasons have been given for his strange behavior, and it may be that he was always mildly insane. At least, there must be some truth in the stories told about him."

Martine, impressed by this curious story, was silent for a few minutes.

"There's one thing," she said, "that I have learned about the old people of York; they must have set what Angelina would call a very handsome table. I've seldom seen in one place so many fine old cups and saucers and drinking glasses and decanters."

"These things don't fit exactly our theories about New England plain living and high thinking. I tell you what, object lessons often teach us much more than books. But now," and Mr. Gamut looked at his watch, "I'm sorry to see that I must hurry back to the house; I am visiting a cousin for a few days and if you'll tell me where your cottage is, I shall have a great deal of pleasure in calling on you and your mother."

As accurately as she could, Martine described the location of Red Knoll, and as suddenly as he had appeared on the scene, Mr. Gamut disappeared. After he had gone, Martine mounted the steep stairs to the second story of the gaol where she examined at her leisure the hand-made quilts and quaint furnishings of an old-time bedroom, and looked with interest at the picturesque costumes giving a somewhat ghostly effect to a number of dummy figures in one of the attics. She saw the cell, or rather the room, where gentlemen prisoners were confined, and going downstairs, took a final survey of the old kitchen, well equipped with cooking utensils of Colonial days.

Her visit to the gaol had diverted her, but as she walked homeward over the dusty road, the old feeling of loneliness returned. Never before had she realized that she was dependent on young companionship; yet never before had she been so cut off from her own special friends.

Mrs. Stratford was pleased to hear that Mr. Gamut intended to visit Red Knoll.

"He probably," she said, "has friends at York, of whom we shall be likely to see something; he and your father were never intimate, but always good friends. I shall be glad to see him and I hope his niece will come with him, for there is no reason why we should live in utter seclusion."

Two or three days passed away and then a week, and still Mr. Gamut had not presented himself. Meanwhile a letter had arrived from Lucian.

"Father is still in a rather critical condition; he is not able to attend to business, though they say he is much better than before I came; it will be impossible to tell for some time how things really stand or when we can come home."

"I call that very encouraging," cried Martine, reading the letter aloud for the second time. "I'm so glad that Lucian went out there."

"He has certainly taken hold very well," responded Mrs. Stratford, "although I cannot agree with you that the letter is very encouraging."

"But it might have been so much worse," murmured Martine, turning away that her mother might not discern any lack of cheerfulness in her face. For although the letter might have been worse, Martine realized that after all it did not promise a great deal for the future. Other letters came now to Red Knoll. Priscilla wrote affectionately. She knew, she wrote, it was probably warmer at Plymouth than at York and yet, if only it could have been arranged, she believed that Martine and her mother might have enjoyed the South Shore better even than the North.

"The children talk of you constantly; no one ever made a deeper impression; so I have promised them that Thanksgiving, if not before, you will come again to visit us. Mr. Stacy asks for you whenever he sees me, and that, you know, is fairly often. He says that York is historic in its way, and he hopes that you will find a lot to interest you there, so that you can tell him all about it when you see him. He evidently thinks that York history isn't half as important as our Plymouth history, and of course he's right, because this was the earlier settlement; still if there's anything worth knowing about the place, I am sure you will find it out. For even though you made so much fun of Acadian history last summer, in the end you really knew more about it than any of the rest of us. That was because there was so much more to know about the Acadians than the English, and you may recall I tried not to remember the Acadian history that Amy talked so much about."

"Martine," said Mrs. Stratford, "I hope that Priscilla will visit you; she is the kind of girl to be quite comfortable in that little room next yours; there are some people we wouldn't care to put there."

"Oh, Priscilla would just love it, but she wrote me a while ago that she couldn't possibly be spared, at least that she oughtn't to wish to be spared; and when Priscilla says 'ought not' she generally means 'will not.'"

A day later Martine had her first letter from Amy, who was enjoying her first trip abroad; she and her mother had gone directly from Liverpool to North Wales, where Mrs. Redmond was anxious to spend a week or two sketching in the neighborhood of Snowdon.

"She was here years ago, before her marriage," wrote Amy, "and so this is a kind of sentimental journey for her; she thinks that I have made a sacrifice in postponing our visit to London; but indeed, I find it very attractive here, and perhaps it is just as well to rest for a little while before we set out on a regular sight-seeing tour."

"Martine," said Mrs. Stratford, as her daughter replaced Amy's letter in its envelope, "you haven't yet gone down to the beach?"

"No, mamma, I haven't really felt like going."

"Well, I *do* feel like going to-day," said Mrs. Stratford. "Let us take the next car and ride down as near as we can; people bathe about twelve and we shall be in season to see all that is going on."

"Very well, mamma;" Martine's tone implied resignation to something that she did not wholly approve. In a few moments mother and daughter were well on their way to the beach. After they were once fairly started Martine's spirits revived. She and her mother had never passed through the village together and Martine pointed out the gaol and the old white church with its high spire, fronting a little green; and the old churchyard across the road, whose inscriptions she said she would not try to decipher until she could have Priscilla with her. It was a warm morning, but the motion of the car produced a refreshing breeze, and when at last they left it to walk toward the beach, both mother and daughter were in good spirits. At the edge of the sands a gay sight met them. Two large pavilions, roofed over, but open at the sides, were filled with gayly dressed people; the tide was fairly low, and on the sand in front half-grown boys and girls were romping in their bathing-suits, and nurse-maids with little children were disporting themselves in large numbers. From the bath houses behind the pavilions, a long plank extended to the water. Here bathers were coming and going, some dripping from their plunge, others ready to go in. Martine and her mother seated themselves on the first empty seat they came to at the edge of the pavilion. Martine, impressed by the gay hats, fluttering, colored veils, and thin muslin gowns, seen on every side, glanced involuntarily at her own plain linen suit.

Mrs. Stratford, understanding her glance, spoke encouragingly. "You look very well, Martine; your dress is entirely suitable for the morning. Some of these other costumes are too elaborate."

"I had no idea it would be so gay," responded Martine; "evidently we are in York, but not of it."

Instantly she was sorry. But if Mrs. Stratford had heard her words, she made no comment. Mother and daughter sat for some time idly watching the crowd. Once or twice they recognized people they had known in Chicago, not intimate friends, but persons with whom they had a speaking acquaintance.

"There's Mrs. Brownville," exclaimed Mrs. Stratford, as an elderly woman with an elaborate hat walked down on the sands. "I will drop a line to her; probably Carlotta is here too, and they will be glad to see you."

"No, no, mamma," exclaimed Martine; "I never did like them, except at a distance, and I should hate to have them get in the habit of running to see us."

"They might not take the trouble to come at all; we are out of the way," rejoined her mother.

Martine made no further reply; her attention was fixed on a girl who was walking up from the sands past the end of the pavilion. She seemed to be looking directly at Martine, and the latter rose from her seat as if to speak to the other; but before she could make her way outside, this girl had passed on without a sign of recognition.

"That's a nice looking girl," said Mrs. Stratford.

"Yes," responded Martine. "That was Peggy Pratt."

"Peggy Pratt; isn't she a friend of yours?"

"A school friend," responded Martine bitterly. "But evidently she doesn't wish to recognize me here. I suppose she thinks that I'll be troublesome in some way."

"Perhaps she didn't really see you."

"She couldn't help it," replied Martine.

That very day an invitation from Edith Blair came to Martine. "Mother and I," wrote Edith, from the North Shore, "would both be delighted to have a visit from you, a fortnight at least, a month if you can stay as long. Your mother, we hear, is much better, and she surely does not need you all the time."

For a moment Martine was strongly tempted to show the letter to her mother, who, she knew, would certainly urge her to accept the invitation. It is true that Edith and her friends were some years older than Martine, but the latter knew that they would do their best to give her a good time. She would have a fine riding-horse, there would be trips of all kinds up and down the shore, and delightful afternoons at the Essex Country Club, pleasant evenings on the Blairs' piazza after dinners with bright and agreeable people. Under these circumstances, she could put up for a time with the patronizing manners of her mother's cousin, Mrs. Blair; for Edith was always sweet and agreeable, if a little slow. Really, it would be sensible to spend two weeks in this way. She could make herself more entertaining to her mother on her return. But here Martine drew herself up. Duty for the time being presented only one face; her place, for the present, was at Red Knoll; so without mentioning the invitation, she merely gave her mother the personal messages contained in Edith's letter.

CHAPTER XX

THE ISLES OF SHOALS

It never rains but it pours. A day or two after their visit to the bathing beach, Martine and her mother were seated in their nook under the trees. It was early afternoon, and, as usual, Angelina was off for a stroll.

"Why, there are some visitors," exclaimed Mrs. Stratford, and Martine looked up to see two ladies approaching the front door. Martine wouldn't have been a girl, if she hadn't glanced down involuntarily at her dress.

"You look very well," said her mother, understanding her glance.

"Well, I hate to have to play the part of maid," said Martine, "but it can't be helped now." So, laying down the book from which she had been reading aloud, she went over toward the newcomers.

"I am Mrs. Ethridge, and this is my daughter, Clare. We are really your nearest neighbors," and she pointed to the large house across the road, about which Martine had often wondered. "A young girl, your assistant, I think she calls herself, came over to our house on the evening of the Fourth. Her fire balloon had gone astray." And Mrs. Ethridge smiled at the recollection. "She told us you were lonely, but we could not quite understand. Surely you are Martine Stratford, of whom we have heard so much from Elinor Naylor; you must have many friends at York; there are so many Philadelphians and Chicagoans here. Elinor mentioned you in the letter we had a day or two ago, and we recognized your name as the one your assistant had given us. In any case we

ought to have called earlier, but we have had a house full of visitors, and—"

"No apologies are necessary," responded Martine, with dignity. "We expected to be quiet this summer, although my mother will be most happy to see you." And leading them to Mrs. Stratford's corner, introductions were quickly made. Hardly had they seated themselves when Clare Ethridge exclaimed, "Why, there's Peggy Pratt," and Martine looking up, recognized the girl who was hurrying across the lawn, and a second later, Peggy was shaking hands with Martine most effusively.

"What a queer girl you are, Martine Stratford; why didn't you let me know you were in York? Elinor Naylor wrote that you were coming, and I certainly thought you'd tell me where you were. Of course, I've asked everybody, but no one had seen you or heard a thing about you. I couldn't imagine your being hidden in a corner like this; so I supposed you hadn't yet arrived. I'm sure I didn't know what to do," and she looked around with an air of injured innocence, as if some one had been unjustly blaming her.

"You might have inquired at the postoffice," said Mrs. Ethridge smiling, "you can generally get information about people there."

"Oh, I dare say; but I just concluded she wasn't here."

"But now that I *am* here and you know that I am here," responded Martine gayly, "everything is as it should be." She did not mention the little incident at the beach, for she saw that her judgment of Peggy then had been wrong, and that the eyes which had seemed to see her had really been looking at something else.

While Mrs. Ethridge and Mrs. Stratford talked by themselves, Peggy's tongue flew on reciting the attractions of York. Trips up the river, tea at the Country Club, yachting, trolley and auto excursions apparently filled her days; "really I never have a minute to myself," she said, "and tomorrow we are going to have a fish dinner at the Shoals, the whole crowd of us. We've got a special car to take us over to Portsmouth, and then we go by the steamboat; we thought it would be more fun than simply to sail over. There's a seat for you, Martine; I know your mother will let you go, and of course we shall see you too, Clare."

"Yes," said Clare, "I had already promised."

"Then it's all settled," cried Peggy; "you can bring Martine to the car, Clare. Now I must hurry on, for I have an engagement up at the Club, and I'm so glad to have seen you, Martine. Good-bye, Mrs. Stratford; good-bye, Mrs. Ethridge." And almost before they could say "good-bye" themselves, Peggy was out of sight.

"I wonder that girl doesn't wear herself out; she is always flying from one thing to another," said Mrs. Ethridge.

"It's hard for a girl to settle down in the summer," added Clare, "especially in a place where there is so much going on as there is here."

"Habit is everything," and Mrs. Stratford glanced toward Martine, reflecting that she, at least, had been able to adapt herself the past few months to a quiet life.

The prospect of the excursion to the Shoals was very agreeable to Martine, especially as she was to have the companionship of Clare. The latter was a quiet, dignified girl, possibly a little older than Martine and reminding her a little of Amy.

Promptly at the appointed hour Martine met Clare at the turn of the road; they had not long to wait before the special car came in sight. As it stopped for them, there was a loud clapping of hands and shouts of welcome from those within. Martine, cut off for what had seemed so long a time from young people of her own age, was quite bewildered at this. Two of the boys who had stepped down to assist her and Clare on board, proved to be old acquaintances, Herbert Brownville and Atherton Grey; and when once they were fairly off her spirits had risen rapidly. The car sped on, up hill and down dale, past the golf club, through the woods, over bright, green meadows, along tressles surrounded by marshes.

"To think," exclaimed Martine, "these cars almost pass our house and this is my first trip on them. Angelina went over to Portsmouth one day and was so enthusiastic she almost persuaded me to make a trip with her; but she is so easily pleased that I didn't quite believe all she said; but now I believe it and more too."

After a time their road led them past quaint old houses and pleasant summer cottages. There were occasional glimpses of water on one side, and once in the distance, across the water, rose the massive outlines of a hotel.

"This is Kittery," exclaimed Clare. "We are almost on the boundaries of Maine and New Hampshire; that water is the mouth of the Piscataqua; you must go down on the shore some time; artists love it."

"I should like to sketch one of these tree-shaded old houses myself," replied Martine; "that one over there looks as if it could tell a story if it would."

"Oh, that's one of the William Pepperell houses; I never could remember which was his special house and which his daughters lived in, but you know he set out for Louisburg from Kittery, and

two or three of these houses have hardly been changed since his day."

"Dear me!" sighed Martine, "have I got to follow the French and Indian war in this corner of the country? I had so much of it last summer in Acadia that I'd like something a little different now."

"Acadia," exclaimed Peggy, overhearing Martine. "How sick I grew of that word last summer. Some people were with us in Nova Scotia, went about with guide books and histories and acted as if they were crazy; but I'm happy to say that I sailed away from Yarmouth without knowing a thing more than before I travelled."

"I believe you," commented Clare. "But if I were you, I wouldn't boast. Some of us *do* care for history."

"Unfortunately they do; there's my aunt; when she heard we were coming to the Shoals to-day, she gave me a lot of interesting information that went in one ear and out the other; for I told her that I was simply off for a good time and I never meant to learn anything if I could help it outside of school."

Several of the party applauded Peggy's sentiments, but Martine could not help thinking that a speech of this kind from a girl of Peggy's age was rather shallow; and she admitted to herself that there was a time, not so very long ago, when she too would not only have expressed herself in the same way, but would have felt just exactly as Peggy professed to feel.

Soon after passing the Navy Yard, the car reached the shore of the Piscataqua, where they crossed the ferry to Portsmouth. Soon they were on the little steamboat, bound for the famous Isles of Shoals.

"There's one thing that I do remember," said Peggy. "There are nine of these islands and they are nine miles out at sea, and they are partly in Maine and partly in New Hampshire; but please don't ask me another word, Martine Stratford, for I can see by your expression that you're thirsting for information."

Martine reddened at Peggy's words, because Herbert Brownville, who was standing beside her, was known to have a special dislike for bookish girls. Martine was ashamed of herself for giving even a thought to Herbert's opinion, and in consequence, she reddened more deeply when Herbert asked in surprise, "Have you really come out only for information, Miss Martine, as Peggy told me on the car?"

This question decided Martine; she did not care for Herbert's opinion; she would show him so plainly, and so she decided to mystify him.

"Yes," she replied politely. "You know I have travelled a great deal, and some time I intend to write a book describing my travels. So wherever I go, it is necessary for me to get all the facts I can. Somehow I forgot to bring my notebook to-day, but perhaps you can lend me a pencil and paper."

Poor Herbert looked at Martine in surprise. Was this the girl who was famous for her wit, who was one of the best dancers and riders in their set two or three years ago? How sad that she should have changed so; but it was all on account of Boston; no girl could live in Boston a year without becoming affected. But what a pity that a pretty girl like Martine should turn into a bookworm! Nevertheless, Herbert handed Martine the desired pencil and paper, and he sat beside her while she made a great show of writing down the few facts that she had gathered from the volatile Peggy.

"I'm so glad," continued Martine, "that you are willing to help me; and when we reach the islands I'm going to ask you to find some one who will tell me all about them."

"There can't be much to tell," replied poor Herbert; "you know they are small and rugged and very queer. I've been there many a time on a yacht and I'm perfectly sure from what I've seen that they haven't any history."

"In such matters," responded Martine solemnly, as if she were preaching a sermon, "you cannot be too positive. No corner of the world is so obscure as to be without history."

Again Herbert looked at her in amazement. Her head was turned from him and he did not see the mischievous expression lurking in her brown eyes. He liked Martine, and since there seemed to be no help for it, it would be only proper in him to promise what she asked.

"Certainly," he replied, "I dare say we can find out something for your book; they have a very intelligent clerk at the hotel, and I know a man in a cottage on Smutty Nose who's lived there a long time, and what he can't tell probably would not be worth knowing."

Thus Herbert constituted himself Martine's guide for the day, and kept beside her and Clare until the boat touched Appledore. True to his promise, when they had finished dinner, he got a row-boat and took them over to Smutty Nose, where the old Captain proved very talkative. He explained that the name of the islands did not come from their structure, but from the quantities of fish found in the waters near the "schooling" or "shoaling" of fish. He told them that the Shoals had probably been visited by Captain John Smith, and Christopher Leavitt in 1623 had written something about them.



"The old captain proved very talkative."

"Of course the first settlers," said the old man, "were fishermen, and they were always a pretty rough lot, though the Reverend John Brock did something to improve them. There are all kinds of stories going about pirates and wrecks and strange happenings in the old times."

"I suppose Captain Kidd buried some of his treasure here," said Herbert sarcastically.

"That he did, at least they say so," responded Captain Dickerson; "and if you and the young ladies are real enterprising, you might dig a while, for it's never been found, and you've as good a chance as any one."

"Thanks," said Herbert, rather taken aback by finding that his chance arrow had hit the mark, "but we've other things to do to-day. Sometime, perhaps, we'll return."

"Well," said the old man, "there's a chance that other treasure might do you just as well. Nigh a hundred years ago, a Spanish ship went to pieces on the islands, and there were other wrecks that perhaps cast treasure on the sands."

"Oh, I remember," exclaimed Clare, "a poem that I learned at school, 'The Wreck of the Pocahontas.' Celia Thaxter wrote it. It begins something like this:—

"I lit the lamps in the lighthouse tower,
For the sun dropped down and the day was dead;
They shone like a glorious clustered flower,
Ten golden and five red."

"Ah, Mrs. Thaxter," said Capt. Dickerson, "there isn't much on the islands that she hasn't put into poetry. But you'll hear all about her over at Appledore, and I won't spoil your fun by trying to tell what other people can tell better."

"Haven't you some stories of your own?"

"There won't be time for a long story," interposed Herbert, looking at his watch. "We must be prompt for dinner."

"Just one," pleaded Martine, smiling at Capt. Dickerson.

"Most of the stories of these parts belong to Kittery and Portsmouth," rejoined Capt. Dickerson. "You'll have to fish them up there. The only one I can think of you mightn't like—except it will interest you if you love dogs—as most young ladies do."

"Well, tell us, please."

"It's about a murder that took place on Smutty Nose once when I was off on a cruise. Two helpless women in a little cottage were killed by a wretch who thought there was money saved in

the house. A third woman with a small dog in her arms escaped and hid here among the rocks. She was terribly scared that the little creature would bark and betray her."

"Did it?"

"Well, she crouched in the darkness, while she heard the murderer pass close by, calling and threatening. But the dog seemed to understand, and kept perfectly quiet until daylight. The woman had heard the murderer rowing away at dawn, and when people on Appledore were stirring they saw her making frantic signs, and they came over and got her and the dog."

"Was the murderer ever caught?" asked Herbert.

"Yes—and he paid the penalty. But I don't know how long the dog lived, young ladies, for I see that's what you'd like to hear," added Capt. Dickerson, turning to the girls.

"I wish I could tell you more," he continued, after a pause. "I dare say you know the Shoals were once called 'Smith's Eyelands,' and there's a monument to Capt. Smith on Star. You've heard about Gorges, I suppose; well, they were in Gorges and Mason's grant, and when Massachusetts people stepped into Maine, the most northerly went to Maine, and the others to New Hampshire."

"Any other great men here, besides Smith?" asked Herbert.

"Not many—besides myself," said Capt. Dickerson, smiling, "except, perhaps, Sir Wm. Pepperell. At least his father was one of the early settlers of the Shoals, and he was born here. But you'll hear about him at Kittery. Then, as I said before, Appledore's full of Celia Thaxter, and her father was queer enough to be called a great man. He had been a politician, and when he got out of sorts with his party he quit the mainland, and brought his boys to White Island, where he was lighthouse keeper. They say the boys were fourteen or fifteen before they ever went ashore, and then they were frightened by the first horse they saw."

"Thank you, Capt. Dickerson. I knew you'd have something interesting to tell," and Herbert moved away impatiently. "I'm coming over some day next week to go fishing with you."

"Yes, I shall be expecting you. I could show you a good many things, young ladies, if you'd spend the day, but it is hard to understand even Smutty Nose alone in an hour."

"Oh, but we've enjoyed coming here," replied Martine, and she and Clare shook hands cordially with Captain Dickerson as they said good-bye.

After dinner at Appledore, all sat for a half-hour on the hotel piazza, which was so near the water that it seemed in many ways like the deck of a ship. Miss Byng and Mrs. Trotter, who had taken charge of the party from York Harbor (the girls declined to call them chaperones) met several acquaintances among the hotel guests. Miss Byng, in fact, had spent a summer at Appledore, and she exchanged reminiscences with one of her friends about Celia Thaxter, the "Queen of Appledore."

"She was certainly a wonderful woman," said Miss Byng, as Clare and Martine drew their chairs within her circle. "Sometimes in the early morning when I looked out of my window, I would see her working in her garden. She was often up at four o'clock, and she made the most wonderful flowers grow from this rocky soil."

"Oh, flowers were to her as individual as human beings," added Mrs. Trotter. "She watched over them lovingly while they were in the garden, and when she brought them into the house they were treated sumptuously. Each flower was placed in a vase by itself, and every spot that could hold them had its vases, silver, glass, or china, each with its single blossom."

"What a strange idea!" cried Clare.

"The effect was beautiful, the brilliant flowers, the picture-covered walls—and the queenly mistress of the house with snow-white hair, in her clinging grey gown—the favorite costume of her latter years."

"Appledore is not the same now," and Mrs. Trotter sighed, "do you recall Mrs. Thaxter's lines—

"The barren island dreams in flowers, while blow
The south winds, drawing haze on sea and land,
Yet the great heart of ocean, throbbing slow
Makes the pale flowers vibrate where they stand."

"Oh dear!" whispered Martine to Clare, "I feel as if I were at a funeral. Let's find what Peggy has been doing."

"But I'd like to have known Mrs. Thaxter, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, though a person who had lived most of her life on an island of four hundred acres must have been different from the rest of the world."

"She *did* write poetry," replied Clare.

"Yes, that made her different from most of us. But here come Peggy and the rest. I wonder where they've been."

Peggy and her party explained that they had been watching the surf on the farther side of the island.

"Yes," exclaimed Peggy, "it was fine, I can tell you, and the view, why, we could see miles and miles; if we had had a glass, I believe we could have heard people talking at York." Whereat, in the fashion of young people, all laughed as heartily as if Peggy had said something really funny. While they stood there, Herbert was looking nervously at his watch.

"Excuse me, but I really think—"

Carlotta, after the manner of sisters, laughed derisively.

"Listen! I believe he wishes to make an original remark." Herbert was farther off than the others and had not heard just what Carlotta said.

"If we are not careful," he said again, looking at his watch, "we shall miss the boat."

"There," said Carlotta, "I told you that he was going to make an original remark."

This time Herbert heard her words, and when all laughed except Martine, he reddened deeply.

"It's better to be early than late," remarked Martine consolingly; "I've often missed a boat or a train just by thinking I had plenty of time."

Herbert turned gratefully towards Martine and walked back with her to the hotel. As a matter of fact they had half an hour to spare and were able to say good-bye to all their acquaintances without undue haste. The return trip was unexciting, and they reached Portsmouth in good spirits just in season to get the Ferry for Kittery.

As they came to their special car, "Here's your admirer," said Peggy mischievously to Martine.

"What do you mean?" asked Martine.

"Why, the conductor; didn't you notice him coming over? Carlotta did."

"Yes," added Carlotta, "I certainly thought he was going to speak to you."

"Nonsense!" said Martine.

"Do you know him?" whispered Peggy mischievously, as the car speeded along the Kittery shore.

"I haven't even looked at him," replied Martine indignantly. "Herbert has had charge of the fares, and as the conductor stands on the back platform, and as I have no eyes in the back of my head, I couldn't recognize him even if he were an old friend."

Later, however, as the young man moved along and stood for a while beside the motorman, Martine had a chance to see him, though it was only a back view.

"Carlotta," she said, "that conductor does remind me of some one. I wonder if it's any one we know at home? Do you see a resemblance? A resemblance to any one you know?"

"No," said Carlotta, "really I do not." And so the matter dropped.

It was nearly dusk when Martine and Clare left the car at the turn of the road.

"Step carefully," said the conductor, holding out his hands to help the two. Martine started, turned and looked toward the car, but it was already on its way down the hill.

"I wonder,"—but she did not complete the sentence, though all that evening she continued to ponder over the strange resemblance.

CHAPTER XXI

VARIETY

After the Shoals excursion Martine's life was less placid than before. Peggy, as if to make amends for her apparent neglect, tried to draw her into some of the gayer doings of the younger set.

"It's very kind of Peggy, but I can't make her understand that I didn't come here wholly for fun; or rather that I find fun in things that she would consider quiet. Clare feels as I do, and we try to make Peggy see that we enjoy a morning under the trees, or a walk in the meadow, quite as well as a game of golf with tea at the Club."

"Golf is good exercise, and you used to like it."

"I know it, but I don't need it in midsummer, and besides—"

Martine did not explain that she did not care to engage in golf, or in anything that would take her away too much from Red Knoll. "Besides," she said to herself, "I won't accept invitations that I can't return, and we are not in the mood for entertaining this summer, even if we had money to waste."

Angelina thought it strange that Mrs. Stratford and Martine preferred the quiet life, and by gentle hints tried to impress on them that they were losing a great deal by declining some of the invitations that came to them. Mrs. Brownville, among others, had called. A day or two after the Shoals excursion, Mrs. Brownville and Carlotta drove up to Red Knoll. Martine at the moment was carrying on an argument with the butcher, who had drawn his cart up nearer the front door than the back. Martine was balancing a chicken in one hand and holding a large cabbage in the other, and was gently arguing with the butcher regarding his prices.

It was somewhat disconcerting to have Mrs. Brownville and Carlotta, in elaborate gowns and flower-laden hats, descend upon her while she was wearing an apron over her gingham skirt. There was no escape for Martine, and before she could decide what to do with the chicken or the cabbage, Mrs. Brownville had advanced toward her with outstretched hand. At this moment, Angelina fortunately appeared on the scene to relieve Martine of her burdens, and Mrs. Brownville politely ignored what she had seen. Martine, however, after the first greetings, broke the ice by plunging into a humorous discussion of summer housekeeping.

"It's the funniest thing," she said, "that clothes and food are so much alike."

"Yes," said Mrs. Brownville, though her expression showed that she could not grasp Martine's meaning.

"Yes," repeated Martine; "in both cases we have to pay highest for the trimmings. When I order three pounds of beef-steak and only get a pound and a half, though I pay for three, the butcher says, 'It's all on account of the trimmings' and it's so with chickens, and lamb, and almost everything except eggs; though for eggs there are three grades of fresh eggs."

"Really?" said Mrs. Brownville, not knowing what else to say. She had a small sense of humor combined with a kind heart; that is, she was always willing to do a kindness when it came directly in her way to do it. She was not quite sure whether or not Martine was making a demand on her for sympathy. Before she could decide what to say, Carlotta interposed. She suspected that Martine was laughing at them both and she wished she could escape the special errand which had brought her. A moment later Martine had led the way into the little sitting-room where her mother received the guests; and soon Carlotta made her errand known.

"I am going to have a little dance at the Club on Saturday evening and I do hope you can come," she said to Martine.

"Yes," added Mrs. Brownville, "it's going to be the most elegant dance of the season, that is for the young people."

A shade of annoyance crossed Carlotta's face; she had wished to pretend it was to be a very simple affair, so that her guests would be the more impressed in the end by all the expense lavished on it.

"Oh, thank you very much," replied Martine, "but I'm not going out at all evenings at present."

"Herbert will be so disappointed."

At this speech of her mother's Carlotta felt an annoyance that she did not show. She did not wish Martine to know that her invitation was due only to Herbert's urging.

"I know it would be delightful," said Martine, "but really I am not dancing this summer."

Carlotta for the moment felt that she would do almost anything to get Martine to take back her refusal. It was irritating that a girl living in as humble a house as Red Knoll should show so little appreciation of an invitation that should have been accepted almost with gratitude. So she rose to her feet and rather abruptly said good-bye to Mrs. Stratford and Martine.

"I must hurry on," she explained, "as I have an engagement at the Club. Mamma, I will send the carriage back for you." And with another word or two of good-bye, Carlotta made a rather hasty departure. After her daughter had gone Mrs. Brownville talked on in her usual rather rambling fashion. She admired the wall papers and the furnishings of the little room.

"Really you've made the most of everything," she said in a manner savoring of patronage that irritated Martine, though she knew Mrs. Brownville did not mean to offend her.

A little later Herbert appeared on the scene.

"Oh, do change your mind," he urged; "I told Carlotta—"

"Then it was you who asked her to come? I thought so."

Again Herbert reddened.

"Well, you see you weren't on the list when the first invitations were sent out, and I was afraid you might be offended, only I thought you were too sensible, and so—"

"There, there," interposed Martine; "I am sensible, that is, I am not offended really, because Carlotta did not think of me in the first place."

"Then you will accept?"

"Oh, no, I am not going out this summer, at least to things of that kind."

"Then I won't go either," said Herbert sulkily; "I hate summer dances and I know a lot of fellows who will stay away too."

"Now, Herbert," said Martine emphatically, "don't be a goose. You ought to try to please Carlotta once in a while, and really, if I hear that you stay away from Carlotta's party, I won't be friends with you."

Whether or not Martine influenced him she never knew, but it was a fact that Herbert and his friends went in force to Carlotta's dance, which Martine heard was really a very successful affair.

For a week or two after this Martine herself felt rather left out of things. She had few friends in the Philadelphia group. Peggy, it is true, as if to make up for her early apparent neglect, did try on more than one occasion to get Martine to join some excursion.

But Martine was firm. She saw that she could not well accept one invitation and refuse another, and she decided that she could afford neither the time nor the money that these outings required.

Mrs. Stratford watched Martine with some concern. The change from her former self was almost too great. But when her mother remonstrated with her, Martine invariably replied that she was perfectly contented—that housekeeping that involved a constant oversight of Angelina afforded excitement enough.

"Besides," she added, "there is Clare; she is livelier than Priscilla, though almost as improving. To-morrow we are going down by Spouting Rock; she, to take photographs, I, to sketch, and she knows any number of picturesque places."

"Your plan sounds improving, if not exciting," responded Mrs. Stratford, smiling.

"We think it will be more fun than going off with a crowd. Instead of riding to Bald Head Cliff with Peggy and her crowd, Clare has asked me to go to Ogunquit on Saturday. We shall drive over, and she is going to ask you too. Her cousin, Mr. Carrol, has a studio there, and we are all invited to luncheon, so please say you will go, mamma."

"Why, yes, when I am really invited," replied Mrs. Stratford, smiling; and a few moments later, when Clare appeared with her message from Mrs. Ethridge, the drive was quickly arranged.

The day at Ogunquit was one of many pleasant, quiet days that Martine spent with Clare on the shore or up the river. Almost always Mrs. Stratford and Mrs. Ethridge went with them. In a short time Martine had become an expert paddler, and she was proud enough to have her mother entrust herself to her care. One afternoon, in two canoes, the four went three or four miles up the river to have tea in a little cove on the Bans. It did not detract from Martine's pleasure, when they passed the Country Club, to hear Peggy and Carlotta shout from the piazza:

"Don't go past."

"There's a landing here."

Or rather, if they did not hear clearly they judged that this was the meaning of the words that were accompanied with signals and gestures. But without heeding the sirens, Martine and Clare paddled on and their outing was a complete success. It cannot be said that they made their passage upstream without difficulties. It was near the turn of the tide, and part of the way the current was against them. But of two evils they had to choose the less, as Clare thought it wiser to return down the river with the current wholly in their favor.

"If the York were a real river, we wouldn't have to do so much planning, but you see it's only an arm of the sea, and in its whole seven miles from the harbor, the tide has to be closely reckoned with."

"Yes, I've heard weird tales of canoeists left high and dry on the shore because they had forgotten to calculate the rise and fall of the tide," added Martine.

"It's generally worse for the parents at home than for the stranded young people. I have known mothers half-distracted while waiting to hear from missing daughters," said Mrs. Ethridge.

"Then we were wise in coming with the girls," added Mrs. Stratford.

"As if we would have come without you. The whole fun to-day is showing you the river," responded Martine, who had been up with Clare before. "There," she continued, "I forgot to give you my one piece of information—that Sewall's Bridge near the Country Club is the oldest pier bridge in the United States, and was built by the same Major Sewall who built the first bridge between Cambridge and Boston."

"Unimportant, if true," and Mrs. Stratford smiled at Martine's earnestness. "I approve, my dear, of your zeal for history, but in New England people often make too much of unimportant trifling things."

"Bridges and houses."

"Yes, and Indians and wars and—"

"Then you won't appreciate this verse that Clare recited the other day:

"Hundreds were murdered in their beds

Without shame or remorse,
And soon the floors and roads were strewed
With many a bloody corse."

"Evidently the writer of those lines had a real tragedy in mind," replied Mrs. Stratford.

"Yes," interposed Clare, "it was the Indian massacre of 1792, when more than three hundred savages came into York on snow-shoes, and killed half the people of the place,—all in fact except those who had taken refuge in the old garrison house. The minister, Rev. Shubael Dummer was shot while standing at his door—and—"

"Tell her, Clare, about the little boy," said Martine.

"Oh, Jeremiah Moulton, the only person within the Indian's reach whom they spared. He was a fat little boy, and when he caught sight of the savages he waddled away as fast as his little legs would carry him. This so amused the Indians that they laughed and laughed and spared him. Though hardly more than a baby at the time the boy never forgot his fright, and years later he revenged himself on the Indians in what was known as the Harmon Massacre,—and many people have since blamed him for his cruelty."

"Probably they had never been chased by Indians," responded Martine. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

"We must go to the McIntire garrison house some day," continued Clare. "Though it wasn't the refuge during that particular massacre, the two houses were probably much alike, and this is one of the oldest buildings in the country—built in 1623."

"Clare," exclaimed Martine, "excuse my interrupting you, but you are tremendously like Amy when you are imparting information, though at other times I hardly notice the resemblance. I shall forget half you have told me, and I wonder how you happen to remember so much."

"If you should come here as many summers as I have come, you would unconsciously imbibe dates and scraps of information."

"But now," said Martine, "we are hungry for something more substantial than dates, and with your permission, Mrs. Ethridge, we'll open the basket."

The sandwiches prepared by Angelina's deft fingers, and the cakes and fruit brought by Clare made a supper fit for a king, as Martine phrased it, and the journey home with wind and tide in their favor brought to an end one of the pleasantest afternoons of the season.

A few days after the canoe trip Martine and Clare started out for a day at Newcastle, accompanied by Angelina. Mrs. Stratford was spending the day with Mrs. Ethridge, and Angelina was in a seventh heaven of delight as she walked along carrying the basket. Angelina had an especial interest in Clare dating from the night of the Fourth, for she considered that her fire-balloon and the tact with which she had rescued it from Mrs. Ethridge's grounds had led to the acquaintance between the Red Knoll household and the family across the road.

She did not know, since she was not a mind-reader, that Mrs. Ethridge would have called on Mrs. Stratford within a few days of the Fourth, even without her intervention. But as her own belief made her so happy, no one had pricked the bubble of Angelina's illusion.

While the girls were waiting for the car, Herbert came in sight.

"Off for the day, portfolio, camera, easel!" he exclaimed. "Then surely you will let me go with you."

"No," replied Martine firmly, "this isn't a picnic. We are just going off to work a little, and enjoy ourselves."

"I like that. As if I would interfere. Atherton will be along in a minute, and he would enjoy the excursion too."

"No," repeated Martine, with increasing firmness. "We have made our plans. We wish to go by ourselves."

Clare, who saw no good reason for Martine's attitude toward Herbert, yet thought it wiser not to interfere.

Herbert, who so seldom was out of temper, now seemed offended.

"Very well," he said abruptly, "I won't trouble you," and turning on his heel, he walked away.

"I can't help it," explained Martine in answer to Clare's look of wonder. "One boy, or two, for that matter, would be terribly in the way in a little trip like this. Here's the car, and I am glad enough to be off."

Now it happened that Carlotta and another girl who knew Martine went as far as Kittery on the same car. On their return to York they found Herbert on the links.

"You were on the same car with Martine; did she say where she was going with Grace?" he asked abruptly.

"She mentioned Newcastle," replied Carlotta. "They will cross on the ferry, and may row back across the river."

"How foolish girls are!" grumbled Herbert. "They think because they can paddle up York River that it's perfectly safe to row anywhere else. I hope they won't try it alone. There's a fearful current at the mouth of the Piscataqua."

"I don't see why you should care," responded Carlotta sharply. "Besides, Martine can generally take care of herself. Besides, I must tell you a funny thing. You know there was a young conductor on the special the day we went to the Shoals. Peggy says he watched Martine when she wasn't looking, and I know Martine asked me if he reminded me of any one I knew at home. Well, to-day he was on the regular car—and once when we waited at a turnout, Clare and Martine got off and stood by the side of the road, and in a minute he and she were talking as if they had always been acquainted. They actually stood there under the trees and talked, and Angelina stood there grinning like a Cheshire cat, the way she always does."

"Well, why not? Why shouldn't Martine talk to whom she pleases? Really, Carlotta, how silly you are!" and Herbert walked off with an expression of disdain for a foolish sister.

Now this is what had really happened. Martine and Clare had not been long on their way when the former exclaimed excitedly, "Do you remember, Clare, that boy I told you of, Balfour Airton, whom we met in Nova Scotia, who was so clever and knew everything about old Port Royal, whom I discovered to be a kind of cousin? Well, he's the conductor."

"What conductor?" asked Clare, who had not quite followed the course of Martine's thought.

"Why, our conductor on this car, and he was on the special the other day; I thought so then, but now I am quite sure. He hasn't given me a chance to speak to him, because I wasn't noticing him when you paid the fares, but as soon as I can I am going to recognize him."

A moment after this, the car reached the turnout where it had to wait for the car from Portsmouth, and then Martine had her opportunity. So Carlotta was right. Martine and Clare did spend a minute or two talking to the young conductor, who admitted that he had recognized Martine on the former occasion, though he had hesitated to reveal his identity to her.

"Your uniform was almost a disguise, though at the last moment I knew it was your voice; but of course I had no idea you were in this part of the world."

Balfour had no time to explain before the other car appeared in sight, but as he assisted the girls back to their seats Martine said cordially, "You must be sure to look us up."

It was not long before they reached the point on the Kittery shore where they were to take the little ferry for Newcastle.

"The Piscataqua is more of a river than the York," said Clare, "and there's a good deal to see along these banks. We'll have to content ourselves with Newcastle to-day, but sometime we might go farther down and touch at the other landings."

"We mustn't forget that we have come here to work to-day," replied Martine. "I am really anxious to do one sketch—and here is just the spot," she concluded, taking her position at a point from which she had a perfect view of an old house well shaded at the head of a little beach.

While Martine was sketching, Clare fluttered about, taking first one thing and then another that pleased her fancy, and often including Angelina in her views to the great delight of the latter.



"While Martine was sketching, Clare fluttered about."

"How blue the water is, and the sky! I haven't felt so thoroughly in the mood for good work since I left Acadia," exclaimed Martine.

"But the sun is terribly hot," replied Clare, "and I am hungry. Let us go inside Fort Constitution for our luncheon. There will surely be more shade there."

"Your word is law," and Martine reluctantly gathered up her belongings, and soon the three had ensconced themselves in a shady corner within the crumbling walls of the old grass-grown Fort.

"'Fort William and Mary' was the name of the first Fort near this spot," explained Clare, returning to her rôle of guide, "and even before his ride to Concord and Lexington, Paul Revere is said to have posted up here to tell the people of Portsmouth that the British were sending one hundred men to take all the powder away.

"Accordingly four hundred men of Portsmouth marched out to Fort William and Mary, and required the Captain in command and his five men to surrender. Then they took the powder to a safer hiding-place, and later it was sent down to Boston, where it is said to have been used in the Battle of Bunker Hill. That other little tower is called the Walbach Tower, for Col. Walbach who commanded the fort in the War of 1812. There's a funny story about the building of this tower. Any one can see that it probably isn't true, although a poem has been written on the subject. The story is simply that the people of Portsmouth, alarmed by the sight of some British ships in the harbor, came over here in the night and worked like bees, men, women, and children, laying stones until this tower was built. There isn't an atom of proof that this is true."

"But it's a pretty story," said Martine.

After luncheon, Clare gave Martine the choice of two walks—to Odiorne's Point, called the "Plymouth Rock of New Hampshire," as the first settlement was made there, or to Little Harbor.

Martine promptly chose the latter, because she was anxious to see the old Wentworth house. To their disappointment, when the girls reached it, the three found the old house closed; but the grounds were open to them and the curious exterior amused Martine, reminding her, as she said, of half a dozen small houses piled and twisted together to make one large one.

"This is the house where Martha Hilton was married," explained Clare. "I am sorry we cannot go inside. The rooms with their polished floors and old-time furniture are really fascinating. Cousin Mary—I hope you will meet her some time in Portsmouth—says that Benning Wentworth, in spite of being Governor, was a plain man, and son of a plain farmer, so that his marriage with Martha Hilton was not such a tremendous mesalliance."

"Oh, I remember that poem," cried Angelina, "how the Governor married the servant maid. It's by Longfellow, and the story's something like Agnes Surriage. The minister didn't want to marry them. I can say some of it, and she recited dramatically:

"This is the lady, do you hesitate?
Then I command you, as Chief Magistrate.
The Rector read the service loud and clear.
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here—
And so on to the end. At his command
On the fourth finger of her fair left hand,
The governor placed the ring, and that was all.
Martha was Lady Wentworth of the Hall.'

"So I'm glad to see this hall," she added, after Clare and Martine had sufficiently praised her recitation,—and there's one thing more that I'd like to see,—the island in the harbor, where they kept the Spanish prisoners two years ago. You know I used to think I must be partly Spanish myself, I had so much sympathy for Cervera and all his men. I'm sorry they didn't stay here longer. It would be so pleasant to go to the island and console them."

"Perhaps you'll be as well pleased if you can *see* Seavey's Island," replied Clare, smiling. "We passed the other day on our way to the Shoals; and sometime you must take the same trip."

For the time this suggestion satisfied Angelina, and she heard with evident pleasure all that Clare and Martine had to say about old Newcastle.

Intending to catch the last ferry of the afternoon, Clare and Martine cut short their stay at Little Harbor, delightful though they found the neighborhood with its suggestions of antiquity. They had a long walk before them—long at least for an August afternoon, and they did not reach the pier as quickly as they had hoped.

In spite of Clare's intention and Martine's efforts to be prompt, the little tug had left the landing a minute before they reached it. By close calculation, as they glanced at the time-table, they saw that they would be altogether too late in reaching home, if they waited for the next boat.

"Isn't it aggravating?" cried Martine, "to have to stand here and wait, when the distance across to Kittery is so little."

"There's nothing to do but wait," replied Clare.

Martine followed the direction in which she pointed, and saw an old man in a row-boat approaching the pier.

"Do you suppose he would take us over?"

"Why not? Let's ask him."

The two friends, with Angelina following close behind, stood on the end of the pier while the old man was mooring his boat.

"Will you row us over to the other side?" asked Martine.

He paid no attention to them, but continued tying a knot in his rope. The question was repeated in a slightly different form, and still the old man made no answer.

"He must be deaf," said Angelina.

"Or the wind's blowing in the wrong direction," said Clare. "We must wait till he comes up to us."

When the old man approached, by signs and words they made him understand what they wished, and he smiled pleasantly when Clare put a dollar bill in his hand.

"It's worth it," she said in an aside to Martine. "If we cross with him, we shall save two hours on our homeward journey."

So the old man untied his boat, which was ample enough for the four, and the girls quickly took their places.

"I can't say that I like a deaf boatman," said Clare, "in case of an accident we might find it awkward that he can't hear."

"An accident!" exclaimed Martine, who seldom feared any unseen things; "there certainly could be no accident in this quiet water." Before they had gone very far, however, she began to change her mind. The breeze which they had noticed while they were on the landing, now seemed to be blowing violently, and despite its heavy freight the boat rocked violently; it not only rocked, but veered from its course. Martine held her breath, while the excitable Angelina began to scream.

"Hush! hush!" said Martine, "it's nothing."

"Nothing?" cried Angelina, as a great wave broke over the end of the boat, half drenching her.

"It's only the Piscataqua current," said Clare. "But ask him if there's any danger."

The boatman ignored the question. Probably he had not heard it. A great wave slapped the boat sidewise, and this time Clare's screams were added to Angelina's. Billows rose all around them. Apparently they were no longer on the surface of a quiet river, but in the midst of a disturbed ocean and their boat was small. Martine kept her eyes on the distant shore; she saw that they were approaching it, slow though their progress was. The old man seemed to be doing his best,

when suddenly one of his oars broke and they heard him mutter, "that's bad." Bad, it certainly was; even Martine's courage waned. One thing, however, led her to hope that they might escape disaster. She had noticed a little boat pushing out from the other side. How rapidly it seemed to approach! Very soon after the old man's oar snapped, she recognized one of the rowers in the approaching boat. It was Herbert Brownville.

As the boat drew nearer, they saw that Atherton was Herbert's companion. The boys rowed steadily and swiftly, and soon their boat was beside the other. Leaning over, Herbert extended an oar to the old man who accepted it with a nod of thanks; it wasn't a time for words; Angelina was in tears, Clare was barely calm, and even Martine, the courageous, looked disturbed. The old man bent to the oars, the two boats, almost side by side, went on in a straight line.

"Thank you, thank you!" cried Clare, as they got into calmer water.

"You weren't really scared, were you?" shouted Herbert.

"Just a little," replied Martine.

"You should have known of the current," added Herbert. "It was just the wrong time to cross in a small boat, especially with only one oar."

The wind continued to blow, but the rest of their short journey was so calm compared with the turbulent five minutes, that Martine was ashamed of their needless alarm; and yet she was glad enough when at last she found herself standing on the Kittery bank of the river.

"I knew you'd need a rescuer," exclaimed Herbert, after he had helped them ashore.

"But how in the world did you know where to find us?" asked Martine.

Herbert was silent; he did not really care to tell her what Carlotta had said.

CHAPTER XXII

EXCITEMENT

Mrs. Stratford was interested in Martine's account of her interview with Balfour Airton.

"I should certainly like to see him, and if he's as you describe him, and I am sure he is, I should be glad to welcome him as a long lost cousin. From what Mrs. Redmond has said, I'm sure that he contributed a great deal to your pleasure last summer."

Several days passed and Balfour did not appear. At last Mrs. Stratford sent a note to the headquarters of the trolley line addressed to Balfour and inviting him to tea. On the appointed evening he made his appearance at Red Knoll.

"It is not often," he said, "that I can get enough time off to accept an invitation of this kind; but I can tell you that it's very delightful to be among friends. That's the worst of going so far from home. You're among strangers and nobody cares especially for you."

Although Martine and her mother were both somewhat curious as to what had brought Balfour to this corner of the world, for the moment they asked no questions. Martine inquired about Eunice.

"Of course she writes regularly to Priscilla," she said, "and Priscilla keeps me informed about Annapolis happenings. Do you think your sister will go to college?"

Balfour shook his head.

"I am not sure; I am not even sure that Eunice knows her own mind; but if she does wish to go to college, some one will certainly find a way for her to carry out her wishes."

Martine, looking at him, felt that Balfour was likely to be that "some one."

"I ought to say," added Balfour, turning to Mrs. Stratford, "that the money so kindly sent Eunice last autumn did an immense amount of good. It was the first money of her own that she had ever had to handle, and I may add," he concluded smiling, "that she has at least half of it still stored away for a rainy day."

At last Martine could not control her curiosity.

"How did you happen to think of coming up here?" she asked.

"Oh, some of my friends had had opportunities as extra men on the New England trolley lines, and I decided that I could spend my time more profitably here than on the vehicle I drove last summer.

"That wasn't such a bad vehicle," interposed Martine. "If you hadn't been driving it, I might still be lost in the fog."

During this conversation the three had gone outside to sit. And now in the darkness they heard a voice inquiring anxiously, "Is this Red Knoll?"

"It's Mr. Gamut," exclaimed Martine, and rushing forward, was soon greeting the old gentleman.

"I've only just come back," he cried volubly after he had joined the group. "You must have thought it strange that I disappeared so completely; but I was called away on business, and my niece has been visiting friends on the South Shore. Now tell me about your father; what do you hear? Good news, I hope."

Martine said nothing.

"What we hear is indefinite," said Mrs. Stratford.

"Oh, well, 'no news is good news' and you must expect the best. Young people who have no care don't realize the ups and downs of life; they expect things to move along in an upward line. You, young man," he continued, "expect life to continue to be one continual round of pleasure; you bathe, play golf, drive, have evening excursions, and it's all right for the summer; but after a while you will have a hard hill to climb, and that is right too; it's part of life; only you mustn't let the summer spoil you."

"Oh, but Mr. Gamut," began Martine.

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Gamut, turning to Balfour, "you think perhaps there needn't be a hill for every one."

"I think I know what Miss Stratford meant to say; she meant to tell you that I am not a pleasure seeker, but a worker. I am simply a conductor on the trolley line."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the old gentleman, and though the light was too dim for him really to see, Balfour realized that Mr. Gamut had raised his glasses and had fixed his eyes upon him.

"A conductor!" he exclaimed; "how extraordinary! do you really think it will lead to something? That's what a young man should always ask himself."

"It will lead to my having more money at the end of the season than I had before," responded Balfour.

"Yes, yes; but it's very unusual." Before Mr. Gamut could complete his sentence, a loud scream from the direction of the kitchen fell on the ears of the four.

"I wish Angelina were not so excitable," said Mrs. Stratford. "It takes so little to make her scream; probably she has seen a mouse."

When the scream rang out a second time, Balfour started to his feet and in another instant was racing to the gate in pursuit of a flying figure; an instant later, the others had reached Angelina.

"It was a burglar," she cried. "He was opening the trunks in the ell room, and when I came through with the safety lamp in my hand I saw him plainly, and he started and ran, leaving his booty on the floor," she concluded dramatically.

"But those were empty trunks," cried Martine, climbing the stairs.

"Come and see," said Angelina, leading the way upstairs, where indeed the floor was strewn with clothing. Martine picked up a delicate muslin skirt.

"This isn't mine, mamma," she said. "The man must have had a bundle with him that he dropped here; these things are not mine; it all seems very queer."

"Yes," said Angelina, "especially as the burglar is an old acquaintance of mine."

Thoughts of collusion crossed Mrs. Stratford's mind while Angelina continued:

"It was years and years ago, and I'd know him anywhere; especially because I've seen his twin brother since, and he looks just like him, though this wasn't the twin. He's an honest man and he lives in Salem."

"Let us get out into the fresh air again," said Mrs. Stratford. "I feel faint."

"Angelina's story makes me feel fainter," added Martine.

"I hope that interesting young conductor hasn't been hurt by the burglar; if he should catch him, I wonder if he'd know what to do with him."

"We can only wait."

Their time of waiting was not long. Balfour came back rather crestfallen.

"He gave me a great run," said Balfour, "and I couldn't catch up with him. But I'm sure he won't trouble you again, and on my way home I'll telephone so that the authorities here and in Portsmouth can be on the lookout for him. Do you suppose he took anything of yours?"

"I hardly think so," replied Martine, "he seems to have left something behind him."

"Oh, he's nothing but a sneak thief," continued Angelina. "I know him."

"A friend of yours?" asked Balfour in surprise.

"Oh, Angelina was just going to tell us about him," said Mrs. Stratford, trying to repress certain

suspicious regarding Angelina that had come to her since the girl had said that she knew the intruder.

"It was this way," continued Angelina, pleased, as usual, to be the centre of interest. "It was my mother he took the money from a long time ago, when she lived at the North End. It was the money that was to take us to the country, that Miss Brenda and her Club had made at a bazaar; and he went off to some far country, and now he's come back, I suppose he'll go on stealing. Miss Brenda had to make up the money out of her own allowance, because she had been careless in giving the money too soon to my mother. So if you had caught this thief, Mister—" here Angelina hesitated, not knowing Balfour's name,— "we might have recovered what he took."

"I'm sorry that I did not," replied the young man, "but I'll do my best to help some one else catch him."

A little later Mr. Gamut and Balfour walked off together, and the Red Knoll household, left to itself, talked over the exciting evening. Mr. Gamut and Balfour had both offered to stay, or even to sit up all night if Mrs. Stratford or the girls felt timid. But at last all agreed that the intruder had been so effectually put to flight that there was no danger of his returning.

That night Martine's dreams were filled with visions of a burglar chasing Balfour, with Mr. Gamut in a white muslin skirt following closely in pursuit. They were all late for breakfast, and were still at the table when the grocer brought the mail. There was but one letter for Martine, and she read it eagerly.

"What do you think?" she asked, when she had finished. "Elinor is going to stay over at York on her way to the mountains. She is to be at the Hotel for a day or two. Oh, I wish that she could stay here! What do you think, mamma? she could be comfortable in my room, and I would take the little one next."

"Certainly, my dear, you may ask her as soon as she arrives. When does she arrive?"

"Why, it must be to-day—for this is Thursday. I wonder why the letter was so slow. I'll go over as soon as the work is done."

Now it happened that Elinor herself made the first visit, as she had come in from Portsmouth on an early train. After they had talked of other things for half an hour, Martine told Elinor of their excitement of the evening before.

"Are you sure he didn't take anything?" asked Elinor. "I should think you wouldn't have slept a wink. I should have been awake all night after such a fright."

"I can't say I was frightened; it seemed rather funny. Do come upstairs with me now. I must see what the man left behind."

Elinor followed Martine upstairs.

"Why, Martine, what is this?" she cried, raising the white skirt "It is—why, it must be the gown I lost Class Day—and this—it really is my trunk," and she gave Martine a severe glance as she bent toward a small trunk in the corner.

"Nonsense," cried Martine. "That is a skirt the burglar left, part of his 'booty,' as Angelina calls it, and this is one of our packing trunks. It has been here all summer."

"But it has my name on it," protested Elinor.

Martine shook her head. Elinor's manner reminded her of her manner on the day of their first meeting, and it annoyed her.

Nevertheless she bent down towards the label on the trunk.

"Don't look at me in that tone of voice," she said gayly, as she turned again toward her friend. "The label is certainly marked,

*"Miss Elinor Naylor
The Belhaven, Boston*

and now that I look at it closely I can see that this is not one of our trunks. But how did it come here, Angelina?"

"Oh, Miss Martine, we brought the trunk with us from Boston. It was in the storeroom. I don't know anything about it, except it came the day before Class Day. There was a laundress working there that afternoon, and I remember she told me she had had a trunk sent to the trunk-room. I supposed you told her, and of course when we moved, all the trunks came here. You told me they were to come."

"Perhaps you are not altogether to blame, Angelina, although I wish that you had said something to mamma or me, and I still don't understand why the trunk was sent to us."

It was now Elinor's turn to explain. "I understand it all. When I left Bar Harbor for Class Day, I simply put on a tag with my name and I didn't notice this old label, which was the one I used when I spent a day or two with you in the spring. The expressman followed the Belhaven tag, instead of keeping my trunk with Kate's aunt,—so if any one is to blame, it is I for leaving that tag

on."

"I am not so sure of that," replied Martine. "If I had been a really up-to-date housekeeper I should have known exactly what trunks came down to York. Now I only hope that our burglar didn't make way with any of your things."

"We'll soon know;" already Elinor was on her knees before the trunk.

"No" she said, "I hardly think he took anything. The trunk is closely packed below the tray, and the tray would hold little more than these things he tumbled out. But I remember a set of topaz studs in a box that I put in this corner. The box is not here."

After a careful search neither she nor Martine could find the studs. But Elinor was philosophical over this loss.

"In finding the trunk I feel as if I had recovered a small fortune—and I can bear the loss of the studs. I daresay Kate will be pleased to get back her things, although she is so up-to-date, that she may consider these class-day clothes old-fashioned now, as they were made to wear two months ago."

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Martine, "and yet," she admitted, "I can remember when I would not wear anything that was not of the very latest, but now—why this is a last year's shirt-waist, and you know how the sleeves have changed."

A few hours later Martine and Elinor were telling the story of the "Class-day trunk," as they dubbed it, to a group of merry young people on the piazza of the hotel, and every one teased Martine about her skill in abstracting so important a part of Elinor's wardrobe.

After a day or two at the hotel, Elinor began a visit at Martine's that lengthened itself into a week, and during her friend's stay Martine's life was as gay as that of the gayest at the Harbor. She drove, she sat at noon with the gay throng under the pavilion to watch the bathers. She would not bathe, because she had brought no bathing-suit to York, and because it was too late in the season, she said, to begin a course of spectacular bathing. She went with a sailing party on Herbert's cat-boat, although before Elinor's arrival she had refused all his invitations. She spent two mornings at the Club watching the tennis tournament, and she accepted invitations to two luncheons given in Elinor's honor.

"Martine," said Mrs. Stratford, two or three days after Elinor's arrival, "Would you not like to have a luncheon for Elinor? On a small scale we could manage it very well."

"Oh yes, Mrs. Stratford," interposed Angelina, who overheard the suggestion. "I've just been longing for Miss Martine to have some kind of an entertainment. There's something going on every day, and I don't like Miss Martine to be the only one that doesn't entertain—not that I'd be so presuming as to talk of anything you hadn't spoken of yourself," she concluded hastily. She was bright enough to notice an expression of surprise on Mrs. Stratford's face.

"It would make some trouble for you," said Martine.

"Oh, I wouldn't mind that, and I'm always happy when there's something going on."

"Lucian's last letter was more cheerful;" Martine said this to draw her mother out.

"Yes, my dear, and I am sure you need not let your father's health stand in the way of your party. I am sure that he is better."

"But ought we to spend money in that way?"

"It will not cost much."

"I know,—but still."

"There, write your notes. They should be sent at once."

"Instead of a luncheon, mamma, let me have a tea late in the afternoon and ask boys as well. Herbert has been very good to Elinor, and Atherton has given us a lot of time, and there are several others. I wish I needn't ask Carlotta, but I must. However, I can leave out the most of her crowd."

Elinor helped Martine write the notes, and Angelina took hold of the preparations with a heartiness that spoke for success.

The tables were spread out-doors, one for serving chocolate and coffee, one for lemonade. Elinor and Clare gathered flowers in abundance, especially great clusters of St. Anne's lace, that proved a most effective table decoration.

In spite of the short notice nearly all whom Martine invited accepted the invitation, even Carlotta and two or three of her set, who "never would be missed," said Martine almost ruefully as she read their replies.

"Then why did you ask them?" Elinor's tone was reproachful.

"Oh, because—well, because I had no good reason for leaving them out. They have all invited me to something or other, and of course in one way I want them, only Carlotta is so critical that I

hate to think of her making fun of things here."

"She will have cause to be critical if you do not hurry down to the village for that extra cream. It's strange they forgot to leave it this morning. Of course," concluded Elinor, "I think that Carlotta might have been prompter in answering your invitation, but when she comes she'll be on her best behavior."

Now it chanced that as Martine was returning from the village, warm and a little tired, carrying a large bottle of cream under one arm and a package of odds and ends on the other, she met Carlotta and three or four others driving rapidly down from the Club. How it happened Martine never knew, but an unlucky stumble made her lose her hold of the bottle, and as it flew into the road the cream emptied itself in a sticky pool in the dusty road.

Poor Martine! The drag slowed up. She thought she heard a half-suppressed outburst of laughter. But in a moment Herbert stood beside her. He had slipped down from the drag, and he looked at her now as if waiting for her to tell him what to do.

"Let me help you," he said at last.

"Help me!" cried Martine scornfully.

"Oh, Phoebe you have torn your dress!
Where are your berries, child?"

"There, Herbert, that is the way I feel. To think that I must go back to the village for a second bottle of cream! We are all in a hurry, and they are waiting for me. Angelina herself could not have done worse."

"Of course you won't turn back. Go home with the other things, and I will bring you your cream."

So eager was Herbert to be of use that he hardly listened to Martine's thanks, and Martine, to her own great surprise, for once in her life found herself ready to obey one to whom she was not in the habit of looking up. For Herbert, although nearer Lucian's age than Martine's, always seemed to the latter like a younger boy whom she could order around. In the present emergency she was thankful for Herbert's help and pleased enough to receive the cream that he brought from the village.

When her guests arrived at the appointed hour, Martine was fairly proud of the appearance of Red Knoll. She had had the grass clipped the day before, and the lawn, if stubbly on close inspection, at least was of a vivid green. The old-fashioned garden at the side that had been the pride of the former occupants of the farm, was now in full bloom, and almost all the chairs had been brought from the house to be set under the trees or farther up in the meadow, where those who wished could enjoy the rather unusual view.

With the chairs removed, the dining-room seemed almost spacious, and there Peggy at one end of the table and Clare at the other served chocolate and lemonade. The afternoon passed quickly away. Martine forgot her first anxiety when she saw that her friends were evidently enjoying themselves.

"I am surprised to see you here," Peggy exclaimed to Herbert. "Isn't it a great condescension? I thought you had vowed never to go to a tea at York."

"Generally this kind of thing is a bore, and I had fairly hard work to get the other fellows to come. But I told them that anything Martine did was sure to pass off well, and it's true."

"This is just like any other tea," protested Peggy, remembering that Herbert had never accepted one of her invitations.

"Oh, it's smaller than others," responded Herbert, "and every one knows every one and we all feel that we can do as we like—and no one is wearing white gloves," he concluded, as if he had made a special discovery.

"There are no gloves of any color so far as I can see," retorted Peggy.

"That's just it, we can have a good time here, because everything is unconventional. But, alas, here is Carlotta—" and Herbert moved rapidly in the opposite direction from his sister.

Although Carlotta seldom said really disagreeable things, something in her manner excited Martine's antagonism.

"She need not have referred to the spilt cream," thought the latter, after a word or two with Carlotta. "She must know I hate to be reminded that I cut a ridiculous figure."

"Oh yes," she continued aloud, "I am too busy to do much pleasuring this summer. The house gives me plenty to do, and I have some extra studying."

"We heard you were going to college," said one of Martine's friends.

"Yes," added Carlotta, "but I shouldn't think you'd quite like to. It makes a girl so conspicuous to go to college."

"A college girl isn't half so conspicuous as a golf-champion. Why, I saw your picture in a Sunday paper last month, Carlotta, beside a prize bicycle rider's, and your weight and height and all

kinds of things about you were there, too."

Martine spoke hotly, as she was apt to when excited, and Carlotta made no reply.

"If I go to college," continued Martine, "I fear I'll never be distinguished enough to have my portrait in print." Then, remembering that personal speeches of this kind were not in good taste from a hostess to a guest, she changed the subject to something less irritating. But Carlotta turned away, only half mollified.

"Elinor," cried Martine, as the last of her guests went home, "this tea has been bad for me; it has given me a taste for society that will worry me the rest of the summer."

"There's no reason why you shouldn't be a little gayer."

"Oh, yes, there is, every reason. If things go better, I'll have my turn in a year or two when I am really out, and if things go ill, why I shall bury myself in work. Really, I meant what I said to Carlotta. I do mean to try for college. It would be fun to pass the examinations with Priscilla, even if I couldn't go through. For, of course, if we are very poor, I shall have to work for a living."

"Martine," cried Elinor, "you are very absurd. When I think of your cousin Mrs. Stanley at Bar Harbor—"

"Yes, and my cousin Mrs. Blair, who has one of the handsomest places on the North Shore. But unluckily what is theirs is not mine, and I have never been a beggar."

"Of course not, but from one extreme you have gone to the other, and I think that you ought to hope for the best."

"If hoping were having," murmured Martine.

Mr. Gamut was one of the guests whom Martine invited in Elinor's honor.

"Where's your young conductor?" he asked, when he had a moment alone with her.

"We invited him, but he wrote that he couldn't get off. Mamma felt pretty sure he wouldn't have come, even if he had time to spare. He is in this part of the world for business, not pleasure."

"Just so, just so, he's a fine fellow, though, and I mean to keep an eye on him. I can offer him a good place when he's through studying. I have no prejudice against the college man in business, and he'll be none the worse for taking his degree. I liked the way he ran after that fellow the other night, and he's done some clever detective work since. You'll hear about it soon."

"Martine," said Mrs. Stratford, when her daughter later told her what Mr. Gamut had said; "you may congratulate yourself on this one thing, if on nothing else this summer. By bringing Mr. Gamut and Balfour together you have accomplished more than you realize."

"But it was the burglar and not I," said Martine, "who really had the most to do with it. It was the way Balfour ran that impressed Mr. Gamut the most."

"However it came about, you have had a good share in bringing them together, and with Mr. Gamut's good will, Balfour is sure to prosper."

"I'm glad of that, mamma. Sometimes I feel that I have been so useless this summer."

"My dear—" and then Mrs. Stratford said no more. She was really afraid of spoiling Martine by praise, but she thought it better for the latter to find out certain things for herself.

CHAPTER XXIII

QUIET LIFE

When Elinor left York for the mountains, she took the little trunk with her, after carefully removing the Belhaven label. The label itself she carried in her card-case. "I shall need it," she said, "to illustrate my tale of a trunk when I tell it. Every one who has heard it thus far thinks it the most amusing story that ever was—and if it hadn't happened no one could believe it. This label is a proof of its truth."

Martine missed Elinor more than she admitted even to her mother. It was part of her summer plan to seem perfectly contented with everything. Mrs. Stratford noted with some concern that Martine was growing paler, if not a little thinner. Could it be that she was less happy than she professed to be, less contented?

Whatever she did, she did with her utmost energy, and in summer it was possible for a young girl to have too much of housework, gardening and study. It had become almost a passion with her to make up one or two deficiencies before her return to school. Strangely enough, it was Herbert now, on whom she began to depend for help in carrying on her work, and this is how it came about.

Herbert, after the so-called rescue on the Piscataqua, made light of the affair, in spite of

Martine's reiteration that except for him she knew that she and Clare—not to mention Angelina—must have capsized.

"We might not have met a watery grave—but we certainly should have reached shore very wet."

"Well, perhaps," responded Herbert, "but even if it meant something to you to be saved from your 'peril' as you call it, you must admit that Atherton and I ran no risk."

"That doesn't alter the fact that you were thoughtful as well as brave, and really, Herbert, if only you wouldn't pretend to be so lazy, you'd—"

Martine did not finish the sentence, for Herbert immediately tried to prove that he was not lazy.

"Of course I won't fall in with all of Carlotta's plans; if I did she'd keep me busy from morning to night. But I got into college without conditions—and that reminds me—Miss Martine Stratford—I heard you complaining the other day about your Cicero, and so, if you are not too lazy, I will come to you two or three times a week to read Latin with you. We'll make the orations fly like hot-cakes, and Carlotta will be more infuriated than ever that I have something to do that will keep me from trotting around after her."

"If that's your motive, I refuse to be helped."

"You ought to be very grateful, for in general I don't approve of a girl's going to college, and I understand it's because you have college in view that you wish to skip on with your Latin. But it's only because I think college won't spoil you that I consent to give you the benefit of my knowledge," and Herbert assumed a pompous air that greatly amused Martine. Thus it happened that a day or two after Elinor left York, Herbert entered on his self-appointed office of tutor. Mrs. Stratford had made no objection when Martine told her of Herbert's plan. She had known Herbert for a long time, and she understood some of the difficulties of his home surroundings. Carlotta and he were so unlike in temperament, that they were constantly at swords' points, and Mrs. Brownville was so absorbed in her own narrow interests that she had never found time to study her children.

Mrs. Stratford realized that Martine could do more for Herbert than he for her, as he never resented the sisterly advice that she bestowed on him.

Carlotta was the only one who seemed to object to Herbert's new occupation. She teased him unmercifully, and showed an inclination to snub Martine. The two girls, fortunately, did not meet often, for Martine had little part in the gayeties of August, while Carlotta was a leader of the younger set.

Carlotta, had she been so disposed, might have done much for Martine. On the other hand, Martine, with a little effort, could have shared in the pleasures of the young people of her own age. At last her mother remonstrated with her for holding herself aloof from those who were pleasantly disposed to her.

But Martine was firm.

"No, mother, I can't serve two masters. The summer has been flying away, and I haven't accomplished half that I had hoped to. I shan't dare to look Priscilla in the face if I haven't made up all that Latin. Then I shouldn't have a really good time if I 'mingled' more, as Angelina suggests. People here are cliquey, and Carlotta and Peggy are the only girls in the crowd that I've ever known before. Peggy is a regular will-o'-the-wisp, and Carlotta and I never could be intimate."

"But still—" began Mrs. Stratford.

"But still," echoed Martine, "you seem to forget, mother dear, that we came here to save money—and everything costs so much—and I don't want to spend my poor little allowance on dress and excursions, and sometimes I feel pretty blue, and until we know from Lucian how father really is, I couldn't plunge into things. There wouldn't be any half way with me; if I should begin to 'go,' I would just have to go all the time."

Here Martine stopped for sheer want of breath. But her mother, watching her closely, wondered if she really understood herself. Yet Martine was sincere. It was only when she heard of some particularly pleasant thing that she felt left out. A moonlight sail, an all-day picnic up the river, an excursion to Agamenticus, all seemed to her as she heard of them more delightful affairs than they actually were to those who took part in them.

Before Herbert and Clare, Martine maintained her Spartan indifference, even when they talked of their own experiences in a well-meant effort to make her express a desire to go with them on their next expedition.

But nothing could weaken Martine's determination to lead a quiet life.

"It isn't as if I never had had any fun, or never should have any more," she wrote to Priscilla, "but even as it is I believe I have been running about too much. For the next few weeks I mean to be quiet as a dormouse, and two pages of Latin a day will keep me pretty busy. You see, Prissie, if papa really has lost all his money, I shall want to earn my living at once. I never could be dependent on my relations, and Lucian will have all he can do for the next few years. Oh, how different this summer is from last, when I almost felt as if I owned the world, though I hope I

didn't show it. Of course we are very comfortable here. The house is small, but we brought enough of our own things to make it homelike, and Angelina does pretty well, though I have to help out with things sometimes. We have radishes and peas and a few tomato plants in the kitchen garden, but the rest of the place is all in grass, except the flower garden, and that would do your heart good. There are all kinds of old-fashioned things that you would love. They have grown up in the wildest way, and I am kept very busy weeding the flowers as well as the vegetables. Now, Prissie, before we leave York you must make us a visit. Mother and I both want you, and York will suit you to a T. The summer people make it livelier than Plymouth, but there are enough queer old houses to make you feel quite at home. You'd enjoy the graveyard opposite the church. It is shaded with ancient trees, and every one browses around there at least once. The funniest stone that I saw there was Father Moody's; he was the father of Handkerchief Moody. The inscription is just what you might expect from a thrifty New Englander. I wonder more haven't tried the same thing. Instead of having a long inscription put on he just gave the chapter and verse, 2 Corinthians, III, 1-6, so that any one interested could read. I am sorry to say I haven't yet had time. There's another thing that might amuse you. There are a lot of little cottages down by the Long Beach beyond the harbor. They look as if they were made of cardboard, painted in bright colors, and have fancy names like 'Sea-crest' and 'Harbor View.' Well, the other day on our way to Cape Neddock, I noticed one called Gorgeana, and I thought the owners had given it this name because they meant to enjoy themselves by eating all they could, or gorging.

"I was awfully snubbed by Herbert when I asked him if it wasn't a shame for people to advertise their greediness. He laughed well at me when he reminded me that the name was in honor of Gorges, the founder of York, a fact which I really ought to have remembered, for of course I knew it.

"You need not be jealous of Clare, as you suggest. It is certainly pleasant to have a congenial girl so near. But she never could take your place—never in the world.

"She is something like you, however, quiet and dignified, and fond of history. Mrs. Ethridge is great fun, and would be good company for mother, except that she plays bridge from morning till night.

"You haven't told me what you think of my rescue, and of Balfour and the burglar. I wrote you a few days ago.

"I had a letter from Brenda last week. Isn't it wonderful that she should find time to think of me when she is so far away. She is delighted because all the family are with her now, and they are to be in San Rafael the rest of the summer.

"She is not sure whether she will be in Boston next winter. How I wish we might have her apartment again. But we can't tell what we shall do until father and Lucian return. She says she would like to be with me one winter, to be sure that I really deserve to be called her ward."

Then, with messages to Mrs. Danforth and the children, Martine concluded her letter.

It brought a quick reply, in which Priscilla laughed at Martine for her two rescues—if one can be said to laugh in a letter.

"For an independent person it seems to me that you succeed in getting rescued from extreme danger pretty often. Balfour, in the fog last summer, had the easier time I should say, and I only hope that he and Herbert Brownville may not come to blows in trying to decide which is the greater hero.

"If I am called on to help to decide, I should have to decide against Balfour, for you could not be half as much lost on a horse as in a boat."

Although Priscilla was correct in her diagnosis of the different kinds of dangers, Balfour and Herbert gave no signs of coming to blows on the subject of their prowess. On the contrary, they showed an inclination to be very good friends. As Balfour's time was so fully occupied with his duties, Herbert acquired the habit of taking long rides on the cars. Then at the end of the route, or when waiting at turn-outs, he and Balfour had chances for the snatches of conversation in which boys find more pleasure than girls.

Carlotta was as little pleased with Herbert's intimacy with Balfour, as with his interest in Martine's Latin. It might not be fair to say that she wished to keep her brother entirely under her thumb, and yet it annoyed her that he was so much less amenable to her than formerly. She liked to feel that he was ready to come and go as she wished. She especially needed him to help entertain her visitors, of whom she usually had two or three staying in the house.

Now it happened one evening that Martine reading a Boston newspaper came upon something that excited her mightily.

"O, mamma," she exclaimed, "Only think! Mrs. Dundonald is coming here—just listen; Mrs. Dundonald, the well-known artist, passed through Boston to-day on her way to York Harbor where she is to spend a few days with friends."

"Well, my dear, what of it?" responded Mrs. Stratford.

"Oh, you know how I admire Mrs. Dundonald's work. She does exactly the kind of thing I should

like to do, and they say she is perfectly charming. To think she is coming here! Oh, I do hope we shall meet her!"

Then Martine paused suddenly, remembering that for the present she and her mother were not likely to meet any distinguished stranger visiting York. From Clare she learned the next day that Mrs. Dundonald was staying with Miss Stark, an elderly lady whose house was next that of the Brownvilles'. Clare offered to take Martine to call on Miss Stark and Mrs. Dundonald, but Martine hesitated because she had heard that Miss Stark was a rigid upholder of formal etiquette.

"I have had one or two little snubs," she said, "and I should hate to be treated with scorn because I had made the first call on an older woman."

"There is no danger of that," replied Clare, "but still, there will probably be some other way, for you ought to have a chance to meet Mrs. Dundonald."

Just at this time Herbert happened to be away on a short yachting trip, so that Martine could not tell him of her desire. The Brownvilles were cousins as well as neighbors of Miss Stark's, and had Herbert been at home he could easily have arranged a meeting between Martine and the artist.

"Martine," said Clare a day after their conversation about Miss Stark and her guest, "I saw Carlotta at the beach this morning and I told her how anxious you were to meet Mrs. Dundonald. She knows her very well, and—"

"She didn't promise to introduce me immediately?"

Martine's tone was sarcastic. She knew very well that Carlotta would hardly exert herself to do her a favor. The girls were seated on Mrs. Ethridge's piazza at this moment, and before Clare could reply to Martine, the maid handed her a note that had come by special messenger. Martine watched her friend as she read, and noticed that she made no comment as she slipped the note back in its envelope. Then for a few moments neither girl spoke. Martine had recognized the man who had given the note to the maid. He was one of the Brownvilles' coachmen.

"Martine," said Clare, at length, "Carlotta is giving a large stand-up luncheon for Mrs. Dundonald the day after to-morrow. It is just to let the girls here at York have a chance to meet her. Of course you will find your invitation when you go home."

"Perhaps," replied Martine, and this word found an echo in Clare's heart.

When Martine returned home she found no invitation from Carlotta, nor did one come before the luncheon. Strange as it may seem, in view of Martine's repeated declaration that she hated formal festivities in summer, she felt aggrieved that Carlotta had left her out.

"Perhaps Carlotta has heard you express yourself. You know my dear, you have been a little scornful about the doings of the younger set."

"Oh, no, mamma, I have seldom taken the trouble to express my opinions to Carlotta. Besides, she knows I am anxious to meet Mrs. Dundonald. Unluckily Clare has told her this, so my snubbing is all the harder to bear."

Nor was Martine's disappointment lessened by the fact that Clare gave up the luncheon. "You might as well have gone," she said. "It is all the worse for me to know that I have kept you out of something you would have enjoyed."

"But I have met so many artists," replied Clare, smiling, "that one more or less makes little difference to me. You know I do not care for crowds, and although Carlotta speaks of this luncheon as 'small,' I know there will be a crush. I'd much rather go off somewhere with you for the day. Cousin Mary has been urging me to come over to Portsmouth for the day. She would love to see you too. Let us go to-morrow; it will be much more fun than Carlotta's luncheon."

But when to-morrow came, a strange thing happened. By some means known only to her, Angelina had heard that a man had been arrested in Portsmouth for breaking and entering a little shop.

"I want to go over and identify him; I know he's our burglar, and that, of course, makes him Miguel Silva, who took Miss Brenda's money."

"But you would better wait until you are sent for. You may be needed as a witness."

"Oh, I don't know about that. The law is slow, they say, so I want to go now and look at him, and shake my fist at him, and tell him that I am Angelina Rosa, and then, please, I am going on in the trolley to Boston. I had a letter from my mother. She'd like to see me, and I want to tell her about Miguel Silva."

"Would you leave us now, with no one to help us?"

Mrs. Stratford spoke sharply. Martine was too surprised to speak.

"I am sorry, of course," said Angelina, "the place isn't hard, and you've been like a mother to me. But it's very quiet for me at York. You see we're not exactly in things, and I think I'd better be nearer home. My trunk is all packed, and I'll get the express to call to-day."

"Very well," said Mrs. Stratford, turning away with a dignity that gave Angelina no chance to

reply.

"Maggie would never have done this, and I am surprised at you," remonstrated Martine as Angelina bade her good-bye.

"I am sorry you feel so," rejoined Angelina, "for I haven't a fault to find with you and Mrs. Stratford. I have heard of a wash-lady that would come in by the day, and I'll stop at her house on the way."

"Oh, no, we can look out for ourselves."

"It isn't that it hasn't been pleasant here," continued Angelina; "I've had a real good time almost always, but I'm homesick, and I have a duty to my family, and I think I'd better go while Miguel Silva is where I can get at him; for after to-day they might lock him up where I couldn't see him, and I want him to know what I think. There's only one thing I want to confess, Miss Martine. You remember when the cook went away last winter,—so unexpectedly, you know, before your dinner? Well, it was I who discharged her. I told her you wanted her to go, and I paid her for the rest of the week. I was so anxious to have things all to myself, so I could show what I could do. But it didn't do me much good,—after the expense of paying her,—for you kept getting cooks that wouldn't let me meddle. But I hope you'll think kindly of me, Miss Martine, and so now good-bye."

After this extraordinary speech, Angelina tripped gayly down the path in the direction of the cars.

"It's frightful ingratitude!" said Martine. "I feel as if I should never wish to do anything for any one again."

"Angelina has earned her money," responded Mrs. Stratford. "She has worked pretty faithfully. As I have studied her character, I have sometimes wondered that she should stay so contentedly with us, when we have given her so little opportunity to indulge in her favorite gossip."

"But what shall we do now? That is the question, mamma. Of course I will help all I can, but I am feeling tired, and you are not strong enough, and we must stay here."

"There, there, Martine, do not borrow trouble. To-day will take care of itself, and as for to-morrow—"

"To-morrow," cried Clare, suddenly coming upon them, "will be the best day for our Portsmouth excursion, and mamma has sent me over to invite you, Mrs. Stratford, to spend the day with her."

"There, Martine, to-morrow is provided for. Tell your mother, Clare, that I am only too happy to accept her invitation. I must leave you now, while Martine relates the story of Angelina."

As her mother turned toward the house, Martine told Clare of Angelina's departure.

"You must find some one to take her place," said Clare. "You are thinner than when you came to York, and if you don't mind my saying so, you look tired."

To Clare's great surprise, her friend, instead of replying, shed a tear or two. But the tears were followed by smiles, as Martine exclaimed:

"There, I am almost as bad as Priscilla."

"But do you suppose that Angelina was right about the burglar? I wonder if your friend Balfour Airton has heard—"

"Oh, if the burglar has been caught, I am sure Balfour knows all about it. He was really very anxious himself to discover the fellow. If he is off duty, he will probably come over to see us this evening—at least if he has anything to tell."

CHAPTER XXIV

PORTSMOUTH AND AFTERWARD

It was not until they were on their way to Portsmouth, that Clare and Martine had their first good chance to talk to Balfour about the burglar.

"It is really true," said Balfour, "that the fellow has been arrested for entering a Portsmouth shop. I was pretty sure of him, and when this shop was entered, I told the police about this man. He was wearing a pair of topaz sleeve-links, and you said, I remember, that these were the only things missing from Miss Elinor's trunk."

Balfour spoke modestly. From him the girls could get no idea of the many hours he had put into the case until he had assured himself that this was the very man wanted by the police of more than one city.

"How excited Angelina will be if she really identifies him as the man who took her mother's money long ago."

"Yes," added Martine, "if she is only called in court as a witness, she will be perfectly happy."

At Kittery, as on the day they went to the Shoals, Balfour was left with his car on the Kittery Shore.

"I believe this will be the pleasantest of all our excursions," said Martine to Clare as the two strolled about. "A crowd would seem out of place in these quiet old streets."

"Is there anything you especially care to see before we go to Cousin Mary's?" asked Clare. "You know she expects us there to luncheon, and she always has any number of stories to tell."

"I'd like to see Strawberry Bank," replied Martine. "It sounded so attractive when I came across it in my History as the first name of Portsmouth."

"I fear there are no strawberries there now, though the first settlers are said to have built the Great House in the centre of ground covered with wild strawberry-vines. There's little to see there now, though you have enough imagination to picture where the Great House stood in the time of Mason."

So they went down on Water Street, and thence to the substantial little house where Washington's secretary, Tobias Lear, lived. Here Washington himself called on Madame Lear when he visited Portsmouth soon after his inauguration.

As they turned back toward the statelier mansions of Congress and Pleasant Streets, Clare tried to fit the things she had heard about old Portsmouth to the right persons and people.

"I remember that some distinguished French nobleman described the Langdon House as elegant and well furnished. Washington, too, called it the handsomest house in Portsmouth, and when Louis Philippe was in exile here, he lived for some time in this house. But I like this old Wentworth House better because I really remember one of the romantic stories connected with it."

"Tell me, please."

"Oh, this is simply about Frances Wentworth who jilted her cousin John because he was too poor. John went to England, and Frances married Theodore Atkinson, who was rich and amiable and delicate. In the course of time John Wentworth returned from London as governor of the Province, and when two years later the husband of Frances died, she mourned only ten days, and then became the bride of her cousin John. But here we are at Cousin Mary's, and I ought to have left this story for her. She can tell it so dramatically."

Cousin Mary lived near the old Warner house, and she had much to say to the girls about a former owner of this historic dwelling, whom her mother remembered as one of the last of the townsmen to wear a cocked hat and knee-breeches. After luncheon she took her young visitors to call at the Warner mansion, where they saw the curious wall paintings that no one had known about, until the removal of several layers of paper brought the paintings to the light a few years ago.

"You can see how little this house has been changed," said the owner, proudly. "It is really an eighteenth century house of the best type."

"Such as Amy Wentworth dwelt in," added Martine, reciting.

"With stately stairways worn
By feet of old Colonial knights,
And ladies gentle-born.
And on her from the wainscot old
Ancestral faces frown,
And this has worn the soldier's sword,
And that—the judge's gown?"

"You did not know I could quote Portsmouth poetry?" asked Martine, turning mischievously to Clare, "but I caught the habit from Amy last summer, as she had a ballad or a story for every place we visited."

"Portsmouth is full of stories," responded Clare; "I wish, Cousin Mary, we could stay here three or four days. Martine would enjoy everything—old stories as well as old houses—"

"We have plenty of both, my dear," said Cousin Mary, laying her hand on Martine's arm.

"I have been wondering about the houses, there are so many more of what you might call 'stately mansions,' than there are in Plymouth," and Martine looked enquiringly at Cousin Mary.

"Oh, that is easily explained," replied the older woman, understanding Martine's unexpressed question. "Portsmouth was a Royal Province, and its merchants were prosperous and fond of the good things of life. They vied with one another in the eighteenth century in building handsome dwellings. There were also many government officials here, who felt that fine surroundings were their rightful due. When the Revolution came, Portsmouth was full of Tories, as you may have read in some of the recent historical novels. They were far from pleased with the change in government."

"Martine and I certainly must come over again," cried Clare, looking at her watch, "there are two or three special stories that I hope you will tell her, though they are too long for to-day. I am

afraid we have barely time for the church, if we mean to get back to York to-night."

"This church," explained Cousin Mary, as they drew near old St. John's, "is interesting because it succeeds the old Queen's Chapel. It may surprise you to learn that in Portsmouth the first church observed the forms of the Church of England. But after the earliest years, for a long time there was no Episcopal church until the Queen's Chapel was built in the early eighteenth century."

"They couldn't have a Queen's Chapel after the Revolution!" exclaimed Martine.

"Well, it was Queen's Chapel for a few years. This was its name when Washington attended service here. But in 1791, when the parish was re-organized, the new church was known as 'St. John's.'"

The girls made the most of the short time they had to spend at the old church. There were a number of things to see, but nothing, not even the famous Queen Caroline chairs interested Martine more than the old bell in the tower. For Cousin Mary told her that it had been brought from an old church at Louisburg by Sir William Pepperell's victorious men.

"I must come down some Sunday," she said, "just to hear it. In Nova Scotia they tell some weird stories about these old French bells," and as she spoke, Martine recalled her afternoon with Balfour and Amy near the site of the Acadian church.

"You certainly must spend a day or two with me soon," said Cousin Mary, and when the girls bade her good-bye, the day was set for a longer visit from Clare and Martine.

A slight fog overtook them as they rode home, and this, perhaps, lowered Martine's spirits. Had Clare known Martine longer, she would have been even more surprised than she was at her friend's despondent tone, for those who knew her best had seldom seen her out of spirits.

It was Clare herself, however, who had turned the conversation in a direction not exactly enlivening.

"I suppose we shall see Herbert to-morrow," she said. "He won't be exactly pleased when he hears about Carlotta's luncheon."

"You mean my being left out? Oh, he won't care. Boys never take up those things. Besides, I hope no one will tell him. Besides, I shouldn't have cared if it hadn't been for Mrs. Dundonald, though I shall probably have a chance to meet her again, somewhere."

"Of course," responded Clare, "she is likely to be in Boston, and you know so many people. I think you have been very amiable about the whole thing. For certainly it was hard to bear."

Now sympathy is often the last straw to break one down, and as she replied to Clare, Martine did not control a little quaver in her voice.

"Naturally no one likes to be slighted, but then nothing has gone exactly right this summer. I have hardly done a thing I wanted to, and I have been left out of things I might have gone to."

"But, my dear, I have heard you say over and over again that you wouldn't have any gayety on account of your father and—"

"Yes, that is true," replied Martine, undisturbed by her own inconsistency, "but all the same it isn't pleasant to be left out, and I really don't like being economical, although I have to pretend I don't mind. I suppose that's why some people slight me. I never believed before that money made any difference, but now I know."

"Martine," said Clare, "you are ridiculous. I believe you have been working too hard, and so are a little run down."

"I haven't slept well lately," Martine admitted, "I have been thinking so much about my father and Lucian."

"Isn't your father improving?"

"The last letter was more cheerful. But we haven't heard for three weeks, and I am wondering what we shall do next year if he has lost *all* his money. It will be so hard for Lucian to give up college."

Clare was at a loss for a reply. Mrs. Stratford and Martine were new friends and she really knew little about their affairs. She had to content herself with rather vague attempts to cheer Martine, and she was gratified before they reached their stopping place to see the smiles return to Martine's face.

It was almost dusk as the car sped down a long hill near the Country Club.

"Why, that was Carlotta driving," exclaimed Clare, as they passed a restive horse that was driven by a girl in a high cart.

"She has poor control of her horse," rejoined Martine.

"It's curious," added Clare, "that Carlotta, who is so good at other sports, knows so little about a horse. She seldom drives alone. I wonder how it happens that no one is with her now."

"She may swim better than I," rejoined Martine, "but I believe I could give her points about

managing a horse."

Soon the two friends had reached their corner and were about to part when they heard the clatter of hoofs and wheels.

"Keep to the side, Clare," cried Martine. "It's Carlotta, the horse is running away."

Hardly had she uttered these words when the horse and carriage were upon them. The reins had fallen, and Carlotta, helpless, was clinging to the side of the carriage. Martine did not hesitate. Instantly she plunged forward, and unheeding Clare's warning scream, flung herself before the horse. Yet, in spite of her impetuosity, she knew what she was doing. The creature's speed was less than it seemed to the frightened Clare. Martine with a sure aim reached the bridle. Although she was dragged a few steps, the horse slackened his pace, and stopped. Carlotta, too much shaken to resume control, jumped to the ground on the opposite side from Martine.

"Look!" cried Clare, running up to her as she came to the horse's head.

"Is she hurt?" asked Carlotta, anxiously, as Clare stooped down toward Martine, who had fallen to the ground.

"She must be," replied Clare. "What shall we do?"

"I cannot very well leave my horse," responded Carlotta, still with her hand on the bridle; "if only somebody—"

At that moment "somebody" did appear, in the shape of Mr. Gamut.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, "What is this? An accident?"

Martine lay white and still. Clare, stooping down, could not rouse her.

"Let us take her to the house, and then I will go for Mrs. Stratford," cried Clare; "she has been spending the day with my mother."

"I was on my way to Red Knoll," said Mr. Gamut. "I came on the afternoon train, and I felt anxious to talk over the good news; but now, this looks serious," he continued, as together he and Clare lifted Martine from the ground.

"May I take my horse to your stable, Clare?" asked Carlotta. "He is quiet enough, but I would rather not drive now, and then I will hurry to the village for a doctor. I am so sorry for all this," she concluded.

"There are certainly no bones broken," said the practical Clare; "she has simply fainted."

Clare and Mr. Gamut slowly carried Martine to the side of the road, and now Clare was supporting her friend's head on her knee, while Mr. Gamut had gone to Red Knoll for water.

As Carlotta disappeared down the lane leading to the Ethridge house, Martine stirred slightly, and opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she asked, faintly. "Oh—yes—I remember," and though she closed her eyes again, she no longer lay a dead weight against Clare's arm.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SUMMER'S END

One afternoon in late September, Martine sat under the trees in her mother's corner of the Red Knoll garden. A number of letters lay before her on a little round table, and beside her, swinging lazily in a hammock, was Priscilla, the practical, who had often been heard to say that she despised hammocks.

After a moment Priscilla, bringing herself to a full stop, leaned forward and gazed intently at Martine.

"I cannot see," she said at length, "that you look so *very* thin."

"Why should I be *very* thin?"

"Well, from what I heard I thought you must be. They said you weren't eating, and you are thinner than you were in the spring. I am sure your eyes look larger."

"Probably my eyes have grown; I am sure my waistbands have."

There was a twinkle in Martine's brown eyes, as she pushed back a wavy lock of hair.

"You are just a little paler, too," persisted Priscilla, "but except for that, no one would believe that you had been so ill."

"I don't believe it myself," replied Martine, "though I am perfectly willing to take the word of those who say they know. To tell you the truth, I am rather ashamed to hear that I barely escaped

nervous prostration, just because I tried to stop a horse from running away."

"But you *did* stop him."

"Then he wasn't running away. It was only that Carlotta had let go the reins."

"Well, they all say that if you hadn't seized the bridle, he would have gone straight down the little embankment."

"Nonsense—at any rate I spoil the effect of it all by fainting, and yet I shouldn't have fainted if I hadn't been following your example. The horse had nothing to do with it."

"Oh, Martine!"

"Yes, my dear Prissie. I had been following your old example of borrowing trouble, and I had been keeping my tribulations to myself, until I just couldn't bear them. You see it was this way. I was sure that father wouldn't get well, and that the shock of his death would kill mother, and Lucian would have to leave college, and I would have to start out at once to earn my living. Then little things were bothering me too, like Carlotta's being mean, and Angelina's leaving us with no one to help, and I was tired of being economical, so the horse was just the last straw."

Though Martine's explanation was not very lucid, Priscilla certainly understood her.

"I believe Clare was disappointed," she continued, "that I hadn't at least one bone broken. She wanted to make a heroine of me, and she isn't at all pleased when I tell her I wasn't in danger."

"Well, if you were not, Carlotta was. She is very grateful."

"I know, I know," said Martine, hastily. "But when you are not very fond of people, it is rather disagreeable to have them grateful, especially for nothing at all. I was really sorry that the person in the carriage was Carlotta. I suppose this sounds very hateful, for she has written me a fine letter—says she is sorry she couldn't see me before she went to the mountains, but still—"

"But still," echoed Priscilla.

"Oh, nothing, except that I like Mrs. Brownville's letter so much better. She says that I have been a great help to Herbert this summer—keeping him away from a set of young men the family didn't care for, and giving him ideals. I shouldn't expect Mrs. Brownville to know an ideal when she saw it. However, I dare say she's right, only it was unconscious goodness on my part. I didn't know Herbert had to be kept away from any set of foolish companions. I simply found him good company, and I am so used to giving advice to Lucian and Robert that I naturally favored Herbert in the same way. Then he was tremendously good in reading Latin with me. Except for this accident I should have been ahead of you, Prissie dear."

"I should like to have seen Herbert Brownville."

"Yes, it's a pity he had to go back to college before you came. But you'll see him in Boston some time."

"When do you expect your father?" asked Priscilla.

"Oh, in a week—just think of it—in a week, and he is almost well, and although he has lost money, things are not going to be so very dreadful,—not at all as I feared. I looked too far ahead."

"Yes," said Priscilla, mischievously, "jumping at conclusions is almost as bad as borrowing trouble. They mean much the same thing."

"I am not so sure. I cannot imagine a slow, deliberate person like you jumping at conclusions, though I have known you to borrow trouble."

"Sometimes I am very hasty," responded Priscilla, slowly, as if reflecting on something. "There is one thing I ought to tell you. Do you remember your prize essay last spring?"

"Oh, yes, but I didn't set out to get a prize."

"I know. If you had, I suppose you would have written it all alone."

"What do you mean? I did write it alone."

Then remembering Lucian's help, Martine flushed to the roots of her hair.

"I did not mean to offend you," continued Priscilla, "for even if Lucian helped you a little, this was all right; I was only thinking how unfair I had been. I accidentally saw some notes for your essay in Lucian's handwriting, and for a little while I felt that you had acted unfairly. Do you remember one week last spring, when I was stiff and disagreeable and wouldn't go anywhere with you?"

"*One* week!" exclaimed Martine, roguishly.

"Oh, I dare say there were others. Only I remember the why of that particular week."

"But it's so long ago," cried Martine, "Let's not remember it now."

"It's only fair that you should know that I sometimes jump to conclusions."

"As long as you are ready to jump away from them again, there's no great harm done."

"That's what I wanted to say. I realized after all that there was no rule in school against getting help in an essay, and that you didn't know a prize was to be given when you wrote yours. But I always thought you ought to know how unfair I had been."

"Then we are friends again," said Martine, laughing, "though I didn't know we had ever been anything else." Secretly, she thought Priscilla had made a great ado about nothing. "It's the Puritan way, I suppose," she said to herself. Then aloud,—

"As I have forgiven you, we may call it square about those Christmas photographs. Thus far I have always been able to prevent your paying me for them. But to-day, when I found your note with this money on my bureau—really, Priscilla, I was almost offended. So here, child," and she held out an envelope, "if you will take back this money, I will forgive you for your unfair thoughts."

Under the circumstances Priscilla could not refuse Martine, and thus both girls were satisfied.

"There's one thing," said Martine, to change the subject, "I have had some lovely letters lately. Just think of little Esther's writing me. Nora must have told her where I was. She hopes I will be able to go on with the Mansion Class next year—but dear me, Priscilla, she has got far beyond me; only look at this pen and ink," and she displayed the last page of the letter, in which Esther had drawn a picture that Priscilla at once recognized as Martine herself. "Then Alexander Babet has written me about Yvonne, that she is much stronger, and so happy with her music lessons,—and would you believe it, they still have some of that hundred dollars left. It's wonderful how far some people can make a little money go."

Here Martine sighed, recalling the time when she would not have thought a hundred dollars too much to spend in gratifying a single small wish.

"Do you know," she continued, "it may be that I can really do something for Yvonne next year. If papa can't spare the money, why I can give up something of my own—riding lessons, for example,—and spend what it would cost for Yvonne. This year I have been so frightfully useless; it seems as if I hadn't done anything for anybody."

"How foolish you are," exclaimed Priscilla. "If there were nothing else, you certainly have helped Yvonne and Esther, and just think what Mrs. Brownville writes about Herbert, and your mother says you have been a wonderful housekeeper, and that you have taken so much care off her shoulders, and Angelina—"

"Well, Angelina is rather absurd," interposed Martine; "I was just coming to myself that evening after—what shall I call it—the Carlotta incident, when Angelina rushed into the room, and almost threw herself on my neck. She seemed to think that something awful had happened to me because she had undertaken to leave us, and that my salvation depended on her. She said she had had queer feelings all day, and that she just felt drawn back to Red Knoll, which she never, never, would desert again. Really it was just as well that she came back, for although mother was able to get an extra helper, Angelina knew exactly where things were. Of course she was tremendously proud of what she had accomplished in her trip to Portsmouth, for she made the house-breaker admit that he was Miguel Silva, and though she can't recover her money, she has a kind of wicked satisfaction in knowing that he will be punished for his other misdeeds."

"She doesn't seem to be quite as Spanish as she was last winter. At least she doesn't say as much about it."

"No, she gives me the credit for that. She says that I have shown her that it is wrong to pretend anything. However, on that same Portsmouth trip, she went down the harbor to look at the island where Cervera's men were prisoners, and now she likes to speak of the Spaniards in a patronizing tone as people to be spoken of as inferiors rather than kinsmen."

"It's astonishing," mused Priscilla, "how many friends you make!"

"Why should it be astonishing? Why shouldn't I make friends?"

"I only meant it was astonishing in comparison with me. No one ever attaches importance to me. In the past year I have hardly made a new friend—while you—"

"You have made a friend of me for one thing, and Lucian thinks you are exactly right, and my mother considers you a perfect model. Oh, yes, and there's Eunice."

Priscilla, in spite of herself, smiled at Martine's droll tone.

"But think of all the people you have to your credit. Mr. Stacy says he never saw a young girl talk so intelligently about Plymouth, and the children are always asking me when you will come again, and in her secret heart I believe Aunt Tilworth prefers you to me,—and my mother—"

"What nonsense, Priscilla! It's only because people think me so very empty-headed when they first meet me, that they are surprised later to find that there's anything to me, just as I am surprised some times to discover these quiet dignified girls, like Elinor, and Clare, are really very good fun when you come to know them better."

"Then," continued Priscilla, "there are Balfour and Mr. Gamut. If you hadn't been considerate of Balfour's feelings, and invited him to your house, he wouldn't have met Mr. Gamut, and Eunice says he has made him a splendid offer, and he will take it as soon as he's through college."

"Oh, well, things may have happened that way; but you know yourself that I haven't any particular talent for anything, and I never go out of my way to help people."

"You help them just by being bright and pleasant and making them think the best of themselves."

"Perhaps; but as to Balfour, I am glad that he's to be helped by Mr. Gamut, and not by Mr. Blair, or even papa, as I once hoped. For, as it is, he's much more independent, without feeling that anything has been done for him, because he's a connection of ours, even though the cousinship is rather far away. It was so funny, though, to see Mr. Gamut the evening Carlotta's horse tried to run. He appeared on the scene just as I fainted, and later, when I came to, he was hopping about, anxious to do something, but not knowing what to do. Faint as I was, I almost laughed at him. But that would have been mean, for he had come almost expressly to bring me news that he had just heard about papa's affairs. He said he knew I had been worrying, and he wanted to be the first to tell me. Naturally, he was surprised to find me lying on my back in the middle of the road. But come, we mustn't waste all the morning here," and seizing Priscilla by the arm, Martine fairly dragged her from the hammock.

"I feel so energetic now," she cried, "that we must do something exciting—take a long walk to work off my energy—if we could gather a party, I believe I could climb Agamenticus. What would you say to that, Prissie?"

The diminutive no longer annoyed Priscilla. She had learned to understand Martine.

"It isn't necessary for me to say anything. Your mother will tell you what she thinks about your climbing Agamenticus."

"I suppose it is too far. You always do know better than I. I believe that next year I shall have to be known as Priscilla's, instead of Brenda's ward"—and with her hand in Priscilla's, Martine went into the house.

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