

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of Molly Brown's Junior Days, by Nell Speed

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Molly Brown's Junior Days

Author: Nell Speed

Illustrator: Charles L. Wrenn

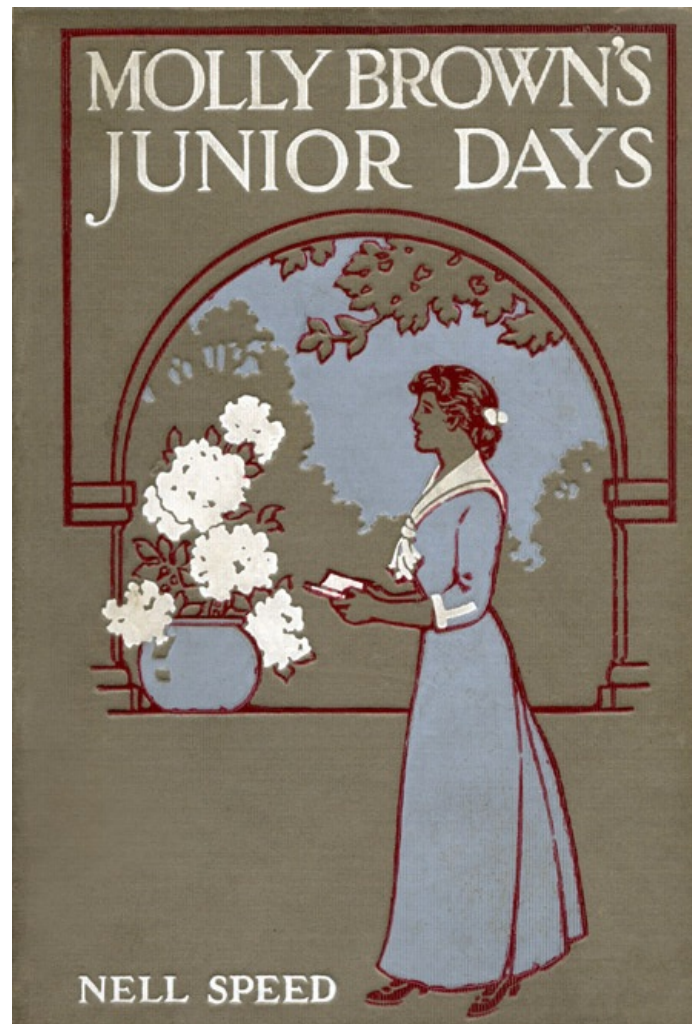
Release date: July 12, 2011 [EBook #36717]

Language: English

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MOLLY BROWN'S JUNIOR DAYS \*\*\*

E-text prepared by  
Stephen Hutcheson, Rod Crawford, Dave Morgan, eagkw,  
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team  
(<http://www.pgdp.net>)

---





DID I FRIGHTEN YOU? I AM SORRY.—Page [35](#).

# MOLLY BROWN'S JUNIOR DAYS

BY  
NELL SPEED

AUTHOR OF "MOLLY BROWN'S FRESHMAN DAYS," "MOLLY  
BROWN'S SOPHOMORE DAYS," ETC., ETC.

*WITH FOUR HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS*  
By CHARLES L. WRENN

NEW YORK  
HURST & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

---

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DAUGHTERS OF WELLINGTON	<a href="#">5</a>
II. MINERVA HIGGINS	<a href="#">18</a>
III. IN THE CLOISTERS	<a href="#">32</a>
IV. A LITERARY EVENING	<a href="#">44</a>
V. VARIOUS HAPPENINGS	<a href="#">57</a>
VI. "THE BEST LAID SCHEMES"	<a href="#">74</a>
VII. A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE	<a href="#">89</a>
VIII. COVERING THEIR TRACKS	<a href="#">105</a>
IX. THE GRAVE DIGGERS	<a href="#">116</a>
X. A VISIT OF STATE	<a href="#">134</a>
XI. A SWOPPING PARTY AND A MOCK TRIAL	<a href="#">147</a>
XII. ALARMS AND DISCOVERIES	<a href="#">163</a>
XIII. "THE MOVING FINGER WRITES"	<a href="#">175</a>
XIV. AN INVITATION AND AN APOLOGY	<a href="#">187</a>
XV. A CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY THAT WAS NEVER TOLD	<a href="#">200</a>
XVI. MORE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS AND A COASTING PARTY OF TWO	<a href="#">212</a>
XVII. THE WAYFARERS	<a href="#">226</a>
XVIII. HEALING THE BLIND	<a href="#">246</a>
XIX. A WARNING	<a href="#">259</a>
XX. THE PARABLE OF THE SUN AND WIND	<a href="#">272</a>
XXI. THE JUNIOR GAMBOL	<a href="#">289</a>

---

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Did I frighten you? I am sorry	<a href="#">Frontispiece</a>
They set to work to dig a small grave for Judy's slipper	<a href="#">129</a>
"And she's given me a pair of silk stockings," cried Molly	<a href="#">213</a>
The next thing she knew she was buried deep in a snow drift, and Judy was whizzing on alone	<a href="#">224</a>

---

# Molly Brown's Junior Days

## CHAPTER I.

### DAUGHTERS OF WELLINGTON.

No. 5 in the Quadrangle at Wellington College was in a condition of upheaval. Surprising things were happening there. The simultaneous arrival of six trunks, five express boxes and a piano had thrown the three orderly and not over-large rooms into a state of the wildest confusion.

In the midst of this mountain of luggage and scattered boxes stood a small, lonely figure dressed in brown, gazing disconsolately about.

"I feel as if I had been cast up by an earthquake with a lot of other miscellaneous things," she remarked hopelessly.

It was Nance Oldham, back at college by an early train, and devoutly wishing she had waited for the four-ten when the others were expected.

[6]

"This is too much to face alone," she continued. "If it had been at Queen's it never would have happened. Mrs. Markham wouldn't have allowed six trunks and a piano and five boxes to be piled into one room. And mine at the very bottom, too. If it wasn't a selfish act, I think I'd leave everything and go call on Mrs. McLean—but, no, that wouldn't do on the first day." Nance blushed. "But Andy's there to-day." She blushed again at this bold, outspoken thought. "I shall get the janitor to come up here and distribute these things," she added presently, with New England determination not even to peep at a picture of pleasure behind a granite wall of duty.

The doors of No. 5 opened on a broad, high-ceiled corridor, the side walls of which were wainscoted halfway up with dark polished wood. On either side of this corridor ranged the apartments and single rooms of the Quadrangle, one row facing the campus, the other the courtyard. An occasional upholstered bench or high-backed chair stood between the frequent doors and gave a home-like touch to the long gallery. They had been the gift of a rich ex-graduate.

[7]

Nance, closing the door of No. 5, paused and looked proudly down the polished vista of the hallway, which curved at the far end and continued its way on the other side of the Quadrangle.

The sound of voices and laughter floated to her through the half open doors of the other rooms. With a smile of contentment, she sat down in one of the high-backed chairs.

"Dear old Wellington," she said softly, "other girls love their homes, but I love you." Thus she apostrophized the classic shades of the university while her gaze lighted absently on a large laundry bag stuffed full standing just outside one of the doors. It was different from the usual Wellington laundry bag, being of a peculiar shape and of material covered with Japanese fans.

"It's Otoyo's. Of course, she must have been here since Monday. I heard she had spent the summer down in the village."

She hastened along the green path of carpet running down the middle of the corridor and paused at the room of the Japanese laundry bag.

[8]

"Otoyo Sen," she called. "Why don't you come out and meet your friends?"

The Japanese girl was seated on the floor gazing at a photograph. She rose quickly and flew to the door, thrusting the picture behind her.

"Oh, I am so deeply happy to see you again, Mees Oldham," she exclaimed.

"She has learned the use of adverbs," thought Nance, kissing Otoyo's round dark cheek.

"You see I have been studying long time. I now speak the language with correctness. Do you not think so?" said Otoyo, apparently reading Nance's thoughts.

"Perfectly," answered Nance. "But tell me the news. Is Queen's not to be rebuilt?"

"No, no. Queen's is to remain flat on the ground. She will not be erected into another building."

"And have you had a happy summer? Was it quite lonesome for you, poor child?"

"No, no," protested Otoyo, still hiding the photograph behind her. "Those who remained at Wellington were most kind to little Japanese girl."

[9]

"And who remained, Otoyo?"

"Professor Green was here long time. I studied the English language under him. He is a great man. It is an honorable pleasure to learn from one so great."

"He is, indeed. And who else? Any of the rest of the faculty?"

"No, no. They had all departing gone."

Nance smiled. There was still a relic of last year's English.

"Mrs. McLean and her family remained at Wellington through the entire summer," went on Otoyo fluently.

"And were they nice to you, Otoyo?"

"Veree, exceedinglee."

"Was Andy well?"

"Quite, quite," replied the Japanese girl, backing off from Nance and slipping the photograph into a book.

Not for many a day did Nance find out that it was a portrait of that youth himself, taken at the age of eight in Scotch kilties and a little black velvet hat with two streamers down the back.

[10]

Suddenly Otoyo became very voluble. She changed the subject and talked in rapid, smooth English. Could she not see the new rooms of her friends? She understood everybody was coming down on the four-ten train. It would be very crowded. She had found a new laundress whom she

could highly recommend.

Nance looked at her curiously as they strolled back to the other rooms. Something was changed about the little Japanese girl. She seemed older and much less timid.

It was Miss Sen who found the man to move the trunks, and who helped Nance unpack her things and lay them in half the chest of drawers; and it was Otoyoy, also, who, with the skill of an artisan, removed all the nails from the express box tops so that they might be unpacked immediately by their owners. At lunch time she led Nance into the great dining hall of the Quadrangle where more than a hundred girls ate their meals three times a day. There was no attention she did not show to Nance, and all because her conscience was heavy within her on account of the one dishonorable act of her life. How could she know that among the scores of photographs taken of young Andy from his babyhood to his present age, Mrs. McLean would never miss one small, faded picture out of the pile thrust into a cabinet drawer? [11]

At last it came time to meet the four-ten, and Nance, looking spic and span in fresh white duck and white shoes and stockings, was rather surprised to find Otoyoy also attired in a pretty white dress, her face shaded with a Leghorn hat trimmed with pink roses.

"Why, Miss Sen," she exclaimed, "how did you learn so soon to dress yourself in this charming American style?"

"At a garden party at Mrs. McLean's I learned a very many things," said Otoyoy, "and by the purchasing agent I have obtained dresses of summer, of duckling, lining and musling; also this hat and two others very pretty." [12]

Nance laughed.

"You mean duck, linen and muslin, child," she said.

When the four-ten train to Wellington pulled into the station it seemed as if every student in the university must be crowded inside. They leaned from the windows and packed the doorways, overflowing onto the platforms.

The air vibrated with high feminine shrieks of joy. Only the poor little freshies were silent in all this jubilation of reunions. Suddenly Nance, spying Molly Brown and Judy Kean, rushed to meet them, Otoyoy following at her heels like a toy spaniel after a larger dog. There was a long triangular embrace.

"Well, here we are, *and juniors*," was Judy's first comment. "Nance, you're looking fine as silk. No sign of travel on that snowy gown."

"There oughtn't to be," said Nance. "I just put it on half an hour ago."

"And look at our little Jap," cried Molly, hugging Otoyoy. "Look at little Miss Sen, all dressed up in a beautiful linen." [13]

"Little Miss Sen has been learning a thing or two," said Nance. "She's been to parties, she's been studying English under a famous professor; she's been buying duckling, lining and musling dresses through a purchasing agent with very good taste, and she's got a photograph she looks at in private and hides away when any one comes into the room. Oh, you needn't think I didn't see you!"

Otoyoy blushed scarlet and hung her head.

"Oh, thou crafty one," Judy was saying, when four of the old Queen's girls pounced on them with suit cases and satchels. "Why, here are the Gemini," Judy continued, embracing the Williams sisters. "Burned to a mahogany brown, too. Where did you get that tan? You look like a pair of—hum—Filipinos."

"Don't be making invidious remarks, Judy," put in Katherine. "Learn to see the beautiful in all things, even complexions."

In the meantime Margaret Wakefield, looking five years older than her real age because of her matured figure and self-possessed air, was shaking hands all around, making an appropriate remark with each greeting, like the politician she was; and Jessie Lynch was crying in heartbroken tones: [14]

"I left a box of candy and a bunch of violets and two new magazines on the train!"

"Where's my little freshman?" Molly demanded of the other girls above the din and racket.

"There she is," Judy pointed out. "But there is no hurry. Every bus is jammed full."

The lonely freshman was standing pressed against the wall of the waiting room looking hopelessly on while the usual mob besieged Mr. Murphy, baggage master.

"Why, the poor little thing," cried Molly, rushing to take the girl under her wing.

"It's astonishing how one good deed starts another," thought Nance, looking about her for other stranded freshies; and both the Williamses were doing the same thing.

There were several such lonely souls wandering about like lost spirits. They had been jostled and [15]

pushed this way and that in the crowd, and one little girl was on the point of shedding tears.

"I can always tell a new girl by the wild light in her eye," observed Edith Williams, making for an unhappy looking young person who had given up in despair and was sitting on her suit case.

At last they were all bundled into one of the larger buses from the livery stable. The older girls were thrilled with expectant joy while they watched eagerly for the first glimpse of the twin gray towers; the new girls, most of them, gazed sadly the other way, as if home lay behind them.

"It isn't a case of 'abandon hope all ye who enter here,'" observed Judy to a dejected freshman who in five minutes had lost all interest in her college career. "Look at us blooming creatures and you'll see what it can do. There's no end to the fun of it and no end to the things you'll learn besides mere book knowledge."

"I suppose so," said the girl, struggling to keep back her tears, "but it's a little lonesome at first." [16]

"Poor little souls," thought Molly, who had overheard with much pride Judy's eulogy of college, "how can we explain it to them? They'll just have to find it out themselves as we did before them."

The truth is, our new juniors felt quite motherly and old.

A hushed silence fell over the Queen's girls when the bus drove by the grass-grown plot where once had stood their college home.

"If a dear friend had been buried there, we couldn't have felt more solemn," Molly wrote her sister that night.

But the prestige felt in alighting finally at the great arched entrance to the Quadrangle drove away all sad thoughts, and when they hastened down the long polished corridor to their rooms, they could not quench the pride which rose in their breasts. It was the real thing at last. Queen's and O'Reilly's had been great fun, but this was college. They were the true daughters of Wellington now, and that night when the gates clicked together at ten, they would sleep for the first time behind her gray stone walls. [17]

At that moment the voices of a hundred-odd other daughters hummed through the halls, but it was all a part of the college atmosphere, as Judy said.

Their bedrooms were not quite as large as the old Queen's rooms, but oh, the sitting room! They viewed it with pride. Each of the three had contributed something toward additional furniture. The piano was Judy's; the divan, Nance's; and the cushions, yet to be unpacked, Molly's. There was another contribution not made by any of the three. It was the beautiful Botticelli photograph left for Molly by Mary Stewart, who had gone to Europe for the winter.

"How glad I am the walls are pale yellow and the woodwork white!" exclaimed Judy joyfully.

"How glad I am there's plenty of room on these shelves for everybody's books," said Nance.

"And how glad I am to be a junior and back at old Wellington," finished Molly, squeezing a hand of each friend.

---

## CHAPTER II.

 [18]

### MINERVA HIGGINS.

"There's only one thing worse than a faculty call-down and that's a Beta Phi freeze-out," remarked Judy Kean one Saturday afternoon a few weeks after the opening day of college.

"Why do you bring up disagreeable subjects, Judy? Have you been getting a call-down?" asked Katherine Williams.

"Not your old Aunt Judy," replied the other. "I'm far too wise for that after two years' experience, but I saw some one else get one of the most flattening, extinguishing, crushing call-downs ever received by an inmate of this asylum for young ladies. And they do tell me it was followed soon after by another one."

"Do tell," exclaimed an interested chorus.

"It was that fresh Miss Higgins from Ohio," continued Judy, with some enjoyment of the curiosity she was exciting. "You know she's always trying to attract the attention of the masses——" [19]

"We being the masses," interrupted Edith.

"And stand in the limelight. She's bright, I hear, very bright, but she knows it."

"I recognized her type almost immediately," said Katherine. "She's one of those brightest-girls-in-

the-high-school-pride-of-the-town kind.”

“Exactly,” answered Judy. “She has been regarded as a prodigy for so long that she doesn’t understand the relative difference between a freshman and a senior. I honestly believe she thought everybody in Wellington knew all about her, and she wears as many gold medals on her chest as a field marshal on dress parade.”

“We saw the gold medals on Sunday,” interposed Molly. “I think it’s rather pathetic, myself. She is more to be pitied than scorned, because of course she doesn’t know any better.”

“She’ll have to live and learn, then,” said Judy.

“Get to the point of your story, Judy. Who extinguished her?” ejaculated Margaret Wakefield, impatient of such slipshod methods of narration. [20]

“How can I tell a tale when I’m interrupted by forty people at once?” exclaimed Judy. “Besides, I haven’t the gift of language like you, old suffragette.”

Margaret laughed. She was entirely good-natured over the jibes of her friends about her passion for universal suffrage.

“Well, the Beta Phi crowd of seniors,” went on Judy, “were walking across the campus in a row. I don’t suppose Miss Higgins had any way to know this soon in the game that they represented the triple extract of concentrated exclusiveness at Wellington. Anyhow, she knows it now. She came rushing up behind them and gave Rosomond a light, friendly slap on the back. If you could have seen Rosomond’s face! But Miss Higgins was entirely dense. She began something about ‘Hello, girls, have you heard the news about Prexy—’ but she never got any further. Rosomond gave her the most freezing look I ever saw from a human eye.”

“What did she say?”

“That was it. She never said anything. Nobody said anything. Eloise Blair carries tortoise-shell lorgnettes—” [21]

“She doesn’t need them,” broke in Nance.

“She only does it to make herself more haughty.”

“Anyway, Eloise raised the lorgnettes.”

“Poor Miss Higgins,” cried Molly.

“There was perfect silence for about a minute. Then they all walked on, leaving little Higgins standing alone in the middle of the campus.”

“And where were you?” asked Margaret.

“Oh, I was with the seniors,” answered Judy, flushing slightly. “I had been over to Beta Phi to see Rosomond about something.”

It was impossible for Judy’s friends not to make an amiable unspoken guess as to why she had visited the Beta Phi circle. It had been evident for some time that she was working to get into the “Shakespeareans,” the most exclusive dramatic club in college. There was an awkward silence as this thought flashed through their minds. Molly felt embarrassed for her chum. After all, she was no worse than Margaret Wakefield, who had managed to get herself elected three years in succession as president of her class. [22]

“What was the other extinguisher Miss Higgins had, Judy?” asked Molly.

“Oh, yes. That was even worse. It came from your particular friend, Professor Green. She interrupted him in the middle of a lecture with one of those unnecessary questions new girls ask to show how much they know. And then she said something about methods at Mill Town High School.”

“Really?” chorused the voices. “And what did he say?”

“He looked very much bored and replied that they were not interested in Mill Town High School, and he would be obliged if she would pay attention to the lecture. It was a public rebuke, nothing more nor less.”

“The mean thing,” exclaimed Molly.

“Now, Molly,” interposed Margaret, “you know very well that girls of that type ought to be taken down. They are never tolerated at college. A conceited boy at college is always thoroughly hazed until there’s not a drop of conceit left, and it does him good. And since we can’t haze, we simply have to extinguish a fresh freshie. Miss Higgins may develop into a very nice girl in a year or two, but at present she’s the veriest little upstart—” [23]

“Do be careful,” said Molly cautiously. “I’ve invited her this afternoon to drink tea—”

“Molly Brown,” they cried, pummeling her with sofa cushions and beating her with her own slippers.

“Really, Molly, you must restrain your inviting habits,” said Judy.

"I'm sorry," apologized poor Molly.

"Why did you do it, pray? You know perfectly well no one here wants her."

"I know it, but I was sorry for her. She seemed so brash and lonesome at the same time. I thought it might help her some to mingle with a few fine, intelligent, well-bred girls like you——"

"Here, here! Don't try to get out of it that way."

[24]

"She appears to be very learned," continued Molly, turning her blue eyes innocently from one to the other. "I thought it would be nice to pit her against Margaret and Edith. She discusses deep subjects and uses big words I can only dimly guess the meaning of——" There was a tap at the door. "Now, be nice, please."

"Come in," called Nance, in a tone of authority, and Minerva Higgins appeared in their midst.

She had done honor to the occasion by putting on a taffeta silk of indigo blue, and by pinning on some of her most conspicuous gold medals acquired at intervals during her early education.

Judy shook her head over the indigo blue.

"Only certain minds could wear it," she thought.

Molly rose, but before she could frame a cordial greeting, the new guest was saying:

"How do you do, Molly? Awfully nice of you to ask me. You don't mind my calling you by your first name, do you? My name is Minerva but the girls at Mill Town High School called me 'Minnie.' I hope you'll do the same."

[25]

"I shall be glad to," answered Molly, rather taken back by this sudden intimacy.

After she had performed all necessary introductions, wicked Katherine Williams remarked:

"Minnie is a very charming name, but I insist on calling you 'Minerva' after the Goddess of Wisdom. She never wore gold medals, but then it wasn't the fashion among the early Greeks."

Minerva's face was the picture of complacency.

"In Greece she would have been 'Athene,'" she observed.

There was a loud clearing of throats and Judy, as usual, was seized with a violent fit of coughing.

"Sit down here, Miss Higgins—I mean Minnie," said Molly hastily. "The tea will be ready in a minute."

"You have been to college before, Minerva?" asked Edith Williams solemnly.

Minerva looked somewhat surprised.

"Oh, no. Not college. I am just out of High School. Mill Town High School is a very wonderful educational institution, you know. Perhaps you have heard of it. A diploma from there will admit a girl into any of the best colleges in the country. I could have gone to a private school. My father is professor of Greek at the Academy in Mill Town, but I preferred to take advantage of the high standards of the High School, which are even higher than those of the Academy."

[26]

"I suppose your father's taste in Greek caused him to name you Minerva," observed Judy.

"But Minerva isn't Greek, Julia," admonished Katherine.

Again Molly interceded. It was cruel to make fun of the poor girl, although there was no denying that Minerva had a high opinion of herself.

"Have a sandwich," she said soothingly.

There was a long interval of silence while Minerva crunched her sandwich.

"Your life at Mill Town High School must have been one grand triumphal progress, judging from your medals, Miss Higgins," said Edith Williams finally.

[27]

Minerva glanced proudly down at the awards of merit.

"There are a good many of them," she observed, with a smile that was almost more than they could stand. "And there are more of them still. I've won one or two medals each year ever since I started to school. But I don't like to wear them all at once."

"That's very modest of you."

"Are you going to specialize on any subjects, Miss Higgins?" asked Margaret Wakefield, really meaning to be kind and lead the girl away from topics which made her appear ridiculous.

"Biology, I think. But I am interested in Comparative Philology, too, and after I skim through a little Greek and Latin, I intend to take up some of the ancient languages, Sanskrit and Hebrew."

Was it possible that Minerva was making game of them? They regarded her suspiciously, but she seemed sublimely unconscious.

[28]

"Why not study also the ancient tongue of the Basques?" asked Edith, quite gravely.



"That would be interesting," replied Minerva, "but I want to get through this little college course first."

Molly batted her heavenly eyes and suddenly burst out laughing.

"Excuse me," she said. "I didn't mean to be rude, but the course at Wellington doesn't seem so small to us. We have to study all the time and then just barely pull through. I've almost flunked twice in mathematics. I wish I could call it a little course."

"Ah, well, we are not all Minervas," observed Margaret. "Some of us are just ordinary school girls learning the rudiments of education. We have not had the advantages of Mill Town High School, and if any of us have won gold medals we never show them."

This measured rebuff, however, had no more effect on Minerva's impervious vanity than a cup of water dashed against a granite boulder. She was already up, wandering about the room, boldly examining the girls' belongings, ostentatiously reading the titles of books aloud. [29]

"Plays by Molière. Oh, yes, I read them in the original two years ago. They're easy. 'Green's Short History of the English People,' very interesting book. 'The Broad Highway.' I never read fiction. Only biography and history——"

Edith Williams, stretched at her ease on the divan, gave an inaudible groan and turned her face to the wall.

Molly glanced helplessly about her.

"'The Primavera,' that's by Botticelli," went on the girl, infatuated by her own intelligence. "Good artist, but I don't care for the old masters as a general thing. They are always out of drawing."

Katherine rolled her eyes up into her head until only the whites could be seen, which gave her the horrible aspect of a corpse.

There was a long and eloquent silence. Presently Minerva took her departure, and Molly, hospitable to the last gasp, saw her to the door and invited her to come again. [30]

With the door safely locked and Minerva out of earshot, there was a general collapse. Nobody laughed, but the room was filled with painful sounds, moans and groans. Judy pretended to faint on top of Edith, and Molly sat in a remote corner of the room.

Somehow, they felt beaten, vanquished.

"I am sore all over with repressed emotions," cried Judy. "I couldn't stand another séance like that."

"Does she know as much as she claims?" asked Nance.

"Of course not," exclaimed Margaret irritably. "If she really knew she wouldn't claim anything. It's only ignorant people who boast of knowledge. I suppose she has been looked up to for so long that she regards herself as a fountain of wisdom."

"She must be taken down," said Edith firmly. "This mustn't be allowed to go on at Wellington."

"But hazing isn't allowed," put in Molly.

"Not by hazing, goosie. By some homely little practical joke that will show herself to herself as others see her." [31]

"All right," consented Molly. She felt indeed that something should be done to save poor Minerva Higgins from eternal ridicule.

"If anybody has suggestions to make," here announced Margaret Wakefield, self-constituted chairman of all committees, impromptu or otherwise, "they may be stated in writing or announced by word of mouth to-morrow night in our rooms at a fudge party."

"Accepted," they cried in one breath.

In the meantime, Minerva Higgins was writing home to her mother that she had been, if not the guest of honor, almost that, at a junior tea, and had found the girls rather interesting though poor talkers. In fact, it was necessary to do almost all the talking herself.

---

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN THE CLOISTERS. [32]

Life in the Quadrangle hummed busily on. The girls found themselves in the very heart of college affairs. As a matter of fact the old Queen's circle had been somewhat restricted, having narrowed down to less than a dozen; whereas now, they associated with many times that number and were

invited to a bewildering succession of teas and fudge parties.

Also they were nearer to the library, the gymnasium, the classrooms and the cloisters. Here, during the warm, hazy days of Indian summer Molly loved to walk. It was not such a popular place as she had imagined with the Quadrangle girls, and often she was quite alone in the arcade, bordered now with hydrangeas turning a delicate pink under the autumn suns.

One afternoon, a few days after Margaret's fudge party to discuss the question of Minerva Higgins, Molly sought a few quiet moments in the cloistered walk. It was a half hour before closing-up time, but she would not miss the six strokes of the tower clock again, as she had on her first day at college two years before. [33]

She usually confined her walks to the far side of the arcade, keeping well away from the side of the cloisters on which the studies of some of the faculty opened. That afternoon she carried her volume of Rossetti with her, and pacing slowly up and down, she read in a low musical voice to herself:

“The blessed damozel leaned out  
From the gold bar of Heaven;  
Her eyes were deeper than the depth  
Of waters stilled at even;  
She had three lilies in her hand,  
And the stars in her hair were seven.”

Waves of rhythm ran through Molly's head, and when she reached the end of the walk she turned mechanically and went the other way without pausing in her reading. [34]

Many girls studied in this way in the cloisters and it was not an unusual sight, but Molly made a picture not soon to be forgotten by any one who might chance to wander in the arcade at that hour. She was still spare and undeveloped, but the grace that was to come revealed itself in the girlish lines of her figure. Her eyes seemed never more serenely, deeply blue than now, and her hair, disordered from the tam o'shanter she had pulled off and tossed onto a stone bench, made a fluffy auburn frame about her face. Molly was by no means beautiful from the standpoint of perfection. Her eyebrows and lashes should have been darker; her chin was too pointed and her mouth a shade too large. But few people took the trouble to pick out flaws in her face or figure. Those who loved her thought her beautiful, and the few who did not could not deny her charm.

Presently she sat down on a bench, continuing to declaim the poem out aloud, making a gesture occasionally with her unoccupied hand. After reading a verse, she closed her eyes and repeated it to herself. Opening her eyes between verses, she encountered the amused gaze of Professor Edwin Green who, having seen her in the distance, had cut across the grassy court and now stood as still as a statue leaning against a stone pillar. [35]

“Oh,” exclaimed Molly, with a nervous start.

“[Did I frighten you? I am sorry.](#) I should have walked more heavily. It's unkind to steal up on people who are reading poetry aloud.”

“I was learning the—something by heart,” she said, blushing a little as if she had been detected in a guilty act. After all, it was the professor who had introduced her to that poem and given her the book last Christmas, but that, of course, was not the reason why she was so fond of the poem she was studying.

“How do you like the Quadrangle?” he asked. “Are you comfortable and happy?”

Molly clasped her hands in the excess of her enthusiasm. [36]

“I was never so happy in all my life,” she cried. “It is perfect. Our rooms are beautiful, and a sitting room, too. Think of that, with yellow walls and a piano!”

The professor looked vastly pleased. For an instant his face was lighted by a beaming, radiant smile. Then he thrust his hands into his pockets and pressed his lips together in a thin line of determination.

“I feel as if I were one of the workers inside the hive now,” Molly continued.

“And all the difficulties about tuition have been settled?” he asked. “Forgive my mentioning it, but I felt an interest on account of my close relationship to the Blounts.”

“Oh, yes. The money from the two acres of orchard settled that. You see, whoever bought it, whether it was an old man or a company—for some reason the name is still a secret with the agent—paid cash. They rarely do, mother says, and the money is usually spent in dribblets before you realize it. Mr. Richard Blount expects to settle with his father's creditors in a few months. My sisters are working. They say they enjoy it, but they are both engaged to be married,” she added, smiling. [37]

“Did the orchard yield a good crop this year?” asked the professor irrelevantly.

“Oh, splendid. The apples were packed in barrels and sent away. Several of them were sent to mother as a present. Very nice of the owner, wasn't it?”

"Very," replied the professor, fingering something in his pocket absently.

"The owner of the orchard has it kept in fine condition. The trees have been trimmed and the ground cleared. Mother says she's ashamed of her own shiftlessness whenever she looks at it. The grass was as smooth as velvet all summer until the drought came and dried it brown. I used to go there summer mornings and lie in a hammock and read. I didn't think any one would care. There's no harm in attaching a hammock to two trees. Mother says I don't seem to remember that we are no longer the owners of the orchard. I have played in it and lived in it so much of my life that I've got the habit, I suppose."

[38]

The professor cleared his throat.

"You said the ground sloped slightly, did you not?"

"Yes, just a gradual slope to a little brook at the bottom of the hill. The water seems to cool the air in summer. It never goes dry and there is a little basin in one place we used to call 'the birds' bath tub.' Such birds you never imagined! They are attracted by the apples, I suppose. But there are hundreds of them. They sing from morning to night."

"You paint a very attractive picture, Miss Brown. It must have been hard to give up this charming property."

"But you see we haven't given it up exactly. It's there right against us. We can still look at it and even walk under the trees. No one minds. And see what I have for it! Nothing could ever take the place of college—not even an apple orchard."

[39]

A sharp voice broke in on this pleasant conversation.

"Cousin Edwin, I've been looking for you everywhere."

Judith Blount appeared hastening down the walk.

The professor watched the advancing figure calmly.

"Well, now you have found me, what do you want?" he asked.

Molly detected a slight note of annoyance in his voice. She had a notion that Judith was one of the trials of his life.

"I have rewritten the short story you criticized for me last week, and I want you to look it over again."

He took the roll of paper without a word and thrust it into his coat pocket.

Molly rose.

"I must be going," she said. "It must be nearly six o'clock."

Judith promptly sat down on the bench facing her cousin, who still leaned against the stone pillar.

[40]

"Don't you think it's a little chilly to be lingering here, Judith?" he remarked politely, as he joined Molly.

"It wasn't too chilly for you a moment ago," answered Judith hotly.

But she rose and walked on the other side of the professor.

"How do you like your rooms?" he asked presently.

"I hate them," she replied, with such fierce resentment that Molly was sure that Judith was glad to have something on which to vent her angry mood. "Thank heavens, this is my last year. I detest Wellington. I have never been happy here. It's brought shame and misfortune on me. It's a horrid old place."

"Oh, Judith," protested Molly, unable to endure this libel on her beloved college.

"My dear child, you can't blame Wellington for your misfortunes," interposed the professor, who himself cherished a deep affection for the two gray towers.

[41]

"It is hard to live in the village instead of at college," said Molly, feeling suddenly very sorry for the unhappy Judith.

But Judith was in no state to be sympathized with. All day she had been nursing a grievance. One of her friends in prosperity at the Beta Phi House had turned a cold shoulder on her that morning; and Judith was so enraged by the slight that her feelings were like an open sore.

She turned on Molly angrily.

"You ought to know," she said. "You had to do it long enough."

"Judith, Judith," remonstrated the professor. "Can't you understand that you gain nothing, and always lose something, by giving way like this? Denouncing and hating make the object you are working for recede. You'll never get it that way."

"How do you know what I'm working for?" she demanded, more quietly.

[42]

"We are all of us working for the same thing," he answered. "Happiness. None of us proposes to get it in the same way, but all of us propose to reach the same goal. What would give me happiness no doubt would never satisfy you."

"You don't know that, either. What would give you happiness?" Judith asked, with some curiosity.

The professor paused a moment, then he said calmly:

"A little home of my own in a shady quiet place with plenty of old trees, where I could work in peace. I have always fancied an old orchard. There might be a brook at one end——"

Molly smiled.

"He's thinking of my orchard," she thought.

"There must be hundreds of birds in my orchard," went on the professor, "and the grass must always be thick and green, except perhaps when the drought comes and it can't help itself——"

The six o'clock bell boomed out.

"Have an apple," he said, taking two red apples from his pocket and giving one to each of the girls.

Then he opened the small oak door and stood politely aside while they passed out.

[43]

---

## CHAPTER IV.

### A LITERARY EVENING.

[44]

The entertainment designed to bring Miss Minerva Higgins to a true understanding of her position as a freshman took place one Friday evening in the rooms of Margaret and Jessie. It was called on the invitation "A Literary Evening," and was to be in the nature of a spread and fudge affair. There had been two rehearsals beforehand, and the girls were now prepared to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

Molly was loath to take part in the literary evening.

"I can't bear to see anybody humiliated even when she ought to be," she said, but she consented to come and to give a recitation.

Several study tables had been united for the supper, the cracks concealed by Japanese towelling contributed by Otoyō. There was no Mrs. Murphy in the Quadrangle from whom to borrow tablecloths. All the chairs from the other rooms were brought in to seat the company, who appeared grave and subdued. Most of the girls were dressed to resemble famous poets and authors. Judy was Byron; Margaret Wakefield, George Eliot; Nance, Charlotte Brontë; Edith Williams, Edgar Allan Poe; and Molly was Shelley. Shakespeare, Voltaire and Charles Dickens were in the company, and "The Duchess," impersonated by Jessie Lynch.

[45]

The unfortunate Minerva was a little disconcerted at first when she found herself the only girl at the feast in her own character.

"Why didn't you tell me, so that I could have come in costume, too?" she asked Margaret.

"But you had your medals," was Margaret's enigmatic answer.

Minerva looked puzzled. Then her gaze fell to the shining breastplate of silver and gold trophies. She had worn them all this evening. The temptation had been too great. The medals gleamed like so many solemn eyes. She wondered if the others could read what was inscribed on them, or if it would be necessary to call attention to the most choice ones: "THE HIGHEST GENERAL AVERAGE FOR FOUR YEARS"; "REGULAR ATTENDANCE"; "MATHEMATICS"; "THE BEST HISTORICAL ESSAY"; "ENGLISH AND COMPOSITION."

[46]

Edith opened the evening by delivering a speech in Latin which was really one of Virgil's eclogues mixed up with whatever she could recall of Livy and Horace, and filled out occasionally with Latin prose composition. It was so excruciatingly funny that Judy sputtered in her tea and was well kicked on her shins under the table.

Minerva, however, appeared to be profoundly impressed, and the company murmured subdued approvals when, at last, the speaker took breath and sat down, gazing solemnly around her with dark, melancholy eyes very much blacked around the lids.

Margaret then delivered a learned discourse on "Poise of Body and Poise of Mind," which was skillfully expressed in such deep and intricate language that nobody could understand what she was talking about.

[47]

"Very, very interesting, indeed," observed Edith.

"Remarkable; wonderful; so clearly put," came from the others.

Minerva rubbed her eyes and frowned.

Nance recited "The Raven," translated into very bad French. This was almost more than their gravity could endure, and when she ended each verse with "*Dit le corbeau: jamais plus,*" many of the girls stooped under the table for lost handkerchiefs and Japanese napkins.

But it was not until Judy had sung a lullaby in Sanskrit—so called—that Minerva became at all suspicious. Even then it was the wrong kind of suspicion. She thought that perhaps she should have laughed, and the others had politely refrained because she hadn't.

After a great deal of learned talk, Molly stood on a soap box and recited "Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night."

[48]

This was the crowning joy of that famous evening, but still Minerva appeared seriously impressed.

"I recited that once at Mill Town High School," she remarked.

"Can't you give us something to-night?" asked Molly kindly, feeling that in some way the unfortunate Minerva ought to be allowed to join in.

"I don't know that I ought to give another poem by the same man," she replied, "except that Miss Oldham gave 'The Raven' in French."

"Don't tell us you know 'The Bells'?" demanded Edith Williams, in a trembling whisper.

"Oh, yes. I've given it at lots of school entertainments."

"We had better turn down the lights," said Margaret. "The room should be in darkness except the side light where Miss Higgins will stand. That will be the spot light."

This was a fortunate arrangement because, while Minerva recited "The Bells," with all proper gestures, intonations and echoes, according to Cleveland's recitation book, the girls silently collapsed. When she had finished, they were reduced to that exhausted state that arrives after a supreme effort not to laugh.

[49]

At last the entertainment came to an end. Minerva departed with some of the others, while those who lived close by remained to chat for a few minutes.

"I give up," exclaimed Margaret Wakefield. "Minerva is beyond teaching. She must remain forever the smartest girl in Mill Town High School."

"The only pity of it is that it was all wasted on one humorless person. We really furnished her with a most delightful entertainment and she never even guessed it," declared Nance.

"I'm glad she didn't," remarked Molly. "It was cruel, I think. Suppose she had caught on? Do you think it would have helped her? And we would have been uncomfortable."

"Suppose she did understand and pretended not to. The joke would have been decidedly on us," put in Katherine.

[50]

Later events of that evening would seem to bear out this suggestion, although just how deeply, if at all, Minerva was implicated in what followed no one could possibly tell. It was a question long afterwards in dispute whether one person had managed the sequel to the Literary Evening, or whether there had been a confederate. Certainly it seemed that every imp in Bedlam had been set free to do mischief, and if Minerva, as arch-imp, was looking for revenge, she found it.

"I don't like to appear inhospitable, girls, but it's five minutes of ten and I think you'd better chase along," said Margaret Wakefield.

But when Judy laid hold of the knob and tried to open the door, it would not budge.

"It won't open," she exclaimed. "What's to be done?"

What was to be done? They pulled and jerked and endeavored to pry it open with a silver shoe horn and a pair of scissors, and at last Jessie, as the smallest, was chosen to climb over the transom and go for help. It was five minutes past ten, and they prudently turned out the lights.

[51]

"Let me get at that knob just once before we work the transom scheme," ejaculated Margaret, who was very strong and athletic.

"People always think they can open tin cans and doors and pull stoppers when other people can't," observed Judy sarcastically.

Margaret treated this remark with contemptuous indifference. Seizing the knob with both hands, she turned it and, putting her knee to the jamb, pulled with all her force. The arch fiend on the other side must have turned the key at this critical moment, for the door flew open and the president tumbled back as if she had been shot from a catapult, knocking a number of surprised poets and authors into a tumbled heap. They were all considerably bruised and battered, and Margaret bit her tongue; a severe punishment for one whose oratory was the pride of the class.

"Hush," whispered Jessie, who alone had escaped the tumble, "here comes the house matron."

[52]

Softly she closed the door, and the girls waited until the danger was over. Then Margaret hastened to examine the keyhole.

"There's no key in it," she whispered, speaking with difficulty, because her tongue was bleeding from the marks of two teeth.

Whoever played the trick must have unlocked the door, jerked the key out and fled the instant the matron appeared at the end of the corridor. There was no time to discuss the mystery, however. She would be coming back in two minutes. Again they waited in silence until they heard the swish of her dress as she went past the door, now left open a crack in order that Judy, lying flat on her stomach on the floor, and enjoying herself immensely, might be on the lookout.

"Come on," she hissed, as the large, rotund figure of Mrs. Pelham was lost in the darkness, and out they scuttled like a lot of mice loosed from the trap.

But the evening's adventures were not over.

As Judy, in advance of Molly and Nance, pushed open their door, already ajar, a small pail of water, placed on the top of the door by the arch-imp, whoever she was, fell on Judy's head and deluged her. It contained hardly a quart of water, but it might have been a gallon for the wreck it made of Judy's clothes and the room. [53]

"Oh, but I'll get even with somebody," exclaimed that enraged young woman.

They turned on the green-shaded student's lamp and drew the blinds, the night watchman being very vigilant at the dormitories, and began silently mopping up the floor with towels.

Judy removed her wet clothes, and unbound her long hair, light in color and fine as silk in quality.

"I can't go to bed," she announced, "until I find out what's happened to the Gemini," and without another word she crept into the corridor.

"Nance," whispered Molly, when they were alone, "if Minerva Higgins did this, she's about the boldest freshman alive to-day. But, after all, we can't exactly blame her, considering what we did to her." [54]

"She is taking great chances," replied Nance, who had a thorough respect for college etiquette and class caste. "Every pert freshman must be prepared for a call-down; and if she doesn't take it like a lamb, she'll just have to expect a freeze-out. It's much better for her in the end. If Minerva were allowed to keep this up for four years, she would be entirely insufferable. She's almost that now."

"Don't you think she could find it out without such severe methods?"

"Severe methods, indeed," answered Nance indignantly. "Do you call it severe to be asked to sup with the brightest girls in Wellington? Margaret's speech alone was worth all the humiliation Minerva might have felt; but she didn't feel any. Do you consider that rough, crude jokes like this are going to be tolerated?"

"But we don't know that Minerva played them, yet," pleaded Molly. "I do admit, though, that it must have been a very ordinary person who could think of them. Margaret might have been badly hurt if she hadn't fallen on top of the rest of us." [55]

Presently Judy came stalking into their bedroom.

"It's just as I expected," she announced. "The Williamses' bed was full of carpet tacks and Mabel Hinton fell over a cord stretched across her door and sprained her wrist. She has it bound with arnica now."

"I don't see how Minerva could have had time to do all those things," broke in Molly.

There are some rare and very just natures—and Molly's was one of them—which will not be convinced by circumstantial evidence alone.

"She would have had plenty of time," argued Judy. "It would hardly have taken five minutes provided she had planned it all out beforehand. Besides, it's easy for you to talk, Molly. You didn't bite your tongue, or sprain your wrist, or get a ducking; or undress in the dark and get into a bedful of tacks. You escaped."

"Disgusting!" came Nance's muffled voice from the covers. [56]

"It is horrid," admitted Molly. "Whoever did it——"

"Minerva!" broke in Judy.

"—must have a very mistaken idea of college and the sorts of amusement that are customary."

So the argument ended for the night.

## CHAPTER V.

## VARIOUS HAPPENINGS.

Guilty or innocent, Minerva Higgins displayed an inscrutable face next day, and the juniors, lacking all necessary evidence, were obliged to admit themselves outwitted; but they let it be known that jokes of that class were distinctly foreign to Wellington notions, and woe be to the author of them if her identity was ever disclosed.

In the meantime, Molly was busy with many things. As usual she was very hard up for clothes, and was concocting a scheme in her mind for saving up money enough to buy a new dress for the Junior Prom. in February. She bought a china pig in the village, large enough to hold a good deal of small change, and from time to time dropped silver through the slit in his back.

[58]

"He's a safe bank," she observed to her friends, "because the only way you can get money out of him is to smash him."

The pig came to assume a real personality in the circle. For some unknown reason he had been christened "Martin Luther." The girls used to shake him and guess the amount of money he contained. Sometimes they wrote jingles about him, and Judy invented a dialogue between Martin Luther and herself which was so amusing that its fame spread abroad and she was invited to give it many times at spreads and fudge parties.

The scheme that had been working in Molly's mind for some weeks at last sprung into life as an idea, and seizing a pencil and paper one day she sketched out her notion of the plot of a short story. It was not what she herself really cared for, but what she considered might please the editor who was to buy it as a complete story, and the public who would read it. There were mystery and love, beauty and riches in Molly's first attempt. Then she began to write. But it was slow work. The ideas would not flow as they did for letters home and for class themes. She found great difficulty in expressing herself. Her conversations were stilted and the plot would not hang together.

[59]

"I never thought it would be so hard," she said to herself when she had finished the tale and copied it out on legal cap paper. "And now for the boldest act of my life."

With a triumphant flourish of the pen, she rolled up the manuscript and marched across the courtyard to the office of Professor Green.

"Come in," he called, quite gruffly, in answer to her knock. But when she entered, he rose politely and offered her a seat. Sitting down again in his revolving desk chair, he looked at her very hard.

"I know you will think I have the most colossal nerve," she began, "when you hear why I have called; but I really need advice and you've been so kind—so interested, always."

"What is it this time?" he interrupted kindly. "More money troubles?"

[60]

"No, not exactly. Although, of course, I am always anxious to earn money. Who isn't? But I have a writing bee in my head. I've had it ever since last winter, although I confined myself mostly to verse—"

Molly paused and blushed. She felt ashamed to discuss her poor rhymes with this learned man nearly a dozen years older than she was.

"There's no money in poetry," she went on, "and I thought I would switch off to prose. I have written a short story and—I hope you won't be angry—I've brought it over for you to look at. I knew you looked over some of Judith's stories."

"Of course I shan't be angry, child. I'm glad to help you, although I am not a fiction writer and therefore might hardly be thought competent to judge. Let's see what you have." He held out his hand for the manuscript. "On second thought," he continued, "suppose you read it aloud to me. Girls' handwriting is generally much alike—hard to make out."

Molly, trembling with stage fright, her face crimson, began to read. The professor, resting his chin on his interlocked fingers, turned his whimsical brown eyes full upon her and never shifted his gaze once during the entire reading, which lasted some twenty-five minutes. When she had finished, Molly dropped the papers in her lap and waited.

[61]

"Well, what do you think of it? Please don't mince matters. Tell me the truth."

The professor came back to life with a start. She knew at once that he had not heard a word.

"Oh, er—I beg your pardon," he said. "Very good. Very good, indeed. Suppose you leave the manuscript with me. I'll look it over again to-night."

She rose to go. After all she had no right to complain, since she had asked this favor of a very busy man; but she did wish he had paid attention.

"Wait a moment, Miss Brown, there was something I wanted to say. What was it now?" He rubbed his head, and then thrust his hands into his pockets. "Oh, yes. This is what I wanted to say—have an apple?" A flat Japanese basket on the table was filled with apples. "Excuse my not passing the basket, but they roll over. Take several. Help yourself."

[62]

He made Molly take three, one for Nance, one for Judy and one for herself. Then he saw her to the outer door, bowing silently, all the time like a man in a dream.

The next morning the manuscript was returned to Molly by the professor after the class in Literature. It was folded into a big envelope and contained a note. The note had no beginning and was signed "E. G." This is what it said:

"Since you wish my true opinion of this story, I will tell you frankly that it is decidedly amateurish. The style is heavy and labored and the plot mawkishly sentimental and mock heroic.

"Try to think up some simple story and write it out in simple language. Do not employ words that you are not in the habit of using. Be natural and express yourself as you would if you were writing a letter to your mother. Write about real people and real happenings; not about impossibly beautiful and rich goddesses and superbly handsome, fearless gods. Such people do not really exist, you know, and you are supposed to be painting a word picture of life.

"You have talent, but you must be willing to work very hard. Good writing does not come in a day any more than good piano playing or painting. I would add: be yourself—unaffected—sincere—and your style will be perfect."

Molly wept a little over this frank expression of criticism, although there did seem to be an implied compliment in the last line. She reread the story and blushed for her commonplaceness. Surely there never had been written anything so inane and silly.

For a long time she sat gazing at the white peak of Fujiyama on the Japanese scroll.

"Simple and natural, indeed," she exclaimed. "It's much harder than the other way. Unaffected and sincere! That's not easy, either." She sighed and tore the story into little bits, casting it into the waste-paper basket. "That's the best place for you," she continued, apostrophizing her first attempt at fiction. "Nobody would ever have laughed or cried over you. Nobody would even have noticed you. My trouble is that I try too hard. I am always straining my mind for words and ideas. Now, when I write letters, how do I do? I let go. I never worry. Can a story be written in that way?"

"How now, Mistress Molly," called Judy, bursting into the room. "Why are you lingering here in the house when all the world's afield? Get thee up and go hence with me unto the green woods where we are to have tea, probably for the last time before the winter's call."

"Who's 'we'?" asked Molly.

"Why, the usual crowd, and a few others from Beta Phi House."

"But you'll never have enough teacups to go around, child," objected Molly.

"Oh, yes, we shall. There are two other tea baskets coming from Beta Phi. There will be plenty and some over besides. Rosomond Chase and Millicent Porter were so taken with my basket last year that they each bought one. Of course Millicent's is much finer than mine or Rosomond's."

"I dare say. But I don't think I want to go, Judy."

The truth was Molly never felt in sympathy with those two Beta Phi girls, who represented an element in college she did not like. They dressed a great deal, for one thing, especially Millicent Porter, the girl who had sub-let Judith Blount's apartment the year before.

"Now, Molly, I think you're unkind," burst out Judy. She never could endure even small disappointments. "They are awfully nice girls and they want to know you better. They said they did."

"Well, why don't they come and see me? That's easy."

Judy did not reply. She was pulling down all the clothes in the closet in a search for Molly's tam and sweater. She was in one of her queer, excited moods. Could it be that Judy thought the sparkling coterie from Queen's was being honored by these two rich young persons from Beta Phi? Molly rejected the suspicion almost as soon as it entered her mind. No, it was simply that poor old Judy was obsessed with a desire to get into the "Shakespeareans," and by courting the most influential members she thought she could make it.

Molly pulled her slender length from the depths of the Morris chair where she had been lolling.

"Very well," she said resignedly. "I was meditating on my ambitions when you broke in on me. You are a very demoralizing young person, Judy."

Judy laughed. She made a charming picture in her scarlet tam and sweater.

"Come along," she cried, "and ambitions be hanged." She seized her tea basket under one arm and a box of ginger snaps under the other.

"Why, Judy, I am really shocked at you," exclaimed Molly. "I think I'll have to give you another shaking up before long. You're getting lax and lazy."

"Nothing of the sort. I only want to enjoy life while the weather is good. It's lots easier to think of ambitions on rainy days."

The other girls were waiting on the campus: the Williamses, Margaret and Jessie, Nance and



presently the two Beta Phi girls. Rosomond Chase was a plump, rather heavy blonde type, always dressed to perfection and bright enough when she felt inclined to exert her mind. Millicent Porter was quite the opposite in appearance; small, wiry, with a prominent, sharp-featured face; prominent nose, prominent teeth and rather bulging eyes. She talked a great deal in a highly pompous tone, and her voice always slurred over from one statement to another as if to ward off interruption. She seemed much amused at this little escapade in the woods, quite Bohemian and informal.

The Queen's girls could hardly explain why she appeared so patronizing. It was her manner more than what she said; although Margaret insisted that it was because she monopolized the conversation.

"We didn't go to listen to a monologue," Margaret thundered later when they were discussing the tea party. "We came to hear ourselves talk."

[68]

What surprised Molly was the attention that the young person of unlimited wealth bestowed upon her.

"Come and sit beside me, Miss Brown, and tell me about Kentucky," she ordered.

"I am afraid I haven't the gift of language," replied Molly, without budging from her seat on a log. "Ask Margaret Wakefield. She's the only conversationalist in the crowd."

"I suppose Mahomet must go to the mountain, then," observed Miss Porter, and she moved graciously over to the log, where she regaled Molly with a great deal of wordy talk.

"If she's going to do all the conversing, it might as well be on something interesting," thought Molly, and she started Millicent on the topic of silver work. This young woman, rich beyond calculation, had an unusual talent which had not been neglected. She worked in silver.

"Her natural medium," Edith had observed when she heard of it.

[69]

She could beat out chains and necklaces, rings of antique patterns, beautiful platters with enameled centers with all the skill of a real silversmith.

Molly listened with polite interest to Millicent's lengthy description of her art. There was often an unconscious flattery in the sympathetic attention Molly gave to other people's talk. It had the effect of loosening tongues and brought forth confidences and heart secrets. She was a good listener and the repository of many a hidden thought.

"I am only going to college, you know, to please papa," Millicent was saying. "He thinks I should be finished off like a piece of statuary or a new house. I would much rather do things with my hands. I can't see how I am to be benefited by all these classics. In the sort of life I shall lead they won't do me any good. Society people never quote Latin and Greek or make learned references to early Roman history and things of that sort. It isn't considered good form. Modern novels are the only things people read nowadays, but papa is determined. Now, with silver work, it's quite different. I love it. I love to make beautiful things. I have just finished a grape-vine chain. The workmanship is exquisite. My sitting room is my studio, you know, and I work there when I am not busy with stupid books. You seem interested. Do you know anything about silver work?"

[70]

Molly admitted her ignorance on the subject, but Millicent did not pause to listen. Her voice slurred over from the question to her next outburst.

"I like beautiful rich colors. I intend to design all the costumes for the next Shakespearean performance. If I had been born in a different sphere in life, I should have divided my time between silver work and costuming. I can draw, too, but it's more designing than anything else."

Then Millicent, encouraged by Molly's sympathetic blue eyes, lowered her voice and plunged into confidences.

"The truth is," she said, "we were not so—er—well-to-do two generations ago. My great-grandfather was an Italian silversmith. Isn't it interesting? He was really an artist in his way, and made wonderful vessels for the church, crucifixes, and things like that. I tell mamma I believe her grandfather's soul has entered into my body. But that isn't all. Now, if I tell you this, will you promise never to breathe it? It's really a family secret, but it accounts for my love of rich, beautiful things. I can sew, you know. I adore to embroider. If I had to, I could easily make all my own clothes—"

[71]

"But that's nothing to be ashamed of," broke in Molly.

"No, no. That isn't the secret. The secret is where I got the taste for such things. You promise not to mention this?"

"I promise," replied Molly gravely, repressing the smile that for an instant hovered on her lips.

"The silversmith grandfather had a brother who was a merchant. He had a shop in Florence where he sold all sorts of beautiful fabrics, velvets and brocades and lots of antique things."

[72]

"No doubt it was an antique shop," thought Molly.

"Mamma remembers it well, and the shop is still there to-day, but it's in other hands."

Molly felt much amusement at this explanation of heredity. It would not be difficult to add a few

lines to Millicent's small, thin face and place it on the shoulders of the old silversmith or of his brother, the dealer in antiques. How would they feel if they could hear this granddaughter conversing about society and the classics?

"But I have rattled on. Here I have told you two family secrets. But of course they will go no farther. You know more about me than any girl in Wellington. Won't you come over to dinner with me Saturday evening and see my studio?"

"I am so sorry," said Molly, "but I have an engagement,"—to try to write a sincere, natural, simple short story, she added, in her mind.

"Oh, dear, what a nuisance! Can you come Sunday? They have horrid early dinners Sunday, but no matter."

Molly was obliged to accept, anxious as she was to keep out of the Beta Phi crowd.

"By the way, do you act?" asked Millicent abruptly.

"A little," answered Molly, and that ended the tea party.

In the evening Judy was slightly cold to Molly. It was almost imperceptible, so subtle was the change, and Molly herself was hardly aware of it until her friend, stretched on the couch reading, suddenly closed her book with a snap and remarked:

"Considering you dislike the Beta Phi girls, you certainly managed to monopolize one of them."

"Judy!" remonstrated Nance, shocked at this unaccountable exhibition of temperament.

Molly said nothing whatever, and presently she slipped off to bed.

"We've all got our faults," she kept saying to herself, but she was bitterly hurt, nevertheless.

[73]

---

## CHAPTER VI.

### "THE BEST LAID SCHEMES."

[74]

Judy did have her failings, the faults of an only child spoiled by indulgent parents. But they were only on the surface, impulsive flashes of irritability that never failed to be followed by deep, poignant regret when the tempest had passed.

The next morning Molly was wakened by the fragrance of violets, and, opening her eyes, she looked straight into the heart of a big bunch of those flowers lying on her chest.

"Goodness, I feel like a corpse," she exclaimed.

Scrawled on a card pinned to the purple tissue ribbon around the stems of the violets was the following inscription:

"For dearest Molly from her devoted and loving Judy."

"The poor child must have got up early this morning and gone down to the village for them," she said to Nance. "And she does hate getting up early, too."

[75]

Thus the coldness between the two girls came to a temporary end. Molly did not go to the Beta Phi House to dinner on Sunday. Millicent sent word that she was ill with a headache and would like to postpone the visit. Some of the Shakespeareans came to the apartment of the three girls to call one evening, but they were Judy's friends, invited by her to drop in and have fudge, and Molly and Nance kept quiet and remained in the background. If Judy was working to get into the Shakespeareans, she should have the field to herself. The three visitors, seniors all of them, left early, but in some mysterious way the news of their call spread through the Quadrangle.

"Which of you is boning for the 'Shakespeareans'?" Minerva Higgins demanded of Nance next day.

This irrepressible young person had already acquired a smattering of college slang and college gossip. But still she had not learned the difference between a freshman and a junior.

[76]

Nance drew herself up haughtily.

"Miss Higgins," she said, "there are some things at Wellington that are never discussed."

"*Excuse me,*" said Minerva, making an elaborate bow.

But Nance did not even notice the bow. She had gone on her way like an injured dignitary.

The air was certainly full of rumors, however. Everybody, even the faculty, wondered upon whose shoulders the Shakespeareans' highly coveted honors would fall. The new members of this

distinguished body were always chosen after the junior play, preparations for which were now under way. There had been first a stormy meeting of the class. It was quite natural for President Wakefield to want all her particular friends to form the committee to choose a play and select the actors, and it was equally human of the Caroline Brinton forces to resent the old clique rule. But Margaret was a mighty leader and would brook no interference. So the Queen's girls were the ruling spirits of the entertainment. Judy was chairman of the committee, and was to have the principal part in the play, it being tacitly understood that she wanted to show the Shakespeareans what she could do.

[77]

It was like the scholarly group to give a wide berth to the modern comedies and melodramas usually selected by juniors for this performance, and to settle on "Twelfth Night."

"We can never do it," Caroline Brinton had announced in great vexation. "We haven't time and we have no coach."

But she had been calmly overruled and "Twelfth Night" it was to be, with daily rehearsals except on Saturdays, when there were two.

Molly was cast for the part of Maria, the maid. And she was glad, chiefly because the costume was easy. Judy was to play Viola, Edith Williams, Malvolio, and the other parts were variously distributed, Margaret being Sir Toby Belch.

[78]

When a college girl reaches her junior year her mind is well trained to concentrate and memorize. Two years before, perhaps only Edith Williams, whose memory was abnormal, would have trusted herself to memorize a Shakespearean part. But the girls were amazed now at their own powers. Miss Pryor, teacher of elocution, was present at many of the rehearsals, criticizing and suggesting, and hers was the only outside assistance the juniors had in their ambitious production.

It was probably through her that the accounts of their ability were noised abroad, and on the night of the play there was a great rush for seats. The president herself was there and many of the faculty. Professor Green had a front balcony seat looking straight down on the stage.

"Goodness, but I'm scared!" exclaimed Molly, peeping through the hole in the curtain at the large assembly.

"Heaven help us all," groaned Nance, dressed as an attendant of the Duke.

"Don't talk like that," Judy admonished them. "We must make it go off all right. Molly, don't you forget and be too solemn. Your part calls for much merriment, as the notes in the book said."

[79]

"Don't you be so dictatorial," said Nance, under her breath, hoping instantly that Judy, in a high state of nerves and excitement, had not heard her.

When the seniors began thumping on the floor with their heels and the sophomores commenced clapping, Molly's mind became a vacuum. Not even the first line of her part could she recall.

At last the curtain went up and the play began. She had no idea how Judy had conducted herself. A girl near her said:

"She certainly had an awful case of stage fright, but she'll be all right in the next act."

The words had no meaning to Molly, and she sat like a frozen image in the wings until Nance touched her on the shoulder and whispered:

"Hurry up."

Then she stepped into the glare of the footlights. Her blood ceased entirely to circulate. Her hands became numb. Icy fingers seemed to clutch her throat, and when she opened her mouth to speak, no voice came. She remembered making a fervent, speechless prayer.

[80]

In an instant her blood began to flow normally. She felt a wave of crimson surge into her cheeks, and she heard her own voice speaking to Margaret, stuffed out with sofa cushions to resemble Sir Toby Belch.

When the scene was over there was a great clapping of hands. It sounded to Molly like a sudden rainstorm in summer. And, like a summer shower, it was refreshing to the young actors in the great comedy.

"Good work, Molly," Margaret whispered. "I think we carried that off pretty well. If only Judy doesn't get scared again the thing will go all right."

"Did Judy have stage fright?" demanded Molly, in surprise.

"You mean to say you didn't know? She almost ruined the scene."

[81]

"Poor old Judy," thought Molly, "and just when she wanted to do her best, too."

Judy did improve considerably as the play progressed, but even a friendly audience has an unrelenting way of retaining first impressions; or perhaps it was that poor Judy, sensitive and high strung, imagined the audience was cold to her and so allowed her spirit to be quenched. There were no cries for "Viola" from the people in front, and there were many for Malvolio, Sir Toby and Maria.

Again and again these three actors came forth and bowed their acknowledgment. During the intermission several of the freshmen ushers carried down bouquets of flowers. Jessie received two from admirers who appeared to keep a running account at the florist's in the village. A splendid basket of red roses and a bunch of violets were handed over the footlights for Molly, and when she was summoned from the wings to appear and receive these floral offerings she flushed crimson and remarked to the usher:

[82]

"There must be some mistake. They couldn't be for me."

A ripple of laughter went over the entire house. There was another burst of applause which again brought Miss Molly Brown of Kentucky into prominence through no fault of her own.

The card on the magnificent basket of roses made known to her the fact that Miss Millicent Porter had thus honored her. The card on the violets merely said: "From a crusty old critic who believes in your success."

"I thought Millicent Porter had a big crush on you," observed Margaret later in the green room. "There's no doubt about it now after this noble tribute."

"Nonsense," said Molly. "It's because she has so much money and likes to spend it."

"On herself, yes, buying clothes and big lumps of silver to play with; but not on you, Molly, dear, unless she had been greatly taken with your charms."

Molly had seen a few college crushes and considered them absurd, a kind of idol worship by a young girl for an older one; but because she had been so closely with her own small circle, she had escaped a crush so far.

[83]

"I'll never believe it," she said. "I'm much too humble a person to be admired by such a grand young lady. She sent the roses because she had to recall her invitation to dinner."

"Only time will prove it, Miss Molly," answered Margaret.

The play ended with a grand storm of applause and college yells. Not in their wildest dreams had the juniors hoped for such success.

"It's difficult to tell who was the best, they were all so excellent," the president was reported to have said.

Finally, to satisfy the persistent multitude, each actor marched slowly in front of the curtain, and each was received with more or less enthusiasm.

"Rah-rah-rah; rah-rah-rah; Wellington—Wellington—Margaret Wakefield," they yelled; or "What's the matter with Molly Brown? She's all right. Molly—Molly—Molly Brown."

[84]

In the intoxicating excitement of this fifteen minutes nobody realized that Judy had withdrawn from the group of actors and hidden herself away somewhere behind the scenery. There was some speculation in the audience as to why Viola had not filed across the stage with the others, but since Judy's really devoted friends were all behind the scenes, there was no one to bring her out unless she chose to show herself with the others.

"Wasn't it simply grand?" cried Jessie, the last to taste the sweets of popularity. The hall was still ringing with:

"Jessie—Jessie—she's all right!" when she bowed herself behind the curtain and joined her classmates in the green room. Then there came cries of:

"Speech! Speech! Wakefield! Wakefield!"

Margaret, as composed as a May morning, stepped to the front of the platform and gave one of her most appropriate addresses to the joy of the audience and the intense amusement of the faculty.

[85]

"Think of that child, only eighteen, and making such a speech! They are certainly a remarkable group of girls. So much individuality among them," said Miss Walker to Miss Pomeroy, at her side.

"And rare charm in some of the individuals," added Miss Pomeroy. "The little Brown girl, for instance, who, by the way, is as tall as I am, but so thin that she seems small, has magnetism that will carry her through many a difficulty in life. They tell me she is almost adored by her friends."

In the meantime the juniors, entirely unconscious of these compliments from high places, and perhaps it was quite as well they were, had just missed Judy from their midst.

"Didn't she go before the curtain with the rest of us?" some one asked.

"But how strange, when she had the leading part."

"I thought I heard them give her the yell."

[86]

"Judy, Judy," called Molly.

"Here I am," answered a muffled voice from behind the scenery.

Presently Judy appeared, showing a face so white and tragic that her friends were shocked. With

a tactful instinct most of the girls hurriedly gathered their things together and disappeared, leaving only the intimates in the green room.

"Why, Judy, dearest, why did you hide yourself, and you the leading lady of the company?" exclaimed Molly reproachfully, when all outsiders had departed.

"Don't flatter me, Molly," Judy answered, in a hard, strained voice.

"But you were," said Molly, "and you acted beautifully."

"I ruined the play," said Judy angrily. "I ruined the entire business, and you made me do it."

"Oh, Judy," cried Molly, "you are talking wildly. What do you mean?"

"You did. You upset me completely when you said: 'don't be so dictatorial.' I never heard you make a speech like that before. And just as I was about to go on, too. It was cruel. It was unkind. If it had come from any one else but you——"

"Here—here," broke in Margaret. "Really, Judy, you're losing your temper."

"She never said it, anyhow," cried Nance. "I said it myself."

"She did say it, Nance. You're just trying to screen her," replied Judy, who had worked herself into a nervous rage.

"Is this going to be a free fight?" asked Edith, who always enjoyed battles.

Molly was gathering up her things.

"Not as far as I am concerned," she answered, in a trembling voice.

As she went out she looked sorrowfully back at Judy, but not another word did she say.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Judy Kean?" cried Nance. "You're jealous and that's the whole of it," and she flung herself out of the door after Molly. The others quickly followed. Certainly sympathy was against Judy.

And what of poor Judy left all alone in the gymnasium?

Torn with anger, remorse, jealousy and disappointment, she threw herself face downward on the empty stage.

Presently the janitor came in and switched off the lights.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

### A MIDNIGHT ADVENTURE.

Molly and Nance had little to say to each other that night as they undressed for bed. Nance was still filled with hot indignation over Judy's "falling-off" as she called it, and Molly had no heart for conversation. The door to Judy's bedroom at the other end of the sitting room was closed and they were not surprised when she did not call "good night" as was her custom. Nobody looked in on them. It was late and the Quadrangle was soon perfectly still.

Under the sheets, her head buried in the pillows, Molly cried a long time, softly and quietly, like a steady downpour of rain. It seemed somehow that her beloved friend, Judy, had died, and that she was grieving for her. At last, worn out, she fell asleep. It was a very heavy sleep. She felt as if her arms were tied and she was sinking down into space and, as is always the case with dreams of falling, she waked with a nervous leap as if her body had hit the bed and rebounded. As she fell she had dreamed that she heard a voice calling. Never mind what it said; already the word, whatever it was, was a mere pin point in her memory. It had flashed through her mind like a shooting star across the sky. It was brilliantly illuminating for the instant. Molly was sure that it meant a great deal. It was an important word, and it had an urgent significance. For the tenth of a second her mind had been wide awake, and now it was quite dark again.

Molly leaped out of bed and began pulling on her clothes.

"Why am I dressing?" she thought. "It is because I must—*hurry!*"

"Hurry," that was the word. It came back to her now, quietly and significantly.

Nance wakened and sat up in bed.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I don't know. I must hurry. Don't stop me," answered Molly.

Nance looked at her curiously.

"You've had a nightmare, Molly," she said.

Molly glanced up vaguely as Nance switched on the light.

"Have I? I don't know, but I must make haste, or I'll be too late."

"Too late for what?"

"I don't know yet."

"Wake up, Molly. You're asleep. Nothing is going to happen. You are here, in your own room."

"Yes, yes. I understand, but I must hurry. Don't stop me, Nance. You may come if you like, but don't stop me."

Nance had often heard that it was dangerous to awaken sleepwalkers too suddenly, and she believed now as she saw Molly slipping on her skirt and sweater that she was certainly asleep.

"Dearest Molly," she insisted. "This is college. You are in your own room. It's a quarter to twelve. Don't go out of the room."

[92]

Molly took no notice. Nance turned on another light and slipped across to Judy's room. She must have help, and Judy was the nearest person.

"Judy's not in her room," she exclaimed suddenly, in a scared voice.

Molly gave a slight shudder.

"It's Judy who needs me," she said. "I was trying to remember. I couldn't make it out at first. Put on your things, Nance. Don't delay. Put out the light. We must hurry."

Nance got into a few clothes as fast as she could. She slipped on tennis shoes and an ulster and presently the two girls were standing in the corridor.

"Where are we going, Molly?" asked Nance, now under the spell of the other's conviction.

"This way," answered Molly, looking indeed like a sleepwalker as she glided down the hall to the main steps.

If the girls had glanced back they would have noticed a figure creep softly after them.

"But the gate is locked," objected Nance.

[93]

"I know, but we'll find another way. Come on."

Down the steps they hastened noiselessly. At the bottom, instead of going straight ahead, Molly turned to the left and led the way to a sitting room for visitors on the ground floor of the tower. The windows of the Tower Room, as it was known, looked out on the campus. They were small, deep-silled, and closed with iron-bound wooden shutters like the doors into the cloisters. Mounting a bench, Molly opened the inside glass casement of one of the windows and drew back the bolt which secured the shutter. Then she hoisted herself onto the sill, crawled through the window, and holding by both hands dropped to the ground. Nance, of a more practical temperament, wondered how they would ever get back into the Tower Room; but blind, unquestioning faith is an infinitely stronger staff to lean upon than uneasy speculation, as Nance was one day to find out.

"When the night watchman makes his rounds, will he see the window open in the tower?" she thought. "And if he does, what will he do? Give the alarm at once or try to find out our names and report us? If he reports us, what then? We may be expelled, or suspended or punished in some awful way."

[94]

So Nance's thoughts busily shaped out these tragic events as she followed Molly out of the window and dropped to the gravel walk below. The tower clock struck twelve while the two girls flitted across the campus. It was a strange adventure, Nance pondered, and one she would never have undertaken, or even considered, alone. But then her instincts were not like Molly's. The inner voice which spoke to her sometimes was usually the sharp, reproving voice of a Puritan conscience. It spoke to her now, but she turned a deaf ear to it for once.

It told her how absurd she would appear to other people in this dangerous midnight escapade; what risks she was running. Judy, of course, had spent the night with one of the other girls, it said. It troubled her mind with whispers of doubts and fears; it ridiculed and abused her, but not once did it weaken her determination to follow Molly wherever she intended to go. And presently, when Molly quickened her footsteps into a run, Nance kept right at her elbow like a noontime shadow, foreshortened and broadened.

[95]

Molly turned in the direction of the lake. Nance's heart gave a violent thump. She had believed all along that they were taking a short cut across to the gymnasium, instead of following the gravel walk.

"Molly, you don't think——" she began breathlessly.

"Don't talk now. Hurry," was Molly's brief reply.

Across a corner of the golf course they flew, and before Nance could take breath for another dash

through a fringe of pine trees she caught sight of the waters, as black as ink. She clutched Molly's arm.

"Did you hear anything?" she asked, in a frightened whisper.

They waited a moment, straining their ears in the darkness.

From the middle of the lake came the sound of a canoe paddle dipping into the water.

Molly breathed a sigh of relief.

"It's all right," she said, and they hastened down to the platform of the boathouse.

In another moment they had launched a small rowboat and were out on the lake.

"Will Judy Kean never learn sense?" Nance thought impatiently. "She's just like a prairie fire. It only takes a spark to set her going and then she burns up everything in sight."

Nance had never been able to understand why Judy could not hold her passionate, excitable temperament more in control. She, herself, had learned self-denial at an early age. But that was because she had a selfish mother.

"How did you ever guess she would be here, Molly?" she asked, as the prow of the boat cut softly through the waters of the lake with a musical ripple.

Nance was rowing, and Molly, who had never learned to handle oars, was sitting facing her.

"I don't know. I can't explain it. I dreamed that some one said 'hurry,' and the lake seemed to be the place to come to."

Some two hundred feet beyond they now made out the silhouette of a canoe. Judy—of course it was Judy; already they recognized the outline of her slender figure—kneeling in the bottom of the boat, had stopped paddling. She held up her head like a startled animal when it scents danger. It occurred to Nance, watching her over her shoulder as they drew nearer, that there was really something wild and untamed in Judy's nature. She remembered that, the first morning they had met her at Queen's, Judy had laughingly announced that she had been born at sea on a stormy night. But it was no joking matter, Nance was thinking, and she fervently wished that Judy would learn to quell her troubled moods.

The next instant the two boats touched prows. The little canoe, the most delicate and sensitive craft that there is, quivered violently with the shock of the collision and sprang back. As it bounded forward again, Molly held out her hand. Instinctively Judy grasped it, and the two boats drew alongside each other.

"Crawl into our boat, Judy, dearest," said Molly. "It will be easier to pull the canoe to shore if it's empty."

Judy prepared silently to obey. But a canoe is not a thing to be reckoned with at critical moments. Just as Judy raised her foot to step into the other boat, the treacherous little craft shot from under her, and over she toppled, headforemost into the waters. Fortunately, she was an excellent swimmer, and the star diver of the gymnasium pool. But the lake was not deep, and when she came up, sputtering and puffing, she found herself standing in water that was only shoulder high.

Nance often thought, in looking back on this painful episode, that nothing they could have said to Judy would have brought her so completely to her senses as this cold ducking. Certainly, if Judy had actually planned to jump into the lake, her wishes were most ludicrously carried out, and the struggle she now made to climb back into the boat showed that she was not anxious to stay any longer than she could help in the icy bath. It was a sight for laughter more than for tears, sensible Nance pondered with a slight feeling of contempt—that of Judy, struggling and kicking to draw herself into the boat. Indeed, she almost managed to upset them, too; but she did tumble in somehow, shivering and wet but extremely contrite.

"How did you know I was out here?" was the first question she put, when, having seized the rope on the prow of the canoe, they headed for shore.

"I didn't know. I only guessed," answered Molly.

"She was up and dressed before she even knew you were not in your room," announced Nance.

"I was a fool," exclaimed Judy, "and I know now what good friends you are to have come for me. I don't know exactly what I intended to do out here," she went on brokenly. "I felt ashamed to face any one, even mamma and papa. I might——" she broke off, shivering. Rivulets of water were pouring from her wet clothing into the bottom of the boat. She still wore the costume she had worn in the last scene of the play.

"I'll give you my ulster as soon as we land, Judy," said Nance, rowing with long rapid strokes which sent the boat skimming over the water.

"I'm just a low-down worthless dog," went on Judy, taking no notice of Nance's interruption. "There's no good trying to apologize, Molly. Words don't mean anything. But when the chance comes—and the chance always does come if you want it—I'll be able to show you how sorry I am for what I did, and how much I really love you."

"You showed me what a real friend you were last winter, Judy," broke in Molly, "when you gave up your room at Queen's for my sake. I wasn't angry about what happened at the gym. I was hurt of course because I'm a sensitive plant, but I knew it would be all right in the end because we are too close to each other now to let a few hasty words come between us. But here we are at the boat landing."

[101]

Having tied the two boats in the boat house, which was never kept locked, they hurried back to college. Nance insisted upon Judy's putting on her ulster.

"You know I'm never cold," she said.

"You girls will just kill me with kindness," exclaimed Judy humbly.

But Nance did not even hear this abject speech. The question of how they were to get back into the Quadrangle was occupying her mind.

"We're taking an awful risk," she observed to Molly, in a low voice. "There is no other way but the window, I suppose."

"I can't think of any other way," answered Molly, "unless we ring the bell over the gate and alarm the entire dormitory."

"Suppose the night watchman has closed the window? What then?" demanded Nance.

"Why, we'll just have to find some other way, then," answered her optimistic friend.

[102]

But the window in the Tower Room was wide open, just as they had left it.

The doubting Nance still had another theory.

"Suppose the night watchman has left it open on purpose to catch us when we come back?" she suggested.

"I do wish you would stop hunting up troubles, Nance," ejaculated Molly irritably. "I never found supposing did any good, anyhow."

Nance, thus rebuked, said nothing more.

Molly, boosted by the other girls, pulled herself onto the window sill and climbed into the room. She looked about her cautiously. But Nance's fears were groundless so far. The room was perfectly empty.

"Let down a chair," whispered Judy.

There were no small chairs about, however, and she was obliged to choose a bench.

"How are we to get it back again?" she asked, after Nance had clambered in, and Judy, halfway through, paused to consider this question.

"Hurry, the watchman," hissed Nance, on the lookout at the door. "He's coming down the side corridor."

[103]

The next instant Judy had leaped into the room, and the three girls were tearing along the hall and up the steps, Judy leaving a trail of water behind her. The watchman had seen them. They could hear the beat of his steps on the cement floor as he ran. The fugitives reached the upper corridor just as he arrived at the first landing on the stairs.

"Kick off your pumps, Judy, and pick up your skirts. He'll trace us by the wet trail if you don't."

Another dash and they were in their sitting room, the door locked behind them. Oh, blessed relief!

Judy, in her stocking feet, was holding up her skirts with both hands. Nance had seized one of the slippers and she thought that Molly had the other.

But the final excitement of that eventful night was veiled in mystery.

As they had burst into their sitting room, some one ran swiftly across the room, through the passage into Judy's room and into the corridor. They dared not follow and run the risk of meeting the night watchman, probably standing at that moment at the end of the corridor trying to trace that path of water, which, thanks be to Nance's prudence, ended there and was lost on the green strip of carpet.

[104]

Below in the Tower Room the windows of the casement flapped back and forth in the wind which was rising steadily, and on the path below stood that telltale bench.

"Anyhow," said Molly, "there's only one person who knows we were out to-night and, whoever she is, she can't tell without giving herself away."



## CHAPTER VIII.

### COVERING THEIR TRACKS.

When the dressing bell rang next morning, three heavy-eyed and extremely weary young women felt obliged to pull themselves together and appear at the breakfast table. Judy had caught cold, and to disguise this condition had plastered pink powder on her nose, and now held her breath almost to suffocation to avoid coughing in public.

"Have you heard the news?" demanded Jessie, hurrying in late and sitting next to Nance.

"Why, no. What is it?" asked Nance calmly.

Molly felt the color rising in her cheeks, and Judy buried her snuffles in a long letter from her mother.

"There's the greatest tale going around the Quadrangle! Everybody is talking about it," continued Jessie. "One of the chambermaids started it, I think, because she told it to me just now." [106]

"What is it?" asked Edith Williams impatiently.

"Some of the Quadrangle girls were out last night gallivanting. They climbed through the Tower Room window, left a bench outside and the window open. I suppose the watchman frightened them before they could hide all traces."

"That sounds like a wild freak," commented Katherine. "What do you suppose they were doing?"

"They might have been doing lots of things," replied Jessie mysteriously. "The maid said the watchman thought they had been driving or motoring with some Exmoor boys."

"Whew!" ejaculated a sophomore. "I'm sorry for them if they are found out. I happen to know Prexy's feelings about escapades like that."

"Why? Were you ever caught?"

"No, of course not. Don't you see me sitting here at the table? But my older sister was in the class with a girl who was caught. She was a campus girl." [107]

"What happened to her?" demanded Judy, forgetting her cold in the interest of the story.

"Bounced," answered the sophomore briefly.

The Williamses and Jessie looked at Judy with mixed feelings of surprise; not because they noticed her cold or regarded it with any suspicion, but because, when they had parted company with her the night before she had been in the throes of a jealous rage and had spoken most insultingly to her best friend. Their glances shifted to Molly. The two girls were seated side by side. Judy was leaning affectionately against Molly's shoulder while they looked together at a picture post card sent by Mary Stewart from France.

"All bets are off," whispered Edith to her sister. "They have made it up. Molly is an angel of forgiveness. We were wrong for once."

"And Margaret was correct."

"A pound of Mexican kisses and two pounds of mixed chocolates," said Margaret in Edith's other ear. "I've won my bet, I hope you'll take notice." [108]

"We were just taking notice," answered Edith.

"But there's some more of the story," piped out Jessie again. "Don't you want to hear the most exciting part?"

"Heavens, yes. Did they catch them?" asked several voices.

"No, no, but one of the girls was wet," announced Jessie impressively. "She left a trail of water after her all the way up the steps."

"I should think they could have traced her by that," said Margaret.

"They could have if she had kept on trailing, but she must have remembered and held up her skirt, for it stopped right there."

"Wise lady," put in Katherine.

"She must have been canoeing and not driving, then," observed Margaret. "Else why the significant fact of wet clothes?"

"Nice night to go canoeing in, cold and dark. Strange notion of pleasure," remarked Edith.

"Well, there's more still to come," announced Jessie, when they had finished commenting on this remarkable escapade. [109]

"For heaven's sake, Jessie, you're like a serial story of adventure—a thriller in every chapter. What now?"

"Well," said Jessie, "you may well prepare for a thriller this time. The watchman found something."

"What? What?" they cried, and Nance, Judy and Molly joined in the chorus with as much excitement as any of the others.

"He found a slipper."

Judy made an enormous effort to keep her hand from trembling, as she raised her coffee cup to her dry, feverish lips. Molly, as usual under excitement, changed from white to red and red to white. Nance alone seemed perfectly calm.

"I don't see how they can prove anything by that," she observed. "There are probably fifty girls or even a hundred who wear the same size shoes here. Molly is the only girl I know of who wears a peculiar size, six and a half triple A."

[110]

"Well, 'one thing is certain and the rest is lies,' as old Omar remarked," said Margaret, rising from the table, "and that is, all juniors can prove an alibi last night. No junior would ever go gallivanting on the night of the junior play."

"Hardly," answered Nance, who had risen to the occasion with fine spirit and tact. Molly's face resumed its normal color and Judy looked relieved.

"The thing they will have to do," said Edith, "is to find the other slipper. And if the owner of that slipper takes my advice she'll drop it down the deepest well in Wellington County."

Molly and Nance and Judy hurried through breakfast and rushed back to their apartment. They locked all the doors carefully and gathered in Judy's room.

"We have nearly fifteen minutes before chapel," said Nance, speaking rapidly. "Judy, are your things dry? Get them quickly. They may search our rooms. Miss Walker is pretty determined once she's roused, I hear."

[111]

Judy gathered up the stiff, rough-dry garments that had been hanging on the heater all night, while Molly found tossed in a corner the mate to the fatal slipper. Judy held up Viola's dress of old rose velvet.

"It's ruined," she exclaimed, "and that's another complication. Suppose——"

"Don't suppose," interrupted Molly hastily, snatching the dress away from her. "Hurry, Nance, where shall we put them?"

For a temporary safe hiding place they chose the interior of the upright piano. Then they hastily made their beds, set their dressing tables to rights and dashed off to chapel just as the matron appeared on an ostensible tour of inspection.

It was possible that she was not being very vigilant with the juniors, however, that particular morning, knowing that they were one and all engaged in producing a very important play the night before. At any rate, she only glanced casually around, saw nothing incriminating and departed to the next room.

[112]

The president looked grave and worried at chapel, but, contrary to expectations, she had nothing to say after the prayer.

"It's a bad sign," observed a student. "When Prexy doesn't say anything, she means business."

Except for a few moments at lunch, the three girls did not meet in private consultation again until late in the afternoon. There was a busy sign on their study door. Molly smiled knowingly to herself, and gave the masonic tap.

"It's a good idea," she thought, "and will keep out inquisitive people until we decide what to do."

She found Judy stretched on the sofa, feverish and coughing, while Nance was dosing her with a large dose of quinine and an additional dose of sweet spirits of niter.

"You're going to kill me, Nance," Judy was grumbling.

"For heaven's sake, be quiet," scolded Nance. "You haven't any voice to waste. Molly, will you make her a hot lemonade? I think we had better get her to bed and cover her up with all the comforts so as to bring on a perspiration."

[113]

"Only one?" inquired Judy.

"Get up from there and go to bed," ordered Nance. "The inspection is over and there won't be any chance of another one to-day. You'll have to miss supper to-night. We'll say you have one of your sick headaches."

Judy obediently got out of her things while Molly flew around making hot lemonade, and Nance hung a blanket over the heater and pulled down their three winter comforts off a shelf in the closet.

Judy meekly allowed herself to be smothered under a mountain of covers, while she drank the lemonade with childish enjoyment.

"You always make good ones, Molly, darling, because you put in enough sugar. I'll probably be melted into a fountain of perspiration like Undine, only she went away in tears," she complained presently.

"That's the object of the treatment," answered Nance sternly. "Whatever is left of you after the melting process is over is quite well of the cold." [114]

Molly could have laughed if she had not been thinking of something else very hard.

The two girls sat down on the divan and began a subdued and earnest conversation.

"What are we to do with these things, Molly? We can't leave them in the piano because the moment some one sits down to play we'll be discovered."

"Murderers take up the planks in the floor and hide their bloodstained clothing underneath," observed Molly. "But we can't do that, of course."

They took the bundle from its hiding place and looked over the garments.

"I have an idea," announced Nance, who had many practical notions on the subject of clothes. "Suppose we take the dress to the cleaner's in the village and have it steamed."

"Why can't we steam it ourselves over the tea kettle?" demanded Molly. "We can and we'll do it right now and press it on the wrong side. If it hadn't been so much admired, it wouldn't matter so very much, but some one's sure to ask to see it or borrow it or something. How about the underclothes? Can't we smooth them out with a hot iron before they go to the laundry?" [115]

They set to work at once to heat water and irons, and presently were engaged in restoring the old rose velvet to a semblance of its former beauty.

"What are we going to do about that slipper?" demanded Molly, pausing in her labors.

"I've made up my mind to that," replied Nance. "We must bury it."

---

## CHAPTER IX.

 [116]

### THE GRAVE DIGGERS.

Three times during the night Molly and Nance crept into Judy's room and looked at her anxiously. She seemed to be sleeping heavily, but she tossed about the bed with feverish restlessness, and her forehead was burning hot.

Early in the morning the faithful friends were up again, tipping about like two wraiths of the dawn in their trailing dressing gowns.

"I'll bathe her face and hands before she takes any tea," said Molly. "She's awake. I saw her open her eyes when I peeped in just now."

Judy was awake and sitting bolt upright when they presently entered with the basin and towels. There was a strange look in her eyes. Molly remembered to have seen it before when Judy was in the grip of the wander thirst.

"Here you are, Sweet Spirits of Niter," she cried, in a hoarse, excited voice. "Knowst thou the land of Sweet Spirits of Niter?" she began singing. "Knowst thou the Sweet Spirits? They are tall, slender, gray ladies done in long curving lines, like that." She illustrated her ideas of these strange beings by sketching a picture on an imaginary canvas. "They lean against slim trees. They have soft musical voices and speak gently because they are sweet. You see? And the Land of Niter, what of it? It is a land of gray mists, always in twilight, and the Sweet Spirits who live in it are shadows. It is a sad land, but it is still and quiet and there are cool fountains everywhere. Sweet spirit, wouldst give me to drink of thy cup?" [117]

Molly and Nance laughed. They knew that Judy was delirious, but it was impossible not to laugh over her strange, poetic illusion regarding sweet spirits of niter. Setting down the basin and towel, they retreated to the next room.

"We'd better make her a cup of beef tea as quickly as we can," said Nance. "That will quench her thirst and nourish her at the same time. Good heavens, Molly, what shall we do if she begins to talk about the slipper and the lake?" [118]

"I don't know," replied Molly, lighting the alcohol lamp, while Nance found the jar of beef extract. "I wish you hadn't given her so much physic, Nance." Molly had a deep-rooted objection to medicine, while Nance, on the other hand, was a firm believer in old-fashioned remedies. "Her stomach was in no condition for all that stuff. It was utterly upset. Her gastric juices had been lashed into a storm and hadn't had time to subside."

Nance smiled at Molly's ignorance.

"You are getting the emotions and the stomach mixed, Molly, dear."

Now, Molly had her own ideas on this subject, but it was vain to argue with her friend, the actual proprietor of a real medicine chest marked "Household Remedies," which contained more than a dozen phials of physics.

Judy was, in fact, paying the penalty for her mental storm when on the night of the play she had run through the whole scale of emotions, beginning with stage fright and an awful fear and passing into mortification, disappointment, rage, remorse and finally sorrow, or it might be called self-pity, which inspired her to launch a canoe and paddle into the middle of the lake at midnight. It will never be known how near she came to jumping into the lake. It is difficult to reckon with an unrestrained, hypersensitive nature like hers, always up in the heights or down in the depths; sometimes capable of splendid acts of generosity and unselfishness, but capable also of inflicting cruel punishments for imagined offences.

[119]

Nance was for more medicine.

"Suppose I give her a big dose of castor oil, Molly," she suggested, while she stirred the tea. "She had better take it before she drinks this."

"Goodness, Nance, you'll kill her," exclaimed Molly, horrified. "Don't you see that it is entirely a mental thing with Judy? What she needs is absolute quiet, and the quinine has probably excited her and made her delirious. She doesn't need things to stimulate her. She's almost effervescent in her normal condition, anyhow."

[120]

"Castor oil isn't a stimulant, child."

"Perhaps not, but she'd better not be upset any more," and in the end Molly had her way.

Returning in a few moments to bathe Judy's face, she found the sick girl half out of bed.

"Get back into bed, Judy," she said firmly. "You're to have a nice quiet day in here and no one to bother you."

"But the slipper. I'm looking for the other slipper," began Judy, weeping. "Oh, dear, I must find the slipper. Nance, Molly, the slipper, have you seen the slipper, the old oaken slipper, the iron-bound slipper that hangs in the well. If it's in the well now, drop it to the bottom. I hope it's a deep well, the deepest well in Well County."

It was unkind to laugh, but Molly could not keep her countenance.

"I might have known," she thought, "that Judy could be more delirious than anybody in the world."

Judy submitted to having her face bathed and drank the beef tea without a murmur. She appeared greatly refreshed and quieted and said a few rational words about having had bad dreams.

[121]

It was Sunday morning, frosty and bright. The bell of the Catholic Church in the village called devotees to early mass. It rang out joyfully and persuasively, reiterating its message to unbelievers. It was a cheerful sound and, in spite of Judy's troubles, they felt comforted. The steam heat began its pleasant matins in the pipes. The kettle on the alcohol stove hummed busily. Molly began to make preparations for breakfast. Although she was not self-indulgent, discomfort was never an acceptable state to her.

"Get your bath, Nance," she ordered, "and then you can come back and make the toast while I take mine."

Nance departed for the bathrooms with soap and towels, while Molly busied herself spreading a lunch cloth on one of the study tables and placing a blue china bowl full of oranges in the center. Then she carefully extracted four eggs from a paper bag in a box on the outer window ledge; cut four thin, even slices of bread to be inserted in Judy's patent electric toaster, and at intervals poured boiling water through the dripper into the coffee pot.

[122]

"If I were at home this morning," she said, "I would be eating hot waffles and kidney hash."

Suddenly she looked up. Judy was standing in the doorway.

"Molly," she said, "I want my slipper."

Molly took her hand and gently led her back to bed.

"Judy, would you like a cup of delicious, strong, hot coffee?" she asked, endeavoring to divert Judy's quinine-charged senses.

"Very much, but the slipper——" Judy began to whimper like a child.

Molly hurried into the next room, found one of Nance's slippers and gravely handed it to Judy, who grasped it carefully with both hands as if it were something very precious and brittle.

"When I gave her your slipper, Nance, I felt something like the old witch who had kidnapped the Queen's infant and put a changeling in its place," Molly observed later, in telling about this incident to Nance. "But there is nothing to do but humor her, I suppose, until the influence of the

[123]

quinine wears off.”

“Where has she got it now?” asked Nance, ignoring Molly’s allusions to quinine.

“What? The changeling slipper? Under her pillow.”

Nance laughed.

“I’m thinking, Molly,” she remarked, “that to-day would be an excellent time to get rid of that other slipper. I don’t feel as if I could sleep comfortably another night in these rooms with the guilty thing around. Until we dig a hole and bury it deep, we shall never have any peace of mind.”

Molly was carefully peeling the shell from the end of an egg.

“Do you think we could leave her alone this afternoon?” she asked. “How long does quinine continue its ravages?”

“Oh, not long,” answered Nance, in a most matter of fact voice. “She’s such a sensitive subject, that is the trouble. Quinine doesn’t usually make people take on so. I never met any one so excitable and high strung as Judy. She gets her nerves tuned up to such a high pitch sometimes that I wonder they don’t snap in two.”

[124]

“Nance, don’t you think we ought to confess the whole thing to Miss Walker?”

“Do you think Judy would ever forgive us if we did?”

Molly sighed.

“I’m afraid not,” she said. “Confessing would involve so much. We would have to go back so far to the original cause, those wretched Shakespeareans. It would be pretty hard on poor old Judy. But the slipper, Nance—it’s such a ridiculous thing, our hiding that slipper. Where shall we hide it?”

“We must dig a grave and bury it,” said Nance, “and we must do it this afternoon and get the thing off our minds. Then all evidence will be destroyed and there will be no possible way of finding out about Judy.”

[125]

“You have forgotten about the visitor to our room in the night.”

“Yes,” admitted Nance, “there is that visitor. Who was she? What did she want? You haven’t missed anything, have you?”

“No,” replied Molly. “I have nothing valuable enough to steal except old Martin Luther, and he’s quite safe.”

She reached for the china pig on the bookshelves and shook him carefully. His interior gave out a musical jingle.

Clothed and fed and comforted, the two girls leaned back in their Morris chairs, with extra cups of coffee resting on the chair arms, to consider the question of Judy’s slipper. At last they came to a mutual agreement.

Otoyo, the safest, discreetest and least inquisitive of their friends, was to be taken partly into their confidence and left to look after Judy while they went on their mysterious errand. Otoyo, who had the racial peculiarity of the Japanese of never being surprised at anything, accepted this position of trust without a comment. Few students took Sunday morning walks at Wellington, and therefore morning was the safest time for the expedition. Judy, reënforced with a soft-boiled egg and a cup of coffee, appeared perfectly rational and quiet. She surrendered the slipper without a murmur, and turning over on her side dropped off to sleep. A Not-at-Home sign was hung on the door and Otoyo was cautioned not to let any one into Judy’s room. She was to say to all callers that Judy had a headache and was asleep.

[126]

Dressed for a tramp, with Judy’s slipper in one of the deep pockets of Nance’s ulster, and a knife, fork and table spoon for digging purposes in the other, the two girls presently left Otoyo on the floor immersed in study. They had scarcely closed the door when Judy called from the next room:

“Bring me that slipper, Otoyo.”

And the little Japanese, with a puzzled look on her face, obeyed.

As they hastened down the corridor, hoping devoutly not to meet intimate friends, Molly and Nance were stopped by the irrepressible Minerva Higgins.

[127]

“Isn’t this a stroke of luck?” she exclaimed. “You are going for a walk and so am I. I was just on the lookout for somebody. Girls here are so industrious Sunday mornings, I can never get any one to go walking until afternoon.”

Molly was silent. At that moment she yearned for the courage of Nance, who with a word could scatter Minerva’s cheeky assurance like chaff before the wind.

“It’s lack of character, I suppose,” she thought disconsolately. “But I couldn’t crush a fly, much less that presumptuous little freshman.”

She stood back, therefore, and let Nance have a clear field for the struggle.

“You are very kind to offer us your company, Miss Higgins, but we must beg to be excused to-

day," said Nance calmly.

"I call that a nice, Sunday-morning, Christian spirit," cried Minerva, with an angry flash in her small, pig-like eyes.

"No, no, Minerva," put in Molly gently. "You must not think that way about it. Nance and I have some important business to discuss, that's all. You mustn't imagine it's unkind when older girls turn you down sometimes. You know it isn't customary here for a freshman to invite herself to join an older girl. I believe it isn't customary in any college. Don't be angry, please."

[128]

Hidden under layers of vanity, selfishness and stupid assurance, was Minerva's better self which Molly hoped to reach, and some day she would break through the crust, but not this morning.

"Don't tell me anything about upper-class girls—conceited snobs! I know all about them," exclaimed Minerva angrily, as she marched down the corridor in a high state of rage.

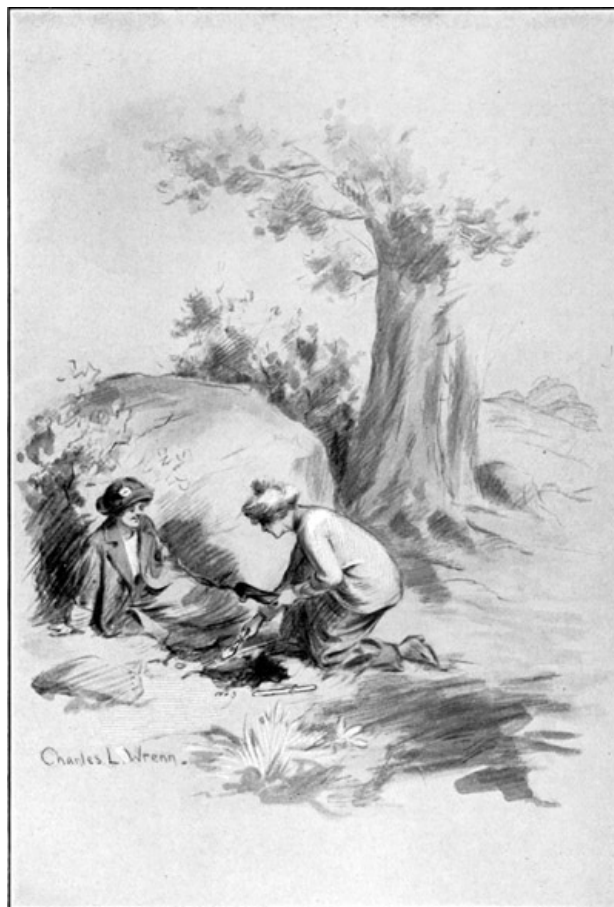
"Don't bother about her. She's a hopeless case, just as Margaret said," remarked Nance.

Once off the campus, they followed the path along the lake and turned their faces toward Round Head as being the spot most apt to be deserted at that hour in the morning. It was not long before they were climbing the steep hill.

[129]

"Where shall we lay it to rest, poor weary little *sole*?" asked Nance, laughing.

"Let's dig the grave on the Exmoor side," answered Molly. "Behind one of those big rocks is a good spot. We'll be hidden from sight and the ground is softer there."



THEY SET TO WORK TO DIG A SMALL GRAVE FOR JUDY'S SLIPPER.

—Page 129.

Talking and giggling, because after all they were entirely innocent of any wrongdoing, they set to work to dig a small grave for Judy's slipper.

"When the earth casts up its dead on the Day of Judgment, Nance, do you suppose this slipper will seek its mate?"

"I hope it won't seek it any sooner," answered Nance dryly.

At last the grave was ready. They laid the slipper in the hole, carefully covered it with earth, and concealed all evidences of recent disturbance with bits of grass and splinters of rock.

[130]

Then Molly, leaning against the side of the boulder and clasping her hands, remarked:

"Let this be its epitaph:

"Under the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie;

Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

“This be the verse you ’grave for me:  
Here he lies where he longed to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.”

Scarcely had the last words died on her lips when Nance gave a low, horrified exclamation. Molly glanced up quickly. Just above them in the shadow of another big rock stood Professor Green in his old gray suit. So still was he that he might have been a part of the geological formation of the hill, planted there centuries ago. Molly felt the hot blood mount to her face. How long had he been there? How much had he seen? What did he think? Forcing its way through all these wild speculations came another thought: there was a brown coffee stain on one of his trouser legs. She tried to speak, but the words refused to come, and before she could get herself in hand, the professor coldly lifted his hat and walked away. [131]

In his glance she read DISAPPOINTMENT as plainly as if it had been written across his brow in letters of fire.

“Oh, Nance,” she cried, and burst into tears.

“He won’t tell, even if he has seen,” Nance reassured her. “Don’t mind, Molly, dear. Come along. I’m not afraid.”

“It’s not that! It’s not that!” sobbed Molly. But then, of course, Nance wouldn’t understand what it really was, because she hardly understood it herself. He believed, of course, that she had gone rowing with some Exmoor boys after ten o’clock. He had heard the story of the slipper. Everybody had heard it. It was the talk of college. For a moment Molly felt a wave of resentment against Judy. Then her anger shifted to Professor Green. [132]

“At least he might have given us a chance to explain,” she exclaimed, as she followed Nance along the lake path back to the campus.

As soon as they entered the room, a little while later, they saw by Otoyó’s face that something had happened.

“What is it?” they demanded uneasily.

“Oh,” ejaculated Otoyó, raising both hands with an eloquent gesture, “it was that terrible Mees Heegins. You had but scarcely departing gone when there came to the door a rap-rap-rap—so. I thought it was you returning, and when I open, she push her way in, so.”

Otoyó gave an imitation of Minerva forcing her way into the sitting room.

“She say: ‘I wish to see Mees Kean on a particular business.’ I say: ‘Mees Kean has a sickness to her head.’ She say: ‘Move away, little yellow peril. Don’t interfere with me. I wish to inquire after her health.’ Then she make great endeavors to remove me from the door.”

“And what did you do, Otoyó?” they asked anxiously. [133]

Otoyó’s face took on an expression half humorous and half deprecating.

“It will not make you angry with little Japanese girl?”

“No, of course not, child.”

“I employ jiu jitsu.”

The girls both laughed, and Otoyó, relieved, joined in the merriment.

“She receive no bruises, but she receive a shock, because it arrive so suddenlee, you see? So she quietlee walk away and say no more.”

“You adorable little Japanese girl,” cried Molly, embracing her.

Nance opened the door and peeped into Judy’s room.

She was sleeping quietly, the slipper clasped in both hands.

---

## CHAPTER X.

### A VISIT OF STATE.

Judy still slept the sleep of the exhausted. Her tired forces craved a long rest after the storm that had lashed and beaten them. The girls crept about the room softly and spoke in low voices, and [134]

when they went down to the early dinner locked the door and took the key with them. Later, fearing callers, again they hung out a Busy sign and settled themselves comfortably for a peaceful afternoon. Nance, armed with a dictionary and notebook, was translating "Les Misérables," a penitential task she had set for herself for two hours every Sunday.

Molly was also engaged in a penitential task. She was endeavoring to compose a story on simple and natural lines. It was very difficult. Her mind at this moment seemed to be an avenue for bands of roving and irrelevant thoughts and refused to concentrate on the work at hand. She made several beginnings, as: "One blustering, windy day in March a lonely little figure—" With a contemptuous stroke of her pencil, she drew a line through the words and wrote underneath: "It was a calm, beautiful morning in May—" [135]

Twirling her pencil, she paused to consider this statement.

"No, no, that won't do," she thought. "It's entirely too commonplace." She glanced absently over at the book Nance was reading. "Victor Hugo would probably have put it this way: 'It was the fifteenth of May, 17—. A young girl was hurrying along the Rue—. She paused at the house, No. 11.' Oh, dear," pondered Molly, "one has to tell something very important to write in that way. It's like sending a telegram. Just as much as possible expressed in the fewest possible words. Can the professor mean that? Would he mind if I asked him and then at the same time, perhaps—" Again the wandering thoughts broke off. "It's rather hard he should have misunderstood about this morning. Is there no way I can explain without involving Judy? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! How complicated life is, and what a complicated nature is Judy's." [136]

There were two quick raps on the door. Molly and Nance exchanged frightened glances. It was not the masonic tap of their friends, and no one else would have knocked on a door which advertised a Busy sign. There was, in fact, a note of authority in the double rap. Some instinct prevented Nance from calling out "Come in," a matter later for self-congratulation. She rose and opened the door and President Walker entered. If Miss Walker had ever paid a visit to a student before, the girls had not heard of it. It was, so far as they knew, an entirely unprecedented happening and quite sufficient to make innocent people look guilty and set hearts to pumping blood at double-quick time.

"I saw your Busy sign," said Miss Walker, glancing from one startled face to the other, "but I shall not keep you long. What a pretty room," she added, looking about her approvingly. [137]

"Thank heavens, it's straight," thought Nance, groaning mentally.

"Won't you sit down, Miss Walker?" asked Molly, pushing forward one of the easy chairs.

The President sat down. There was a plate of "cloudbursts" on the table. Would it be disrespectful to offer the President some of this delectable candy? Nance considered it would be, decidedly so. But Molly, a slave to the laws of hospitality, took what might be called a leap in the dark and silently held the plate in front of the President. If this turned out to be a visit of state it was rather a risky thing to do. But Miss Walker helped herself to one piece and then demanded another.

"Delicious," she said. "Did you make it, Miss Brown?"

"Yes, Miss Walker."

It had been purely a stroke of luck with Molly, who had no way to know that Miss Walker had a sweet tooth. [138]

"I must have that recipe. What makes it so light?"

"The whites of eggs beaten very stiff, and the rest of it is just melted brown sugar. It's very easy," added Molly, forming a resolution to make the President a plate of "cloudbursts" without loss of time.

"Who is the third girl who shares this apartment with you?" asked Miss Walker, unexpectedly coming back to business.

"Julia Kean."

"And where is she to-day?"

Nance hesitated.

"She is sick in bed to-day, Miss Walker."

"Ahem! Cold, I suppose?"

"It's more excitement than anything else," put in Molly. "The junior play—"

"Oh, yes. She was 'Viola,' of course," said the President.

"You see she had a bad attack of stage fright," continued Molly, "and Judy is so excitable and sensitive. She exaggerated what happened and it made her ill." [139]

"And what did happen? She forgot her lines, as I recall. But that often occurs. Even professionals have been known to forget their parts. Ellen Terry is quite notorious for her bad memory, but she is a great actress, nevertheless."



The girls were silent. They wondered what in the world Miss Walker was driving at.

"And then what happened next?"

They looked at her blankly.

"What happened next?" repeated Molly.

"Yes. I want you to begin and tell me the whole thing from beginning to end."

Molly rested her chin on her hand and looked out of the window. This is what had been familiarly spoken of in college as being "on the grill."

"What do you want us to tell, Miss Walker?" asked Nance with a surprising amount of courage in her tones.

"I want to know," said the President sternly, "where you were between twelve and one o'clock on Friday night."

"We were on the lake," announced Nance, with keen appreciation of the fact that when President Walker made a direct question she expected a direct answer and there was no getting around it. [140]

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"You mean to tell me that you three girls went rowing on the lake alone at that hour? What escapade is this?"

Her voice was so stern that it made Molly quake in her boots, but Nance was as heroic as an early Christian martyr.

"It was not a mad escapade. We did it because we had to," she answered.

"Why?"

Nance paused. This was the crucial point. It looked as if Miss Walker must be told about Judy's folly, or themselves be disgraced.

"They came for me," announced a hoarse voice from the door.

It was such an unexpected interruption that all three women started nervously, but if Molly and Nance had been more observant they would have noticed the President stifle a smile which twitched the corners of her mouth. [141]

Judy, in a long red dressing-gown, her hair in great disorder and her eyes glittering feverishly, came trailing into the room. In one hand she grasped Nance's slipper and with the other she made a dramatic gesture, pointing to herself.

"They came for me," she repeated. "I had been angry and said cruel, unjust things to Molly. Everybody went off and left me after the play. I was locked out and I was so unhappy, I wanted to be alone. Water always comforts me. You see, I was born at sea, and I took a canoe from the boat house and paddled into the middle of the lake. Then those two Sweet Spirits of Niter came for me, and the canoe upset and I—I dropped my slipper somewhere, 5-B is the number—I don't know who found it—here's its mate—" Judy waved the slipper over her head and laughed wildly.

"The child's delirious," exclaimed Miss Walker, smiling in spite of herself.

They persuaded Judy to get back into bed and the President sent Nance flying for the doctor. Presently, when Judy had dropped off to sleep again, Molly finished the story of that exciting evening. [142]

"But, my dear," said the President, slipping her arm around Molly's waist and drawing her down on the arm of the chair, "what prompted you to go to the lake and nowhere else?"

"I can never explain really what it was," replied Molly. "I dreamed that someone said 'hurry.' I wasn't even thinking of Judy when I started to dress. You see, we thought she had gone to bed. I hadn't thought of the lake, either. It was just as if I was walking in my sleep, Nance said. Then we found Judy wasn't in her room, and I knew she needed me. I remember we ran all the way to the lake."

"Strange, strange!" said Miss Walker.

She drew Molly's face down to her own and kissed her. There were tears on the President's cheek and Molly looked the other way.

"Sometimes, Molly," she said after a moment, "you remind me of my dear sister who died twenty years ago." [143]

It was a good while before Nance returned with Dr. McLean and in the interval of waiting Molly and Miss Walker talked of many things. Molly told her how they had buried the slipper on Round Head, and of how they had seen the Professor and been frightened. They talked of Judy's temperament and of what kind of mental training Judy should have to learn to control her wild spirits. From that the talk drifted to Molly's affairs, and then she asked the President to do her

the honor of drinking a cup of tea in her humble apartment. The two women spent an intimate and delightful hour together, with Judy sound asleep in the next room, and no one to disturb them because of that blessed Busy sign.

At last Dr. McLean came blustering in, and, seeing the President and Molly in close converse over their cups of tea, chuckled delightedly and observed:

"They are all alike, the women folk—the talk lasts as long as the tea lasts, and there's always another cup in the pot." [144]

"Have a look at your patient, doctor," said Miss Walker, "and we'll save that extra cup in the pot for you."

The doctor was not disturbed over Judy's delirium.

"It's joost quinine and excitement that's made her go a bit daffy," he said. "Keep her quiet for a day or so. She'll be all right."

Imagine their surprise, ten minutes later, when Margaret Wakefield and the Williamses, peeping into the room, found Molly and Nance entertaining the President of Wellington and Dr. McLean at tea. The news spread quickly along the corridor and when the distinguished guests presently departed almost every girl in the Quadrangle had made it her business to be lingering near the stairway or wandering in the hall.

Only one person heard nothing of it, and that was Minerva Higgins, who, after Vespers, had taken a long walk. Nobody told her about it afterward, because she was not popular with the Quadrangle girls and had formed her associations with some freshmen in the village. When it was given out that evening that Miss Walker had come to see about Judy, who had been quite ill, the talk died down. [145]

Having dropped the heavy load of responsibility they had been carrying for two days, Molly and Nance felt foolishly gay. Molly made Miss Walker a box of cloudbursts before she went to bed, while Nance read aloud a thrilling and highly exciting detective story borrowed from Edith Williams, whose shelves held books for every mood.

"By the way, Nance," observed Molly, when the story was finished, "how do you suppose Miss Walker found it all out?"

"Why, Professor Green, of course," answered Nance in a matter of fact voice. "There was never any doubt in my mind from the first moment she came into the room."

"What?" cried Molly, thunderstruck.

"There was no other way. He saw us burying the slipper and I suppose he thought it his duty to inform on us." [146]

"He didn't feel it his duty to inform on Judith Blount when she cut the electric wires that night," broke in Molly.

"Perhaps he didn't think that was as wrong as rowing on the lake with boys from Exmoor. Besides, she was his relative."

Molly took off her slipper and held it up as if she were going to pitch it with all her force across the room. Then she dropped it gently on the floor.

"I'm disappointed," she said.

---

## CHAPTER XI.

 [147]

### A SWOPPING PARTY AND A MOCK TRIAL.

There was never any tedious convalescing for Judy; no tiresome transition from illness to health. As soon as she determined in her mind that she was well, she arose from her bed and walked, and neither friendly remonstrances nor doctor's orders could induce her to return.

On Monday morning she appeared in the sitting room wearing a black dress with widow's bands of white muslin around the collar and cuffs. Molly and Nance were a little uneasy at first, thinking that the delirium still lingered, but Judy seemed entirely rational.

"Why, Judy," exclaimed Molly, "are you a widow?"

"I shall wear mourning for awhile," answered Judy solemnly, ignoring Molly's facetious question. "It is my only way of showing that I am a penitent. I can't wear sackcloth and ashes as they do in Oriental countries or flagellate my shoulders with a spiked whip like a mediæval monk; nor can I go on a pilgrimage to a sacred shrine. So I have decided to give up colors for awhile and wear black." [148]

Molly kissed her and said no more. She knew that Judy went into everything she did heart and soul even unto the outward and visible symbol of clothes, and if wearing black was her way of showing public repentance she felt only a great respect for her friend's sincerity of motive.

"But what are we to tell people when they ask if you have gone into mourning, Judy, because they certainly will?" demanded Nance, taking a more practical and less romantic view of the situation.

"Tell them I'm doing penance," answered Judy, and thus it got out around college that Judy was making public amends for her angry words to Molly, and there was a good deal of secret amusement, of which Judy was as serenely unconscious as a pious pilgrim journeying barefoot to a holy tomb. [149]

In the midst of these happenings there came a note one day from Mrs. McLean inviting the three young girls to the annual junior week-end house party at Exmoor. Their hosts were to be Andy McLean, George Green and Lawrence Upton and they were to stay at the Chapter House from Friday night until Sunday noon. It meant a round of gayeties from beginning to end, but to Molly it meant something almost out of reach.

"Clothes!" she exclaimed tragically, "I must have clothes. I can't go to Exmoor looking like little orphan Annie."

It was in vain that Judy and Nance offered to share their things with her. Molly obstinately refused to listen to them.

"I won't need any colored clothes, anyhow," said Judy.

"Yes, you will, Judy. You just must come out of those widow's weeds for the house party," Molly urged. [150]

"No," said Judy, "I've made a vow and until that vow is fulfilled I shall never wear colors. I've sent two dresses down to the Wellington Dye Works to be dyed black. Fortunately my suit is black already and so is my hat. Now, I have a proposition to make, Molly. I'm in need of funds more than clothes just now and I'll sell you my yellow gauze for the contents of Martin Luther. He must be pretty full by now."

"He's plumb full," answered Molly proudly. "I hadn't realized how much I had put in until I tried to drop a quarter in this morning, and lo, and behold, he couldn't accommodate another cent."

She held up the china pig and shook him.

"How much should you think he'd hold altogether?" asked Judy. "I don't want to be getting the best of the bargain and perhaps Martin Luther is worth more than the dress."

"No, no," protested Molly. "He could never be worth that much. I think he has about fifteen dollars in his tum-tum. I've put in all the money I earned from cloudbursts and about ten dollars, changed up small, for tutoring." [151]

Judy insisted on adding a blue silk blouse and a pair of yellow silk stockings to the collection to be sold.

"I'll sell them to someone else if you won't buy them," she announced, "and if you need a dress, you might as well take this one off my hands."

"Well," Molly finally agreed, "we'll break open Martin, and count the money and, if there's anything like a decent sum, I'll buy the dress. Let's make a party of it," she added brightly. "I'll cut the hickory-nut cake that came from home last night, and Nance can make fudge." [151]

It was like Molly's passion for entertaining to turn the breaking open of the china bank into a festival. Nance had once remarked it was one thing to have a convivial soul and quite another to have the ready provisions, and Molly never invited her friends to a bare board.

"Try on the dress and let's see how you look in it, Molly dear," ordered Judy. "We'll open the bank to-night with due ceremony, but I want to see you in the yellow dress now." [152]

The two girls were about the same height and build. Molly was not so well developed across the chest as her friend and was more slender through the hips. But the dress fitted her to perfection.

"Oh, you're a dream," cried Nance, when Molly presently appeared in the yellow dress.

"Molly, you are adorable," exclaimed Judy. "You always look better in my clothes than I do."

"They always fit me better than my own," said Molly, looking at herself in the mirror over the mantel. "I feel like a princess," she ejaculated, blushing at her own charming image. "Oh, Judy, I have no right to deprive you of this lovely gown. Your mother, I'm sure, would be very angry."

"Mamma is never angry," said Judy. "That is why I am so impossible. Besides, I told you I needed the money. I have spent all my allowance and I won't get another cent for two weeks." [153]

Molly took off the dress and laid it carefully in the box, stuffing tissue paper under the folds to prevent premature wrinkles. Her eyes dwelt lingeringly on the pale yellow masses of chiffon and lace. [153]

It would certainly be the solution of her troubles, and oh, the feeling of comfort one has in a

really beautiful dress! She put the top on the box and pushed it away from her.

"I'll decide in the morning, Judy. I can't make up my mind quite yet. It seems like highway robbery to take the most beautiful dress you have and the most expensive, too, I am certain."

"I tell you I never liked the color," cried Judy. "I'm determined to wear black. When I have on black I feel superior to all persons wearing colors. It gives me dignity. There is a richness about robes of sable hue. Some day I'm going to have a black velvet evening dress made quite plain with an immense train stretching all the way across the room. My only ornaments will be a great diamond star in my hair and a necklace of the same, and I shall carry a large fan made of black ostrich feathers."

[154]

The girls laughed at this picture of magnificence and as Molly hurried away to invite the guests to the spread she heard Nance remark:

"You'll look like the bride of the undertaker in that costume, Judy."

"Not at all. I shall look like the Queen of Night, Anna Oldham."

Judy went to the door and looked out. Molly was safely around the corner of the Quadrangle.

"Nance," she continued, "don't you think Molly would let me give her the dress?"

Nance shook her head.

"I am afraid not. You know how proud she is. It's going to be hard to persuade her to buy it at that price. You know it's worth lots more."

Judy sighed.

"If I could only do something," she said. "If I only had a chance."

"Perhaps the chance will slip up on you, Judy, when you least expect it. That's the way chances always do," said Nance.

It occurred to Judy, thinking over the matter of the yellow dress later, that it might be fun to have a "Barter and Exchange Party," and if all the girls were swopping things Molly could be more easily persuaded to take the yellow dress. All guests therefore were notified to bring anything they wanted to swop or sell to the rooms of the three friends that night.

[155]

It turned out to be a very exciting affair. The divans were piled with exchangeable property. Jessie Lynch brought more things than anybody else, ribbon bows, silk scarfs, several dresses and a velvet toque. Millicent Porter, who now spent more time in the Quadrangle than at Beta Phi House, to the surprise of the girls, brought a rather dingy collection of things which no one would either swop or buy. But she enjoyed herself immensely. Edith Williams made two trips to carry all the books she wished to exchange for other books, clothes, hats or money. But Otoyos Sen had the most interesting collection and was the gayest person that night. She was willing to exchange anything she had just for the fun of it.

It was so exciting that they forgot all about Martin Luther until the time arrived for refreshments and they gathered about the hickory-nut cake, now a famous delicacy at Wellington.

[156]

"What surprises me is how pleased everybody is to get rid of something someone else is equally pleased to get," observed Margaret. "Now, for instance, I have a black hat I have always hated because it wobbles on my head. I feel as if I had received a gift to have exchanged it for this green one of Judy's. And Judy's so contented she's wearing my black one still."

"Oh, but I am the fortunate one," said Otoyos. "I have acquired an excellent library for three ordinary cotton kimonos."

"But such lovely kimonos," exclaimed Edith. "Katherine and I are in luck. Look at this pale blue dressing gown, please, for a French dictionary."

"I have the loveliest of all," broke in Molly, "amber beads."

"But they did not appear becomingly on me," protested Otoyos, not wishing to seem worsted in her bargains. "And what do I receive in exchange? A pair of beautiful knitted slippers for winter time, so warm, so comfortable."

[157]

"They were too little for me," announced Molly. "It was no deprivation to exchange them for a beautiful necklace. Really, Judy, this was a most original scheme of yours."

"But what about Martin Luther?" asked someone. "I thought this spread was really for the purpose of counting up the pennies he had been accumulating."

Molly took the china pig from the shelf and placed him on the table.

"How shall I break him?" she asked. "Shall I crush him with one blow of the hammer, or shall I knock off his head on the steam heater?"

"Poor Martin!" ejaculated Edith. "He's not a wild boar to be hunted down and exterminated. He's a kindly domestic animal who has performed the task set for him by a wise providence. I think he should choose his own death."

"Every condemned man has a right to a lawyer," said Margaret. "I offer my services to Martin Luther and will consult him in private."

[158]

"We'll give him a trial by jury," broke in Katherine.

"But what's he accused of?" demanded Molly.

"He's accused of withholding funds held in trust for you," put in Margaret promptly.

There was a great deal of fun at the expense of Martin Luther and his mock trial. Katherine presided as Judge. There were two witnesses for the defense and two on the other side, and Margaret's speech for the accused would have done credit to a real lawyer. The jury, consisting of three girls, Otoyoy, Mabel Hinton and Rosomond Chase—Millicent Porter had excused herself with the plea of a headache and departed—sat on the case five minutes and decided that the pig should be made to surrender Molly's fund in the quickest possible time and by the quickest possible means.

It was almost time to separate for the night when Molly at last placed Martin Luther on a tray in the center of the table and with a sharp rap of the hammer broke him into little bits.

If interest had not been so concentrated on the amount of money hidden in the pig, perhaps it might have occurred to the company that Molly and her two friends had been playing a joke on them when they looked at the heap of ruins on the tray. But if this suspicion did enter the mind of anyone, it was dissolved at once at sight of Molly's white face and quivering lips.

[159]

"My money!" she gasped.

What happened was this. When the china pig was demolished, there rolled from his ruins no silver money but a varied collection of buttons and bogus stage money made of tin. Only about a dollar in real silver was to be found.

"What a blow is this!" at last exclaimed Molly, breaking the silence.

"But what does it mean?" demanded Rosomond.

"It means," said Nance, "that someone has taken all Molly's savings out of the china pig and substituted—this."

She pointed to the pile of stage money.

"But they couldn't have done it," cried Judy. "How could they have fished it up through such a small slot?"

[160]

"What a low, miserable trick!" cried Katherine.

It was a despicable action. Who among all the bright, intelligent students at Wellington could have been capable of such a dastardly thing? They agreed that it must have been a student. None of the college attendants could have planned it out so carefully.

"Who else has missed things?" asked Margaret with a sudden thought.

"I have," replied Jessie, "but I never mentioned it because I'm so careless and it did seem to be my own fault. I lost five dollars last week out of my purse. I left it on the window sill in the gym. and forgot about it. When I came back later the purse was there, but the money was gone."

"How horrid!" cried Molly, her soul revolting in disgust at anything dishonest.

"To tell you the truth I have not been able to find my gold beads for nearly two weeks," put in Judy. "I haven't seen them since—" she paused and flushed, "since the night of our play. I remember leaving them on my dressing table that morning."

[161]

Molly and Nance exchanged glances, recalling the mysterious visitor to their room that night.

Several of the other girls had missed small sums of money and jewelry which they had not thought of mentioning at the time.

"But how on earth was this managed?" demanded Jessie, pointing dramatically to the broken china pig.

"I suspect," replied Molly, "that this is not the real Martin Luther. When I bought him there were several others just like him on the shelf at the store. Whoever did this must have bought another Martin and the stage money at the same time. They have a lot of it at the store, silver and greenbacks, too. I saw it myself when I bought Martin. They keep it for class plays, I suppose."

There was a long discussion about what ought to be done. The housekeeper must be told, of course, next morning and a list of all missing articles made out, headed by Molly's loss of almost fifteen dollars.

[162]

It was rather a tragic ending to the jolly hickory-nut cake party. Molly tried to laugh away her disappointment about her savings, but she could not disguise to herself what it actually meant.

"I'm afraid I can't buy your dress, Judy," she announced, when the company had disbanded. "I'll mend up one of last year's dresses. It will be all right. It's a lesson to me not to place so much importance on clothes."

Judy said nothing, but she made a mental resolution that Molly should have that dress.

The next morning the housekeeper was properly notified of what had happened and it was not long before the rumor spread that somewhere about college there dwelt a thief. So remote did such a person seem from the Wellington girls that the thief came to be regarded as a kind of evil spirit lurking in the shadows and gliding through the halls.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

[163]

### ALARMS AND DISCOVERIES.

Several things of importance to this history happened during the week before the house party at Exmoor.

One morning, just before chapel, Molly was visited by several members of the Shakespearean Society, who presented her with a scroll of membership and fastened a pin on her blouse. They then solemnly shook hands and marched out in good order. By this token Molly became a full fledged member of that exclusive body. Margaret Wakefield, Jessie Lynch and Edith Williams were also taken into the society. Most of the other girls in the circle were elected to the various societies that day. Judy and Katherine became "Olla Podridas," which, as all Wellington knows, is Spanish for mixed soup. Nance was elected into the "Octogons," and all the girls belonged to one or the other of the two big Greek letter societies.

[164]

If Judy had any feelings regarding the Shakespeareans, she was careful to keep them well hidden under her gay and laughing exterior.

The Shakespeareans at Beta Phi House gave a supper for the new members, and later Millicent Porter, in a stunning, theatrical looking costume of old blue velvet, received them in her rooms. Margaret and Edith wore their best to this affair. The Shakespeareans were a dressy lot.

"I wonder why, in the name of goodness, they ever asked me to belong," exclaimed Molly to herself, as she got into her white muslin, which was really the best she could do. "I wish I could surprise somebody with something," her thoughts continued. "College friends are just like members of the same family. I can't even surprise the girls with a shirtwaist. They are intimately acquainted with every rag I possess."

Molly enjoyed the Beta Phi party, however, in spite of her dress, which Millicent Porter had dignified by calling it a "lingerie."

[165]

"How much nicer you look than the other girls in more elaborate things," she said admiringly.

Molly felt gratified.

"I don't feel nicer," she said. "I have a weakness for fine clothes. I love to hear the rustle of silk against silk. Your blue velvet dress is like a beautiful picture to me. I could look and look at it. There's a kind of depth to it like mist on blue water."

Millicent bridled with pleased vanity.

"It is rather nice," she admitted modestly. "It's a French dress made by the same dressmaker who designs clothes for a big actress. Don't you want to see some of my work? I have put it on exhibition to-night. I thought it would interest the new members. The girls here are quite familiar with it, of course."

Molly was delighted to see the craftsmanship of this unusual young woman, who appeared to be a peculiar mixture of pretentiousness and genius.

[166]

When, presently, she led Molly into the little den where her silver work was spread out on view it was almost as if she had turned into a little old man and was taking a customer into the back of his shop.

Some of the other girls had followed and they now stood in an admiring circle around the table whereon were displayed rings and necklaces, buckles and several silver platters.

"You are a wonder," cried Molly, deeply impressed.

Millicent accepted this compliment with a complacent smile.

"Papa and mamma think I am," she remarked, "but I have artistic knowledge enough to know that this is only a beginning. When I am able to make a bas-relief of Greek dancing figures on a silver box, I shall call myself really great. At present I am only near-great."

"What are you going to do with these things?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, nothing. They just accumulate and I pack them away. I don't have to sell any of them, of course."

[167]

"Don't you want to exhibit some of them at the George Washington Bazaar?" asked Margaret. "The Bazaar will sell them for you at ten per cent commission. The money goes to the student fund. You can have a booth if you like and dress up as Benvenuto Cellini or some famous worker in silver. I am chairman and can make any appointments I choose."

Molly could hardly keep from smiling over the expression on Millicent's face. The worker in silver and the dealer in antiques were struggling for supremacy in the soul of their descendant.

"Oh," she cried in great excitement, "I will fix it up like a Florentine shop, full of beautiful old stuffs and curios. It will be the most beautiful booth in the Bazaar. And I will choose Miss Brown to assist me. You shall be dressed as a Florentine lady of the Renaissance. I have the very costume."

Now Margaret, as Chairman of the Bazaar, preferred all appointments to be made officially, but seeing that Millicent was very much in earnest and that such a booth would greatly add to the picturesqueness of the affair, she made no objections. [168]

"There is one thing I would advise you to do, Miss Porter," she said when the plan was settled, "and that is to keep your silver things under lock and key because there is a thief about in Wellington. You might as well know it, because, sooner or later, you'll lose something. We all of us have. My monogram ring went this morning. I left it on the marble slab in the wash room and when I came back for it not three minutes later it was gone."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Molly, "I do hate things like that to happen. Why will people do such things?"

Millicent shrugged her shoulders.

"Perhaps they can't help themselves," she answered. "I've lost a few little things myself," she added. "But come into my room, Miss Brown, and let's talk about your costume. I have a gold net cap that will be charming." [169]

For the next half hour Molly was lost in the delights of Millicent's collection of beautiful theatrical costumes, pieces of old brocades and velvets. She drew them carelessly from a carved oak chest and tossed them on the bed in a shimmering mass of rich colors. Molly lingered so late over these "rich stuffs" that she was obliged to run all the way back to the Quadrangle and fell breathless and exhausted on a stone bench just inside the court as the watchman closed the gates.

Nance and Judy were late, too. Nance had been to a secret conclave of the Octogons and Judy had been having a jolly, convivial time with the Olla Podridas. The three girls met in their sitting room as the last stroke of ten vibrated through the building. They were undressing in the dark stealthily, in order to avoid the eager eye of the housekeeper, who was not popular, when they heard a great racket in the corridor.

"What's the matter? What's the matter?" called several voices through half open doors. [170]

The housekeeper making her rounds for the night passed them on the run.

"I've been robbed! I've been robbed!" wailed the voice of Minerva Higgins. "I won't stand having my things stolen from me. Who has dared enter my room?"

"What have you been robbed of?" asked the matron sharply. She was a lazy woman and detested disturbances.

"Two of my best gold medals I won at Mill Town High School. They were pure gold and very valuable."

"Good riddance," laughed Judy. "If anything in school could be spared, it is her gold medals."

"You're only in the same box with all the rest of us, Miss Higgins," called a student who roomed across the hall. "Everybody in the Quadrangle has lost something."

"They haven't lost gold medals," cried Minerva. "They haven't had them to lose. I could have spared anything else. I valued them more than everything I possess. They will be heirlooms some day for my children to show with pride." [171]

There were stifled laughs from several of the rooms, and someone called out:

"Suppose you don't have any?"

"Then she'll leave 'em to her grandchildren," called another voice.

"Poor, silly, little thing," exclaimed Molly, as the matron, intensely annoyed, went heavily past.

"Old Fatty's gone now. Let's light a lamp," suggested Judy, who either felt intense respect or none at all for all persons. There was no moderation in her feelings one way or the other.

"It's a queer thing about this thief-business," sighed Molly. "It makes me uncomfortable. I can't think of anyone I could even remotely suspect of such a thing."

"She must be a real klep.," observed Judy, "or she never would want the fair Minerva's gold medals. They're of no use to anybody but Minerva."

"Do you suppose Miss Walker will get another detective like Miss Steel?" asked Nance. "She was a fine one. The way she tipped around on noiseless felt slippers and listened outside people's doors was enough to scare any thief."

"Oh, yes," said Judy. "She was the real thing. And she wanted everything quiet. If Minerva Higgins had set up a yowl like that at Queen's she would have been properly sat upon by Miss Steel."

If Molly's mind had been especially acute that evening she would have noticed that her two friends were keeping up a sort of continuous duet as they lingered over their undressing. As it was, she barely heard their chatter because she was thinking of something far removed from thieves and detectives.

"We'll be called down about the light if you don't hurry, girls," she cautioned. "Why are you so slow?"

"By the way, did you know there was a package over here on the table addressed to you, Molly?" said Nance.

"Why, no; what can it be?"

Filled with curiosity, Molly made haste to cut the string around a square pasteboard box. Whatever was inside had been wrapped in quantities of white tissue paper. [173]

"It feels like china," cried Molly, tearing off the wrappings. "Why it's—"

"It's after ten, young ladies," said a stern voice outside the door.

Judy turned out the light.

"It's Martin Luther, girls," whispered Molly.

Judy crept to her room and returned presently with a little electric dark lantern her father had given her. This she flashed on the china pig.

"One sinner hath repented," she whispered. "It is Martin."

Nance reached for the hammer.

"Break him open," she ordered. "Let's, see if the money's safe. He might be filled with stage money, too."

Molly struck Martin Luther with the hammer, muffling the sound with a corner of the rug. The flashlight revealed quantities of silver.

"Oh, girls!" she exclaimed, "I've got it all back. I'm glad the thief repented and I'm glad, oh, so glad, to get the money." [174]

"And now the sale is on again," said Judy, jumping about the room in a wild, noiseless dance.

"I can't resist it," ejaculated Molly. "I'll buy the dress if you really want to sell it, Judy."

They looked carefully at the address on the box. It was printed with a soft pencil and merely said: "Miss M. Brown."

"I suppose the girl felt sorry," Molly remarked. "But it's a pity she started up so soon again after her repentance and took Minerva's medals."

---

## CHAPTER XIII.

### "THE MOVING FINGER WRITES."

The girls had agreed to pack all their clothes in one trunk and carry a suitcase apiece to the Junior Week-End Party at Exmoor. Nance was official packer and stood knee-deep in finery while she considered whether it was better to begin with party capes or slippers. Molly was studying and Judy was stretched on the divan idly swinging one foot.

Otoyo poked her head in the door.

"May I ask advice of kind friends?"

Molly looked up and smiled. She had once heard a preacher say that humility was as necessary to a well-rounded character as a sense of humor and she could see now what he meant. Otoyo was an excellent illustration. She was filled with humble gratitude for little kindnesses, never boasted and never forgot her perfect manners. [176]

"Indeed, you may, little one," spoke up Judy. "Come right in and state your grievances."



"Oh, I have no grievances. I have only happinesses," said Otoyō. "But I am packing and I wish to ask advices regarding clothes."

"Clothes for what?"

"For Exmoor," replied Otoyō, blushing and casting down her eyes.

"Why, you dear little Jap, you didn't tell us," exclaimed Molly.

"I have obtained the knowledge of it myself only this morning. Mrs. McLean has so kindly offered to look after little Japanese girl."

"And who is your escort?" they demanded in one chorus.

"Professor Green," said Otoyō, trying not to show how intensely proud she felt of the honor. "He is what you call 'a-lum-nus,'" she said, "and he invites me to go with him, and Mr. Andrew McLean, junior, is making out a card of dances for me. Is it not wonderful? And is it not of great good fortune that I have now learned to dance?" She began circling about the room. "Only I can do it much better alone. Poor little Japanese girl will be frightened to dance with American gentleman." [177]

The girls laughed again.

"You are an adorable little person," exclaimed Molly, kissing her, "and young American gentleman will be only too glad to dance with little Japanese girl."

Otoyō was now well provided with clothes, and there being still plenty of room in the trunk, they allowed her to pack two evening dresses and a diminutive black satin party wrap with their things.

Molly was half sorry that Professor Green was going. Except at classes, she had never seen him since that Sunday morning on Round Head. Once he had smiled at her like an old friend when they had met in the main hall, but she was careful not to return the smile and bowed coldly.

"Yes, I am disappointed," she had thought. "I am glad Prexy found out about us that night, but he needn't have been the one to tell. I hope I shall be too much engaged in having a good time at Exmoor to see him. I am glad Lawrence Upton is going to look after me, because he always does so much for one. It was nice of Professor Green to take Otoyō. He is kind, of course." [178]

However, that afternoon when the trolley started with its load of Wellington guests for Exmoor—there were several other parties—Molly found herself seated between Mrs. McLean and Professor Green. How it had happened she could not tell. She had intended to sit anywhere but next the Professor, whom she regarded as a false friend. But there she was and the Professor was saying:

"Miss Brown, you and I have been almost strangers of late. Are you working so hard that you have no time for old friends this winter?"

Molly paused for an instant to consider what she should reply to this question. Then she said a thing so bitter and foreign to her nature that the Professor gave a start of surprise and Molly felt that someone else must have said it. [179]

"I have plenty of time for really *loyal* friends, Professor Green," she said in a frigid tone of voice. She turned her back and began to talk to Mrs. McLean, and for the rest of the trip the Professor devoted himself to Otoyō.

Molly was in high spirits when she reached Exmoor. She was determined not to let her cruel speech ruin her good time. But through all the gayeties of that afternoon and evening, at the teas, the dinner and the Glee Club concert, the tang of its bitterness reached her. Across the aisle at the concert she could see Professor Green sitting by Otoyō, smiling gravely while the little Japanese girl entertained him, but never once did he look in Molly's direction. A lump rose in her throat and she dropped her gaze to the program.

"It is never right to make mean speeches," she decided, "no matter how much provocation one has."

"Aren't you having a good time?" asked Lawrence Upton at her side. "You look a little tired." [180]

"I'm having a lovely time," answered Molly, "and I thought I was looking my best."

"Oh, you couldn't look any better. I think you are—well, the prettiest girl in the room. I meant there was a kind of sad look in your eyes."

"Don't try to cover it up with compliments," answered Molly. "When a thing's said, you can't change it, you know. It's like this:

"The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it."

"Please don't be so severe, Miss Molly," said Lawrence humbly.

"I wasn't thinking of what you said, particularly," said Molly. "I was thinking of any speech one might make and regret and never be able to recall."

"You *are* sad," said Lawrence. "I was certain of it. Will it make you any gladder to hear about to-morrow? You are engaged for every hour in the day. I had a great to-do keeping a little time for myself. Three fellows wanted to take you driving in the morning, but I reserved that privilege for yours truly. Dodo and I are going to drive you and Miss Judy over to Hilledell after breakfast. Then there's the Junior Lunch. That's quite a big affair, you know. It's like a reception. Prexy always comes to that and any of the alumni who happen to be down. A crowd of them come usually. Andy's giving a tea in the Chapter rooms and there are some other teas, and then come the dinner and the ball."

[181]

"If there's anything left of us by then," said Molly, laughing.

It was an intermission and everybody was visiting as they did at the Wellington Glee Club concerts. Molly, the center of a jolly crowd of young people, joined in the merriment and talk and all the time there was a taste of bitterness on her lips and in her ear a voice kept dinning over and over:

"I have plenty of time for really loyal friends, Professor Green."

[182]

That night, when they had gone to bed in their rooms in the Chapter House, they were serenaded by a roving band of juniors. When at last the serenaders moved away and the house was still, Molly could not go to sleep.

Dozens of times she repeated her cruel speech. She analyzed and parsed it, as she used to parse sentences years before in her first lessons in grammar. She named the subject, the predicate, the object, and modifying words. She tried to define the meaning of the word loyal. What were its synonyms? Faithful was one, of course. When she closed her eyes, she could see her speech written in red across a black background like a flaming sign. Was the Professor hurt or angry or both? She recalled every kindness he had ever done for her and there were many. She remembered with a burning blush what pains he and his sister had taken to make her have a happy Christmas a year ago. He had informed President Walker on her, of course, but he was only doing his duty. And she had made that cruel speech!

[183]

"I have plenty of time for really loyal friends, Professor Green."

Her mind traveled in a circle. She tossed and turned, trying one side until it ached and then trying the other; resting on her back for a moment and finding the position intolerable.

At last she fell asleep and woke up stiff and weary in the morning, devoutly wishing the day were well over.

She had hoped to see Professor Green in the morning, if only for a moment, but he had returned to Wellington, leaving the entertainment of Otoyoy in charge of some of his brother's friends.

Of what earthly pleasure is a beautiful corn-colored evening gown when one's heart is like a lump of lead and one's conscience heavy within?

All her numerous partners at the ball could not console Molly, nor could the knowledge that she was looking her best as she floated through the dances in her diaphanous dress.

"I know now how Judy felt after she was so unkind to me at the junior play," she thought, "and, if heaven is kind to me, I hope never to say anything to hurt anyone again."

[184]

In the meantime there were those who were enjoying themselves to the utmost limit of enjoyment.

Otoyoy Sen, in a seventh heaven, was dancing with young Andy, who towered above her like a lighthouse over a cottage.

Judy in her black dress was sparkling with vivacity. Her fluffy light brown hair gleamed yellow and her skin was cream white, against the dark folds of her chiffon frock. Could this be the same Judy who, only a few weeks ago, was contemplating—heaven knows what?

Nance, with one eye on Andy, was also happy and light-hearted. How trim and charming she looked in her white silk dress!

Molly found herself laughing and talking a great deal, and all the time she was thinking:

"We'll be back to-morrow at noon. On Monday the holidays begin. Oh, if I can only see him before he goes!"

A great many young men came down to the station to see them off next morning. There was a din of farewells. On all sides girlish voices were calling:

[185]

"Good-bye!"

"It was the jolliest dance!"

"I never had a better time in all my life!"

"Awfully nice of you to ask us."

Molly had joined in the chorus with the others and had grasped many outstretched hands and smiled and waved her handkerchief and listened to Otoyó in one ear, crying:

"Oh, Mees Brown, I do like the American young gentleman verree much," while Judy in the other was saying:

"Wasn't it glorious fun? I never saw you look better. I have a dozen compliments for you."

The car fairly crept back to Wellington, so it seemed to poor Molly. At last they arrived and a carry-all took them back to the Quadrangle.

Without waiting to explain, she left her suitcase in the hall and ran to the cloisters. Pausing at the door marked "E. A. Green," she knocked urgently. [186]

There was no answer. A door farther down the corridor was opened and the professor of French looked out.

"Professor Green has gone away," he said. "He will not return until after the holidays."

---

## CHAPTER XIV.

 [187]

### AN INVITATION AND AN APOLOGY.

Millicent Porter invited Molly to go to New York with her for the holidays and visit in the grand Porter mansion. Molly understood it was a palace filled with tapestries and fine pictures. Millicent had mentioned all those things casually. They would go to the theaters and the opera and ride about in motor cars. But Molly was glad she had kept her head and declined.

"I have some work to do, Millicent," she said. "I appreciate your invitation, but I can't accept it."

"You must," exclaimed Millicent, too accustomed to having her own way to take no for an answer. "Is it clothes?" she added. Somehow, she gave the impression of not being used to wealth.

Molly hardly felt intimate enough with her to go into the subject of her own poverty and answered briefly. [188]

"Not entirely."

Millicent was not famous for generosity and the basket of red roses sent to Molly on the night of the junior play had been her one outburst; but she was determined to have Molly go home with her at any cost.

"Because," she continued, "if it's a question of clothes, I can arrange that perfectly. My dresses will fit you if they are lengthened and—well, there'll be plenty of clothes. Don't bother about that. Your yellow dress is good enough for anything—"

"I should say it was," thought Molly, rather indignantly. "Good enough for the likes of you or anybody else."

"I'll lend you my mink coat and turban," went on this munificent young person, "and I have a big black velvet hat that would look awfully well on you. Now, you must come, please. I want you to see my studio at the top of the house. To tell you the truth, I'm rather lonesome in New York. I don't know any girls well, because I've never stayed at one school long enough to make friends." [189]

"What's the reason of that?" asked Molly.

"Oh, I always get tired or something," answered the other carelessly. "But say you'll come, do, please," she went on pathetically. Then, unable to stifle her grand airs, she said: "I doubt if you have such fine houses as ours in the south."

"Oh, no," answered Molly, quickly, "I doubt if we have. Our homes are very old and simple. The only works of art are family portraits. We have no tapestry or statuary. The house I was born in," she went on half-smiling to herself, "was built by my great-grandfather. Most of the furniture came down from him, too. Some of it's quite decrepit now, but we keep it polished up. My earliest recollection is rubbing the mahogany. You would doubtless think our house very empty and plain. We have some old crimson damask curtains in the parlor, but the rest of the curtains are made of ten-cent dimity. There is no furnace. We depend on coal fires in the bedrooms and wood fires in the other rooms and we nearly freeze if there's a cold winter. We have no plumbing. Every member of the family has his own tub and there are six extra ones for company. A little colored boy named Sam brings us hot water every morning for our baths. He gets it from a big boiler attached to the kitchen stove, and when we are done bathing he has to carry it all down again. Rather a nuisance, isn't it? But Sam doesn't mind. Oh, I daresay you'd think our house was a kind of a hovel." Molly paused and looked at Millicent strangely. There was a hidden fire in her deep [190]

blue eyes. "As for me," she said, "no palace in all New York or anywhere else could be as beautiful to me as my home."

Millicent looked uncomfortable.

"Be it ever so homely, there's no face like one's own," cried Judy, who at that moment had come into the room and caught Molly's last words. "What's all this talk about home?"

"I was just telling Millicent about the old-fashioned, whitewashed brick palace wherein I was born," answered Molly. [191]

"I'm sorry you won't accept my invitation," said Millicent, taking no notice of Judy whatever. "Perhaps, after you think about it awhile you'll change your mind." Her manner was heavy and patronizing, and implied without words:

"After you have had time to consider the honor I am paying you and the advantages of visiting in my splendid home, you cannot fail to accept."

"You are very kind, Millicent, but I shall not reconsider it," announced Molly coldly. "I have made up my mind to spend Christmas right here in the Quadrangle. I hope you'll have a beautiful time. Good-bye." They shook hands formally.

"I'll try to see the best in her," she thought, "but I'd rather not see it at close hand. She grates on me."

Judy waved an open letter with a dramatic gesture.

"Oh, Molly, dearest, I'm glad you didn't accept. It's my own selfish pleasure that makes me glad, but I'm going to spend Christmas right here in the Quadrangle, too." [192]

Molly looked at her friend's eager, excited face in surprise.

"Do you mean your mother and father are coming here?"

"No, no. They're on the Pacific Coast, you know, and will be detained until spring. It's too far for me to take the trip just for the few days I could spend with them, so I'm going to stay here."

A year ago Judy would have been in the depths of despair over a separation from her beloved parents at this holiday time. But whether she had gained poise by her recent sufferings or whether spending Christmas with her friend in the big empty Quadrangle appealed to her romantic nature, it would be difficult to tell. Through all the complexities of her nature her devotion to Molly was interwoven like a silver thread, and the shame and remorse she still felt in looking back on that unhappy evening when she had denounced her friend only seemed to draw the two girls more closely together. [193]

Molly gave her a joyous hug.

"Oh, Judy, I am so happy. I never dreamed of such a blessing as this. Even Otoyó is going away this year and hardly half a dozen girls are left in the Quadrangle. I am truly glad I had the courage to decline Millicent's invitation. It was only for one instant I was tempted to go, but she ruined it by a patronizing speech."

"What a singular little creature she is," observed Judy. "She has no charm, if she can beat on silver; and she's so awfully conscious of her wealth. I don't know how I could ever have admired her. I suppose I was lured in the beginning by her fine clothes and her grand way of talking."

"She is very talented," Molly continued, "but, as you say, she lacks charm. Perhaps she would have been different if she had been poor and obliged to turn her gifts to some use. After all, I think we are happier than rich girls. We are not afraid to be ourselves. We wear old clothes and we have an object in view when we work, because we want to earn money." [194]

"Earn money," repeated Judy. "I only wish I could give papa the surprise of his life by earning a copper cent."

Molly was silent. Her own earning capacity had not been great that winter. She had kept herself in pin money by tutoring, but lately she had made an alarming discovery. When she had first started to college, teaching had been the ultimate goal of her ambitions. She intended to be a teacher in a private school and perhaps later have a school of her own, as Nance wished to do.

Now, as her horizon broadened and her tastes and perceptions began taking form and shape, she found herself drifting farther and farther away from her early ambition. Something was waking up in her mind that had been asleep. It was like a voice crying to be heard, still immensely far away and inarticulate, but growing clearer and more insistent all the time.

It made her uneasy and unsettled. She yearned to express herself, but the power had not yet arrived. [195]

The two girls went down to the village that afternoon to see the last trainload of students pull out of Wellington station, and later to make some purchases at the general store. It was Christmas Eve and the streets were filled with shoppers from the country around Wellington. Molly was trying to recall the words of a poem she had heard ages back, the rhythm of which was beating in her head, and Judy was endeavoring to explain to herself why she felt neither homesick nor blue on this the first Christmas ever spent away from her parents.

They paused to look in at the window of a florist who did a thriving business in Wellington. A motor car was waiting in front of the shop.

"We must have some Christmas decorations, too," exclaimed Judy about to enter, when the way was blocked by a crowd of people coming out. "What pretty girls!" continued Judy in a whisper, looking admiringly at two young women who came first.

[196]

The prettiest one, who had red hair not unlike Molly's and brown eyes, called over her shoulder:

"Edwin, I shan't save you a seat beside me unless you're there to claim it."

"I'll be there, Alice, never fear," answered Professor Green, hurrying after her with an armload of holly and cedar garlands.

Molly stood rooted to the spot while the shoppers crowded into the car.

"If I could only tell him how sorry I am for that cruel speech," she thought.

With a sudden determination, she rushed toward the car, calling:

"Professor!"

The girl named Alice looked around quickly, but apparently she did not choose to see Molly, and as the car moved off she began laughing and talking in a very sprightly and vivacious manner.

Molly sighed. The longer an apology is delayed the more trivial and insignificant it becomes.

"He probably has forgotten all about it," she thought. "He seems happy enough with Alice, whoever she is. Perhaps what I said hurt me more than it did him, but, oh, I do wish I had seen him before he went away. It would have been different then, I'm sure."

[197]

She followed Judy into the flower store. Mrs. McLean was there with Andy.

"Why, here are two lassies left over!" cried the good woman.

"What luck, mother!" said Andy. "Now we'll have some fun. We'll give a dinner and a dance, and Larry and Dodo will come over. We will, won't we, mother?"

"What a coaxer you are, Andy. You're still a lad of ten and not nineteen, I'm sure."

"Don't you let him persuade you to give parties when you're not of a mind to do it, Mrs. McLean," put in Judy.

"I wouldn't miss the chance, my dear. I like it as much as he does. We'll have it to-morrow night and you'll come prepared to be as merry as can be and cheer up the doctor. He has been so busy of late he has forgotten how to enjoy himself."

[198]

"It doesn't look as if we were going to spend such a quiet Christmas after all, Judy," laughed Molly, when Mrs. McLean and Andy had gone.

Judy was engaged in selecting all the most branching and leafy boughs of holly she could find, while the florist looked on uneasily.

That afternoon they spent an hour beautifying their yellow sitting room. And all the time Molly's mind was harking back to Christmas a year ago, when the Greens had busied themselves preparing such a delightful party for Otoyoy and her.

"And I said he was not a loyal friend," she said to herself. "Oh, if I could only unsay those words!"

She sat down at her desk and seized a pen.

"What are you going to do?" asked an inner voice.

"I am going to write a note and tell him I'm sorry, and then I'm going over to the cloisters and slip it under his door. It will ease my mind, even if he doesn't get the note until he comes back. He'll know then that I couldn't go to sleep Christmas Eve until I had apologized."

[199]

The note finished, she carefully addressed and sealed it. Judy was in her own room composing a joint letter to her mother and father, and did not see Molly when she slipped out of the room and hurried downstairs. Outside, the pale winter twilight still lingered and the sky was piled high with fleecy white clouds.

"It's going to snow," thought Molly, as she hurried along the arcade and opened the little oak door leading into the cloisters.

---

## CHAPTER XV.

[200]

### A CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY THAT WAS NEVER TOLD.

It was quite dark in the corridor whereon opened the cloister offices. All the teachers had gone away for the holidays and the place was as ghostly as a deserted monastery.

"I can't say I'd like to be here alone on a dark night, if it is such a young cloister. It seems to have been born old like some children," Molly thought.

She coughed and the sound reverberated in the arched ceiling and came back to her an empty echo.

Pausing at Professor Green's door, she stooped to shove the note underneath, when, to her surprise, the door opened at her touch and swung lightly back.

With an exclamation, Molly started back, leaving the note on the floor. Leaning against one of the deep silled windows, just where the fast fading light fell across his face, stood a tall, stoop-shouldered man. In the flashing glimpse Molly caught of him before she turned and fled, she noticed that he resembled an old gray eagle with a thin beak of a nose and a worn white face; and that his dark eyes were quite close together. The rest of him was lost in the black shadows of the room. [201]

Once out of the ghostly corridor and the heavy oak door shut between her and the strange visitor in the Professor's office, Molly paused and took a deep breath.

"In the name of goodness," she cried, "what have I just seen? If he had stirred or blinked an eyelash or even appeared to breathe, I should at least have felt he was human."

The big empty hall of the Quadrangle seemed a cheerful spot in comparison with the cloister corridor. It was warm and light and from the seniors' parlor came the sound of piano playing. But Molly never paused to look in and see what belated student was cheering herself with music. Only her own sitting room with its gay holiday decorations and Judy twanging the guitar could recall her to a world of realities. Before she reached the door she had made up her mind that it would be just as well not to tell the excitable and impressionable Judy anything about the apparition or whatever it was in the Professor's study. It was really an act of self-denial, because it would have been decidedly interesting to discuss the episode with Judy. [202]

"I would have told Nance," she thought. "She would have agreed with me, I am sure, that it couldn't have been a ghost because, of course, there are no such things. But if I tell Judy, I know perfectly well she will persuade me it was a ghost and we'll be frightened to death all night."

Judy, still wearing her widow's weeds, was singing a doleful ballad when Molly hurried in, called "By the Bonnie Milldams o' Binnorie." Molly was fond of this ancient song, but she was in no mood to listen to it just then. [203]

"The youngest stood upon a stane,  
The eldest cam' and pushed her in.  
Oh, sister, sister, reach your hand,  
And ye sall be heir to half my land;  
Oh, sister, sister, reach but your glove,  
And sweet William sall be your love."

The guitar gave out a mournful twang.

"Talk about impressionable people, I'm worse than she is," thought Molly. "I'll shriek aloud if she doesn't stop this minute."

Just then the six o'clock bell boomed out and Molly did give a loud nervous exclamation.

Judy dropped the guitar on the floor. The strings resounded with a deep protesting chord and then subsided into resigned quietude.

"Molly, what is the matter? You're as pale as a ghost."

Molly smiled at her own weakness. Having just made up her mind not to tell Judy, she was suddenly possessed with a fever to relate the entire incident from beginning to end.

"If you'll promise to put on your red dress to-night by way of celebration, and to cheer me up, I'll tell you a thrilling story, Judy." [204]

"But I've made a vow and I can't break it."

"Did the vow stipulate that you couldn't wear colors Christmas Eve?"

"No, not exactly."

"Well, then, get into your scarlet frock, because I'll never tell you if you wear that black one, and I'll put on some old gay-colored rag, too, and after supper I'll tell you a thrilling tale."

"I'll put on the red dress," said Judy, "if you promise never to tell Nance, but I can't wait until after supper to hear the story."

"You'll have to. It's a long tale and there won't be time to dress and tell it, too."

"Well," consented Judy, "because it's Christmas Eve, the very time to tell thrilling tales if they are

true, I'll agree."

And obediently she attired herself in the scarlet dress, while Molly put on a blue blouse that, by a happy chance, matched the color of her eyes as perfectly as if they had been cut from the same bolt.

[205]

"Did it really happen to me," she kept thinking, "or did I dream it after all?"

There was no chance to tell Judy the story after supper, because the two girls were summoned to the parlor almost immediately to see three callers, Andy, Dodo Green and Lawrence Upton.

During the visit Molly seized the opportunity to ask the younger Green where his brother was spending his Christmas.

"Oh, he's making visits around the county," answered George Theodore carelessly. "He always has enough invitations for three, but he was never known to accept any before. I don't know what's got into the old boy this year. He's getting as giddy as a *débutante*, going to parties and rushing around in motors. I have had to make two trips over to Wellington, first to get his evening clothes because he forgot to pack them, and then for his pumps and dress shirts I forgot myself. When the old boy goes into anything, he always does it in good style. He used to be a kind of dude about ten years ago. But he's all the way to thirty now and he feels his age. Do you notice how bald he's getting? He'll be losing his teeth next."

[206]

"I'm glad he's having such a good time," said Molly, disdaining the aspersions cast by George Theodore on his brother's age. "I hope he is well and happy," she added in her thoughts. "I am sure I don't begrudge him a jolly Christmas, considering what a jolly one he gave me last year. I am sorry I left the note, now. Like as not, he doesn't even remember what I said that day and when he reads the letter he won't know what I am talking about."

At last the boys left. Judy was intensely relieved. She desired only one thing on earth: to hear Molly's ghost story. All her perceptions were on edge with curiosity, but she was determined to have all things in harmony for the telling of a Christmas Eve Ghost Story. So she restrained her inquisitiveness until they had slipped on dressing-gowns and were both comfortably installed in big chairs with a box of candy and a plate of salted almonds between them.

[207]

"And now, begin," she said, sighing comfortably.

But Molly had scarcely uttered three words when she was interrupted by the arrival of packages from the late train brought up by the faithful Murphy.

Even Judy's unsatisfied curiosity regarding the tale could not hold out against these fascinating boxes, and the story waited while they untied the strings and eagerly tore off the paper wrappings.

"I suppose we ought to wait until to-morrow morning, but since we're just two lonely little waifs, I think we might gratify ourselves this once, don't you, Molly dear?" asked Judy.

"I certainly do," Molly agreed, "seeing as it doesn't matter to anybody whether we look at them now or in the morning."

It was a long time before they settled down again to the story, and Molly had not advanced a paragraph when there came another tap at the door. Evidently the Quadrangle gates were to be kept open late that night or account of the arrival of holiday packages.

[208]

This time it was a boy from the florist's, fairly laden with flower boxes.

Andy had sent both the girls violets.

"Very sweet and proper of him, I'm sure, in the absence of Nance," laughed Judy.

Lawrence Upton had sent Molly a box of American beauties.

"And he could ill afford it, the foolish boy," ejaculated Molly.

Dodo had expended all his savings on a handsome Jerusalem cherry tree for Judy. There was another box for Molly. It contained violets and two cards—Miss Grace Green's and Professor Edwin Green's.

Molly blushed crimson when she read the names. For the thousandth time she covered herself with reproaches. She sat down and gathered the bouquets into her lap.

"Judy," she cried contritely, "what have I done to gain all these kind friends? I'm sure I don't deserve it. The dears!"

[209]

But Judy was too much engaged with her own numerous gifts to contradict this self-deprecating statement.

"I am really happy, Molly," she cried, "even without mamma and papa it's been a lovely Christmas Eve."

With one of those divinations which sometimes comes to us like a voice from another land, it suddenly occurred to Molly that whatever it was in Professor Green's office, whether ghost or human, perhaps the Professor might not like to have it discussed, and she resolved not to tell

Judy or anyone else what she had seen.

"And then," she continued, "if he ever asks me whether I told, it will be a nice, comfortable feeling to say I haven't."

At last, having put the flowers back in the boxes and restored some order to the room, Judy sat down and folded her hands.

"And now, go on with the story."

"My dear child, so much has happened since then and I'm so weary, I don't think I can make it the frightful tale I had intended."

[210]

"Oh, it was all a joke?" asked Judy, whose enthusiasm had about spent itself in other outlets.

"Oh, partly a joke. I went down to the cloisters to leave a Christmas note for Professor Green at his office and saw a ghostly looking figure there."

"Is that all? Well, anybody might look like a phantom in that gloomy place. I've no doubt the ghostly figure took you for another."

"I've no doubt it did," answered Molly, laughing, and with that they kissed and went to bed.

Long after midnight Molly rose and slipped on her dressing-gown. Creeping out of her room, she flitted along the corridor, turned the corner and hurried up the other side of the Quadrangle. At the very end of this hall was a narrow passage with a window which commanded a view of the courtyard and the windows of the cloister studies.

Softly raising the blind, she looked out. In one of the studies a dim light was burning. She counted windows. It was Professor Green's office, she was certain. While she looked the light went out.

[211]

Back to her bed she flew with a feeling that somebody was chasing her.

"There's one thing certain," she thought, drawing the covers over her head, "ghosts never need lights."

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

[212]

### MORE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS AND A COASTING PARTY OF TWO.

All the bells in Wellington were ringing when the girls awoke Christmas morning. The sweet-toned bell of the Chapel of St. Francis mingled its notes with the persistent appeal of the Roman Catholic bell across the way, while on the next street the bell of the Presbyterian Church sent out a calm doctrinal call for all repentant sinners to be on hand sharp for the ten o'clock service. And in this confusion of sound came the tinkle of sleigh bells like a note of pleasure in a religious symphony.

"Merry Christmas!" cried Judy, running into the room with an armful of parcels done up with white tissue paper and tied with red ribbons. "Here are the presents Nance and the others left for you. 'My lady fair, arise, arise, arise!'"

[213]

"Merry Christmas!" cried Molly, bounding out of bed and rushing to find the presents she had been commissioned to take care of for Judy.

The two girls climbed under the covers and began to open their gifts.

"Dear old Nance!" ejaculated Judy. "How well she knows my wants. She's given me an address book because she disapproved of my keeping addresses on old envelopes."





"AND SHE'S GIVEN ME A PAIR OF SILK STOCKINGS," CRIED  
MOLLY.—Page 213.

"And she's given me a pair of silk stockings," cried Molly, "because she knows my luxurious tastes run to such things."

"Edith Williams is the class joker," remarked Judy, laughing. "She's sent me a novel by Black and she's written on the fly leaf, 'For the first six months the Merry Widow read only novels by Black.'"

"Weren't they dears?" broke in Molly. "They knew we'd be lonely and they wanted to make us laugh Christmas morning. Look what Edith sent me."

It was a small round basket of sweet grass, no doubt purchased at the village store, and inside on pink cotton was a pasteboard medal. Printed around the outer edge of the medal was the following announcement: "Awarded to Pallas Athene Brown for the Best General Average in Good Manners and Amiability by the Wellington High School."

[214]

There was a hole punched in one end of the medal with a blue ribbon run through it. On one of Edith's cards in the box was written:

"To be worn on great occasions."

The two girls received other amusing presents. If their friends had hoped to cheer them on their lonely Christmas morning, they had succeeded wonderfully well. Judy especially was in the wildest spirits. It was a custom of hers to describe her feelings exactly as a chronic invalid recounts his sensations.

"I'm all aglow with good cheer. I could dance and sing. It must be a sort of Christmas spirit in the air. I do adore to get presents. I think I have more curiosity in my nature than you, Molly. Why don't you open the rest of yours?"

Molly was lost in admiration of a beautiful little copy of Maeterlinck's "*Pelléas et Mélisande*" sent to her by Mary Stewart.

[215]

"Because I like to eat my cake slowly," she answered, "and get all the fine flavor without choking myself to death. Oh," she cried, taking the tissue paper off a small parcel, "how lovely of your mother, Judy, to send me this beautiful lace collar!"

"It's just like the one she sent me," answered Judy, as pleased as a child over Molly's enthusiasm. "But do look in the other boxes. What's that square thing? If it were mine, I should be palpitating with curiosity."

If Judy had guessed what the square box contained, she would not have been so eager to precipitate an embarrassing situation.

"Very well, Mistress Judy, we'll find out immediately what's inside. Where did it come from,

anyway?"

"There's not the slightest inkling of who sent it," answered Judy, examining the address printed in a sort of script. "Whoever sent it knew how to do lettering, certainly. But the postmark is smeared."

[216]

Molly cut the string and removed the brown paper wrapping. The article inside the box was folded in a quantity of tissue paper.

"It has as many coverings as a royal Egyptian mummy," exclaimed Judy impatiently.

It had indeed. After stripping off several layers of paper it was necessary to cut another string before the rest of the paper could be removed.

At last, however, another china Martin Luther emerged from his tissue paper shell. The two girls gasped with surprise and consternation.

"Will wonders never cease?" ejaculated Molly.

"I'm sure it's just another joke the girls are playing on us," broke in Judy with some excitement. "Here's a card. What does it say?"

On a pasteboard card, written in the same script as the address, was the following mystifying message:

"Was it kind to put such temptation in the way of the weak?"

[217]

"What does it mean, Judy?" asked Molly. "I seem to be groping in the dark."

Judy shook her head.

"You can search me," she said expressively. "Why don't you break a hole in him and see?"

"No sooner said than done," answered Molly. "But I really feel like a butcher. This is the third time I've destroyed a pig."

She cracked the bank on the head of her little iron bed, but only a silver quarter rolled out on the floor. The rest of the money was in bills, three five dollar bills, which had been compactly folded and pushed through the slit in the pig's back.

"Fifteen dollars and a quarter!" ejaculated Molly. "That was just about what the original sum was, but I suppose in silver it was too heavy to come through the mails."

She lay back on her pillows, her brows wrinkled into a puzzled frown.

"It's a curious performance," she said, after a brief silence. "I don't understand."

Judy at the foot of the bed, half buried in tissue paper and Christmas presents, glanced out of the window at the snowy landscape. There was a strange expression on her face and two little imps of laughter lurked in her wide gray eyes. Molly looked at her a moment, but Judy would not meet her gaze.

[218]

"Julia Kean," broke out Molly, suddenly, "do you know whom you look like this moment? Mona Lisa. You have the same mysterious smile as if you knew a great deal more than you intended to tell. Now just turn around and look me in the eyes." Molly crawled from under the covers and put her hands on her friend's shoulders. "Who sent me that first Martin Luther with all the small change?"

Judy's lips curled into an irresistible smile. There was something very mellowed and soft about her face, like an old portrait, the colors of which had deepened with the years.

"You aren't angry with me, Molly, dearest?" she asked, laying her cheek against Molly's.

"Angry? How could I be angry, you adorable child?"

[219]

"You see it was just taking money out of one pocket to put it in the other, and it was the only way I could think of to make you take the yellow dress. You wouldn't accept it as a gift. Of course, I never dreamed the real thief would repent."

The two friends looked into each other's eyes with loving confidence.

"Dear old Judy!" cried Molly, "I don't know what I have done to deserve such a friend as you. And what an imagination you have! Who but you would ever have conceived such a notion? And to think, too, that I would never have known, if the real person who took the money hadn't had an attack of conscience."

"It would certainly have remained a secret forever unless Nance had confessed it on her death bed," laughed Judy. "She's that close, I imagine her first confession would be her last one."

"I'll wear the dress to-night, Judy, just to show you how much I appreciate the gift," announced Molly.

Judy put on a broad lace collar that morning and a lavender velvet bow, by way of lightening her mourning.

[220]

There was a good deal to do during the day, getting the rooms straightened and writing letters.

All morning the snow fell so softly and quietly that the Quadrangle seemed to be isolated in a still white world of its own. Not even the campus houses could be seen through the thick curtain of flakes. Molly could picture to herself no more delightful occupation than to stay indoors all day and read one of her new Christmas books. Nothing could have been more cheerful than the little sitting room with its Christmas greens and vases of flowers.

Curled up in one of the big chairs, Molly's mind wandered idly from the open pages of the book in her lap to the recent inexplicable happenings. Who was the mysterious visitor in the Professor's study? After all, it was none of her business, but she felt some natural curiosity about it. Who was the girl who had stolen the china pig?

[221]

"I don't want to know," she admonished herself.

Nevertheless, it was impossible not to make a few random conjectures.

Judy, restlessly beating a tattoo on the window, was thinking the same thing.

"Molly," she burst out, after a long silence, "I have an idea who that girl is. Have you?"

"Yes, but I'd rather not mention her name. It's too dreadful. And you know how I feel about circumstantial evidence."

"All I say is," announced Judy, "that it's a certain person who makes the loudest noise about losing her own things."

"Well, she's repented," said Molly, "so let's try and forget it."

There was another brief but eloquent silence. Judy pressed her face against the window pane.

"I did think," she observed presently, "that those boys would come to take us out for a sleigh ride or a coast or something this afternoon. But we can't wait around here all day for them. It would be paying them too much of an honor. Why not go coasting ourselves? I'll get Edith's sled and we'll walk over to Round Head."

[222]

"That would be fine," said Molly, with all the enthusiasm she could muster. Reluctantly she laid aside her book and began to dress for the walk.

When two intimate associates are not mutually agreed, the more selfish one never dreams of the sacrifices of the other. Molly had no taste for battling with the snow, and when in half an hour they found themselves plunging through the drifts on their way to the steep coasting hill, she turned a wistful inward eye back toward the comforts of the yellow-walled sitting room. The Morris chair, the prized antique rug and the Japanese scroll with the snow-capped Fujiyama and the sky-blue waters called to her insistently.

"Isn't this glorious, Molly?" ejaculated Judy, fired with the energy of her enthusiasms.

"Dee-lightful," replied poor Molly, brushing the snow out of her eyes with admirable pretense at cheerfulness. However, the snowfall began to diminish and when they reached Round Head the storm had apparently spent itself. Molly felt the glow of exercise she really needed and she admired the splendid panorama of the snow-clad valley stretching before them.

[223]

"It is beautiful," she admitted, "and what fun, Judy, to go whizzing down Round Head! It will be the longest coast I have ever taken in my life."

Clambering up the side of the hill had not been as difficult as they had expected, because the wind had swept that part of it clear of drifts and the way was plain. When at last they reached the top, Molly was no longer sorry that Judy had dragged her from "The Idylls of the King" and the comforts of an easy chair.

"You're not afraid, Molly?" asked the reckless Judy, looking with the glittering eye of anticipation down the long track of white over which they would presently be flying.

"I don't see why I should be," answered Molly evasively. "Even if we fall off, it will be on a bed of snow as soft as a down comfort."

"Come along, then," cried Judy, "we'll have the sensation of our lives. And we might as well make it a good one, because it's beginning to snow again and we'd better not try it a second time."

[224]

Judy had coasted down Round Head before and knew just the spot on the hill where the Wellington girls were accustomed to start the long slide on bobs and sleds.

Sitting behind Judy, Molly closed her eyes and the sled commenced its journey. For some moments it skimmed along at a reasonable speed, but as it gained in impetus, she had the sensation of riding on the tail of a comet.

"Look out for the bump," called Judy with amazing calm and forethought, considering the circumstances.



THE NEXT THING SHE KNEW SHE WAS BURIED DEEP IN A SNOW DRIFT, AND JUDY WAS WHIZZING ON ALONE.—Page 224

But the warning had no meaning for Molly, whose experience in coasting was of a very mild and unexciting character. The shock of the rise caused her to lose her hold, and the next thing she knew she was buried deep in a snow drift and Judy was whizzing on alone into the unknown. [225]

"I never did really enjoy coasting," thought Molly, climbing out of the drift and shaking herself vigorously like a wet dog. "It's all right if nothing happens, but something always does happen and then it's a regular nuisance."

Already the tracks of the sled were covered by the fast falling snow and it was impossible to see just where the tumble had occurred on the hillside.

"Judy," called Molly, hurrying down the hill; while at the same moment Judy was calling Molly as she hastened back.

The two girls passed each other at no great distance apart, but they might have been as widely separated as the poles for all they could see or hear in the blinding snowstorm.

After calling and searching in vain, Judy started back to Wellington, feeling sure that her friend had gone that way; and Molly, who was gifted with no bump of location whatever, blindly groping in the snowstorm turned in the opposite direction.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE WAYFARERS. [226]

Human beings have been variously compared by imaginative persons to pawns on a chessboard; storm-tossed boats on the sea of life; pilgrims on a weary way, and other things of no resemblance whatever to the foregoing.

Molly, marching stoically along the lonely road under the impression that she was on her way to Wellington when she was really turned toward Exmoor, might have fitted into any of those comparisons rather more literally than was intended.

She was certainly a storm-tossed pilgrim if not a boat; the way was decidedly weary and as pawn, pilgrim or ship, whichever you will, she was about to come in contact with another of life's pawns, pilgrims or ships, to the decided advantage of the one and amazement of the other. [227]

This new pawn, pilgrim or ship was now advancing down the road, and Molly, mindful of the fact

that she was not getting anywhere when she felt sure that by this time she should at least have reached the lake, was not sorry to see a human being.

The stranger looked decidedly like the pilgrim of romance. He wore an old black felt hat with a broad slouching brim and a long Spanish cape reaching below his knees; his staff was a rosewood cane with a silver knob.

He was about to pass Molly without even glancing in her direction when she stopped him.

"Would you mind telling me if it's very far from Wellington?" she asked. "I'm afraid I'm lost."

"Do you imagine you are going to Wellington?" he demanded, looking up.

Instantly Molly recognized him. He was the man she had seen the night before in Professor Green's study. [228]

"I did think so," she answered meekly.

"I would advise you to go in the opposite direction, then," he said. "Exmoor lies that way." He pointed down the road with his stick.

"How stupid of me!" exclaimed Molly. "I was coasting and tumbled off the sled. I was completely dazed, I suppose, when I crawled out of the drift."

The two walked along in silence. Molly gave the man a covert glance. He was very distinguished looking and vaguely reminded her of someone.

"You are one of the students of Wellington?" he asked presently.

"Yes, sir," answered Molly respectfully.

The stranger smiled.

"You are from the south. I never heard a girl across the boundary line use 'sir.'"

"I am," she answered briefly.

"And from what part, may I ask?"

"From Carmichael Station, Kentucky."

The man stopped as if he had been struck a blow in the face. [229]

"Carmichael Station, Kentucky," he repeated in a half whisper. Drawing a leather wallet from his inside pocket, he took out a folded legal cap document and opened it. "Ahem. Not far to go," he said in a low voice, running down a list with one finger. "Your name——"

"Brown."

"Mildred Carmichael Brown, I presume."

"No, Mary. My sister's named Mildred."

The old man refolded the document, put it carefully back in the wallet, which he returned to his pocket. Then he resumed his walk, muttering to himself.

"Strange! Strange!" Molly heard him say. "Here in a snowstorm, in the wilderness, on Christmas day, too, I should happen to meet—I can't get away from them," he cried angrily, waving his cane. "Victims, victims! Everywhere. They rise up and confront me when I'm sleeping or waking—like ghosts of the past——"

His mutterings gradually became inarticulate as he wrapped his cape around him and stalked through the snow. [230]

"Hunted—hunted—hounded about——" he began again. Suddenly he stopped, took off his hat and held his face up to heaven as if he were about to address some unseen power.

"I'm tired," he cried. "I've had enough of these wanderings; these eternal haunting visions. Let me have peace!" He shook his cane impotently at the overcast skies.

It was then that Molly recognized him. On that very day but one, a year ago, had she not seen Judith Blount stand under a wintry sky and defy heaven in the same rebellious way?

Judith's father had come back from South America and was hiding in the Professor's room at Wellington! And how like they were, the father and daughter; the same black eyes, too close together; the same handsome aquiline noses, and the same self-pitying, brooding natures.

Evidently, Mr. Blount had suffered deeply. Molly thought he must be very poor. Looking at him closely, she noticed the shabby gentility of his appearance; the shiny seams of his Spanish cape which had been torn and patched in many places; his old thin shoes, split across the toes, and his worn, travel-stained hat. [231]

She wondered if he had any money. She suspected that he was very hungry and her soul was moved with pity for the poor, broken old man who had once been worth millions.

"Mr. Blount," she began.

"How did you know my name?" he cried, shivering all over like a whipped dog. "I didn't mention it, did I? I haven't told any one, have I? I came down here in disguise." He laughed feebly. "Disguised as a broken old man. I went to Edwin's rooms," he wandered on, forgetting that he had asked Molly a question. "You know where they are?"

Molly nodded her head. She knew quite well that the Professor lodged in one of the former college houses built on the old campus, used long ago before the Quadrangle had been built flanking the new campus.

"The housekeeper recognized me as a relation and I waited in his room some hours," went on the old man in a trembling voice.

[232]

"And where did you spend the night?"

"In the cloister study. I found the key on his desk. It was marked 'cloister study.'"

"But where did you eat?" asked Molly gently.

The melting sympathy in her eyes and voice encouraged the old man to pour out his woes. Evidently it was a great relief to him to talk after his miseries and hardships.

"I've been living off apples," he said. "Very fine apples. There was a big basket of them on Edwin's study table."

"But there's an inn in the village," she exclaimed.

He smiled grimly.

"I have come all the way from Caracas to Wellington," he said. "I was poor when I started; yes, miserably, wretchedly poor. I am an old man, old and broken. I want peace, do you understand? Peace."

They had reached the lake and in fifteen minutes would arrive at the Quadrangle. Mr. Blount was leading the way, occasionally hitting the ground savagely with his cane.

[233]

Molly thrust her hand into her blouse and drew out a chamois skin bag which hung by a silk tape around her neck. Since the pilfering had been going on at Wellington she carried what little money she had with her during the day and hid it under her pillow at night.

Extracting ten dollars from the bag, she hurried to the old man's side and touched him on the shoulder.

"Mr. Blount, I'm under great obligations to your cousin. He has been very kind to me—always—and I'd like you to—I'd—"

It was difficult to know what to say. Was it not strange for her, a poor little school girl, to be offering money to a man who had so recently been a millionaire?

"Won't you take this money?" she began again, resolutely. "I don't think anyone will recognize you at the inn. It's just a little country place and you will be quite comfortable there until I find Professor Green. I may get word to him to-night, or to-morrow at any rate."

Mr. Blount eyed the money as a hungry dog eyes a bone. Evidently hunger and fatigue had got the better of his pride. He took the bill and touched it lovingly. Then he put it in his pocket.

[234]

"You're a nice girl," he said. "I thank you."

"Would you like to see George Green?" asked Molly timidly.

"No, no, no!" he answered fiercely. "Not that young fool. I don't suppose Judith is here?" he added presently in a tremulous voice.

"No, sir. She's in New York for the holidays."

They shook hands and separated. Mr. Blount took the path down the other side of the lake across the links to the village and Molly followed the path on the college side. As she cut through the pine woods she heard a shout.

"Molly Brown, where have you been? We have had a search for you!" cried Judy, rushing up, followed by the three boys.

"I reckon I've been a good deal like the pig who thought he was going to Cork when he was really going to Dublin," laughed Molly. "If I hadn't asked the way, I suppose I'd have been almost to Exmoor by this time. I am a poor person to find my way about. My brother used to tell me to take the direction opposite to the one my instincts told me to take and then I'd be going right."

[235]

"In other words, first make sure you're right and then take the other way," said Lawrence Upton, laughing.

"You'd make a good explorer, Miss Molly," remarked Andy McLean. "You might discover the South Pole and think all the time it was the North Pole."

"That would be of great benefit to humanity," answered Molly, "but you may be sure I'd stop and ask a policeman before I reached the equator."

"It's your proper punishment for cutting church this morning," here put in George Green. "I don't know whether it was because it was a good excuse to go sleighing, but a lot of people were at the ten service. Even old Edwin came in the trail of Alice Fern."

[236]

"What a pretty name!" said Molly. "It sounds so woodsy."

"She's a cousin," George went on, "and a winner, too. They've got a jim-dandy place ten miles the other side of Wellington, Fern Grove. We spent last New Year's with them and had a cracker-jack time."

"George Theodore Green!" ejaculated Judy, "I never heard so much slang. I wonder you are allowed inside Exmoor."

"Oh, I cut it out there. I only use it when it's safe."

"I regard that as a slight on present company," broke in Andy. "I think you'll just have to take a little dose of punishment for that, Dodo. Get busy, Larrie."

There was a wild scramble in the snow, and finally Dodo, who had developed into a big, strapping fellow, stronger than either of his friends, intrenched himself behind a tree and began throwing snowballs with the unerring aim of the best pitcher on the Exmoor team. Molly hastened on to the Quadrangle, while Judy with true sportsman taste waited to see the fun.

[237]

Molly went straight to the telephone booths in the basement corridor. By good fortune, the haughty being who presided at the switchboard was hovering about waiting for a long distance call from a "certain party" in New York.

That she alone in all the world was concerned in this call and that she wished to have this corner of the globe entirely to herself for the full enjoyment of it were very evident facts when Molly asked for "Fern-16-Wellington."

"I'm not working to-day," announced the operator shortly, arranging her huge Psyche knot at the mirror beside her desk.

Molly looked into the girl's implacable face. No feminine appeal would melt that heart of stone, but perhaps the magic name of man might fix her.

"Would you do it to oblige Professor Green? I have an important message for him."

"I guess that's different," announced the owner of the Psyche knot, with a high nasal accent. "Why didn't you say so at first? I guess Professor Green is about the nicest gent'man around here."

[238]

Sitting down at the switchboard, she slipped on the headpiece with a professional flourish. Then, with a hand-quicker-than-the-eye movement, she pushed several organ stops up and down, stuck the end of a green tube into a hole and remarked in a high pitched voice that had great projective powers:

"Wellington Exchange? Hello! Yes, I know it's Christmas. On hand for a long distance, are you? Oh, you-u-u. Well, say, listen. To oblige a certain party—a very attractive gent'man—call up 'Fern-16-Wellington.'"

Then there was a detached monologue about a certain party in you know where—same gent'man that was down Thanksgiving time. Suddenly, with professional alertness, the telephone girl stopped short.

"Fern-16-Wellington? Here's your party. Booth 3," she added to Molly, in a voice so radically different that Molly had a confused feeling that the young person who operated the Wellington switchboard might be a creature of two personalities. She retired timidly to the booth.

[239]

"Is this the residence of Miss Alice Fern?" she asked.

"It is," came the voice of a woman from the other end.

"I would like to speak to Professor Edwin Green."

"He's very much engaged just now. Is it important?"

"I think it is," hesitated Molly.

"What name?"

"Now what earthly difference does it make to her what my name is?" Molly reflected with some irritation. "Would you please tell him it's a message from the University?"

"I'll tell him nothing until you tell me your name."

Could this be Miss Alice Fern? Molly was fairly certain it was. Perhaps she also had two personalities.

"It doesn't do any good to tell my name. I have nothing to do with the message. I'm only delivering it for someone else. But if you want to know, it's 'Brown.'"

[240]

"Mrs. or Miss Brown?"

Suddenly Molly heard the Professor's voice quite close to the telephone saying:

"Alice, is that someone for me?"

"Yes, an individual of the illuminating name of Brown wishes to speak to you. I don't see why they can't leave you alone for one day in the year."

Molly smiled. Why was it that down deep in the unexplored caverns of her soul there lurked an infinitesimally tiny feeling of relief that Miss Alice Fern was plainly a vixen?

"How do you do, Professor Green? This is Molly Brown."

"How do you do? Is anything the matter?" answered the Professor in rather an anxious tone.

"I wanted to tell you that Mr. Blount is here. Old Mr. Blount."

The Professor seemed too surprised to answer for a moment. Or it might have been that Miss Alice Fern was lingering at his elbow and embarrassed him. [241]

"Where?" he asked.

"He spent last night in the cloister study. Now, he's at the inn. He asked me to let you know. I met him on the road. He's very unhappy."

"How did he happen to be in the study?"

"He—he had no money."

"And now he's at the inn? Has he seen anyone but you?"

"No." Molly blushed hotly.

"I'll come right over. Thank you very much."

"Now, Edwin, what a nuisance!" broke in the voice of Miss Fern.

"Good-bye. Thank you again. I really must, Alice. Very impor——"

The receiver had been hung up and the connection lost.

"Oh, these cousins!" Molly reflected with a laugh as she hurried up to her room.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a gay party at the McLeans' that night and one unexpected guest arrived just before dinner. It was Professor Green. They squeezed him in somehow at the end of the table with the doctor, and the two made merry together like school boys. Molly had never seen the Professor of English Literature in such joyous spirits. After dinner, when the dancing commenced, he sought her out and led her to a secluded sofa in the back hall. She began at once by asking about Mr. Blount, but the Professor was not listening. [242]

"That's one of the prettiest dresses I've seen you wear," he interrupted. "Yellow is not becoming to most people, but it is to you. Probably because it has the same golden quality that's in your hair."

"I'm glad you like it," said Molly, turning red under his steady gaze.

"I found your note on my study floor," he went on.

"I was afraid you wouldn't remember what I was talking about, after all," she exclaimed. "But I had to write it. I have never really been happy since I said that cruel thing to you. I was so wretched the day afterward, and when I rushed to find you in your study, you were gone!" she broke off with a tearful glance into his eyes. [243]

The Professor beamed upon her.

"So you were unhappy," he said, as if the statement was not entirely displeasing.

"Oh, yes. I know now that you were quite right to tell Miss Walker about that silly episode of the burying of the slipper."

"But I never told her. I know the story, of course, and the explanation. The President told me herself."

"But who did tell, then?"

"That I can't say."

It was now Molly's turn to beam on the Professor.

"I am glad you didn't tell her," she exclaimed in tones of great relief. "You see, you didn't inform on Judith Blount that time, and I was hurt. I couldn't help from being. I was really awfully sore." [244]

"My dear child," said the Professor hurriedly, "promise hereafter to regard me as a faithful friend. Never doubt my sincerity again."

"I promise," answered Molly, feeling intensely proud without knowing why.



Then the talk drifted to Mr. Blount.

"And you haven't mentioned meeting him?" he asked. "Not even to Miss Kean?"

Molly shook her head.

"You are a very unusual young woman, Miss Brown. It's important to keep Mr. Blount's presence here a secret. If word got out that he had come back, there would be a great hue and cry in the papers. I have him with me now at my rooms until Richard gets here. The family will be very grateful to you for your kindness to him."

Lawrence Upton was coming down the hall to claim Molly for a dance.

"Are you going back to the Ferns' to-morrow?" she asked hurriedly.

"I think not," answered the Professor with the ghost of a smile. "I am detained here on business."

[245]

The next morning Molly received a short note from Professor Green, inclosing a ten dollar bill.

There was a postscript which said:

"I've opened a barrel of greenings. Better come around and get some."

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

[246]

### HEALING THE BLIND.

"But, Madeleine, I never touched an iron in my life. I wouldn't know how to go about it," protested Judith Blount.

"It's high time you learned then, child. It's a very useful piece of knowledge, I assure you. You may begin on handkerchiefs first. They are easy, just a flat surface, and it doesn't matter if you scorch one, especially as it's your own. Test the iron like this, see. Pick it up with the holder, wet your finger and touch the bottom. If it gives out a sizzly sound, it's fairly hot and may be used on something damp. It will surely scorch dry material. Always sprinkle. Rough-dry things can't be ironed decently unless they have been sprinkled and allowed to get damp through and through."

Madeleine Petit's unceasing flow of conversation did not stop while Judith took her first lesson in ironing.

[247]

"You see," continued Madeleine, "I've made quite a name for myself for doing up fine things and I really need an assistant, Judith. And, since you need the money, and I like you better than any girl in college, I want you to help me."

Judith winced at the mention of poverty, but her face softened when Madeleine spoke of friendship.

After all, was it not good to have a friend, a real tried and devoted friend who had nothing to gain but friendship in return? Yes, Madeleine did talk a great deal. We all have our faults. Judith's was a temper. She knew that. But Madeleine was good company, nevertheless, much better company than those false friends of Beta Phi days. She was charming and pretty and she had a heart of pure gold. Moreover, she was a lady, if she did talk so much.

Judith loved Madeleine. For the first time in her life she felt the stirrings of a really deep affection for another girl. It had quickened her parched soul like the waters of a freshet flowing through a thirsty land. Madeleine had first gained the respect of the proud, discontented girl by being always good-naturedly firm, and now she had gained her love.

[248]

Furthermore, Judith felt for the first time the pleasure of doing something for someone else. It was a matter of infinite secret joy to her that she had been able to help Madeleine with her studies. In a way she had constituted herself tutor to the little Southern girl; had criticized her themes; given her a boost in the dreaded French Literature and carried her over the blighting period of mid-year examinations. Madeleine had spent Christmas with the Blounts at a boarding house in New York and had given them a taste of Southern conversation, humor and anecdotes that had made that dreary time for them to blossom with new enjoyments.

And now Judith was learning to iron. At first she handled the iron quite awkwardly, but in a few minutes she became interested and the pile of handkerchiefs rapidly decreased.

[249]

"Of course, it isn't as if either one of us expects to have to iron handkerchiefs always," went on Madeleine, "but it doesn't hurt us to know how, just the same, and I have always found that doing common things well only made one do uncommon things better. Now, I intend to be a Professor of Mathematics. I don't know where nor how, but those are my intentions. There's no ironing of jabots connected with mathematics, but somehow I feel that ironing jabots well makes me more proficient in mathematics."

"By the way, have you settled on anything to do yet? It's time you began to think about it, unless you decide to take a Post Grad. course and be with me next year. That would be perfectly grand, wouldn't it?"

Madeleine's small pretty hands paused an instant in their busy fluttering over the garments she was sprinkling, and she smiled so sweetly upon Judith that the black-browed young woman felt moved beyond the power of speech and could only smile silently in reply.

[250]

Oh, heavens, it was good to have a friend! Madeleine had come at a time when she most needed her; when the whole world was nothing but a black, hideous picture and life was a dreary waste. Not her mother, not Richard, not Cousin Edwin, could take the place of Madeleine.

"You know I always said I wouldn't work for a living, Madeleine," she answered presently, gulping down these new, strange emotions.

"My dear, we all say such things, but it's only talk. And, after all, it's better to work than to be an object of charity. Think of making your own money; having it come in every month—say a hundred dollars, or even more—earned by you? Why, it's glorious. It's better than running across a gold mine by accident or inheriting a fortune, because you have done it yourself. I intend to earn a great deal of money. I shall rise from being a teacher to having a splendid school of my own. It will be the most fashionable school in the South and all the finest families will send their daughters there. And what will you be in my school, Judith? Because you must commence now to work up to that eminence. Will you be part owner with me?"

[251]

Judith laughed.

"You're an absurd, adorable, sweet child," she said, and went on ironing busily.

After all, life was not so desperately unpleasant.

There was a knock on the door. Judith put down the iron hastily and retreated to the window. She had not yet reached the point where she was willing for others to see her engaged in this menial work.

"Come in," called Madeleine, without stopping an instant.

To Judith's relief, however, it was Mrs. O'Reilly.

"A note for you, Miss Blount, and the man's waiting for an answer."

Judith tore open the envelope impatiently. It was a bill of two years' running, amounting to nearly forty dollars, from the stationery and candy shop.

[252]

On the bottom she was requested to remit at once.

"Tell the man—anything, Mrs. O'Reilly. I can't see him. That's all."

"Certainly, Miss," said the Irish woman with a good-natured smile.

"These poor young college ladies was in hard luck just like the men sometimes," she thought as she turned away.

Judith sat down and began to think. Richard was having a great struggle to keep her at college, her mother and himself at the boarding house, and her father in a sanitarium. It would really be unkind to burden him with that bill; but what was to be done?

"Is it that old stationery man again?" asked Madeleine, who had inherited a profound contempt for dunning shopkeepers.

"Yes, it is, and I don't know what to do."

"Why don't you put an advertisement in the 'Commune'? You have no idea how it will bring in work. And then hang out a shingle, too. People have got to learn to recognize you as a wage-earning person before they come around and offer you things to do."

[253]

"But what can I do? I don't know how to iron well enough to take in laundry, like you."

A voice outside called:

"Is this Miss Madeleine Petit's room?"

"Come in. Can't you see the name on the door?" answered Madeleine. "There's only one Petit at Wellington and I'm the lady."

Millicent Porter now entered.

She looked smaller and more shriveled than ever in a beautiful mink coat and cap and a velvet dress of a rich shade of blue that breathed prosperity in every fold.

"This is the region where signs are out asking for work, isn't it?" she asked in a pleasantly patronizing, unctious voice.

"We don't ask for work. We announce that we do it and the work comes," replied Madeleine, eyeing the visitor with a kind of humorous pity.

"Be that as it may," said Miss Porter, "I have some work I want done and I'm looking for a very competent and reliable person to do it."

[254]

Judith winced at the word "reliable."

"This isn't a servants' agency, you know, Miss Porter," answered the spunky Madeleine. "Those words are generally used when one engages a cook or a housemaid. What is the work like?"

"I'm going to give an exhibition of my silver work at the George Washington Bazaar. I may sell some of it if I can get the price, and what I want is a skillful and re— or rather clever—" Madeleine blinked both eyes rapidly at the substitution—"person to help me get it in order. Most of it is awfully tarnished and it will need a good deal of polishing."

"How much will you pay a skillful, clever person?" demanded Madeleine, determined to drive a good bargain and shrewdly guessing the kind of person she had to deal with.

"I'll pay ten dollars," answered Millicent glibly.

"What are the pieces like?"

"Oh, there are chains, necklaces, platters and bowls, and a lot of ivory things I have picked up in Europe that must be carefully washed."

[255]

"We'll do the work for fifteen dollars," announced Madeleine. "No less."

Judith could hardly preserve a grave countenance while this bargaining was going on between the rich Miss Porter and her funny little Southern friend.

"I think that's too much," declared Millicent.

"Not at all. The work requires care and, as you say, reliability. It might be stolen, you know."

Madeleine snapped her eyes.

"Very well, then," said Millicent in a resigned tone of voice. "It's a great deal to pay, but I suppose I can't do any better. I hear you do everything well, Miss Petit."

"Miss Blount will do this," answered Madeleine. "If I do things well, she does them better. Now, where do you want them cleaned? Down here or up at your place?"

"Oh, I would never let them out of my studio," cried Millicent. "She must come there, where she can be under my eye."

[256]

"But—" objected Judith, and paused at a glance from Madeleine.

It would be a crushing blow to her pride for her to go back to her old rooms and rub tarnished silver for this perfectly insufferable Millicent Porter. Yet fifteen dollars loomed up as quite a considerable sum, and, with five dollars added, could be paid to the stationery man on account.

Did Judith realize in her secret soul that the bitter dose she was now swallowing was only a dose of the same medicine she had once forced others to swallow?

"Very well, then," said Madeleine, "we'll give you as much of Friday and Saturday as will be necessary. We'll take a lunch up on Friday so that we won't have to come back for supper—"

She waited a moment, wondering if Millicent would not invite them to supper at the Beta Phi. Hospitality was so much a part of her upbringing that it was impossible to conceive it lacking in others.

"I thought Miss Blount was to do the work."

[257]

"She will. I shall work under her as assistant rubber."

So, the bargain was clinched and Millicent departed.

"Disgusting little reptile!" cried Judith when the sounds of her footsteps died away in the hall and the door banged behind her.

Could Judith forget that she herself had once belonged to that overbearing class?

"Don't get all stirred up, Judith, it's bad for your digestion," ejaculated Madeleine. "That girl is nothing but a mere ripple on the surface. She's ridiculous, but there's no harm in her. I am really sorry for her, because she doesn't belong anywhere. She could never make a friend, and she will never know what it is to be really liked. She thinks she's a genius because she's learned how to beat out a few tawdry silver chains, and as soon as she finishes one she locks it up in a box and takes it out about once a decade to look it over. Why, she's just a poor, starved, little creature without a spark of generosity in her soul. What does she know about living and happiness?"

[258]

"You and I know how to live," Madeleine continued, flourishing her iron. "We're in the procession. We're moving on, learning and progressing. We're going up all the time. I tell you the highest peak in the Himalayas is not higher than my ambitions. And I intend to take you with me, Judith, and when we get to the top we'll look back and see poor, little Millicent Porter, shriveled to nothing at the bottom!"

Judith gave a strange, hysterical laugh. Suddenly she flew across the room and embraced her

friend.

"You could make me do anything, Madeleine," she cried. "Scale the Himalayas or cut a tunnel through them." Taking her friend's small, charming face between her two hands, she looked her in the eyes: "Madeleine," she said, "did you know I used to be a blind girl? You have healed me. I am beginning to see things as they are."

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

[259]

### A WARNING.

The girl who had been blind and could see and Madeleine of the unconquerable soul appeared in Millicent's sumptuous apartment promptly at three o'clock on Friday afternoon.

They carried with them a suitcase containing the implements of their labor, taken chiefly from Madeleine's rag bag: some old stockings; several wornout undervests and polishing cloths made from antiquated flannel petticoats; also a bottle of ammonia and two boxes of silver polish.

"Well, here we are," announced Madeleine, unconcernedly, when Millicent had opened her door to them. "I hope you have the things out and ready. Our time is valuable."

Of no avail were Millicent's pompous and important airs. Madeleine insisted on treating her as a familiar and an equal.

[260]

"I have put you in the den. You will be less disturbed and you can use the writing table to spread things on. Please be care——"

"Have you made an inventory?" interrupted Madeleine.

"No," faltered Millicent. Why was it that this poverty-stricken little person took all the wind out of her sails?

"Make it please at once in duplicate. Keep one yourself and give us the other."

"But——" began Millicent.

"No, we will not touch a thing until the inventory is made. No 'competent, reliable' person would think of doing work like this without an inventory. We'll wait in the other room until you have made it."

There was nothing to do but proceed with the inventory. It was plain that Madeleine knew the manner of person she was dealing with.

While the two girls waited in the big sitting room, now a studio, Madeleine drew a book from her ulster pocket and began to study. The little Southerner was never idle one moment of her waking day and the other seven hours she put in sleeping very soundly. Judith began to look about her.

[261]

The room was little changed from the old days, except that it was even richer in aspect. There were some splendid old altar pieces on the walls and a piece of beautiful old rose brocade hung between the studio and the den. But, after all, what did it come to? Was anyone really fond of Millicent with all her wealth? Why, Judith, poor and forgotten, had made a friend. She felt small tenderness toward the rest of the world, but she loved Madeleine.

Molly Brown came into the room at this stage in Judith's reflections.

"Why, hello, girls!" she exclaimed cordially, shaking hands with the silver-rubbers. "Where is Millicent?"

"She is making an inventory of her valuables before we begin to clean them," replied Madeleine, smiling sweetly and blinking both eyes at once. "We insisted, because it would have been unprofessional not to have had one."

[262]

"The idea!" said Molly. "No, it wouldn't. Besides, you're not professionals."

"Yes, we are," insisted Madeleine. "Everything we do for money is professional work."

"Oh, very well," laughed Molly, "and I suppose you'll polish them up so carefuller that some day you'll be admirals in the Queen's Navee."

"Nothing less," said Madeleine. "It's my theory exactly."

"Oh, Molly," called the voice of Millicent from the den, "please come and help me with this stupid thing. I can't seem to get it straight."

And that was how Molly came to be admitted into Millicent's inner sanctum where she kept her most valued possessions under lock and key.

The top of a heavy oak chest rested against the wall and inside was a perfect mine of silver articles, many of them Millicent's own work; there was also a quantity of small ivory figures collected by her in her travels.

"I'll lift out the things and call their names and you can copy each one twice, like this: one silver necklace—grape-vine design."

[263]

Molly sat down and began to make the list. They were nearly finished when Rosomond Chase's voice was heard in the next room.

"Millicent, please come out for a moment. I want to see you on business."

Molly, left alone, went on with the list, taking each article from the box and noting it carefully twice on the inventory.

In the meantime Millicent and her friend were having a secret conference in the bedroom, while Madeleine and Judith silently waited in the studio. The two silver-rubbers were presently startled by the apparition of Molly standing in the doorway. She had the look of one fleeing before a storm, her face very pale and her eyes dilated with horror. She started to speak, but checked herself and closed the door behind her. Then, hurrying into the room, she said in a low, strained voice:

"Madeleine, I would not advise you to do any work for Miss Porter."

The two girls exchanged a long look.

[264]

"Do you really mean that?" asked Madeleine.

"I was never more in earnest in my life."

"But, can't you explain?" demanded Judith Blount.

Molly shook her head and rushed from the room.

"Come on, Judith," said Madeleine, slipping on her ulster.

"But, this is absurd!" objected Judith again.

"Child," exclaimed her friend, "don't you know human nature well enough to understand that a girl like Molly Brown would never have given a piece of advice like that without knowing what she was talking about?"

"She's jealous because she would like to earn the money herself."

"Nonsense," said Madeleine. "She is not that kind. You know perfectly well that she is the most generous-hearted, unselfish girl in Wellington. She wouldn't injure a fly if she could help herself, and I think we had better take her advice."

But Judith was stubborn.

[265]

"We've come to do the work. Why go?"

Having once committed herself to this menial labor, she wished to see it through. After all, whatever Molly had against Millicent Porter couldn't concern them, and in the end Madeleine reluctantly gave in.

Presently Millicent and Rosomond came into the room.

"What became of Molly Brown?" demanded Millicent suspiciously.

"She couldn't wait," answered Madeleine briefly.

"Was there anything the matter with her?"

"She seemed in perfectly good health as far as I know, but you had better hurry up with the inventory, Miss Porter. We are losing time."

Rosomond helped Millicent with the remainder of the list, and by four o'clock Madeleine and Judith were installed in the den hard at work. All afternoon and evening they toiled and the next morning they appeared soon after breakfast and started in again.

"This is easier than cracking rock, and the pay is considerably better, but I am just as tired between the shoulders as a common laborer," Madeleine exclaimed, rubbing the last tray until she could see her own piquant little face reflected in its depths.

[266]

"As for me, I feel as if I had been drawn and quartered," complained Judith. "It's worth more than fifteen dollars. We should have asked twenty."

"I would have asked it, if I had thought she could have been induced to part with so much money, but I saw that fifteen was her limit."

Judith laughed.

"You're a regular little bargain driver," she said admiringly.

"No, not always," answered Madeleine. "Only when I meet another one."

"Well, I am glad we undertook it, and I am gladder still we have finished it," said Judith.

They arranged the silver on half of the table, and the small army of carved ivory ornaments, for which Millicent seemed to have a passion, on the other half. Then, removing the loose gloves which had protected their hands, they put on their things and marched into the next room with expectant faces. For the first time in all her life Judith had earned a sum of money, and the humblest wage-earner was not more anxious for his week's pay than she was. [267]

"Will you please inspect the work, Miss Porter, and give us our money? We are tired and want to go home," said Madeleine.

Millicent was propped up against some velvet cushions in the window seat. There was an expression of nervous worry on her thin sallow face, and around her on the floor lay the scattered bits of a note she had read, re-read, and torn into little pieces.

She was in a very bad humor, and her warped nature was groping for something on which to vent its accumulated spleen. She rose from the window seat, swept grandly into the next room and glanced at the tableful of silver and ivory.

"It looks fairly well," she said; for Millicent was one of those persons who grudged even her praise. "What was the amount I promised to pay?" [268]

"I dare say you haven't forgotten it so soon," answered the intrepid Madeleine. "Fifteen dollars."

"Oh, was it so much? Will this evening do? I haven't that sum on hand just now. I'll have to go down to the bank."

"A check will do, then," said Madeleine, sitting down in one of the carved chairs.

"I never pay with checks. I only pay cash. I would prefer to draw out the money and pay you this evening."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Madeleine. "Besides, you know very well that the bank closes on Saturdays at noon, and it's now nearly four o'clock."

"So it does. Then you will have to wait until Monday."

"We won't wait until Monday," ejaculated Madeleine. "We haven't been rubbing silver for our health. You'd better look around in your top drawer and see if you can't scrape fifteen dollars together, because I tell you plainly if you don't you'll regret it." [269]

"How regret it?" asked the other suspiciously. "I'm not obliged to pay it until Monday, and I won't," she added stubbornly.

It was growing late. The girls were exhausted and hungry. They had eaten no lunch except crackers and cheese. At last Judith, utterly crushed with disappointment, drew Madeleine aside.

"Suppose we leave her," she said. "I can't stand it any longer."

Without another word they took their departure, leaving Millicent still in the window seat looking pensively out on the campus. They were hardly outside before she sprang to the door and locked it. Then she hastened to the den and began to pack feverishly and with trembling nervous hands. Wrapping each article of silver in tissue paper, she placed it in the chest on a bed of raw cotton. When the table was entirely cleared, she closed and locked the chest and, addressing a tag, wired it to the handle. [270]

Next she drew a trunk from the big closet and packed it with her best clothes. This done, she crept downstairs to the telephone and engaged Mr. Murphy to call that night for an express box and a trunk.

The Beta Phi girls were all at a Saturday night dance at one of the other houses when Mr. Murphy called. Millicent explained to the matron that her rooms were too crowded and she was sending some of her things back to New York.

As quietly as possible she drew her other two trunks from the closet, and by three in the morning the rooms were entirely dismantled and all drapery and pictures carefully packed away. These also she locked and tagged with the precision of one who intends to lose nothing, no matter what's to pay. One more task remained. This was performed in the privacy of the den behind closed doors. When it was done there stood on the table a square box addressed in artistic lettering to "Miss M. Brown, No. 5 Quadrangle." [271]

Placing her watch on her pillow, Millicent now rested for several hours without sleeping. At last, at seven o'clock, dressed for a journey, with suit case, umbrella and hand bag, she crept softly downstairs and plunged into the early morning mists.

Not once did she glance back at the two gray towers as she hastened down to the station, and when the seven-thirty train for New York pulled in, she boarded it quickly and turned her face away from Wellington forever.

## THE PARABLE OF THE SUN AND WIND.

If Molly had been carrying a stick of dynamite she could not have held it more gingerly than the square box she was taking to President Walker on Monday morning.

"That was the reason I never liked her," she thought, mentioning no names even in her own mind. "I wonder if it is true that she couldn't help it. It must be, when she was so rich. What could she want with Minerva's medals or Margaret's initialed ring? Both M's, though," she thought, half smiling.

"Oh, Miss Brown," cried a voice behind her, and Madeleine Petit came tearing across the campus as fast as her little feet could carry her. "Is it true that Millicent Porter has run away from college?"

"I'm afraid it is," answered Molly. [273]

"She owed us fifteen dollars," cried Madeleine tragically. "She promised to pay this morning, and I have just heard rumors that she has disappeared, bag and baggage."

"You *did* do the work for her?" asked Molly.

"Yes, really, against my will. I knew you would never advise without having something to advise about. But Judith was determined, and the only reason I gave in was because she had never done any work before, and I thought it would be good for her to make a start. She was so happy over earning the money. It was really wonderful to see how she brightened up. And when we couldn't get a cent out of Miss Porter on Saturday afternoon, poor old Judith was so disappointed that she cried. Think of that."

"What a shame," exclaimed Molly, appreciating Judith's feelings with entire sympathy. "I'm sure I should have cried if I had done all that hard work and then couldn't collect."

"But what are we to do? Must we sit back quietly and let the rich trample the poor? Don't you think she is coming back?" [274]

"I think not," answered Molly.

"Did you find out something those few minutes you were in the den?"

Molly nodded her head.

"Is she——"

The two girls exchanged frightened glances.

"And her father a millionaire, too! Well, I never," cried Madeleine. "I think I'll just drop him a letter," which she accordingly did that very day. But she never received an answer, and the debt still remains unpaid.

In the meantime Molly was closeted with Miss Walker for ten minutes.

"It's strange," said the President. "I just had a letter this morning from an old friend at the head of a private school warning me about this unfortunate girl who was a pupil there."

But Molly was loath to discuss the matter, and still more loath to keep stolen property in her private possession. She placed the box on the President's desk and hastened away as soon as she politely could. That afternoon there appeared on the bulletin board the following unusual announcement: [275]

"All those who have lost property during the winter may possibly be able to obtain it by applying to the Secretary of the President."

That the thief had been apprehended at last was of course understood. Putting two and two together, the Wellington girls concluded that Millicent Porter must have had some important reason for fleeing early in the morning without explanations, leaving two trunks and a debt of honor behind her. The trunks were afterwards expressed, according to directions left in her room.

But, for the honor of Wellington, open conversation on the subject was not encouraged, and most of the talk was in whispers behind closed doors.

A crowd of the girls from the Quadrangle, where most of the pilfering had been carried on, went together to claim their property on Monday evening. Those who had lost money returned disappointed. The box of restored goods contained none whatever. But the other articles were duly claimed and distributed, with the exception of one. [276]

"Does any one know to whom this belongs?" asked the secretary, placing a photograph in a beautiful silver frame on the top of the desk.

"It must be yours, Nance," announced Edith Williams, with a teasing smile.

"It is not," said Nance emphatically.

The other girls, now gathered around the picture, began to laugh.

Undoubtedly the small lanky boy in kilts in the photograph was Andy McLean.

"Perhaps it is Mrs. McLean's," suggested some one.

Margaret, examining the frame with the eye of an experienced detective, remarked in her usual authoritative tone:

"The design on the frame is Japanese."

"Otoyo," cried Judy, and the little Japanese, lingering near the door, crept timidly up and claimed the picture. Her face was a deep scarlet, as, with drooping head, she rushed from the room. [277]

"Bless the child's heart, who'd have thought she had a boy's picture," laughed Katherine Williams.

That very night Otoyo returned the photograph to Mrs. McLean, and with many tears confessed that she had removed it from the drawer without so much as asking permission.

"My sweet lass," exclaimed the doctor's wife, kissing her, "you shall have a good picture of Andy if you like, taken just lately. I am only too happy that you admire his picture enough to put it in that beautiful frame. I'm sure I think he's a braw lad, the handsomest in three kingdoms; but I am his mother, you know, and not accountable."

Together the two women fitted the latest photograph of the callow youth into the frame. Otoyo presently bore it triumphantly back to her room and placed it on the mantel shelf where all the world could see it. That night she slept with an easy conscience and a thankful heart. Her one dishonest deed was wiped out forever. [278]

The untangling of one snarl in the skein of affairs generally leads to the untangling of many others. So it happened that Molly and Judy, by the turn which events had taken, were able to clear up a mystery that had puzzled them for months.

"I feel, Judy," remarked Molly, one day, "that we ought to do something nice for Minerva Higgins, because of—you know what. We mentioned no names and never breathed it even to each other except vaguely Christmas day, you remember. But we did suspect her, and thinking is just as bad as talking when you think a thing like that, so cruel and horrible."

Judy nodded her head thoughtfully.

"But she will never know we are making reparation, Molly," she said. "It will have to be purely for our own private satisfaction."

"Of course," replied Molly. "That is what I meant. We did her a wrong in our minds, and in our minds we must undo it." [279]

"And how, pray?" demanded Judy.

"Well, let me see. Couldn't we ask her here some night with just the three of us, and make her fudge and be awfully sweet and interested?"

"I suppose we could, if we made a superhuman mental and physical effort," answered Judy lazily. "And it would take both. Why not let well enough alone?"

"But it isn't 'well enough,' Judy, and we've had an ugly thought about her for weeks."

"Do you call those practical jokes she played on us last autumn pretty?" demanded Judy, who had no liking for Minerva.

"No, but she has learned better now. Anyhow, Judy, I want to try an experiment. Do you remember the allegory of the sun and the wind and the man wrapped in his cloak? The wind made a wager with the sun that he could make the man take off his cloak, and he blew and blew with all his might, and the more he blew the closer the man wrapped his coat about him. Then the wind gave up and the sun came out and tried his method of just shining very brightly and cheerfully, and presently the man was so hot he took off his coat." [280]

Judy laughed.

"Meaning, I suppose, that we have been trying the human gale method instead of the merry little sunshine way. All right, Molly, dearest, bring on your Minerva and I'll be as gentle as a May morning. But don't let the Gemini come, because we could never carry it through if they were present."

It was agreed that the three friends, Molly, Nance and Judy, should entertain the vain little freshman at an exclusive party all to themselves. Other persons were advised to keep away.

"Hands off," exclaimed Judy. "Stay away from our premises this evening, ladies, because we are going to try an experiment with explosives, and it might be dangerous."

It was unfortunate that, on the very evening that Minerva Higgins had arranged to go to the three friends, somebody played a practical joke on her and she was in an extremely bad humor. Although she had regained her two medals, she was always losing things and crying her losses up and down the corridor. She usually found the articles mislaid in her own room, but she had a [281]



suspicious nature and was generally on the lookout for thefts. That afternoon she had rushed into the corridor crying:

"My water pitcher has been stolen from me. I will not have people going into my room and taking my things."

"As if anybody wanted her old water pitcher," remarked Margaret, in a tone of disgust.

Edith Williams smiled mysteriously.

Presently Minerva and the matron, much bored, passed the door.

"Come on, let's go and see the fun," suggested Edith.

"How do you know there will be any fun?" demanded Margaret.

"There's likely to be."

They strolled slowly up the corridor, and as they passed the door the matron was saying:

"Really, Miss Higgins, I must request you not to raise any more false alarms like this. There is your water pitcher." [282]

She pointed to the chandelier where the pitcher had been hoisted on a piece of cord. A good many other girls had gathered about Minerva's door, and a ripple of laughter swept along the hall.

"Edith, did you play that joke?" asked Margaret later.

"Judy was a party to it, and Katherine and several others," answered Edith evasively. "We thought it high time to put an end to burglar alarms. Minerva Higgins has come to be a public nuisance."

Margaret smiled. Her dignity would never allow her to enter into what she called "rowdy jokes." However, it did not mar her enjoyment of the story about them afterward.

But it was an angry, sullen Minerva who presented herself at the door of No. 5, Quadrangle, that evening at eight o'clock. She had left off her medals and she had not worn the indigo blue. Judy was relieved at this, but Molly and Nance considered it a bad sign. [283]

The first half-hour of the reparation party dragged slowly.

"We've piped for Minerva and she will not dance; we've mourned for her and she will not mourn. It's a hopeless case," Judy remarked in an aside to Nance.

But Molly had formed a resolution and she was determined to carry it through.

"Behind that Chinese wall of vanity, Minerva has a little soul hidden somewhere and I'm going to reach it to-night if I have to blast with dynamite," she thought.

Nance was stirring fudge on the chafing dish and Judy was occupying herself strumming chords on the piano. Molly led Minerva to the divan and sat down beside her.

"Are you glad you came to college, Minerva?" she asked, wondering what in the world to talk about.

"No," answered the other emphatically. "I detest college. Except that the studies are higher, I think Mill Town High School is better run. I don't like college girls, either. They are all conceited snobs." [284]

"Perhaps you will like it better when you are a sophomore and have more liberty," suggested Molly. "The first year one can't look forward to much pleasure. But a freshman is always under inspection, you see. If she accepts the situation without complaining and is nice and obliging and modest, it's like so much treasure laid by for her the next year when she finds how popular she is with the other girls."

"It's not like that in Mill Town. A freshman is just as good as anybody else," snapped Minerva.

Judy, overhearing this statement, blinked at Nance, who smiled furtively and went on stirring fudge.

Molly still persisted with the patience of one who looks for certain success.

"The most interesting part of being a freshman," she continued, "is that a girl begins to find out about herself, and by the time she's a sophomore she knows what she really wants." [285]

"Oh, but I knew perfectly well what I wanted before I came," interrupted Minerva in a lofty tone, "I want to study the dead languages."

"But there is something you want more than that," broke in Molly. "You want to be popular."

Minerva gave her a suspicious glance, but Molly was beaming kindly upon her with all the warmth of her affectionate nature.

"How do you know that?" she demanded in a somewhat softened tone.

"It was not hard to guess. You said you were disappointed with the girls here because they seemed to be snobs. Now if you hadn't minded it very much, you never would have mentioned it. Don't you think the girls are just a little afraid of you? You see, they had heard you were the brightest girl in your school and when they saw all the medals and you talked to them on such deep subjects, they were scared off. They thought, perhaps, you wouldn't care for them because they didn't know enough. After all, people's feeling toward you is just a reflection of what you feel toward them. If you are interested and admire and love them, they are pretty sure to feel the same toward you. You see, I know you can be just as nice and human and everyday as the rest of us—" Molly laid her hand on Minerva's—"but the others haven't had a chance yet to find out."

[286]

Minerva's stiff figure relaxed a little and she leaned against Molly confidently.

"I do want to be liked," she whispered. "All my life I've wanted it more than anything in the world. But even at Mill Town the girls were afraid of me, just as you say they are here. I might as well own up, as you have guessed it already."

"But it's only a question of time now before you make lots of friends," said Molly, "You are so clever that you'll find out how to make them like you."

"But how?"

"Well," said Molly, "I think people who are sympathetic and who listen more than they talk generally have a good many friends. I'm afraid I've talked more than I listened this evening," she added, pinching Minerva's cheek.

[287]

"But you've talked about me," answered Minerva. Suddenly her face turned very red and her eyes filled with tears. "I shall not wear the medals any more," she whispered unsteadily. "And—there is something I want to confess. I—I waited for you that night you were on the lake, and I sent an unsigned note to Miss Walker the next day to get even with you because you wouldn't let me go walking with you."

Judy, at the piano, was singing a vociferous medley, and Nance was joining in.

"That's all right," whispered Molly. "It was much better for her to know because we would have been misrepresented always unless someone had told her, and we couldn't exactly tell her ourselves. But I think it's awfully nice of you to confess, Minerva. Now, we shall be better friends than ever."

The two girls kissed each other. The cloak of vanity had slipped off and the smartest-girl-in-Mill-Town-High-School became her real natural self.

[288]

Until a quarter before ten the four girls laughed and talked pleasantly together, while the convivial fudge plate was passed from one to the other. But never once did Mill Town High School or comparative philology come into the conversation.

When at last the evening was at an end and Minerva had departed, Nance and Judy led Molly gravely to the divan.

"Now, tell us how you did it," they demanded in one voice.

"I only told her the truth," answered Molly, "but I didn't put it so that it would hurt her. I said the reason why the girls were stand-offish was because they were afraid of her learning and her gold medals."

"Marvelous, brilliant creature!" cried Judy, embracing her friend, while Nance laid a cheek against Molly's.

"You are a perfect darling, Molly," she said.

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

[289]

### THE JUNIOR GAMBOL.

"Hail, Wellington, beloved home!  
Hail, spot forever dear!  
We greet thy towers and cloisters gray,  
Thy meadows fresh in spring array;  
We greet thee, Wellington, to-day;  
Thy hills and dales; thy valleys green;  
Thy wood and lake—tranquil, serene;  
We greet thee far and near."

Molly and Judy were responsible for the words of these stirring lines, which with three other

verses were sung by the junior class to the air of "Beulah Land," the music having been adapted to the words rather than the words to the music.

The entire junior class, a long, slender line of swaying white stretched across the campus, lifted its voice in praise of Wellington that May Day morning at the Junior Gambol. In the center waved the class flag of primrose and lavender. In the background was the gray pile of Wellington and in the front stretched the level close-cut lawn of the campus, fringed by the crowd of spectators. It was an impressive sight and when the fresh young voices united in the class song of "Hail, Wellington!", Miss Walker was moved to tears.

[290]

"The dear children!" she exclaimed to Professor Green at her side, "really I feel all choked up over their devotion."

Winding in and out in an intricate march, the class moved slowly across the campus until it reached the sophomores grouped together in one spot. Here they paused while the President of the juniors made a speech and presented the President of the sophomores with a small spade wreathed in smilax, a symbol of learning, or rather of the delving for learning which that class had in prospect in another year. Next the juniors approached the seniors and sang one of the Wellington songs, "Seniors, Farewell."

[291]

Then the line broke up and moved to the center of the campus, where stood a May pole. An orchestra, stationed under one of the trees, began playing an old English country dance, and the juniors seized the streamers and tripped in and out with the graceful dignity suitable to their new, uplifted position of seniors about-to-be.

Not one of the Wellington festivals could so stir her daughters of the present or the past, now grouped on the edge of the campus, as this Junior May-Day Gambol.

"Perhaps it is so sad because it is so beautiful," Miss Pomeroy observed to Miss Bowles, teacher in Higher Mathematics, wiping her eyes furtively. But Miss Bowles, not being an ex-daughter of Wellington, and having a taste for more prosaic and practical pleasures, regarded the scene with only a polite and tolerant interest.

"Who is to be the May Queen?" asked Mrs. McLean, standing in the same group with Miss Walker and Professor Green.

[292]

As each succeeding year brought around the Junior Gambol the good woman hastened to view it with undiminished interest.

"It would be difficult to say," answered Miss Walker. "In a class of such unusual individuality it will be very hard to select one who deserves it more than another."

"It's a question of popularity more than intelligence," observed the Professor. "I think I might hazard a guess," he added in a lower tone, but his voice was drowned in a burst of music. The juniors were singing an old English glee song, "To the Cuckoo."

"Hail, beauteous stranger of the grove,  
Thou messenger of spring,  
Now heaven repairs thy rural seat  
And woods thy welcome ring."

Many guesses were hazarded regarding the junior May Queen, not only among the crowds of spectators, but in the class itself.

The votes for the Queen were cast by secret ballot in charge of a committee of three. Wellington traditions required that the name of the chosen one should be kept in entire secrecy until the clock in the tower struck noon on May Day. Then the junior donkey was led forth garlanded with flowers. He had officiated on this occasion now for ten years. This was the great moment when the identity of the most popular girl in the junior class was established for all time, and it was an important moment, because the one selected was generally chosen as Class President the next year.

[293]

And now, as the tower clock boomed twelve deep strokes, there was a stirring among the spectators and a craning of necks. Three juniors appeared at the end of the campus, leading the aged donkey, who flicked his tail and walked gingerly over the turf. He wore a garland of daffodils and lilacs and moved sedately along, mindful of the importance of his position.

The three girls were Nance Oldham, Caroline Brinton and Edith Williams. One of them carried a wreath of narcissus and the other two held the ribbon reins of the donkey.

[294]

According to the time-honored rule, they approached their classmates with grave, still faces. It was really a solemn moment and the juniors waiting in an unbroken line never moved nor smiled.

The spectators held their breath and for a moment Wellington was so still that every human thing in it might have been turned to stone.

Why was it so exciting, this choosing of the May Queen?

No one could tell, and yet it was always the same. Even Miss Bowles felt a lump rise in her throat. Many of the alumnæ shamelessly wept, and Professor Green, watching the three white

figures move slowly in front of the line of juniors, wondered if no one else could hear the pounding of his pulses.

Presently the committee came to a stop. The Professor thrust his hands into his pockets and drew a deep breath.

Nance stepped forward and placed the wreath on somebody's head. The spectators could see that she was quite tall and slender, and that she shrank back with surprise and shyness as she was led forth and bidden to mount the donkey, which she did with perfect ease and grace, as one who has mounted horses all her life. [295]

"Who is it?" cried a dozen voices. "They look so much alike."

Scores of opera glasses and field glasses were raised.

"It's Molly Brown, of course," cried a girl.

The Professor smiled happily.

"Of course," he repeated, thrusting his hands deeper into his pockets.

And now the ban of silence was lifted. The orchestra played; the audience cheered and the three classes gave their particular yells in turn, while the juniors, marching two by two, followed Molly Brown, riding the donkey, around the entire circuit of the campus.

As for Molly Brown, she hung her head and blushed, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

"The sweet lass, she might be a bride, she is so shy!" ejaculated Mrs. McLean as the procession moved slowly by. [296]

"Hurrah for Miss Molly Brown of Kentucky!" yelled a group of Exmoor students.

"Here's to Molly Brown, drink her down," sang the entire student body of Wellington.

It was a thing that happened every year and there were those who had seen it thirty times or more, and still the spectacle was ever new.

"I think I must be dreaming," Molly was saying to herself. "Of course, I might have known Nance and Judy would have voted for me and perhaps one or two others,—but so many—and what have I done to deserve it? I have hardly seen anything of Caroline Brinton and her crowd. 'Oh Lord, make me thankful for these and all thy mercies,'" she added, repeating the family grace, which somehow seemed appropriate to this stirring moment.

After the triumphal march, Molly with the class officers, flanked by the rest of the class, held an informal reception on the lawn. This was followed by the Junior Lunch, quite an elaborate affair, served in the gymnasium, decorated for the occasion by the sophomores. [297]

Lawrence Upton was Molly's guest for the day. Many of the girls had asked Exmoor students, but Nance had been visited with a disappointment that was too amusing to be annoying.

Otoyo Sen, on the sophomore committee for decorating the gymnasium, and therefore entitled to ask a guest, had not let the grass grow under her little feet one instant. The moment the committee had been selected, she sent off a formal, polite note to Andy McLean, 2nd, inviting him to be her guest.

"Oh, Nance, that's one on you," cried Judy, when she heard this bit of news. "You always thought Andy was so much your property that no one would ever think of treading on your preserves. It's just like Japan, creeping quietly in and taking possession."

"I suppose Andy will be hurt because I didn't get there first," replied Nance, laughing good-naturedly. "I suppose I shall have to ask Louis Allen, but I don't think it will do Andy any harm to know there are other fishes in the sea." [298]

"I guess it won't," answered Judy. "Nance is learning a thing or two," she added to herself.

But all's fair in love and war, and there was no more charming figure on the campus that day than little Otoyo in a pink organdy and a large hat trimmed with pink roses. On her face was an expression of shy, discreet triumph as of one who has gained a victory by stratagem.

The Junior Gambol came to an end at six that evening, and the tired students repaired to their rooms to rest and relax after eight hours of continuous entertaining. The eight friends of old Queen's days had gathered in No. 5 of the Quadrangle, where refreshments were being handed around, chiefly lemonade and hickory-nut cake. Eight limp young women in dressing-gowns draped themselves about the divans and in the arm chairs to discuss the joys of the day.

Molly, at the window, was reading something written on a card tied to the stem of an exceedingly large yellow apple. It was Professor Edwin Green's card, and the inscription thereon read: "The first of the three golden apples was won to-day. Congratulations and best wishes." [299]

Untying the card, she slipped it into her portfolio.

"Shall I divide it or eat it alone?" she asked herself, and, without waiting for the second voice to answer, she seized Judy's silver knife and divided the apple into eight sections, which she passed around the company.

"Did this come from the Garden of Hesperides, Molly?" asked Edith Williams, always ready with her classic allusions.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it did," answered Molly, smiling mysteriously.

There was much to talk about that evening. It was the moment for reminiscences and they reviewed the past year with all its excitements and pleasures. When Millicent Porter had departed from Wellington in dishonorable flight, her place in the Shakespeareans had been immediately filled, and Judy Kean was the girl selected; which goes to show that after a good deal of suffering and when the edge is taken off the appetite, we generally get what we once earnestly desired. Judy was not excited over the honor paid her, but she acquitted herself creditably in the beautiful performance of "A Winter's Tale," which the society eventually produced. [300]

She sat on the floor now, leaning against Molly, whom, next to her father and mother, she loved best in all the world. Without realizing it herself, Judy's character had been wonderfully developed and strengthened by the events of that winter and she looked on the world with a new and broader vision.

It was nearly bedtime; the night was warm and still and through the open windows came the sound of singing. The girls were silent for a while, too weary to make any more conversation.

"And next year we'll be hoary old seniors," suddenly announced Judy, following up a train of thought.

Several in the company sighed audibly. Already the thought of parting from each other and from their beloved Wellington cast a shadow before it. [301]

But this sorrowful last year was to be filled with interest and happy times, as you will see who read the next volume of this series, entitled "MOLLY BROWN'S SENIOR DAYS."

---

**Transcriber's note:**

Besides some minor printer's errors the following corrections have been made: on page 265 and 269 "Madeleine" has been changed to "Millicent" ([helped Millicent with the remainder](#)) ([leaving Millicent still in the window seat](#)). Otherwise the original has been preserved, including inconsistent spelling and hyphenation. Additional: "Rosomond Chase" was called "Rosamond" in the first book of this series, "Molly Brown's Freshman Year."

---

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MOLLY BROWN'S JUNIOR DAYS \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE  
THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

## **Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of

the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF

## THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for



any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.