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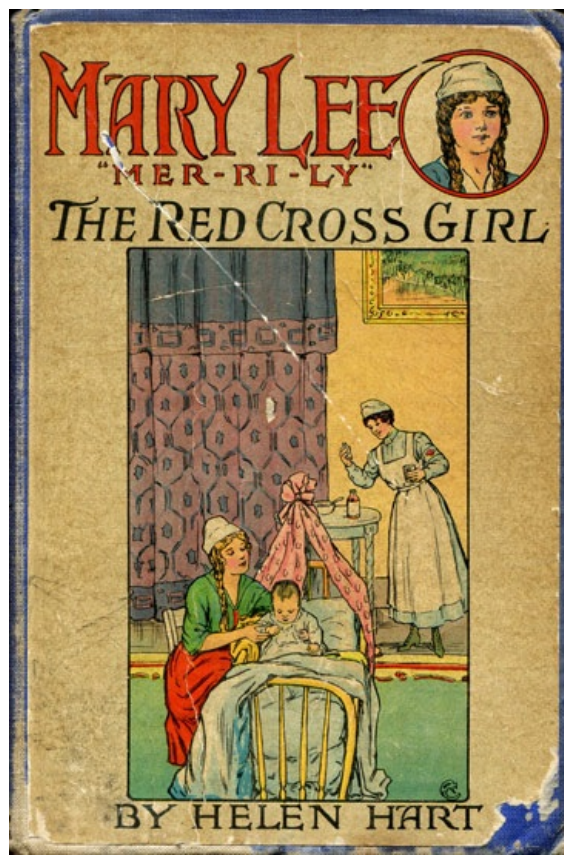
*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK MARY LEE THE RED CROSS GIRL ***

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Transcriber's Note:

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected. Inconsistent spelling and hyphenation in the original document have been preserved.

The sentence "He had been very lonesome for him.", starting on page [103](#), may be missing words.



MARY LEE
***The* RED CROSS GIRL**

By
HELEN HART



ILLUSTRATED BY
ALICE CARSEY

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Dedicated to Jane R.
who makes an ideal
Red Cross Girl in the
opinion of the Author



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MARY LEE, THE
RED CROSS
GIRL

MARY LEE
The Red Cross Girl

CHAPTER I

SPRING AT THE FARM

"From whom is the letter, Mary Lee?" asked Mrs. Quinn as she glanced up from her sewing. 15

"From Bobbie, and he says that they will land about the 15th. He wants to come right out here to the country to see our cozy new home. Oh, dear, I can hardly wait to see him!" exclaimed Mary Lee, her eyes sparkling.

"Does he say that the French doctors have helped him any?" further questioned Mrs. Quinn.

"Helped him any?" repeated Mary Lee, "why, he's cured. He isn't a cripple any more at all. Just think, he can walk again, as well as I can. Isn't it a lovely world?" and the impetuous child threw her arms about Mrs. Quinn's neck and gave her a good hug. 16

Just then a voice from the outside called: "Oh, Mary Lee, come quick. We've found something to show you."

It was Eddie Quinn, the youngest boy, and Mary Lee upon hearing his excited voice, lost no time in rushing out to see what new delight was in store for her.

Mrs. Quinn leaned back in her comfortable chair in the sunny south bay window, and as her eyes wandered about the cheerful room and out over the peaceful woodland view, her thoughts flashed back to the past.

How different things were now from what they had been when Mary Lee—the little waif from the orphanage—had first come into their home as a mother's helper! They were then living in the crowded tenement district of New York City. How much sickness they had had! How often her husband had been thrown out of work! If it hadn't been for hopeful little Mary Lee they all would have lost courage. She put her little shoulder to the wheel with such determination that it seemed as if her efforts had pulled them out of the dreadful rut into which they were gradually sinking. 17

Yes, Mary Lee was always doing something for somebody. How brave she was the day she had saved Bob Cameron from drowning in Central Park! He was a little crippled boy who lived in one of the stately mansions on Fifth Avenue. A strong friendship, encouraged by Bob's grateful parents, had sprung up between the two children. It had meant much to Mary Lee. Her narrow little life began to broaden out—and consequently so did that of the Quinns. Bob's Aunt Madge had taken a great fancy to Mary Lee and had made it possible for her to become a Campfire Girl.

Then there was dear Doctor Anderson. He had operated on Mrs. Quinn when she had been so ill.

Seeing earnest little Mary Lee doing her best to help this worthy but unfortunate family along, he too had become interested. It was he who had made it possible for them to move out in the country where they could live on his farm. Mr. Quinn had shown his gratitude by proving himself a most capable manager the past year. 18

Was it any wonder as Mrs. Quinn sat thinking over all these things that a tear or two trickled down her cheeks? But it was not from sadness—for her heart was filled with the joy of living, and overflowing with love for Mary Lee, the little girl who had brought good fortune and sunshine into her home.

In the meantime, Tom and Eddie had led Mary Lee over to a low-branched tree to behold their "surprise."

"It's a nest," whispered Eddie. "A real nest. See, it's just new!"

"So it is," said Mary Lee. "What a cozy little home! But where do you suppose Father Bird and Mother Bird are? Did we frighten them away?"

"No," said Eddie, "it was empty when we first saw it. But let's hide and maybe they will come back."

"Oh no," said Mary Lee, "let's go away before they return. If they suspected anyone was around they might move their nest. Won't it be fun when we can see the little bird's eggs, and afterwards the little birdies themselves? But you must not tell anyone about this nest, will you? Now promise," commanded Mary Lee. 19

Both boys promised. They also agreed not to look at their nest more than once a day.

"Now, see who wins the race to your father over there in the field," challenged Mary Lee. "One, two, three, go!"

The children were off. Tom won the race.

"Huh," said he, "I wouldn't let any girl beat me."

"Well, you wait until next time and maybe you will change your mind," answered Mary Lee.

"Have you come to help, children?" Mr. Quinn greeted them.

While the boys assisted their father, Mary Lee returned to the house. As she came to the kitchen door, she thought she heard voices. Then as she opened the door and went through the kitchen, she heard Mrs. Quinn say: 20

"She will be here any moment. Won't she be glad to see you both!"

Mary Lee just jumped into the room, for she guessed who the visitors were.

"Aunt Madge and Dr. Anderson—I'm so happy!" And the girl ran into Miss Cameron's arms.

CHAPTER II

WELCOME GUESTS

"My," said Aunt Madge, "how you are growing, Mary Lee. I never knew you to look so well and so pretty. Who said country life would not agree with our Mary Lee?" 21

"Not I, for one," replied Dr. Anderson, as if the question were directed at him. "My own candid opinion is that, no matter what the place might be, if it had any idea of not agreeing with the young lady it would very soon change its mind. Things simply cannot help but agree with Mary Lee!"

"Surely, it isn't because she's idle," added Mrs. Quinn. "You never saw anyone so busy and so anxious to do so many things. If I were to let her have her way, Miss Cameron, I would be sitting in my rocker all day with my arms folded." Then Mrs. Quinn bethought herself of her duties as hostess. "Surely, you are counting on staying for supper, such as it is, I hope?" 22

Both visitors laughed.

"We certainly are, Mrs. Quinn. We half suspected you would ask us," answered Dr. Anderson, with a twinkle in his eye. "Although I will confess that Miss Cameron had some scruples about coming at this hour."

"Yes," said that young lady, "it does look as if we were just forcing ourselves upon you, doesn't it?"

"Nonsense," replied Mrs. Quinn decidedly. "If you folks are not welcome here at all times, nobody is. But I had better start supper, if you will excuse me?"

"Certainly," said the doctor. "In the meantime I shall go down to the field to talk things over with Mr. Quinn. I suppose you will accept our invitation to go out in the automobile after supper, Mary Lee? We thought you and Mrs. Quinn would like a ride."

"Like it," enthusiastically replied the girl, "I'd love it."

23

"It's nice of you to include me and I shall be glad to go," added Mrs. Quinn on her way to the kitchen.

"I suspect you two have more than a few things to talk about and are waiting for me to follow Mrs. Quinn's excellent example," said the doctor, making for the door.

"Indeed we are," replied Aunt Madge laughingly. "Mary Lee and I are going to have a perfectly splendid chat."

The two friends did visit for many minutes, but Mary Lee did not seem to be quite at ease. She wanted to stay and talk with Aunt Madge, yet she felt it was her duty to set the table and help Mrs. Quinn.

Aunt Madge must have guessed what she was thinking about for she suddenly spoke up.

"I know what's on your mind, Mary Lee, you dear, conscientious child. Come, we'll both help set the table, shall we?"

"Do you really want to do that?" asked Mary Lee delightedly.

"Yes, I would like to very much," answered Aunt Madge.

24

It took but a little while to set the table and complete the rest of the necessary work. It was done with many laughs and much enjoyment. When the two were through they entered the kitchen and insisted on helping Mrs. Quinn.

But that lady shooed them out and would have none of them.

"Be off with you. You have time for a fifteen minute walk."

"Shall we?" asked Aunt Madge. And without waiting for an answer, she was off, Mary Lee at her side.

They could not have wanted the walk very much, for when they sighted the big oak which was but a little way down the road, they made themselves comfortable beneath it. They were really anxious to have a heart to heart talk and this was just the place for it.

"Well, my dear, you can now ask me all the questions that are stored up in that little mind of yours. I shall try my best to answer them."

Mary Lee needed no second invitation. She fairly swamped Aunt Madge with her deluge of questions.

25



"THE GIRLS MISS YOU SO MUCH."

"How are the Campfire Girls, Aunt Madge? Did they tell you when they were coming out here? Didn't Ruth and Edith and Letty send any messages with you? Have you heard the wonderful news that Bobbie and Mr. and Mrs. Cameron are coming home at last? And, Aunt Madge—"

26

But Aunt Madge laughed and interrupted the girl at this point.

"Wait, wait, Mary Lee. I guess I had better call a halt to your questions else I will not have time to answer them all before supper. Yes, the Campfire Girls asked me to be sure to give you their love and to tell you that they miss you ever so much. Letty and Ruth and Edith are coming out for next Saturday and Sunday so they did not send any message. In fact, my dear, they thought at first that they would not tell you at all and just surprise you. But they could not keep the secret and so they allowed me to tell you. Are you glad?"

"Glad," replied Mary Lee, with glistening eyes. "That means they will be here in two days."

"Yes. And now as to the last question. I do know that the Camerons are coming home, although I heard the news only yesterday. Isn't it marvelous that Bobbie is cured and will be just like other boys?"

27

"Now, my dear, I am going to tell you a piece of news which may startle you." Aunt Madge paused a moment as she felt the telltale blushes mounting to her cheeks.

"Doctor Anderson and I are to be married next September on the eighteenth."

Mary Lee beamed. "My—" was all that she could say.

Then the two, like silly little school girls, spent a few minutes in embraces, tears and kisses.

"I'm so glad, so glad," said Mary Lee after she had somewhat recovered. "I just know how happy you both are. And, Aunt Madge, Dr. Anderson is a dear and I love him almost as much as I love you."

"Well, don't you ever love him more than you do me." Aunt Madge pretended to be very stern as she shook her finger warningly at Mary Lee.

"I don't think I could do that," said Mary Lee, very seriously. "Where are you going to live when you are married?" she questioned, still filled with the wonder of the news.

28

"We are building a dear little home and it promises to look wonderfully lovely. My dear, you are to come and stay with us, ever so many times. You will, won't you, Mary Lee?"

"I certainly will," said Mary Lee, decidedly. "It will be like home to me."

Aunt Madge embraced the girl again. "You are such a comfort, little girl. And now, I think it is almost time to turn back," she suggested, after a silence of many minutes. "I hope we shall not be late for supper."

They made their way back to the house.

It was not a moment too soon, for as they approached they could hear the vigorous summons of the supper bell which was being sturdily wielded by Tom. They ran the last hundred yards and arrived at the house out of breath.

CHAPTER III

A MERRY PARTY

Dr. Anderson and Mr. Quinn were already in the dining room, having arrived a few minutes earlier. They were still busily talking when Aunt Madge and Mary Lee entered. 29

Mr. Quinn had completed his report of the work that had been done at the farm and was enthusiastic about the prospects for the coming summer and fall. The arrival of the newcomers halted the conversation. The doctor looked toward his fiancée inquiringly, and she nodded gayly to him, whereupon he grinned boyishly at Mary Lee and she smiled back at him.

"Well, Mary Lee, now that you know the secret, we can tell the rest of the folks," and he immediately proceeded to do so. 30

Mr. and Mrs. Quinn were delighted and their good wishes were cordial and sincere. They were very fond of these two friends and they felt they owed much to them. Mixed with their gratefulness and appreciation was the glad feeling that this romance had been partly cemented through them and through their Mary Lee.

"Madge, dear," said Dr. Anderson, as they sat at the table partaking of the excellent and well-cooked supper. "Mr. Quinn has done splendid work here, but I cannot get him to admit that he works too hard."

"I hope it will be the means of his making lots of money," replied Miss Cameron. "I'm glad he shares in the profits due to his labor and good management. Dear, you were extremely fortunate to find so good a manager."

"That I was," affirmed the doctor.

But Mrs. Quinn couldn't see it that way. "Fortunate, you fortunate? Why, it's we who have to bless our lucky stars for being here."

Mr. Quinn nodded his head very decidedly in confirmation. 31

"That is the truth, friends," he said. "My wife finds it a real delight to live out here, and you know, work is never hard or arduous when one is in love with it. Moreover, it's just the place for the children and for Mary Lee, too."

The doctor turned to the latter.

"I suppose you know, young lady, that you are to come to the city this fall and enter high school. Both Mr. and Mrs. Quinn know of it and have agreed that it is the thing for you to do."

Mary Lee turned her happy, joyful face first toward Dr. Anderson and then toward Aunt Madge and Mr. and Mrs. Quinn.

"And if I go," she spoke slowly as if she were realizing what it all meant, "I shall be with Ruth and Letty and the other girls and I can be at the Campfire Girls' meetings and see Bobbie and, oh, ever so many other things, can't I?"

Then her face clouded suddenly.

"But won't Mrs. Quinn need me here?" she asked. "Oh, I'm sure she will, and it's wicked for me to think of anything else. And anyway, I love it here, so much." 32

"I'll not need you, my dear, except for your smiles and cheerfulness," said Mrs. Quinn from the kitchen. "You can just make up your mind you are going." And Mrs. Quinn spoke very decidedly.

"You see," added Aunt Madge, "you really need the schooling. You are getting older and there are things you must learn and which you cannot acquire except in school. You must have an education to get on in the world."

"By the way," interrupted the doctor, "has Mary Lee ever thought of what she is going to be when she grows up?"

Everyone in the room looked at the girl expectantly.

"When I grow up," said Mary Lee, speaking in a way which showed she had made up her mind long ago, "I am going to be a nurse—a Red Cross nurse. In the meantime I am going to be a Red Cross Girl."

"Why, of course," replied the doctor. "I remember now you did say last year that you wanted to be a nurse when you grew older. Isn't it fortunate," he continued, "that I can help you because I am a physician. We will certainly give you lots of chances to become a good nurse and in the meantime you can learn much as 'Mary Lee, our Red Cross Girl.'" 33

"Why, that's fine," said Aunt Madge enthusiastically, while the boys clapped their hands, and Mr. and Mrs. Quinn both smiled proudly.

"And," added Aunt Madge, "what Mary Lee has learned in the way of first aid to the injured as a Campfire Girl, will help her materially to be a good and capable Red Cross Girl."

Mary Lee just beamed. She was too happy to speak but her looks expressed her feelings.

A very quiet though determined voice now spoke up.

"I'm going to be a farmer boy, and when I grow up I'm going to be a farmer-man, just like father." It was Eddie, the younger of the two boys. 34

"Why, of course," agreed the doctor, after the laugh was over, and looking at Mr. Quinn, who was smiling with great pride. "And I hope you will make as good a farmer as your father, Eddie. And, Tom, what are you going to be when you grow up?"

Tom spoke bashfully but yet none the less decisively.

"I'm going to be a real sailor and go all over the world."

"That's splendid, Tom," said Aunt Madge.

"Yes, Tom," added the doctor. "There are a lot of sailors-to-be until they reach the age of ten, so you won't be lonely."

The merry supper party was now over. Aunt Madge insisted upon helping to clear the table and to dry the dishes. While the three were busily at work, Dr. Anderson and Mr. Quinn went out on the porch, to smoke.

For a few moments the men puffed away in silence. Then Mr. Quinn resumed the subject they had been discussing before supper.

"You say you are having an investigation made, doctor?" 35

"Yes, Mr. Quinn. Mr. Cameron left instructions to do so before he went to Europe. Some day we may know who Mary Lee's parents were. I feel sure of that."

"I hope so," answered the older man. "She has done so much for other folks, I hope we shall be able to do something worth while for her."

Mr. Quinn continued after a pause.

"Do you know, Dr. Anderson, the child has absolute faith that some day she and her relations, those that are still alive, will be reunited?"

"If that's the case, I think it would not be wise to let Mary Lee know anything of the search that is being made because something might turn up to shatter her hopes."

Mr. Quinn nodded understandingly.

A few minutes later, the ladies came out on the porch. The boys had already gone to their room as was their usual custom.

"Are we all ready for our ride?" the doctor asked. 36

Aunt Madge nodded. They invited Mr. Quinn to join them, but he had some last duties to perform and he wanted to retire early. So he bade the guests good-night.

The next minute the machine was gliding down the road.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST AID

High above, the sun beat down relentlessly. Not a breath of air stirred. There was the sleepy droning of the everlasting insects, the number of which seemed always magnified at such a time. There had been no rain for many a day. The dust was thick along the roads. Now and then a passing automobile left an instant's breeze to be more than paid for in the swirl of dust.

37

A solitary figure was scuffling along wearily. A casual glance marked him as a knight of the road, a tramp. But if you had stopped to observe a little more closely, you would have noted that he was not of that type, unkempt and bedraggled though he appeared.

He had stopped at the last house on the road and then, after no little hesitation, had asked for a drink of water. He had rested for a few minutes—then he had gone on. The people in the house had noticed his obvious weariness and had asked him if he did not wish to rest. But the evident and simple kindness of the woman, who was Mrs. Quinn, had seemingly embarrassed the man.

38

"Thank you kindly, ma'am," he had replied huskily, "but I must be on my way."

And so he had trudged wearily on. Every move on this hot, breezeless day was an ache, as if he were stepping on live and tender nerves. He had been able to make but one half mile in an hour. Then nature could do no more—and with a sigh, he had fallen to the ground. The heat had proved his master.

Along the road from the village which was two miles from the house where he had stopped, came Mary Lee. For her the heat had no terrors. There was beauty in this day, hot and merciless though it had seemed but a little while before. And, as you traveled with her, you also partook of the joy she received from Nature, because, whatever its guise, it was Nature nevertheless.



MARY LEE CAME TRIPPING DOWN THE ROAD

It was months since Dr. Anderson and Aunt Madge had visited her. Letty and Ruth had come almost every other week after that first spring visit. She had seen Bob, too, almost the day after he had arrived from abroad. With him had come his mother and his father. It had been a wonderful summer for Mary Lee.

40

How her heart rejoiced at the sight of Bob, who had gotten out of the auto a little way down the road so that Mary Lee, who had been his playmate and friend, could see him walk up the road, no longer crippled but like other boys. Bob had stayed over for a few days. Mr. and Mrs. Cameron had been greatly pleased with Mary Lee. They were surprised at the way she had grown and admired the tanned cheeks and the clear eyes.

Bobbie was to come out again at the end of July and a few days later Ruth and Edith and Letty were to come. And while all of them were at the farm, Aunt Madge and Dr. Anderson would drive out.

As Mary Lee came tripping down the road, some of the joy in her was for the days to come. She was not only thinking of the coming of her friends but also of September when she would join these friends in the city and be as one of them. A spirit of gratefulness mingled with her other emotions as she thought of the rapid changes that had taken place in the short time she had been

41

out of the orphanage.

"Some day," she said very softly, "I am going to make my friends very proud that they are my friends." It never occurred to this simple, lovely little girl, that she had already given them cause for their pride in the mutual friendship.

"When Bob and the girls come we can visit the Sanitarium. If we can only get Dr. Anderson to go with us he can explain things to us and in that way we can learn so much more. Then, too, we can have real campfires and meetings and Bobbie can visit us as a Boy Scout."

So her mind planned it all, as she hastened along. There was no need for hurrying, but it was never in the nature of this girl to move slowly. But often she stopped along the road for there were many things that drew her interest.

"You poor things," she said to some dry and withered looking ferns along the way. "I shall practice being a real Red Cross Girl with you." She hurried into the woods somewhat farther down the road and from a brooklet brought some water with which to give the ferns new life.

42

This act set her to dreaming of her future when she would be a Red Cross Nurse and of Dr. Anderson who was to give her the opportunity to gain the necessary experience. It was great work to relieve and cure the sick.

Then across her line of vision came a blurred form which she could not make out. She hurried forward. As she neared it she saw the body of a man lying prone upon the ground.

For one moment there was a scared, helpless feeling within the girl. There was a great sinking in her heart. She seemed very small, very helpless. Then from somewhere within her a small voice whispered:

"Mary Lee, you are a Red Cross Girl."

CHAPTER V

MARY LEE WRITES A LETTER

Mary Lee could never remember how she managed to place the unconscious form of the man against the tree so that the branches would afford some shade and protection from the sun's merciless heat.

43

From the gate at which she was standing and from where she was searching the road for Mary Lee's return, Mrs. Quinn saw the girl running. She noticed her excitement and so hurried forward to meet her.

"What is it, dear? What has happened?" she questioned anxiously.

Mary Lee told her. From the account, Mrs. Quinn judged that the man had had an attack of sunstroke. She calmed the excited girl and immediately went about obtaining the necessary ice to use on the stricken man.

44

The girl found good use for a first aid book which had been presented to her at one of the Campfire meetings. From it she learned that mustard on the nape of the neck or the forehead would help to bring a person back to consciousness. She immediately went into the kitchen and procured some.

Mr. Quinn was not about and so the two, Mrs. Quinn with the ice and Mary Lee with the mustard, hurried to the unconscious man, first sending Tom after Mr. Quinn to bring the carriage to them.

They found him still unconscious. Mary Lee applied the ice and then put a plentiful supply of the mustard upon the nape of the man's neck. Then both watched anxiously for signs of a return to consciousness. It seemed hours before there was a flicker of returning life; as a matter of fact, it was less than ten minutes. When Mr. Quinn arrived with the carriage the man had regained consciousness, but he was obviously quite weak.

"I think we had better take him to the Sanitarium," said Mary Lee, "they will know what to do there."

45

Mrs. Quinn agreed. She returned home, her husband driving toward the Sanitarium, Mary Lee on the rear seat holding the man's head and applying the ice. The drive was over two miles and during almost all of that time, the sick man was either too weak to speak or lacked the inclination to do so.

As they turned into the driveway which led to the hospital, he spoke in a low, weak voice: "I'm sorry to give you all this trouble, young lady. It is a misfortune for me as well as for all of you." Then he paused for a second either through weakness or as if debating something in his mind.

"I wonder if I can impose on your goodness a little more?" he asked as the carriage stopped at the entrance and Mr. Quinn went inside to speak to the proper authorities. "Could you come and see me in the morning? I must have something attended to tomorrow and I suppose," he continued wanly and with the ghost of a smile, "I shall have to stay here at least that long."

"I shall be glad to come," answered Mary Lee. "Please do not worry. I am sure that it will be but a day or two before you are up and about again." 46

An interne and two orderlies now came out of the hospital door with a stretcher. They carried the sick man into the emergency ward but would not allow either Mr. Quinn or Mary Lee to follow. They were told that they would probably be allowed to visit in the morning.

But the man's case was evidently quite serious. Mary Lee called the next day and was informed that the patient had a high temperature and that it was impossible to permit any visitors. She was not allowed to see him until the fourth day. It worried her because of her promise and the man's evident anxiety to have the "something" attended to at once. On the fourth day, she was informed that the man was still weak but had insisted on seeing her. The nurse who spoke to her warned her not to stay too long.

Even as she opened the door she felt the surcharged eagerness of the man. He wasted no time in any greetings.

"The doctor tells me I cannot hope to leave here for at least another week. He claims it is under-nourishment more than the heat." He rested a moment. 47

"My name is Tom Marshall," he continued slowly. "I was on my way home from Mexico where I have been for many years. About two months ago, I remember the day so well, the home of my mother and father and of my early youth seemed to be calling to me in a way I could not resist. I had been away from it for over fifteen years and not once before that time had I been homesick or felt the desire to go home. But the new feeling was such that a little boy feels—I wanted my mother more than anything else in the world.

"My partner and I have a mine down there. We think it is a silver mine, but so far it has been hard to pinch anything out of it and we have found it a difficult matter even to exist. My partner is an Indian but he would shame many white men. I have never known a squarer, whiter man. He found the mine. We both feel it is certain to make good some day.

"Enough of that, except to say that I went to him and told him how I felt. He insisted that I make the trip home. Together, we scraped up enough money to bring me back about half the distance. I wrote home, the first letter I had written, I am ashamed to say, in four years. I told mother that I was coming home and to write me to St. Louis care of the General Delivery." 48

The man paused again. He was watching the girl. He seemed to regain strength.

"I suppose you wonder why I tell you all this. You will soon see. At St. Louis a letter was waiting for me. It was from my cousin, not from my mother. I learned that father had died three years ago and that my mother was very sick. She had been overjoyed at the news that I was coming. But my cousin advised me to hasten my return, as he considered my mother's condition extremely serious.

"I got as far as this by freight train, my money having given out at St. Louis. The headway was slow and yet I could not stop to earn the money to travel any other way. I have had very little food, how little I had I never stopped to consider. My one desire has been to get home." 49



THE SICK MAN DICTATES A LETTER

"You see," the man continued in an eager way, "it seems that all the desire to see mother that I should have had all these years is crowded into the present. I had figured on cutting through to the river and stowing myself in one of the boats which would bring me nearer home; but the heat and the lack of food were too much for me, and here I am."

50

The man paused once more. Mary Lee wondered if she were not staying too long; if the man were not going past his strength. Yet he seemed anxious to complete what he had to say.

"I have prayed that my mother live till I reach home. I want her to know that I am delayed. Will you please write my cousin? Tell him that I am very near and that I shall soon be well enough, but that he must not tell mother about my illness, just that I am surely coming. He must also let me know at once how she is.

"You see, young lady, I cannot write myself just now, as the doctors think I am still too weak. I wanted this letter written four days ago. I am sure you will write understandingly. Will you do it for me?"

51

"I shall be very glad to," answered Mary Lee. "I am going to ask your cousin to telegraph regarding your mother's condition."

The man nodded as if too spent to talk further. He handed Mary Lee a crumpled slip of paper on which was written the address for the letter.

CHAPTER VI

A PICNIC

Ten days later found Tom Marshall home. The telegram had come from his cousin stating that the condition of his mother was unchanged. Mary Lee had told the Quinns of the case and Mr. Quinn had paid a visit to the sick man. He had talked to him for a little while and convinced as to the truth of the man's story, had offered to lend him the money which would take him home.

52

Marshall had returned the money with a letter of thanks immediately upon his arrival home.

Now the end of July had come. Letty and Ruth and Bob all came from the city on the same train. There was a delightful meeting at the town depot, and much happy, excited chattering on the part of the girls. On the way home, Mary Lee said:

53

"I have planned a picnic lunch for this afternoon. I know a lovely spot and then we can take a long walk afterwards."

"I'll tell you what," said Bob. "If we could get some steak or chops I would give you the best eating you ever had. Father showed me how campers cook."

That sounded exciting to the girls. It meant, of course, stopping off at the village general store which in itself was a novelty. Mary Lee telephoned Mrs. Quinn and obtained permission to make the purchases. But Bob insisted that the buying of the chops was his part of the party and insisted so strongly that he won his point.

They drove home and when they passed the spot where Mary Lee had discovered the unconscious Tom Marshall she showed the place to her friends and told them the story.

"My, but you were brave, Mary Lee," said Letty admiringly. "I would have been so frightened I would have fainted."

The guests helped in the preparation for the picnic as did Tom and Eddie who had also been invited so that Bob wouldn't feel it was a girls' affair. Besides, Mary Lee knew how much they would like it. It was after midday before they started on the picnic, and more than a half hour later before they reached their destination. It was truly a pleasant spot. A brook was running nearby and the trees grew so closely together that they formed a regular bower. The girls were so delighted that they immediately decided to use the place for all future meetings and named it Campfire Nook. In the meantime Bob and Eddie were hunting for a large flat rock on which to fry the chops, while Tom gathered wood.

54

"Did you girls bring any matches?" suddenly asked Ruth.

Letty looked at Mary Lee, who in turn looked blank.

"Of course, we need matches for a fire," added Letty. "I'll warrant you Bob forgot all about them too."

It struck the girls as a great joke, even though they were beginning to be hungry. They decided that they would not say anything to Bob until he had everything ready and realized for himself that there were no matches with which to start the fire.

55



BOB MAKES HIMSELF USEFUL AT THE PICNIC

When Eddie and Bob returned the girls said nothing about forgetting the matches, but waited to see the fun.

56

But Bob fooled them. He brought forth some matches from his pocket and lighted the fire in the approved way.

"Did you have them all the time?" asked Letty, somewhat crestfallen.

"Why, of course," answered Bob as if he could never forget so important a thing, when, as a matter of fact, he had only recalled that he would need matches at the last moment.

As soon as the big flat stone Eddie found had been cleaned and heated in the fire, the chops were well seasoned and placed upon it.

The meat smelled and looked so appetizing that the girls stopped their own preparations to watch it cook.

Bob turned the chops with a would-be fork which he had made from a small branch, and soon the first supply was ready.

"Isn't Bob clever, to be able to do this?" said Mary Lee as she ate her chop. 57

"Aren't they delicious?" commented Letty, while Ruth nodded in assent.

The boys were even more enthusiastic and everyone took a second helping. It made Bob very happy to have his experiment turn out so successfully. In addition to the chops there were delightful sandwiches, and Mrs. Quinn had furnished some delicious fruit and fresh cake.

After lunch was over, the girls sat about anxious to have a talk. Bob, Eddie and Tom thought they would like to investigate the source of the brook and so they were off.

"Aren't you excited about Aunt Madge being married, Mary Lee?" asked Letty.

"Yes," added Ruth, "and I know who are to be the bridesmaids."

If Ruth expected that this information would cause a commotion, she was not a bit disappointed.

"You do?" queried Letty.

"Can you tell us?" asked Mary Lee.

Ruth pretended she did not hear them, having found something on one of the trees which interested her. 58

Letty and Mary Lee laughingly and excitedly surrounded her, urging her to give them the information.

"Won't you tell us?" repeated Mary Lee coaxingly.

"Oh, it isn't a secret," answered Ruth, "and I can tell you."

"Well," said Letty decidedly, "I know that you and Mary Lee will be two of the bridesmaids."

"There are some things you do know, Letty," said Ruth teasingly. "Then there are other things you do not know."

"I know I am not to be one of them," remarked Mary Lee. She meant it, too. There were so many nice girls who would naturally be chosen before her. "But I am sure that Letty will be one. I just feel sure of that," she added.

"Well, there are some things you also know, but there are many things you do not," answered Ruth trying hard to be evasive. 59

Mary Lee and Letty sprang up to encircle Ruth and compel her to give them the news, but the latter was just as quick in escaping them. Mary Lee, however, soon caught her and held her so that she could not move.

"Now, will you tell?" asked Letty.

"I was dying to tell all the time," replied Ruth laughingly.

"The bridesmaids will be—" and she paused. "I think I have forgotten." Mischief was still in her eyes.

Letty pretended to be very threatening, while Mary Lee took a firmer hold.

"Oh, yes," continued Ruth, "now I remember. They are to be Edith—and, of course, you sillies, we are the other three."

The conversation then changed to what they would wear, for to all of them the coming occasion was one of the most important of their lives.

"What will you wear?" asked Mary Lee. She was excited over what the two friends intended to wear even though she knew that she herself would have to wear her party dress which was a simple little white organdie with a pink sash. She was thankful though she had a leghorn hat with pink streamers. Her white canvas slippers with lisle stockings would have to do. 60

"What do you girls think of my wearing my pink crepe-de-chine dress and my new pink hat with those pretty rosebuds and foliage encircling the crown, and pink slippers and stockings?" asked Letty.

"I know I am not going to be anywhere up to you, Letty. I can only wear my white dress over pink

China silk and a white hat with a very pale pink bow, and white buckskin slippers with white silk stockings," said Ruth.

"Well, no matter what we may wear," said Letty, "Mary Lee will be the prettiest of us all. Tell us your plans, Mary Lee," she added.

"Mine are very simple, for it isn't hard to decide when you haven't many things to pick from," was the unembarrassed answer. "I haven't much else than my white organdie party dress."

After discussing what they would wear at the wedding the girls next talked over their plans for school the coming fall.

61

"The nicest part of it all is that you are to stay with me," said Letty to Mary Lee.

Just then there was a shout from the boys who were on the other side of the brook, so the girls hurried forward to meet them.

It was now after five o'clock and time to go home. Bob and Mary Lee managed to walk along together.

"Well, Bob," asked the girl, "what are you going to do this fall?"

"I'm to go to the academy, father says. He wants me to mingle with other boys. I shall be glad to do so, too."

"You and your father are great friends now, aren't you?" questioned Mary Lee.

"We certainly are. Dad's great and he teaches me many things," the boy replied. "I tell you, it's wonderful to be like other boys and be able to do what they do. It seems to me I will never cease marveling at it. Do you know, Mary Lee," the boy continued, "both mother and father think just everything of you? Father often says that your coming seemed to bring rays of sunshine into our house which have always stayed."

62

The girl blushed. "How kind they are to say such delightful things," she exclaimed. "It is glorious to have such friends," she continued gratefully.

Letty and Ruth joined them at this moment. The house was now but a little way down the road. Both Bob and Mary Lee were glad to have had this talk, short though it was.

CHAPTER VII

VISITING THE SANITARIUM

Aunt Madge and Dr. Anderson were to come out two days later. There was so much to do in these two days, however, that the time flew quickly. Mary Lee did not neglect her duties but with the help of her friends she was able to get through early so that most of the day was free. The first picnic lunch had been so successful that they had unanimously planned for another. There were, however, so many other things to do that it was put off for the arrival of the newcomers.

63

Dr. Anderson brought his car and almost in the first moment of his arrival had made plans for a long ride, but Mary Lee reminded him of her plan to visit the Sanitarium.

"Well, Mary Lee," he agreed good humoredly. "Of course, it will be talking shop for me to take you youngsters through, but if that is what you wish, I will gladly do so."

64

"Suppose we take our ride later," suggested Bob, who felt more at liberty to suggest than the others because Aunt Madge was his aunt and Dr. Anderson would soon be his uncle. "We could stay out late and you could return to town in the morning."

Aunt Madge laughed. "It's not so easily planned as all that, but even then I think we can manage."

Dr. Anderson telephoned the hospital as soon as they reached the house. He obtained permission almost at once to go through with his party. His business with Mr. Quinn was transacted in half an hour and so it was still quite early in the morning when they reached the hospital. It was a large institution which made a specialty of certain kinds of cases, but it also had an emergency ward.

The doctor explained so thoroughly, yet so simply, to his listeners as they went through the operating rooms, etc., that they could not help having a good conception of the necessary treatment of the sick.

65

In the midst of an explanation he saw Mary Lee's attention centered on a nurse who was taking the temperature of a patient.

"Yes, Mary Lee, that is what you will be doing some day. You have made a splendid choice of profession. It will take many years—there is much you must learn. I know," he continued, jestingly, "folks will be glad to get sick just so that they can have Dr. Anderson treat them and Nurse Mary Lee take care of them."

"It isn't going to take as many years as you think," loyally replied Bob, taking up the cudgels, "for Mary Lee has already begun." And he told Aunt Madge and the doctor of Tom Marshall. To Bob, because he was a boy, the part that had to do with the silver mine in Mexico was important and so he dwelt upon it.

"Tom Marshall told Mary Lee that he has a partner who is an Indian and who is a whiter and squarer man than many white men," concluded the boy.

For one moment, Dr. Anderson wondered at this last remark the boy had made.

66

"An Indian for a partner, eh?" he remarked. Then he laughed at the foolishness of his thought. Of course, there could be no connection between Jim Lee, the Indian who had been a servant to Mary Lee's mother out West, and this Indian Bob had spoken about.

"You didn't say what the Indian's name was, did you?" he asked.

Mary Lee answered, "No, I never thought to ask."

"Well, let's be on," Dr. Anderson said, casting away all thoughts and conjectures as to the possibilities along this line. "That was a good home remedy you applied to the man, Mary Lee," he continued, changing the subject by referring to the mustard the girl had applied for the sunstroke.

It was long past the time for lunch when they left the hospital. Probably Mary Lee learned more than any one of the others from this visit, for everything had been of such vital interest to her. She remembered much of what the doctor had told them.

Immediately after the late lunch which Mrs. Quinn had prepared for them they started out. The girls noticed with astonishment that Aunt Madge was driving the auto.

67

"Oh, yes," she replied in answer to their exclamations, "Dr. Anderson taught me. I find it easy to drive here in comparison with the city. It isn't hard," she added with all the certainty of one who has already learned.

"Tell you what, Madge, dear, I'll teach one or two of these youngsters. Shall I?"

"What a fine idea," Aunt Madge replied, giving up her seat.

Neither Letty nor Ruth would attempt it, however. Bob already knew, but Mary Lee welcomed the opportunity of learning.

Dr. Anderson found her an apt pupil and after the first hour he let her drive the car alone, taking the precaution, of course, of keeping his foot on the emergency clutch. At the end of another half hour, the doctor replaced her and put on extra speed.

The car whizzed along now. At four o'clock he found a suitable place and stopped. The whole party got out and made themselves comfortable.

68

Aunt Madge broke the news of the girls' appointment as bridesmaids.

"Too bad, Bob, you are not quite old enough, or I would make you my best man," said the doctor.

"At any rate, I'll be there," the boy replied. But the girls were not listening. They were eagerly discussing their plans with Aunt Madge. The doctor and Bob looked at them with much amusement and then walked down past the car and on.

It was soon time to return, however. Long after seven the party reached the house. Neither Aunt Madge nor Dr. Anderson could stay over and they began their long trip home.

The girls and Bob were a tired, happy lot and retired almost at once.

CHAPTER VIII

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING

At last September came. Mary Lee reached the city ready for school and her duties as bridesmaid. She had left the Quinn home with mixed feeling; sadness at parting from such good friends and joy at the thought of entering new experiences; it was exhilarating to come to a turning point in life.

69

For the Quinns, however, Mary Lee's departure had brought only sorrow. They tried hard to be unselfish, to be glad for her sake. But they felt intuitively that she had gone for good, that she would never return, and their attempt to appear glad, if the truth must be told, was a sorry failure.

Mrs. Cameron had taken it for granted that when Mary Lee came to the city, she would make her home with them, and Ruth had hopes of having her stay at her house. Letty, however, had insistently claimed that Mary Lee should stay with her. In fact, Mary Lee had been Letty's guest the very first night. Considerable debate came up the second day over this question, when Mary Lee and Letty had called for Ruth and the three had made a call on Mrs. Cameron. Dr. Anderson had been a luncheon guest and was still there when the girls arrived as, of course, was Aunt Madge.

70

The argument as to where Mary Lee should stay became quite heated although it was carried on with good nature. Each one was insistent about carrying her point. The prospective guest, and Aunt Madge as well as the doctor had found the discussion amusing and the latter, in particular, man like, poked fun at all of them.

"Well, Mary Lee," he remarked, "no one would class you as an undesirable. Nor could you be considered in the light of a poor relation."

"From the way you folks talk," added Aunt Madge, "one would never infer that the victim had any rights in the matter nor that there might be a possibility that she would have a preference as to where she would like to stay."

71

Nothing could have flustered Mary Lee more than this. She showed such distress and embarrassment at any likelihood of having to decide the argument, that Aunt Madge took instant pity upon her. She regretted her interference and came quickly to the relief of the girl.

"No," she interposed. "On second thought, we shouldn't let her decide. I'm certain that it would be pleasant for Mary Lee at any of your homes."

"Yes," said Dr. Anderson, "we must keep her out of this important discussion, slave that she is," he added with mock ferocity.

Everyone laughed but Letty. She was so anxious to have the question decided in her favor that she did not even hear what Dr. Anderson had just said. She had listened with some dismay and misgiving to the first suggestion that Mary Lee be allowed to choose her own home. The new Letty dared not hope that she would be chosen in preference to Ruth and Mrs. Cameron.

72

"I know what we will do," Dr. Anderson said. "We two, I mean," and he nodded his head toward Aunt Madge to avoid calling her name. One of the delightful things about him was that he could not overcome the habit, try as he would, of blushing when mentioning his fiancée by name. Worst of all, their friends were acquainted with this characteristic. He was annoyed with himself for not being able to overcome it, and, wisely so he thought he had decided to avoid the amused watchfulness of these friends by failing to mention her by name. This time, he was fairly caught.

"Which two do you mean?" Mary Lee asked innocently even as Aunt Madge, Mrs. Cameron and the girls watched him with laughing eyes. "Which two?" the girl repeated.

Dr. Anderson scowled.

"Why, Madge and myself," he replied and then could feel himself turning brick red even though he made every effort to appear unconcerned. And while they all laughed, he continued as if he did not hear them:

"Madge and I will be the judges as to where Mary Lee is to stay. You are all to prove prior rights as they do in all claims upon valuable property."

73

Neither Mrs. Cameron nor Ruth, however, could bring forth any such proof except that the former had never considered that there could be any question about it. As for Ruth, she had just hoped that Mary Lee would naturally want to stay with her.

"Well, then," triumphantly declared Letty, "Mary Lee was invited by me long, long ago, when she first moved out to the farm. Weren't you, Mary Lee?" she asked as she pointed an excited finger straight at the girl. She was so much in earnest that it raised another laugh.

"I was," answered Mary Lee, and in her heart there was a great warmth and affection for all these dear friends who were so earnest in their desire to have her stay with them and in particular for this warm-hearted, impetuous Letty.

"The jury will now retire," said Dr. Anderson.

Aunt Madge and he went into a far corner and were in earnest discussion for several minutes. Finally they returned.

74

"We, the jury, decided that Mary Lee is to stay with Letty. But—" and the doctor paused

impressively—"she is to make long visits to the other claimants at reasonable times, and in view of the valuable services of the jury she is to make equally long visits to the jury after a certain very happy event takes place."

There was more laughter and general satisfaction on the part of all.

Before the girls left Mrs. Cameron called Mary Lee aside for a moment.

"My dear," she said, "I have ordered a party gown for you to wear at the wedding. Can't you stay here until tomorrow and try it on?"

Mary Lee was greatly distressed. "Oh, I'm so sorry, Mrs. Cameron, but I can't accept your wonderful gift. You are so kind and it is so very tempting." She paused.

"You see," she continued, "I have my pretty white organdie dress which is almost new. I do not wish to become further indebted to any of you; you have all been so kind and I already owe you so much. I just hoped that my simple dress would do. Dear Mrs. Cameron, I hope so to earn enough to pay my way while in the city in order that I can be self-reliant."

75

Mrs. Cameron thought for a moment. It was a little hard to overcome her disappointment. She had set her heart upon this gift.

"You know," continued Mary Lee, and there were tears in her eyes at the disappointment she was causing, "I appreciate your kindness so much. But I do hope you can see my side of it," she concluded.

"You shall have your way, my dear," answered Mrs. Cameron bravely and wholeheartedly, as she took the girl in her arms and gave her a good, motherly hug.

CHAPTER IX

DR. PAYSON EMPLOYS MARY LEE

The week of the wedding arrived. It proved a feverish time for them all. The days flew swiftly. The two preceding weeks had been a mad rush, so they all thought, and they now decided that these last days fittingly capped the climax. For the girls, this last week brought the important—but up to now, neglected—event of school opening strongly to their attention. It was to take place three days after the wedding. There was need to plan and prepare for that as well.

76

It was Mary Lee who found time to be of help to everyone. The excitement left her untouched. There were things she also had to plan and do, yet she proved a blessing to the harrassed and distracted bride who preferred her help to that of anyone else. The girl also was able to help Mrs. Cameron whose responsibilities as matron and hostess were great. Ruth, too, usually independent, welcomed her help. As for Letty, full of the excitement of these days, it required all of Mary Lee's strength of mind to counteract the desire of the former to stay up night after night to discuss the coming events. Mary Lee was the necessary balance for such a nature as Letty's.

77

With all this, Mary Lee set to work to carry out certain other plans that had nothing to do with either of the two important events. And, strangely, too, she was able to enlist the services of Dr. Anderson at this time.

That poor man, with each day's nearer approach to the event found himself of less and less importance. There was little opportunity to see his fiancée who was enmeshed in numberless engagements with dressmakers and, so it seemed to him, with everybody in town but himself.

Mary Lee found him in this frame of mind on the morning she called at his office, only three days before the wedding. She had been surprised to find that he would be glad to see her at any time, when she called him on the telephone.

78

"I didn't dare expect that I could see you so soon," she apologized after greetings had been exchanged. "All I could do was to hope for it."

The doctor, however, gave no sign of being very busy. On the contrary, he seemed to indicate that he had prepared for a long and pleasant visit with her.

"I haven't a thing to do," he remarked. "I turned over my practice for the next two months to Dr. Stewart on the presumption that I could be fairly useful to *her* and because, so I thought, of the opportunities I would have to see *her*. Then, too, I had a large number of things that required attention.

"And," he added with a wry face, "I have found plenty of time to attend to the things that required attention, for, lo and behold, I find *her* without any time for me and the kind of help I can give *her*, she doesn't need. So you see, Mary Lee, I have lots of time on my hands and am glad of the chance to see any friends who have time for me."

"Dr. Anderson," the girl came directly to the subject nearest her heart, "I wondered if you would not know someone who perhaps would be in need of the services of a girl like myself for after school hours."

79

The doctor whistled in amazement.

"Honestly, young lady, you are a creature of surprises. What made you think of that, when there are so many of your friends who would make you more than welcome?"

"I know they would," the girl replied, "but I shall never feel content to live on their bounty and I shall only be happy when I am as independent as is possible."

"You are right, Mary Lee," he agreed in hearty approval. "It is the only normal thing to do. Well," and he paused in deep thought. He knew that Mary Lee would be mortified if he should suggest that he employ her, for that would make it seem as if she were bidding for a position in his office in an indirect way. He knew her well enough to be quite certain that it would be best to place her elsewhere.

"I shall see some of my friends who are likely to need an able assistant part time. Of course, with the training you desire you naturally would prefer a doctor's office."

Mary Lee nodded in assent. After a few inquiries as to the hours the girl would be able to give to the new duties and a friendly warning, which the doctor decided was almost unnecessary as to the demands of employers, the subject was changed and the conversation changed to Aunt Madge. The girl tried hard to give the doctor an idea of how busy his fiancée was, the many things that needed attention and the tremendous amount of preparations necessary for it. Even though he had but a small conception of it all, she felt that she had made him understand a little more closely.

80

At the end of a half hour, she departed after thanking him warmly for his interest.

The doctor was prompt in making inquiries. One of his friends, Dr. Payson, could use Mary Lee's services after school hours and Saturday mornings. But he would also need her at ten o'clock for one hour on two mornings of each week.

Dr. Anderson immediately called her up with the good news.

"Of course, it does not pay much, but Payson will probably find you useful and give you every opportunity to learn. It will be good experience and of great help to you later, when you enter training school. The money it pays is as much as three dollars every week," the doctor added laughingly and apologetically.

81

But if that sum did not seem big to him, it did to Mary Lee and she told him so. It had been more than she had expected. The only hitch was the question of being free at ten on two school mornings.

She consulted Letty in reference to this and received the welcome assurance from her that study hours were often arranged so that free time could be obtained.

She called on Dr. Payson with Dr. Anderson. He proved to be a kindly, middle aged man and from all appearances seemed satisfied as to her possible usefulness to him. Mary Lee did not know that Dr. Anderson had given a full account of her sense of responsibility and likable qualities and that it was his enthusiastic recommendation that had persuaded his friend to try Mary Lee instead of employing an older assistant for full time.

"Well, Mary," he started to say, but Dr. Anderson interrupted him.

82

"Not Mary, Payson, not Mary. This young lady's name is Mary Lee. Be sure to remember the Lee. We sometimes think that her mother did not name her Lee after a loyal Indian, as she would have us believe, but because she wanted her little girl's name to sound as if it were Mer-ri-ly. That name fits her."

As Mary Lee blushed, Dr. Payson remarked laughingly, "I am sure I shall find her very pleasant and agreeable. I shall also be sure to remember that it is Mary Lee I am to call her, in the future."

CHAPTER X

AUNT MADGE IS MARRIED

Aunt Madge had always been a firm believer in simplicity and she made that the predominating tone of the ceremony. She had a fair share of worldly riches and yet she had not, as our readers who have grown to know her must readily realize, ever made use of her wealth for garish display. There was a fine dignity and charm about the ceremony of the marriage that came through the gifted touch of true womanhood. 83

It was at an old church, beautiful, stately and with that atmosphere that brings of itself devoutness, religious fervor and conviction. A wonderful organ played, as down the aisle came Ruth and Edith, followed by Letty and Mary Lee. The four girls were as fair as the flowers they carried and made a charming picture that brought forth a murmur of admiration. About them, too, as if to fit in with the entire impressiveness, was a sense of quiet and repose that to those who knew them measured the significance and importance of the event for them. 84

Mrs. Cameron as matron of honor followed, and Dr. Payson escorted the bride. The bridegroom? He had been waiting with Dr. Payson, his best man, at the altar throughout the entire ordeal. But we shall speak of him a little later, for our eyes are upon the bride as she goes, slowly and yet in perfect time of music, down the broad aisle to the altar.

All brides are beautiful. And yet, Margaret Cameron made a picture that was to stay in the minds of those present for many a day. One stores away memories and impressions of that kind.

We are so built that everything must be symbolized. For as one thinks of green woods, there is sure to come the picture of one certain spot, one certain nook to symbolize it; so, for many of those present, there would, in the same way, come a picture of Margaret Cameron as she appeared that day, whenever thereafter weddings and brides were spoken about. The fineness of her! She carried a shower bouquet of white roses and lilies of the valley. Her head-dress was very becoming—a bridal veil prettily arranged—and her gown was a simple creation of white satin draped gracefully, trimmed with some rare old lace which belonged to her mother, and which had adorned her bridal gown. 85

We wish we could defy the conventional and the expected and say for the groom that he was fully at ease, self-contained, in full command of the situation. Poor man, we wish we could say it and remain truthful. We could not do both. Never was any man more in need of help. Dr. Payson had a busy time of it. His whispered instructions fell on deaf ears, the owner of which was too scared to even hear. At the proper time, too, he was almost dragged to the proper place.

He did, however, manage to answer, "I will" distinctly. And as if that had been the goal, once he did that, some of his composure came back to him.

Dr. Payson always insisted thereafter that his friend had primed himself for the "I will" and was unequal to anything else. 86

"Why, I actually felt sorry for him," he said. "His knees were trembling and knocking against each other. I couldn't make out the thing he was mumbling but I feel certain he was only rehearsing to himself 'I will, I will, I will.'"

There was the usual rush of friends after the Reverend Dr. Arthur had tied the knot, and the shower of congratulations. It was the plan of the married couple to leave at once. To the new benedict, it seemed, however, that the number of their friends was unlimited and the time they took to offer their good wishes hours and hours. But all things have an end and so the Andersons were off at last. Mrs. Anderson had found the opportunity for an affectionate leave-taking from her girls and also from Bob Cameron. She had promised to write to them, too.

Some of the tenseness of the last few days seemed to go with the couple. Mrs. Cameron sighed with relief—relief over the fact that there had been no hitch and that the event had gone through so smoothly. Belief, too, that the worry and bustle were over. 87

For the girls there came a moment of reaction. Just what would take the place of the excitement and planning of the last few weeks? School seemed tame in comparison. Even the fact that Mary Lee had procured a position for some of her spare time had not created the furore that it would have under ordinary circumstances.

"It certainly seems strange to think of Aunt Madge as Mrs. Anderson, doesn't it?" asked Ruth as the party started for the door.

"And I suppose that's what we'll have to call her, too, instead of Aunt Madge," added Letty ruefully.

"And precious little we shall see of her from now on, I suppose," was Edith's contribution.

"I declare when I grow up I just won't marry and desert my friends, I just won't." The sense of injury was growing stronger and it was so voiced by Letty.

The rest of the girls laughed at her. 88

"You'll be the very first one, Letty dear," Mary Lee answered her, as she gave the impetuous

Letty an affectionate hug. "Come, girls, let's plan for school," she added.

Dr. Payson was just entering his car as they came to the street.

"Don't forget, Mary Lee," he called to her. "Be sure to report on time."

"I certainly will," answered Mary Lee.

CHAPTER XI

BUSY DAYS

Ten days later school was already in full swing. Mary Lee had been placed in a grade lower than her friends because she had lost so much time while at the orphanage and at the Quinns. She had been able to arrange for the necessary spare time and so was able to become Dr. Payson's "assistant," as he jokingly called her. 89

Each of the girls had received a card from the Andersons who were now in the Adirondacks and who were to remain there for several weeks. Mary Lee had also received a letter from Tom Marshall, forwarded to her by Mrs. Quinn. He was on his way to Mexico and he told her that his mother had died, but so peacefully that it had left him no bitterness. His sorrow held only the regret that he had not been more with his mother during the last few years. He thanked Mary Lee again for her help and voiced the hope that he would see her again some day. 90

Pleasant days followed each other. The girl enjoyed her work at Dr. Payson's office as much as she did school. What time she did not devote to her studies and to the office was spent agreeably with the other girls.

It had been decided to hold the Campfire meetings on Friday nights and the girls were doing fairly well in the absence of their leader, Aunt Madge. Following Mary Lee's example, they were desirous of being Red Cross girls.

Ruth, who was secretary, was instructed to write to the Red Cross Committee volunteering the services of the seven girls.

"What can we do?" Alice Brown, one of the girls, pessimistically asked.

"Why, we can make bandages, after a few lessons," replied Mary Lee.

"And some of us can sew and knit," added Letty. 91

"Oh," said Alice, as if a light had struck her. "Why of course."

Before they could get a reply to their letter, the President and Congress had declared war against Germany. This made them doubly eager for their answer and with the idea of preparing ahead of time, at Mary Lee's suggestion, they immediately invited Miss Walker, a friend of Mrs. Anderson, who was a trained nurse, to teach them how to make such bandages as might be needed. Miss Walker readily consented to give one evening a week to teaching them.

The war came somewhat close to Mary Lee when Dr. Payson told her that he intended to answer the first call for physicians.

"Would you like to come along?" he asked her jestingly.

The girl took his question seriously and for a moment was not sure. She pictured the wounded and dying with her ready imagination and felt as if she would not be equal to it.

Then a new and clearer thought came.

"If I'm to be a nurse," she said determinedly to herself, "I mustn't think of such things. I mustn't think of myself at all." 92

But Dr. Payson, who had watched the serious minded girl with considerable amusement, added:

"There isn't any need for sudden decision on your part. I'm afraid you couldn't come even if you would. You are somewhat young, for one thing, and I hope there won't ever come a time when they will need anybody so young," he concluded as a serious look came into his eyes.

Then he changed the subject and went into a detailed explanation of what was to be done with a case that was to come in a little later that day, and how he would expect Mary Lee to assist him. She listened carefully as she was anxious to get practical experience.

"I wish I could have you here all the time," Dr. Payson remarked a little later. "You are such a help. I tell you this because I feel sure it won't turn your head."

The girl flushed with gratification and vowed to herself that she would give her very best to her work always. And although Dr. Payson did not add it, he had noticed with considerable satisfaction how neat the girl was and how strong a point she made of keeping things in order.

93

In the midst of a number of questions one afternoon, a sudden thought struck her and she stopped short.

"I'm sorry, Dr. Payson, I should not be bothering you with my many questions," she remarked contritely. "I didn't realize before, how many I ask."

"You are not bothering me," he answered with decision. "I want you to ask questions; in that way I shall be able to get your best help, so be sure you always do."

After that Mary Lee, taking him at his word, never hesitated. In this way she was learning much and daily growing more efficient.

Letty, for one, was keenly interested in Mary Lee's position and at such time when she was free she begged to be allowed to go with her to Dr. Payson's office. But excepting Saturday mornings when Dr. Payson did not come to the office, Mary Lee, much as she would have liked to have Letty with her, had to reluctantly refuse permission. She felt that the situation was not play and even on the Saturday mornings that Letty did come she made her help in getting things in order.

94

School events were now in full swing. Mary Lee became a member of the Basket Ball Team because of her quickness and strength. At the same time Letty was made a substitute.

At one of the Campfire meetings Mary Lee suggested to the other girls that they start a large Junior Red Cross Group at High School.

The idea took like wildfire at school and over forty girls made application at the first meeting.

The idea had the enthusiastic backing of Miss James who was a teacher in English at the school and who had been made the director of the group by the faculty.

"Suppose," said Miss James, "we form a Committee on Plans. There will be so much to do and so many in the school who will be anxious to join that we should have plans formed."

95

The girls all agreed. Besides Miss James seven girls were appointed, and Mary Lee, Letty and Ruth were three of them.

As if to help the Committee on Plans the answer from the Red Cross Committee came to Ruth the next morning.

Ruth read the letter through breathlessly, and then hurried over to meet Letty and Mary Lee before their departure for school.

The two girls were just leaving the house as Ruth turned the corner.

"Mary Lee, Letty!" she called to them excitedly and waved the letter.

Passers-by stopped and smiled at the girl and her excitement but she was heedless of the stir she was causing.

Mary Lee and Letty turned at the call and hurried to meet her.

"I've got the letter! I've got the letter!" she exclaimed.

"Will they let us do anything? What do they say? Let's sit down and read it," Letty responded with great eagerness.

Mary Lee, not a bit less excited, turned to see where they could sit down.

96

"Let's sit down here," she directed and the three girls seated themselves on the steps of Letty's house. Mary Lee then immediately turned to the letter.

It was of considerable length. It told the girls that the help they could give at the time was threefold. While some of it might not at first thought be the Red Cross work, as they probably had associated their idea of it, it was, as they would realize after a little thought, the best kind of Red Cross help. The letter closed very nicely, after outlining the things they could do, with an appreciation of their offer which was so opportune and the assurance that their help was greatly needed.

"My," said Mary Lee, "it's like ready made plans for our committee. Let's hurry and show it to Miss James. We'll be late if we stop and talk it over, there is so much to consider."

So the girls hurried to school with a consciousness that the opportunity for service was straight ahead of them and in definite, concrete form.

After the first period, the three girls were free and they immediately hastened to see Miss James.

97

"It is perfectly splendid, isn't it?" was her comment after reading the letter through. "I wonder how many of the rest of the committee can be excused so that we can go over this letter at once."

Two of the other girls could come and they did. Miss James then read the letter aloud.

"You see, girls, they want us to plan along three different lines. First, and this is the plan that we all had—we should turn to making useful things which would be used by our soldiers and our allies. You see, they want us to be very practical about this.

"Second, they want every member of this group to help in the planting of some vegetable garden. That is a splendid practical idea, not hard to follow and it should prove of great benefit inasmuch as the food supply of the country would be materially increased.

"Third, they want us to form a division whose work will be to call attention of households to the great need of eliminating luxuries, and being economical and frugal. That, too, is possible for us to do.

98

"Of course, young ladies, we by ourselves can do our share. But it helps to know that there are to be other groups like our own formed throughout the country—for that means we shall be a part of a very big thing."

"Isn't it fine?" Mary Lee added with great enthusiasm. "President Wilson said the other day that help, such as this, is just as necessary and useful as the service the soldier gives."

"We'll call a meeting of the group tomorrow afternoon, shall we?" asked Miss James. "This afternoon we can get a report into definite shape."

"But, Miss James," interrupted Letty. "If we have our meeting this afternoon, Mary Lee cannot be present. She is at Dr. Payson's; nor can she come tomorrow afternoon, or any afternoon."

Miss James turned to Mary Lee who nodded her head in confirmation.

"You see," she remarked apologetically, "I work afternoons and Saturday mornings at Dr. Payson's office. But please," the girl added, "you have your meeting and I'll help as I can."

99

"Well, there's one thing we know—we want Mary Lee with us, don't we girls?" asked Miss James.

The girls agreed with decisive unanimity.

"So we will have our meetings at seven tonight and tomorrow, if all of you can arrange to have an early dinner. I hope that this is satisfactory. And in the meantime, girls, think about this and about any ideas that are practical and feasible. Above everything else, let us prove that we are a very practical, useful group."

It was almost time for the next period and so the girls made their way to their classrooms.

CHAPTER XII

INDIAN JIM'S LUCKY STRIKE

With the reader's permission we shall turn our attention to Tom Marshall who was returning to Mexico at the time we last heard of him. He had left his Indian partner prospecting there, for both of them had hopes in the possibilities of the mine despite its apparent fruitlessness.

100

There was a warm friendship between the two men who had grown to know each other in their solitude. It was the Indian who had urged Tom to make his trip home and who had insisted that the latter take most of their small capital on hand for his expenses.

His return was at best a weary trip. He had left the train at El Paso, then had made his way westward and at a lonely point had crossed over into Mexico. Despite the outlaw bands everywhere he had no trouble on the way, although he had been on the road for over two weeks.

101

He had now quickened his pace for he was on the last lap. His weariness fell from him like a discarded mantle. In his heart was a great eagerness to see his friend and still a hope that he had proved successful. A rather vague hope—for the man's optimism which had always been strong, in the last few years had received some severe jolts.

At last he could see their hut. He could make out the figure of the Indian carrying water toward it. He hastened his step.

The keen ear of the Indian must have heard him, for he suddenly stood erect and with his eyes shaded by his left hand he searched the road. Then he saw Marshall approaching. He watched him for a moment, motionless, without any semblance of feeling. Then suddenly he answered the waving, shouting greeting of his partner with a whoop and no less swiftly and eagerly hurried

forward to meet him.

"Hello, Tom, I'm glad to see you."

"No less than I am, old man. It's good to get back and I certainly missed you."

102

The Indian smiled his pleasure. He had associated so long with the white people that he spoke, except at rare moments, after the manner of his white brothers. Even his habits, thoughts and manners were no different and to the ordinary observer it would have been impossible to recognize him as an Indian, except for his copper-hued complexion.

"I'm sorry about your mother, Tom, but it was a blessed thing for you to have been home before she passed away."

"That is was, partner. But I had some time getting there." And he went into the story of how he made his way, and how sickness had overcome him.

"I don't know what I would have done without the help of a little angel of mercy who took me to the hospital, wrote home for me and then saw to it that I got enough money to get home."

The Indian listened interestedly.

"Now tell me what has happened here," Tom added.

"Well, I've had some proof that there is silver here. Not much proof, but some. I have been waiting for you to come back so that we could rig up another block and tackle and bore and go to it at a certain point that may show results. I think there is some chance of its proving 'pay dirt.'"

103

"I shall be ready at any time," replied Tom. "It would be splendid if we could make a strike, wouldn't it?"

The Indian nodded his head; then as something came to his mind, he added:

"Barton is coming this way tomorrow and we can get him to bring us some things we need from the States. He'll be back next week."

"Good," replied Marshall. "I will also give him a few letters I want mailed."

Tom turned to the writing of his letters. One was to his cousin. He wrote a short note to Mary Lee thanking her for her letter which he received at El Paso. He spoke of his partner and of the bare possibility of finding silver in plenty at the mine.

The Indian smoked his pipe while his partner was writing, watching him with a feeling of contentment. He had been very lonesome for him. He was of the type that become strongly attached to people and the acquaintance of this man now so busily writing was the second of his great friendships. Now his mind wandered a little back to the time, more than twelve years before, when he had had other friends.

104

He was brought back to the present with a start.

"Here is that little girl that did so much for me," Marshall, unaware of the flow of his friend's thoughts, interrupted, as he handed the envelope and letter to him.

The man looked at the envelope with passing interest. But even as he looked, a strange thrill came over him. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. Were his eyes playing tricks with his wandering thoughts? He rubbed them again. Then he turned to his partner who was watching him curiously.

What was this miracle that brought the past back to him? Surely it was naught but a trick, a coincidence!

To Tom Marshall, watching him with increasing interest, the Indian turned questioningly, and even as he turned there suddenly came to the white man similarity of names, for his partner was named Jim Lee. Yet, surely the girl was not Indian.

105

Jim Lee's emotion brought his words back to the beauty of Indian phrasing.

"The Great Spirit gives strange proof of his greatness. My partner, who is very dear to me, will listen while I tell him the story of what has been.

"Fifteen years ago and even more, I was up in Alaska. A man, a stranger to me, risked his life and saved mine. More than that, he shared the little he had with me, through the long winter, even though he went hungry often. That was brave and it was good. So I, who had no call of bloodfolk, found my call there. Stewart and I, we did things, but it brought no returns in white man's gold. Then this man returned to where his family was waiting and he was sorrowful that he could bring no wealth. I went with him. Could I do more?"

"A fine man was he. The Great Spirit called him about three years later and he answered. And even as he passed on to the Great Beyond, he turned to me and wished that I would do what I could for his loved ones.

106

"It was little enough I could do, but that little I did. Gentle and kind was Mrs. Stewart; and little Mary, but two years old, was a great playmate. The days were cheerful and even comfortable. Mrs. Stewart named Mary—Mary Lee—for two reasons: For me, and because it sounded as if it

were Merri-ly. And a merry spirit she was.

"The little girl was eight years old when the Great Spirit called again and this time Mrs. Stewart made answer. A sorry time it was; but sorrier days were to come, for they who plan things decided that Jim Lee, because he was an Indian, was not the proper person to take care of one who was dearer than all life to him.

"They took the little girl away even as she cried and would not go. She went East and they would not tell me where. And then I decided that perhaps it was better so. She was young and would forget. Perhaps she would be happier.

"And now you come and bring back—from out of the past—news of a very dear one. So blame me not, if I am moved. I shall leave you, my brother, for an hour or so, for I would be alone." 107

The Indian walked out of the hut. For more than three hours Tom Marshall was alone. Then Lee returned, but he offered no comment and the white man respected his wish for silence.

"Shall I write and tell Mary Lee that you are here?" Tom Marshall inquired the next morning. "Or, perhaps you would like to write to her yourself?"

Lee made no answer for a moment and seemed to be debating the question.

"No, thank you, I think not. We will wait," he finally decided.

Barton came the next morning and took the mail and also promised to do the necessary shopping for them.

The two men turned to the work in hand. It was not long before they were ready for further drilling and before the month was up they were fairly assured of prospective success. If the vein did not "peter out" their fortune was certain. 108

But they made no mention of their probable success to the one or two stray Mexicans who passed. They would not be in possession very long if the news were made public.

Jim Lee had by now received all the information that Marshall could give him of Mary Lee. Moreover he had made Tom repeat it to him a dozen times at least.

On the day when their success was no longer in doubt, Tom was painting in glowing colors his plans and what he would do with his share of the mine. The Indian, however, gave no inkling of his intentions. Tom noticed the fact.

"What are you going to do with your share, Jim?" he asked.

"My share is for Mary Lee. It could not be otherwise."

Tom nodded understandingly. He already realized how much the Indian's loyalty and faith were wrapped up in the girl. It was because of the debt his partner owed to Stewart and because of his added devotion to the girl.

"Tom," the Indian added, "now that the subject is up, I might as well tell you my wishes. If anything happens to me, you will see that my share is turned over to her, will you?" 109

"Of course," was the answer. "But nothing is going to happen to you, and if there is going to be any turning over, it will be done by you."

The days that followed were eager, eventful days. Jim Lee was able to make a safe trip over the border and make a deposit of a large supply of the silver without anyone's being the wiser. He informed the president of the bank of the need of secrecy and that gentleman saw to it that no inkling of the source of the silver leaked out. Then a week or so later Tom came over with another supply which had been stored.

In two months there was over fifty thousand dollars to their credit at the bank.

Then rumors and actual proofs of the approach of the revolutionists came to them. One morning Tom spoke of this and wondered how long it would be safe for them to continue carrying the silver across the border without being discovered. 110

"It seems to me," he added thoughtfully, "it might pay us to play safe. What do you think of destroying all evidence of the fact that this mine exists and leaving here for a year or so? Things might be safer for us then and we would always have the mine. In the meantime we have this money on deposit to help us along."

"I've thought of that," replied Jim Lee. "We might even be able to sell the mine to people who would be ready to take the risk or who would wait for the safe and settled times."

"I hadn't thought of that," was Tom's comment. "We probably could sell—it is only a question of whether we wish to."

Once they had come to a decision they immediately set to work to destroy all clues and made it appear as if the location had been forsaken as worthless. They made good work of it. After they were through they felt that there was small probability of anyone's making any investigation.

A few days later they returned to the States. They drew out what money they needed.

"We'll go North for a while. First we'll stop at my house, then we'll go to the city and visit Mary Lee. Is that satisfactory, Jim?"

111

Jim agreed. They reached Tom Marshall's home, but stayed for a few days only. Tom could see how eager his friend was to see the girl and so he hastened their departure.

CHAPTER XIII

A HAPPY RED CROSS GROUP

It was not very long before the Red Cross Group at the High School was busily at work, following the outline suggested by the Red Cross Committee. The group was made up of thirty girls, each of whom gave five hours a week to sewing, knitting and in a smaller measure preparing bandages.

112

Another group of about the same number had already prepared gardens for the growth of vegetables and berries. Letty and Mary Lee had planned for a garden of string beans. It was Letty's suggestion that each girl specialize in one thing and that all the vegetables were to be brought to the school and sold when ready. With a few slight changes this plan was adopted. Ruth had set to work to grow potatoes and corn.

Miss James had made them all understand that while their gardens would need constant attention, the returns would be rather slow in coming and that only by constant watching would their work prove successful.

113

The third group had set to work to canvass a district which had been assigned to the High School and in twos and threes were already earnestly bringing to the attention of both the thoughtful and thoughtless the need of economizing.

"It isn't so much that we ourselves will need it. The President has told us how much the other warring countries wasted at the beginning and that they were now suffering in consequence. It is our duty to help our allies as much as we can and this way will be your share and my share."

This was Mary Lee's best argument and it usually brought promises to do what was possible and also offers of help.

On Saturday afternoon all the girls were reporting what they had done.

When they had finished, Mary Lee asked Miss James if there was anything she wished to tell the girls.

114

"Only this," was the response, "What the girls are doing in the way of getting stockings, mittens and shirts is of great value. Thanks to the co-operation of all groups such as this, our soldiers will be fairly well supplied. But I really believe that the girls who are visiting families and making them think of economy are doing just as effective and valuable work. And the gardeners are going to get a lot of satisfaction from their work."

"Before we adjourn, I have one or two suggestions which you may think it worth while to follow," said Mary Lee.

"Our Red Cross Group might suggest to the Mayor that the parks be made, at least such parts as could be used for such purposes, into small gardens to grow cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, squash and other vegetables. Furthermore, a little further out in the suburbs, we might get the consent of the railroad companies to let families use the land that they call their right of way, for planting of vegetables. This would be in line with the work planned for us."

"What capital ideas," said Miss James while the girls applauded.

115

"I move," said one of the girls, "that Miss James and Mary Lee be appointed a committee to take up both these questions and that we all offer our help should they need it."

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

When Mary Lee reported for work the following Monday, Dr. Payson was waiting for her.

"Didn't Dr. Anderson tell me that you have had some experience in the handling of babies?" he inquired.

"I have had," was the girl's answer. "At the orphanage they arranged it so that the older girls attended to the babies and at Mrs. Quinn's, because she was not well, I had to take almost complete care of the child."

"Good," was the doctor's answer. "I will have to go to the Richardsons' home about five-thirty. I have been there once already this afternoon, but will need some help when I go there again. I know it is past your hour but I hope you can come with me. Miss Doyle, who is the nurse I called for, is on another case, so I cannot get her."

116

"I shall be glad to go," replied Mary Lee.

"I thought you would," Dr. Payson remarked.

At five-thirty the doctor and Mary Lee drove off. It was about fifteen minutes' ride to the Richardson home.

"The child is ailing," the doctor informed her. "It isn't teething and it isn't the ordinary children's ailments. I wanted them to get a specialist in children's diseases, but they insist on having me. It isn't very serious, but you will have to help me and possibly hold the child's attention while I do a little prying."

The anxious mother was waiting for them.

"Is the child any better?" the doctor asked.

"He hasn't seemed to be in pain but he has a high temperature," answered Mrs. Richardson.

"Well, it isn't anything serious or it would have been apparent by now. So we needn't worry. Mary Lee will give the child this laxative and if he isn't normal in two hours, please let me know. You needn't send for the specialist now. If you had sent for him earlier, you would have saved some worry, for he probably would have realized that it wasn't serious where I simply made sure."

117

"Well, I'd much rather have you make sure than have anyone make a quick guess," answered Mrs. Richardson, much relieved.

In the meantime, thanks to Mary Lee's soothing and practiced touch, the child had perceptibly calmed and the doctor found his temperature already nearer normal.

Mrs. Richardson thanked Mary Lee for her help as they left.

"Of course," said Dr. Payson, as he took the girl to her home in his car, "every mother should worry; but a child of poor parents would hardly get so much attention."

And then Dr. Payson changed the subject and questioned Mary Lee as to the Red Cross work her group was doing.

CHAPTER XIV

MARY LEE MEETS AN OLD FRIEND

While plans were being forwarded for the Red Cross Group's effective aid, two of our friends—Tom Marshall and Indian Jim—were on their way to New York City. The latter intended to enlist in the army as soon as he had paid a visit to Mary Lee.

118

It was fun for Tom Marshall to draw comparisons between their present mode of traveling and that of his previous journey which had been made partly on foot and partly on freight trains. It made the comforts of the Pullman in which they were now riding, seem ideal.

As they were speeding along, the conversation turned to Jim Lee's intention of enlisting.

"I shall enlist, too," Tom remarked, "but I have no desire to serve longer than the war."

119

Lee, however, argued against his doing so. He dwelt upon the advisability of his holding off for a time.

"One of us will be sufficient for the present, partner. It is your duty to stay behind and negotiate the possible sale of our mine. I should feel uneasy if I thought provision had not been made for its safety and the income turned over to Mary Lee."

"Very well," his partner replied. "When we get to the city I shall call upon some people, who will, in all probability, be interested and see if I cannot dispose of it at a fair figure. I guess an immediate sale is the best thing even if we do have to sacrifice a few thousand dollars."

"I think so," the Indian agreed. "At any rate, I shall be satisfied with your judgment in the matter."

Two hours later they reached their destination. Tom Marshall had received Mary Lee's address in one of her letters and although he had not told her who his partner was, he had given her some idea of the good fortune their mine had brought them.

120

The two men made their way to a hotel. They had purchased some city clothes at the time they entered the States on their return from Mexico. Now they secured some more ready made and fashionable suits and it would have been difficult to recognize in the trim, well garbed figures, the rough and unkempt prospectors of little more than a month before. Each one of them took great pride in appearing at his best before Mary Lee.

Tom Marshall recollected that Mary Lee had written him of her afternoon position with Dr. Payson so the two men decided not to call until evening. To Tom, accustomed to his partner's moods and feelings, it was apparent that despite his dispassionate and stolid expression, he was burning with eagerness to see the girl who represented all his earthly ties. And Marshall, himself, was anxious to see his young friend, to be able to thank her again, in person, for her kindness at a time when he needed such kindness and help.

The hour for calling came at last and the two men started for Letty's home.

A butler opened the door and they asked to see Miss Mary Lee. They were ushered into the drawing room.

121

Two girls entered the room a few minutes later.

Tom Marshall bowed to Mary Lee. The Indian looked intently and eagerly at the two girls, then his face cleared, for he now knew which was Mary Lee.

In the same instant the girl recognized Tom Marshall. She came toward him impetuously and with welcoming hand. So excited was she, she failed to pay much attention to his companion.

"Why, this is a surprise! I'm glad to see you. So glad you came. This is Miss Saunders, Mr. Marshall, and Letty, this is Mr. Tom Marshall. You've heard me speak of him, haven't you?"

"Indeed, I have. Won't you both sit down?" Letty invited, not forgetting, in her excitement, the need for hospitality and her duties as hostess. "Mother will be here in a moment," she added.

While Letty had been speaking, Mary Lee had turned, for the first time really aware of the presence of Tom Marshall's friend. For a brief second the man's intent gaze disturbed her. Only for a second, however, then came the consciousness of having met the man before. But she could not place him in her mind.

122

"This is Mr. Lee, my partner," interrupted Tom Marshall, observing the two.

"Mr. Lee?" Mary Lee questioned, with a swift intake of her breath as dawning realization came. "Mr. Lee?" she repeated. Then a sudden glad light came into her eyes. "Why, it's Jim Lee, my Jim! Letty, he's Indian Jim!" And the girl rushed into his arms not knowing whether to laugh or cry and doing both.

"There, there, little girl, it's all right. Jim's here and Jim will take care of you."

"Jim, I never thought I was going to see you again. And I've missed you all the time, all the time."

Letty watched her friend with great wonderment. The usually calm and collected Mary Lee was in a state of great excitement—a thing so unusual as to be worth observing.

123

Mrs. Saunders came into the room at that moment and the two men were introduced by the excited Mary Lee who made a haven of that good woman's kindly arms. Mrs. Saunders was a devoted, indulgent mother. She had developed a great affection for the motherless Mary Lee. She was also a woman of quick and unusually good judgment. She liked the looks of these two men, which fact was not at all strange for they both showed in open countenance, the honesty and cleanliness of outdoor and right living.

Mrs. Saunders made them feel thoroughly at home. She knew the story of Mary Lee and so understood who Jim Lee was. She very naturally realized how delighted the girl must feel at Jim Lee's coming.

For two hours they sat and talked over things, bringing up to the present moment the important events in Mary Lee's life as well as those of interest in Jim Lee's.

The two men then departed, promising to come again. Without Mary Lee's knowledge, they had arranged with Mrs. Saunders for a meeting with Mr. Saunders the following morning. That gentleman had not returned home up to the moment they were leaving.

124

CHAPTER XV

MARY LEE'S LEGACY

"You see, Mr. Saunders, it isn't a question of our wanting any money," said Tom Marshall. "Mr. Lee is anxious to make safe provision for Mary Lee out of the net proceeds of his share of the mine. As for my share, I can wait until such time as the buyers are ready to turn over the proceeds." 125

"The ore is there, all right, but the mine needs capital." Jim Lee was now speaking. "We want to turn it over to the right hands, that is all. That will benefit us most."

Mr. Saunders was a banker. As a business proposition, he was keenly interested. He very naturally took some precautions, asked many questions, but he seemed fairly well convinced at the end. 126

"I shall be able to arrange a meeting for you and probably find a way that will be best for all concerned, if you will both call again this afternoon."

The end of the day found the whole matter closed up. A company was formed in which the two partners received a one-third share. If the mine proved of great value, they were each to receive \$100,000 in addition. Jim Lee's share, by an extra provision, was to be paid out in income to Mary Lee. He also made provision with Mr. Saunders to turn over \$15,000 of his available cash to the girl. It was finally decided that Tom Marshall was not to enlist but to stay and manage the mine.

That night the two men again called at the Saunders home. Indian Jim told Mary Lee of his intention to enlist. The girl did not try to dissuade him.

Then he went into the details, very simply, of what he wanted to do with his money. The girl listened quietly. To her, Jim represented family—so closely allied had he been to it—so much was he connected with all her recollections of it. 127

"I don't know what to say, Jim," she remarked. "To tell you I don't think you should turn over that money to me is needless, almost. Let us put it this way: whatever money there is, I shall gladly count as if it were partly my own; but for you to turn it over entirely to me, isn't fair. Let it be for both of us."

The Indian smiled at her with great affection. He made no answer. He did not tell her he had already made every provision. Instead, he told her how much she meant to him, what a big debt he had owed her father. "This," he said, "is but a small way of repaying it."

A few days later Jim was enrolled in the cavalry. His application had been quickly approved—men like him were needed. But until he joined his company the two men and Mary Lee, when she was free, and Letty, too, spent many happy hours together. Tom Marshall's time was also well spent and plans for proper equipment were being hurried for an immediate start on the mine. Mr. Saunders was a quick, able worker and he obtained results immediately.

"Won't it be fine," said Letty one holiday morning, "for you to have all this money! You won't have to work any longer at Dr. Payson's, will you?" 128

But Mary Lee laughed.

"Of course, I'll not give up my work," she asserted. "I'm learning lots. Furthermore, I want to become a nurse and Dr. Payson agrees that it is the best kind of training to begin as I have."

"But don't you find it awfully hard to give up your afternoons—in fact, all your time, to work and study?" asked the less serious-minded girl.

"Letty, dear, I do get so much fun out of my work at Dr. Payson's. It's delightful—and wouldn't you call it recreation to be able to do the things our Red Cross Group is doing? It is such a wonderful opportunity."

"I suppose it is," the other girl answered uncertainly. "Hello, there's the mail man," she added as from the window she saw him turn in at their house. "I wonder if he has any mail for you and me?"

Almost at the same moment Ruth was ushered into the room. She saw Letty go through the mail and pick out two letters. One, Letty gave to Mary Lee, the other, she quickly opened. 129

"Well!" Letty exclaimed after reading her letter, "it certainly is time."

"Won't we be glad to see her?" added Mary Lee, as she finished her letter.

Ruth was all excitement. "Is Aunt Madge coming home?" she asked eagerly.

"Mrs. Anderson, if you please, young lady," Letty answered reprovingly.

"Wonder if I have a letter home, too," commented Ruth.

"I suppose you have, dear," replied Mary Lee assuringly.

"I have news for you, Ruth. May I tell her, Mary Lee?"

The girl nodded her assent. These two girls were her best friends. She knew how glad Ruth would be because of her good fortune.

Letty told Ruth about the money that Jim Lee had turned over for Mary Lee's use. Ruth's eyes opened with wonder and pleasure. 130

"Isn't that fine! I'm so glad, Mary Lee, dear."

"When does Jim Lee join the army?" she asked.

"I guess the day after tomorrow. He's coming here tonight."

"I wonder if we cannot get him to tell us an Indian story when he comes," remarked Letty.

"He may," Mary Lee replied. "Will you come over tonight, Ruth?" she asked.

"Yes, come to dinner," added Letty.

Ruth agreed.

"When does Mrs. Anderson come home, Mary Lee?" she asked as she started to go.

"Next Saturday afternoon. Isn't that fine, for I am free on that afternoon and can go with you and meet her," was the reply. "Bob is coming home with them, too."

"I didn't know he was with them," Ruth said in surprise. 131

"Yes, he's been there for a week. It is but a short distance from his school, so he went over."

"Be sure to come tonight," Letty reminded the departing girl. "We'll hear a good story if Mr. Lee will tell it."

"I won't forget," replied Ruth.

CHAPTER XVI

A MASTER STORY TELLER

Jim Lee and Tom Marshall were prompt in their expected call, and they found Mary Lee and Letty as well as Ruth waiting to receive them. 132

It was the kind of an evening that is usually associated with the month of March. The rain was coming down in a steady downpour, there was a chill to the wind; altogether it was a night in which folks welcomed the warmth of an open grate fire.

Letty, all excitement, brought up the subject of a story—a story such as only Jim Lee could tell—of the Indian of long ago.

"I'm afraid," remarked the Indian, "that the kind of stories I used to tell Mary Lee would be considered entirely too youthful by you young ladies." 133

"But we'd like to hear one, I'm sure we would," replied Ruth.

"Yes, Jim do tell us one. I know we will enjoy it."

"Very well," was the answer. "I see there's no escape and so I had better make the best of it."

"Long, long ago, in the land you now know as Colorado, there lived a strong tribe—the Wah-hi-tis—well known for their ability in war. Their name was used by the squaws of the other tribes to frighten the little papooses who were wont to whimper.

"When I say it was long, long ago, I do not mean a hundred, or two hundred, or five hundred years ago. I speak of thousands of years before the white man came from across the big waters—the white man who has forced out, who has swallowed up the Indian so that we are becoming like the buffalo, a rarity.

"There came a chief, Black Eagle, descendant from many chiefs. He was wise and great and his strength was like that of the buffalo and his swiftness like that of the eagle. With an iron hand he ruled, but he was ever kind and considerate except when anger or rage overcame him. Then none was more cruel, more terrible. 134

"Wise men of many tribes came to visit him and it is said that great gifts were sent to him from the distant lands of Mexico; even from the small seas, they sent him offerings, for it was known that his friendship was a blessing and his enmity a thing of which to be wary.

"Proud were the young bucks who served under Black Eagle. In their sojourns they had but to exclaim with fine disdain, 'I am a Wah-hi-ti!' and they were immediately offered hospitality and friendship.

"Black Eagle had two wives. Swift Bear, his father, had mated him to Swift Water, daughter of a neighboring chief. But then came Laughing Eyes, young and beautiful, and her—Black Eagle loved at sight. And since it was permitted that chiefs have more than one mate, Black Eagle took Laughing Eyes unto himself.

"Swift Water, his first wife, felt the black rage of hate and envy—and who could blame her? But Black Eagle had already given proof of his terrible outbursts of wrath and she dared not object. She suffered silently.

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"Thus, many years passed. Swift Water gave Black Eagle a son, but only after Laughing Eyes had given birth to a beautiful babe, also a son, who had been named Natawara. Swift Water's son was named Black Fox.

"Both sons grew to sturdy manhood and gradually even Swift Water and Laughing Eyes learned to know each other. Some of the bitterness left the heart of Swift Water. Yet, her life was sad because Natawara was to succeed as chief instead of her own son, Black Fox.

"But sturdy though both sons were, there was a strange difference between the two. Could these both be sons of the same father? Black Fox from early youth loved the tales of combat, liked to hear of the victories of his illustrious fathers; and he would dream of the day when he too would go out and say, 'I am a Wah-hi-ti, a son of Black Eagle.'

"Natawara, however, was different. He loved to hear the wise men tell of the long ago, and yet it was not of combats that he sought to hear. Often he would look to the far west and say:

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"'I would travel far. Over the many mountains I would roam; for the Great Spirit gives us but a short time and there is much to see.'

"'He will be a great man, a great chief,' said the wise men. But in their hearts was a dark doubt which they dared not voice, for the anger of Black Eagle was a thing of dread. And wherefore should they be the bearers of bad news?

"For Natawara had laughed at combats. 'Wherefore shall I kill?' said he. 'I would rather, far rather, seek the things of the world than death.'

"'A coward's speech,' the wise men whispered, one to the other. But word of their whisperings came to Black Fox. Then he showed some of the anger of his father.

"'No coward is Natawara. Who says so? I shall hear and the vengeance of Black Fox is not light.'

"But the whispering grew. It came even to the ears of the Black Eagle who was then on an expedition to the far Wyoming.

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"Fearful was his rage and black scorn was in his heart. He who whispered would feel the might and strength of the chief of the Wah-hi-ti. 138

"'And as for you, you witch,' he said to the old squaw who had taunted him after his men had razed the camp of the Cheyennes, 'you shall die! A fearful death you shall die, for lies are the things you say. No Wah-hi-ti is a coward, no Wah-hi-ti dare say of Natawara that he is a coward, for Natawara is the son of a chief; he is to be a chief and he would kill.'

"So he returned. And the squaws who came to meet the returning warriors, even the braves who had been left at home, drew away, for dark and savage and fearful was the face of the Black Eagle.

"'Where is Natawara?' he cried.

"Only Black Fox dared to come forward. He had but just returned from a victorious conquest.

"'Natawara made a trip of three months beside the running brook that leads to the big water.' 139

"'Is there one, even more than one, who thinks of Natawara as a coward?' the chief cried.

"But none, of course, answered. Side glances were exchanged. So the news had come to the Great Chief.

"'No coward is my brother,' Black Fox replied. 'None dare so say, for my arm would gain double its strength if I heard aught of it.'

"'Speak thou for thyself. Cannot Natawara make his own fights, answer insults himself?'

"'His is a great spirit; to him such taunts are but water even on a duck's back. He loves not combat—rather he would voyage everywhere; but none here holds his strength, none his true courage.'

"Black Fox's eyes flashed. He made a picture that brought fire to his father's eyes.

"'So I would have you, my son, speak—even so. But Natawara is my son, too. Soon I shall join the Great Spirit and if he is to be chief, he must be like the great chiefs before him. He must not own the soul of a squaw.' 140

"Then after three moons, even as Black Eagle waited, his rage still with him, came Natawara home. There came with him a tamed fox, following as does a dog.

"'I have brought him to my brother who bears his name.'

"But Laughing Eyes called to him and instead of laughter there was dread in her eyes.

"'Go to your father who has called and is waiting.'

"So Natawara went.

"What befell there, no one can tell for it shall remain a thing of mystery; but those who saw have said that when Natawara came forth his face bore a wondrous light as if the Great Spirit had touched it. He bade farewell to his mother and was away.

"Black Eagle's heart was crushed; but his stern resolve held and the next day Black Fox (who courageously announced that his brother Natawara should be chief, should he ever return) was proclaimed as the next in line. And truly as he stood there, his black eyes flashing, the fox—gift of his brother Natawara—beside him, he made the true figure of a chief." 141

Jim Lee paused. "I fear," he said, "my story is of too great length."

But Mary Lee breathlessly replied, "Please go on. Tell us of Natawara."

"Did he come back?" Letty demanded.

"Wasn't his brother splendid?" was Ruth's comment.

Jim Lee turned to Mrs. Saunders who nodded her head to continue.

"Years passed," Jim Lee continued, "and with the years came more fame to the name of Wah-hi-tis. Black Eagle joined the Great Spirit and there was much sorrow everywhere.

"And with the years Natawara became a name forgotten. Forgotten did I say? True, except by his mother, Laughing Eyes. Her name became a misnomer; rather it should have been eyes that held the rain, so sad was she. Black Fox, loyal heart, also remembered, and after his mother died, he made the mother of Natawara even as his mother.

"But war, he found a great game. Love came, too. White Cloud became his wife. A gentle soul was she who loved him and his great strength and her second love went forth to Laughing Eyes. 142

"In the meantime Natawara went everywhere. The sadness left him, for life was before him. No longer was he a Wah-hi-ti. He made his home everywhere, learned many things. From the Sioux he learned how to use a wondrous thing even like the present ax. Elsewhere he found what iron

would do. Then, too, he learned the use of many medicines. This last art he prized most. And with the years, throughout the land, word went forth of his healing touch, his healing medicines. Medicine-men spoke of the Healer everywhere. His was a life of love. What would the many tribes have thought had the truth been known—that here was Natawara, a Wah-hi-ti and son of that great chief, Black Eagle, and brother even of the Black Fox!

"So then a son was born to Black Fox—a son who promised to continue the great name of the Wah-hi-ti. Richer and more powerful had grown this nation and the land it held.

"But black clouds appeared. Black Buffalo, the son, had a strange sickness and the medicine men could not cure, try as they would. It was a time of great sorrow. 143

"The chief medicine man came unto the chief.

"None can help Black Buffalo but the Healer. Send you for him; but send not as the great chief, but only as a father who suffers, for the Healer knows not the call of chief or slave, as such, but only as a call.'

"I shall go to him myself,' replied Black Fox, 'as a father whose son ails and whom the medicine men, professedly wise, cannot cure.'

"So Black Fox went forth. Seven moons of great haste and he came upon the home of the Healer.

"A great change had come unto both, so that neither knew the other except that within both of them was a great call which could not be explained. Black Fox dared not tell his name for the Healer had many other calls and his partiality was for the poor and the needy. Rather he spoke of the great love he held for his sick son and of the mother at home. 144

"The Healer heard the father's call and went forth. To the Wah-hi-tis he went, in his heart a great desire to see the land of his youth. Even so, he stopped often for the stricken were everywhere.

"So they came to the home of the Wah-hi-tis, to the old home of Natawara. Black Buffalo was on his couch, but not as the son of a chief, only as a Wah-hi-ti.

"As the medicine men watched, the Healer deftly applied his lotions, applied his touch.

"The boy shall be well within fourteen moons. I shall stay if the chief will send everywhere word that I am here. But who is the chief of the Wah-hi-tis?'

"Know you not?' replied one of the medicine men who knew the great desire of Black Fox to keep his and his son's name secret. 'It is Black Fox.'

"A strange look came into the Healer's face but he said nothing.

"On the third day came Laughing Eyes to see the patient. 145

"Yet as she entered the room, she it was who knew.

"Natawara, my son! Natawara is here! Wonderful is the Great Spirit.' And she took him in her arms even as she did when he was but a youth.

"It is Natawara, Natawara, son of Black Eagle!'

"The news traveled fast. Black Fox came at a great pace.

"The Healer is your brother. It is Natawara.' A great light was in his eyes. Brother and brother clasped hands, for each was filled with a great joy.

"It is good,' said the Healer.

"You are our chief,' said Black Fox.

"Not so,' was the reply. 'The leader is here and here lies the leader to come. My kingdom is elsewhere. I would that he who is saved should not feel the call to battle except for the things that are worth the fight.'

"So I shall teach him,' spoke up White Cloud, a great resolve in her eyes. 146

"So it shall be, my brother,' announced Black Fox.

"But when the fourteen moons had come and gone so also had Natawara."

Jim Lee paused.

There was a silence of many moments. It spoke the appreciation of the three girls.

"There's a lesson in the story for today, isn't there?" said Mrs. Saunders.

CHAPTER XVII

AUNT MADGE RETURNS TO THE CITY

Jim Lee left on Thursday to join his regiment. There was a quiet leave-taking between Mary Lee and the man. Neither showed emotion—it was kept within the depths of their hearts. On Friday Tom Marshall left with several men for the mine. Mr. Saunders was to follow a few days later. 147

Mary Lee received some disquieting news on the same day. Dr. Payson informed her that with the return of Dr. Anderson he intended to join the first assignment of physicians and nurses bound for France. He felt, however, that her services could be used by Dr. Anderson to good advantage. Her experience would be of great help and under Dr. Anderson she would continue to progress.

Saturday afternoon found the old Campfire Group awaiting the train which was late. 148

"Won't Aunt Madge be pleased with our Red Cross work at the school?" commented Grace Olcott.

"Wonder if she'll be displeased at our group's merging with the Red Cross work?" remarked Edith.

"Of course, she won't," answered Ruth. "Will she, Mary Lee?"

The girls had an idea that Mary Lee's opinion and decision on most things was usually sound.

"I'm sure she won't. She'll feel that it was a very democratic and sensible thing to do," was Mary Lee's answer.

The train was in at last and the waiting girls stood on tiptoe watching the passengers as they came from the coaches.

"I see her, I see her," called Letty. "And there's Dr. Anderson and Bob, too."

But the other girls were no less quick in seeing the Andersons and there was excited gesticulating as well as calls. Finally, Mrs. Anderson saw them. She waved her hand and drew her husband's attention to the girls. The doctor lifted his hat and smiled at them. 149

Bob made his way through the throng for he also had espied them.

He was the first to get to the gate.

"Hello girls!" he called. "Hello, Mary Lee, it's good to see you."

"I'm glad to see you, too," answered the girl. By that time Aunt Madge had also arrived and the former had embraced and kissed all the girls.

"Well, Mary Lee," she said, when it was her turn, "when I see you I feel I'm at home."

"It certainly does seem so," added her husband who was keenly interested in his favorite. "Dr. Payson has been giving me some good reports of you, young lady."

Several of the girls had come in cars, so it was an easy matter to take everyone home.

Mary Lee was seated with the Andersons. Bob was in the car with Ruth.

As they sped homeward, the conversation between Ruth and Bob naturally turned to Mary Lee. 150

"Do you know that Jim Lee and Tom Marshall were here? And that Jim Lee joined the army?"

Bob didn't know a thing about it as Mary Lee had not written to tell him. Ruth was not a bit averse to telling him all about Jim Lee.

"He's so nice and so romantic. And he's turned over his share of the money from his mine to Mary Lee. And Tom Marshall has returned to the mine. You'd like them both, Bob."

"Guess I would," replied Bob. "Wish I could have gone with Mr. Marshall to the mine. I'm glad Mary Lee has seen Mr. Lee and I'm glad he's nice," he added.

"Isn't it all wonderful?" Ruth concluded as they reached the home of the Andersons.

Bob, too, got out at this point for he was going to stay with his aunt as his mother and father were out of town. He, therefore, did not get another chance that afternoon to talk to Mary Lee. 151



HE MADE IT A POINT TO CALL ON MARY LEE

Bob, however, made up for lost time the next day for he made it a point to call on Mary Lee. He was to be in the city for only that day as he was due at school on Monday.

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Mary Lee greeted him warmly. Somehow, the stiffness of their greeting the day before was gone. Neither could tell just why they had been so cool and so formally polite upon seeing each other, unless it was due to the fact that so many others were about.

"I wish you had been here to see Jim and Mr. Marshall, Bob. I told them so much about you and they were very anxious to meet you."

"No more than I am to meet them," was the reply of the boy. "Tell me something more about everything. Ruth told me but I want to hear it first-hand."

Mary Lee went into an account of the meeting and everything that had happened. The boy listened intently.

She then gave him an account of the Red Cross work and what the girls had done.

Bob was deeply interested.

"Our Boy Scouts at school are doing good work too. They are all anxious to spend vacation time on farms. I hope to get permission from mother and father to go to one during the summer. There isn't a boy at school who isn't anxious to help at this time and I wish you could see the big garden we have there. I wonder if Jim Lee will go to France," the boy added.

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"He is anxious to go, but of course no one knows what is to be done," replied Mary Lee.

"Isn't it great to be part of such a big undertaking? Of course, war is terrible, but I've often envied the boys and men who lived during the Civil War. Now we are living in even bigger times and it's great to help, even if only in a small way."

"I noticed yesterday how naturally you walk, Bob. No one would ever suspect you had ever been lame."

The boy flushed with pride. He was proud of the fact that he was now like other boys. He valued the use of both his limbs, the more, because he had been so long without their use. Nothing pleased him so much as to be told he was like other boys.

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Letty came in a little later and the three took a long walk.

"Isn't Bob brave to travel by himself on a sleeper? I'd be scared," said Letty.

"Huh," answered the boy, "that's because you're a girl. At that," he added, "I'll bet Mary Lee wouldn't be afraid."

CHAPTER XVIII

MARY LEE MAKES A DECISION

It need not be thought for an instant that, in the rush of events of the last few days, the work of the Red Cross Group had lessened. 155

On the contrary, the Mayor had replied almost at once and had given his permission, including that of the Commissioner of Parks, for the use of one of the parks in the neighborhood of the High School. In addition he had told them that other groups and clubs in other sections were receiving permission in the same way.

Monday brought a letter from the president of the railroad company. He told them that no written permission could be given but that any gardening done on their property would be respected by that company. Upon receipt of this information Miss James had written the newspapers so that proper publicity could be given the fact and people avail themselves of the opportunity to obtain a garden plot. 156

The Red Cross Girls met that night. Over one hundred and fifty now belonged. All of them had donated some money at every meeting and the group now sent seventy-five dollars in cash to the Red Cross Committee. At this meeting they were divided into six groups of twenty-five each and each group assigned to certain definite work on the big garden they were to start in the park. This idea had been suggested by one of the men on the Park Board who had been a visitor at the meeting.

But it was a late spring. The weather stayed cold despite the eagerness and desire for warmth and sunshine on the part of the Red Cross workers. The girls felt that they had done almost everything possible in their gardening, and although a few found their interest abating, the larger number kept pluckily at the duty assigned to each.

The days passed swiftly now. Mrs. Anderson soon made the girls understand that she was still Aunt Madge to them. She renewed her interest in their doings and was able to help Miss James in the organization and planning of the Red Cross Group. 157

Throughout the country the realization of war came slowly. Somehow it was hard to believe that the country was at war, hard to realize that the German nation, so long on friendly terms with our own land, was now an enemy. It dawned slowly in people's minds.

New York City was never so gay. Soldiers were everywhere. One felt, however, that beneath the outward gayety and color the city was prepared for whatever might come.

A rare treat was given to Mary Lee and Letty who were invited by Dr. Anderson to accompany Mrs. Anderson and himself to a point of vantage where they could see General Joffre and the ex-premier of France, Monsieur Viviani. Never had the two girls been so impressed as they were by the simple, kindly looking old man in the uniform of France. There was a greatness about him which both girls felt. And Mary Lee also felt that it was a history-making epoch. She was glad that in the future she would be able to say that she had seen the big man of France. He was a character that one could never forget. 158

In the meantime, Dr. Payson was making ready to close his office and to turn over his practice to Dr. Anderson. He had been pledged to secrecy as to sailing so his friends did not know just when he would be on his way to France.

Mary Lee thought of the doctor's departure with many regrets. It had been valuable time that she had spent at his office; and although the girl had felt that he was in earnest as to her possible usefulness to Dr. Anderson, something Aunt Madge had said made Mary Lee decide that she could not accept, even if Dr. Anderson felt in duty bound to offer her the position.

Aunt Madge and the girl had been shopping one Saturday afternoon. The former was evidently still unaware of Dr. Payson's intention of going to the front. The conversation had turned to Mary Lee's work at the doctor's office and Aunt Madge was as interested as was the girl.

"You see, dear, I, too, am helping Dr. Anderson in the same way. He has been so considerate, so kind. He objected to it at first, wanted to get the services of someone, although, as he regretfully said, 'there is only one Mary Lee.' He felt that it would be too much of a tax for me. He also added some silly, manlike remark about not wanting his wife to be his assistant. But I think he understands now. You see, dear, it is such a fine thing to be able to look forward to doing something worth while, to be able to help my husband. It is useful work, too, and I am learning rapidly." 159

After that, of course, Mary Lee had no regrets in not offering her services to Dr. Anderson. At an early opportunity she brought the subject up before Dr. Payson.

"I hope you haven't spoken to Dr. Anderson as to my going over to his office when you leave, Doctor."

The doctor looked at her in surprise.

"Have you decided that it is too hard work, my dear? I know it is and I do not blame you; especially so, since you are to receive a small income through Mr. Lee's fund. No, I haven't spoken to him as yet," the Doctor continued. "I intend to do so within the next two days, however. I'm glad you spoke about it because this is the time to make up your mind."

160

The girl flushed. She was hurt that the doctor should think she would so easily give up her life work.

"It isn't that I don't want to do the work. That isn't why I don't want you to talk to Dr. Anderson."

The girl paused uncertainly. She was not quite sure that she wanted to tell the real reason. Then her uncertainty vanished—it was the thing to do.

"You see, Dr. Payson, Mrs. Anderson is helping the doctor, and she loves the work. Dr. Anderson gave his consent but reluctantly. If you tell him to employ me, he might be even more reluctant about letting Aunt Madge help him. She loves it. So I thought it best to just let it be known that I can't spare the time. I shall give so much more time to the Red Cross Group, but," and the girl looked squarely into the doctor's eyes, "I don't want you, or any one else, to think that I am undecided as to the profession I am to follow. I couldn't ever be happy and not become a nurse."

161

Dr. Payson looked at the flushed girl admiringly. "I should have known by this time how you feel about it, Mary Lee. I shall not speak to Dr. Anderson about you. And you are right, it will be a very good thing in every way for Mrs. Anderson to do the work."

"I knew you would understand," the girl gratefully acknowledged.

A little later her afternoon's work was over and she left the office. The doctor, however, remained. He did not work, but sat silently thinking. An uncertain little smile played about his mouth. A day or two more and he would be off for the war. He welcomed the opportunity as do all true surgeons. But he knew there would often come to him the memory of this bright, serious-minded, unselfish young girl.

"She's true blue," he finally commented as he prepared to depart.

CHAPTER XIX

LETTY AND MARY LEE SELL LIBERTY BONDS

Mr. Saunders, Letty's father, came home early the following evening. He had been down to Mexico and had just returned. Permission had been given by the Mexican Government for the furtherance of their plans. Tom Marshall, so he reported, was already busily at work and the prospects were very bright. Mr. Saunders spoke enthusiastically about the young man, and his ability. And his respect for Jim Lee had greatly increased from the accounts he had received from Tom Marshall and one or two of the men who were located in the neighborhood.

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Both Letty and Mary Lee were, of course, greatly interested, the latter for the best of reasons, although she somehow could not grasp the idea that more wealth was to be hers. She was gratified that Letty's father—a careful, shrewd and conservative business man—should have made an exception in behalf of her friends.

163

Toward the end of the evening the girls suddenly bethought themselves of a plan they had formulated a few days before the arrival of Letty's father.

It was Letty who opened the campaign.

"We feel it our patriotic duty to sell you a Liberty Bond—or more than one," the girl added as the idea suddenly came to her that one was not very much for her rich father to buy.

"Oh," her father ejaculated in surprise. "And why, young lady?" And his words sounded so serious and businesslike that neither Letty nor Mary Lee noticed the humor lurking in his eyes. "Why should you feel it to be your duty to sell them to me?"

"It is not only our duty to sell bonds, but it is the duty of everyone in the country." It was Mary Lee who answered and even as she spoke a sudden idea came to her mind. It was still a little hazy and so she said nothing more.

164

"How many do you think I should buy?" Mr. Saunders queried trying hard to maintain a business-like appearance.

"How many?" Letty repeated. She tried hard to think of a number that would seem consistent. It

was apparent to her father that she was flustered.

"I think five would be right," and then it occurred to her that five wasn't enough. "I mean ten—or perhaps eight," the girl finally concluded, rather lamely.

"Well, my dears, it may interest you to know that I have bought not ten, nor eight, but two hundred; and I am to buy some more within the next few days."

"My," said Letty, in awed tones into which there crept a measure of disappointment. "Then we cannot sell you any? Not even one?" she added coaxingly, with a sudden renewal of hope.

"You see, Mr. Saunders," Mary Lee turned to the work in hand with the feeling that her own idea would follow as a matter of course, "we girls in the Red Cross Group have each volunteered to sell at least five Liberty Bonds. Letty and I are to sell to some other people, but we counted on you, too." 165

"And you don't want your count to be in vain, do you?"

"No, sir," both girls replied.

"All right then, I'll buy ten. Is that satisfactory?"

Letty hugged her father and both girls danced in glee over their first success. Mr. Saunders looked at them with great pride and satisfaction.

Mary Lee suddenly sobered and became business-like.

"Mr. Saunders," she spoke diffidently.

"Any other business into which you desire to inveigle me?" he questioned.

"Yes, sir," the girl replied, while Letty looked at her, a little uncertain as to what was coming.

The girl continued: "The money that Jim left for my use—I was wondering; of course, I don't know if it can be done—if it couldn't buy some Liberty Bonds." 166

Mr. Saunders laughed. "Of course it could. It wouldn't be so bad an investment either. We'll begin by buying a hundred shares for you."

"Thank you," Mary Lee replied, proud that Jim's money was to be used in this way.

"Can we turn the order in?" asked the practical Letty.

"I suppose you can," her father replied.

"That means, Letty," Mary Lee exclaimed in awe, "that we already have one hundred and ten bonds sold. And we must sell some to the Andersons and to the Camerons. I shall write to Tom Marshall and ask him to buy some, too."

"It may be that I shall have a surprise for you by tomorrow, too," Mr. Saunders added. He was interested in their success but he also felt that their efforts should not be too easily successful. He decided to call up the Andersons and also the Camerons who were to return from Florida within the next few days and tell them not to be too easy in complying and the reasons for it. The work of getting subscriptions would be so much more worth-while if it did not bring too easy returns. 167

"I suppose you girls know why these bonds are being issued and why they are called Liberty Bonds."

"It is money for the war, and because Germany is not a democratic nation the fight against it is called a fight for Liberty, isn't it?" Mary Lee questioned.

"There's more to it than that. If the hour were not so late I would give you some of the reasons for issuing these bonds; but Mary Lee gives the kernel in her explanation. Isn't it time for these young ladies to go to bed, mother?" he asked as Mrs. Saunders came into the room.

"That is the reason for my being here at this minute. It is time, my dears. Ten o'clock has struck long since."

But the girls would not go until they had excitedly explained their success in selling Liberty Bonds.

"I'm disappointed, my dears," Mrs. Saunders said. "Hurt, too. You never thought of asking me." 168

The girls looked at her for the first time in the light of a customer.

"And what is more," Letty's mother added, taking advantage of the pause on the girls' part due to their surprise, "you can't sell me any tonight for it is too late."

"But we surely will tomorrow," Letty replied. "So let's be off to bed, Mary Lee."

CHAPTER XX

PREPARING FOR RED CROSS WORK

Mary Lee and Letty permitted but a small part of the morning to pass before they brought up the subject of Mrs. Saunders' purchase. 169

"But, my dears, I'm not so sure that I care to buy from people who did not consider me a possible customer. I think I'll buy from someone who will give sufficient and proper importance to my purchase."

But the girls could not be put off so easily and it ended by Letty's mother laughingly agreeing to buy fifty bonds.

The meeting of the Red Cross Group was held that afternoon and both of the girls were elated with the report they were to make. Their initial success was but a spur to them for further successes and they were keen to solicit from all the other people they knew. They felt no qualms about it, for it was a patriotic duty. 170

Miss James was amazed by the success of the members of the group and was strong in her approval.

"Altogether," she announced, "the sixty girls who have volunteered to do this work have sold a little less than fifteen hundred bonds. Truly, a remarkable showing. It will be interesting to hear some of the accounts. Don't you think so?"

The girls agreed. Mabel Strong, one of the girls, was called on for her report.

"I sold ten bonds to my father," she announced. "My brother will buy five. However, I have only counted those I have sold."

As report followed report, it was found that in most instances those bonds that were sold were to members of families. An exception was the case of Pauline Antisdale, whose father was a well known surgeon.

"My father was one of the first to subscribe," she reported. "I was too late, so he said. I did not know what to do. Then I decided to see my father's patients for two days. Father thought for a long time before he gave the necessary permission. But," Pauline concluded in a quick manner which evidenced her excitement, "I sold fifteen bonds in this way." 171

"Good," Miss James exclaimed, while the entire group applauded. "That idea was original and worth while."

"I'm one of those who had to count on my family," Letty explained apologetically. "Mary Lee and I worked as partners. Mary Lee, in addition made father buy at least one hundred bonds for her money. And she has written to a Mr. Marshall in Mexico who will be sure to buy some Liberty Bonds too. And we are certain to bring in some more sales, in a few days."

Other girls made reports. When quite a number had been made, Miss James addressed the girls.

"Of course, your success is quite wonderful. May I add, however, that such deeds as Pauline's and Mary Lee's stand out. Of course, Mary Lee was able to use some money which was her own but she showed that she did not ask anyone else to do what she was not willing to do herself. Pauline and several of the other girls have shown originality. As you all know, it is the desire of the President to have all the people subscribe to the Liberty Bonds. It would be a simple matter if only those who are specially well-to-do should subscribe. 172

"We will continue the sale of Liberty Bonds for ten more days. After that we shall have to turn our attention to getting contributions for the Red Cross work. How much do you think we can pledge our group to collect?"

There was a pause of many minutes. Finally Ruth inquired:

"How much do they expect us to collect?"

The other girls nodded in approval of the question.

"Well," Miss James answered, "Mrs. Anderson and I saw the local representative of the Red Cross Committee, as you know. I told them that we had one hundred and twenty girls, some more active than others, some better able to collect subscriptions than others, although all are equally willing. They thought we should be able to collect three hundred dollars. Do you think that is too much?" 173

The girls thought for a few minutes.

"If each of us collected two dollars and fifty cents, that would mean three hundred dollars, would it not, Miss James?" one of the girls asked.

Miss James nodded her head in assent.

"We will be able to do that, of course. Let us pledge that much but make a private pledge to ourselves that we get at least five hundred dollars. I so move," said Mary Lee.

"I second that," said Ruth excitedly, while many of the other girls showed their approval of the idea.

"Very well, then," said Miss James. "We'll understand, however, that no actual attempts will be made until next week so that it does not interfere with the sale of the bonds.

"We are to have Mrs. Frances Billings for a visit next Friday evening. The Committee on Plans will arrange for a reception. Mrs. Billings, as you all know, is an official of the Red Cross work and it will be splendid for us to have her visit us. The Committee on Plans will meet tomorrow. Is there anything else?"

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But nothing else had to be taken up that afternoon and the group adjourned.

CHAPTER XXI

WHAT SHALL WE WEAR

Mrs. Anderson's interest in the girls had not abated in the least because of her marriage. She had watched with pride the work they had done as members of the Red Cross Group.

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One morning each of the former Campfire Girls received an invitation to dinner at the Anderson home. Formal dinner invitations did not come often to the girls; they were not old enough as yet. You may be sure that it left them an excited, eager lot. The very next morning Aunt Madge received eight very formal acceptances.

She smiled for she realized that the girls were very much flattered by the dignity of the invitation. She had purposely made it so for that very reason.

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Thursday morning, the day of the party, found two girls greatly excited, on their way to school.

"I haven't a thing to wear," said Letty, with true feminine consistency.

"Nonsense," replied Mary Lee. "You surely can wear your pale blue voile. It goes so well with your pretty new hat. But as for myself, I haven't a fit dress for a formal dinner party."

Now, Mary Lee had purchased, with the aid of Letty and Mrs. Saunders, two or three simple gowns, but as this dinner was to be formal, she was afraid none of her dresses would do for the occasion.

"Silly," replied Letty, "if I had that love of a Georgette crepe I wouldn't worry a minute."

"I guess," remarked Mary Lee with great truth, "we never have the thing that is altogether satisfactory, it is always something we'd like to have."

School was but a half day. It was so near the end of the term that an unusual amount of free time was permitted. The Campfire girls were glad to have this leisure. They actually thought they needed it for getting ready.

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As a matter of fact, none of them really started to dress until five o'clock.

At six-thirty Letty and Mary Lee arrived. Mrs. Anderson was in formal evening dress as was Dr. Anderson.

"I'm sure there are going to be older folks at the dinner," Ruth, who had already arrived, whispered to Letty. "Look," and when the host and hostess were engaged elsewhere she pointed to the formality of their attire.

"I don't think so," replied Mary Lee, who had overheard. "It's going to be our party only and they are treating us as grown-ups, that is all."

And so it proved.

The girls arrived promptly. The dinner was one of many courses. When it was over, Dr. Anderson arose and said:

"I don't know just where I fit in. I guess I'm just a husband; but Mrs. Anderson thought I should tell you that we're very proud of our Campfire Girls and the unselfish work they have done; and since your work was the equal of work done by people who are grown-up, we thought the most fitting occasion would be a very formal dinner. It is on such occasions that older folks usually tell

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each other how clever and good they are.

"But seriously, girls, your unselfish work in this great cause is what makes one happy in belonging to such a country. When the time comes, all of us, young and old, will give the best that is in us for our country. Pretty soon my time will come, and I shall not fail to answer the call. But when I go, it will not be I who will do the worth-while thing—it will be my wife, who will see me go, smilingly and bravely, because it's the thing I must do.

"It is you girls and you women, you see, who more and more are doing the big thing in a war like this."

Dr. Anderson continued: "I've been very fortunate in knowing you young ladies and learning of your noble work. I can readily understand why my wife thinks so much of you. And, of course," Dr. Anderson's eyes twinkled, "I can understand why you all think so much of her."

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The girls laughed as Dr. Anderson sat down.

"One of the reasons," said Aunt Madge, "I invited you tonight was to extend another invitation. We are leaving for Mount Hope over Decoration Day. All of you girls deserve a rest and I think it can be arranged for you to go with us. You can leave Wednesday and come back Saturday."

The girls applauded enthusiastically.

"Good," said Letty.

"Won't it be heavenly?" said Ruth, equally enthusiastic.

"It will be different from our Thanksgiving party, for at least it is spring—and I love spring," said Grace Olcott.

"You're the one that loved winter, too," said Clara.

"Well, I did," replied Grace, not a whit abashed, "I like them all as they come."

"If we have half as good a time," said Irma, "I'll be satisfied."

Letty and Mary Lee said nothing. The memory of that Thanksgiving party when Letty had tried to make trouble for Mary Lee was not a pleasant one for Letty. Mary Lee also thought of it. She looked at Letty into whose eyes tears began to well.

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"It's all right," whispered Mary Lee, as she put her hand over Letty's, but in a way that the other people could not see. "We're good friends now. Let's forget all of that."

Letty forced back her tears and gave her friend's hand a loving pat.

"Of course," said Aunt Madge, "you will have to receive the necessary permission both at school and at home. I hope you will be successful."

"Now, girls," Mrs. Anderson continued, "let's make no plans for our party and instead talk of what we can do in the way of making folks buy more Liberty Bonds. You see, we want to sell more among the people who would buy but a few shares."

The conversation turned to how the Red Cross Girls could further help. Many suggestions were made and discussed.

"I want to tell you," said Mary Lee, "that the Red Cross Committee intends to go out for more money as soon as the sale of the Liberty Bonds closes."

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"Do you think we should wait and do our work for the Red Cross?" asked Edith.

"I realize, of course, how well you girls have already done. Miss James has given me the amount of subscriptions that the Red Cross Girls have been able to obtain. It's truly wonderful. Perhaps we might turn our efforts toward the Red Cross collections," said Aunt Madge.

"Suppose," Mary Lee suggested, "that we only accept Aunt Madge's invitation on condition that we get \$16,000 worth of Liberty Bonds sold. That means each of us must sell \$2,000 worth."

"Good idea, Mary Lee," Dr. Anderson cried enthusiastically.

"We'll do it," said the rest of the girls.

A little later the girls departed. It was a most enjoyable party, they all agreed.

CHAPTER XXII

WORKING FOR "LIBERTY"

A few days later Mary Lee received a letter from Tom Marshall. He had replied at once to her letter. He told her that he had instructed Mr. Saunders to arrange with her to buy his share of Liberty Bonds. Things were going along well and the mine was a great success. He also told her that he had forwarded his name for registration so that he could be conscripted when the time came.

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"What do you hear of Jim Lee?" he inquired.

Lee had written only once to her, as the girl suddenly realized. It was over ten days since she had heard from him.

But the afternoon brought a short note in which he announced that he had been transferred to the Artillery Division. He was going to see more active service, he wrote.

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When Mr. Saunders came home both Letty and Mary Lee were waiting for him.

"How many bonds did Mr. Marshall tell you to buy, dad?" asked Letty.

"Why should he tell me to buy any bonds?" her father replied.

"Why, he wrote Mary Lee that he had communicated with you; and we must get four thousand dollars' worth sold," she added.

"Must?" Mr. Saunders repeated.

"Otherwise—so we have pledged—we cannot go on the Decoration Day party with Mrs. Anderson," Mary Lee added.

"You mean that you have set a mark which you must attain in order to allow yourselves to go?"

The girls nodded their heads very vigorously.

"Well, I call that a fine thing," replied Letty's father. "You may put Marshall down for fifteen hundred dollars, and I want to add that if you don't make the mark, come to me. I won't buy any more, but I'll see that you get a chance to sell some. Now, be off with you, while I dress for dinner," and Mr. Saunders chuckled to himself.

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"And they worry about this country, when even the little girls are so serious-minded," he remarked to himself.

Mary Lee, together with Letty, called on the Camerons the next day.

"Now," said Mary Lee, "to business, for that is what we came for."

"Has Mr. Cameron bought any Liberty Bonds? Have you? Will Bob buy any?"

"My goodness," replied Mrs. Cameron, "I don't know whether Mr. Cameron did or didn't. I know I did not. I never even thought of it. I don't think Bob did, either."

"Well, you should buy some," Mary Lee advised. "You see, the country needs the money. Uncle Sam is behind these bonds and he pays three and one-half per cent."

"Three and one-half per cent?" repeated Mrs. Cameron. "My bank and my other bonds pay only three per cent."

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MARY LEE WRITES TO BOB

"And better than that," added Letty, "you don't have to pay taxes on Liberty Bonds."

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"It sounds so attractive," said Mrs. Cameron. "But I know very little of such things. I'll leave it to Mr. Cameron. If I buy any, part of them will be bought through you."

"Thank you," the girls replied. They told her about their pledge.

"Better write to Bob and ask him to telegraph you if he will buy two shares. I think he can buy that many," suggested Mrs. Cameron.

"I'll do it at once," said Mary Lee, and proceeded to suit action to words.

"Here comes Mr. Cameron's car," Letty called.

Mr. Cameron came in almost at once and greeted Mary Lee warmly.

"It's good to see you again," he remarked as he removed his gloves.

Mary Lee did not allow much time to elapse before she stated the purpose of their call.

"I'm sorry, girls. Of course, I've already bought the bonds. They are too good an investment to let pass."

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"What's more, I've bought some for Mrs. Cameron, too. However," and he paused, "between us we should be able to buy forty or fifty bonds. Don't you think so, mother?"

Mrs. Cameron smiling assented.

"Will that do?" he asked.

"Do? Do? Why, you're a dear," Mary Lee replied.

They stayed for tea and had a pleasant visit. The girls promised to call when they returned from Mount Hope.

"If we go," said Letty. "We may not be successful in getting the subscriptions."

"We simply must," replied Mary Lee.

"Tell you what I'll do," said Mary Lee. "I feel as if I should go out to see the Quinns. I owe them a call. Perhaps I can make Mr. Quinn understand how good these bonds are and if he has any savings he might want to buy some of them."

"I'll go with you," Letty replied.

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"HELLO, MARY LEE, HAVE YOU COME TO STAY?"

The call on the Quinns was made the next day. The girls took the train and walked to the home from the station. Mary Lee was delighted with the farm; it showed great improvement over the year before.

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Mrs. Quinn came to the door, one hand shading her eyes and the other partly lifting the apron which she wore while busy in the kitchen.

"Well, if it isn't Mary Lee and Miss Saunders!" she exclaimed.

Hearing the exclamation, two sturdy boys rushed past her and were shaking hands with the girls before the mother had a chance.

"Hello, Mary Lee," they greeted her joyfully. "Have you come to stay?"

"No, but I'm glad I'm here."

Mrs. Quinn took Mary Lee in her arms. "I'm so glad to see you, dear, so glad."

"I'm going for father," announced Tom. He was off with a rush, the other boy close at his heels.

CHAPTER XXIII

"BACK ON THE FARM."

The girls sat on the porch during the entire afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Quinn were with them.

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"It is so comfortable and cheerful out here," Mary Lee remarked.

"It's a wonderful place, isn't it?" added Letty as she looked about.

"Yes, and it will always seem like home to me," Mary Lee replied.

"We had a great summer last year. The farm did very well. This year promises to be much better. I tell you, it's a great place," and Mr. Quinn beamed.

"Mr. Quinn has been waiting for Dr. Anderson to come out. He has saved considerable money and

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he wants Dr. Anderson to deposit it for him," volunteered Mrs. Quinn.

Letty looked at Mary Lee who in turn looked at her.

"That's a queer coincidence," said the girl. "One reason why we came out was to find out if you and Mr. Quinn didn't want to buy some Liberty Bonds." Mary Lee then went on to explain about them and also told about the investments everyone she knew had made. "It pays fairly well, you see."

"More than that," replied Mr. Quinn, "it's for Uncle Sam. I know something about it, but just hadn't decided that it applied to me. When you get back, Mary Lee," he continued, "will you get Dr. Anderson's consent? I have seven hundred dollars I can put into these bonds."

"I will ask Dr. Anderson to write you about this investment," Mary Lee readily replied. "He'll probably buy yours with his own."

The important business completed, the girls reluctantly disturbed their own comfort to follow the boys about the entire farm. The baby, over three years old now, was awake by this time.

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Mary Lee was quite disappointed over the fact that the child did not remember her, but she made friends very quickly with both of them.

When the girls reached home it was close to eight. The next two days were hurried ones.

A telegram came for Mary Lee Monday night. At first she was greatly alarmed.

"It's from Bob, of course," Letty reminded her.

"Why, to be sure." She tore open the envelope as she spoke.

"He is going to buy three bonds," she cried delightedly as she handed the telegram to Letty.

"That gives us \$850 over," Mary Lee announced after a few seconds' calculation.

"Some of the other girls may not have enough," Letty remarked. "At any rate, we'll know tomorrow whether we go or not."

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The meeting was in the afternoon. Some of the girls had fallen short in the number they sold, but Edith, alone, had sold four thousand dollars' worth. The total amount—the girls held their breath while it was being figured—was nineteen thousand.

"So we can all go?" asked Ruth.

"Yes, you can go," replied Aunt Madge. "And to show you how much faith I had in you, I've gotten everything ready. We shall leave tomorrow morning at ten, from the Grand Central Station."

"Let's not take any more things than we need," said Mary Lee.

"Very well," answered Letty. "We'll use a steamer trunk for both of us. We simply can't use anything smaller, can we?"

"I thought perhaps we could," replied Mary Lee rather meekly. "But we'll compromise on a small trunk, as you say."

The girls were all ready by dinner time. After dinner they visited Ruth, who lived close by.

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"I'm so glad you came, for you can help me decide what to take with me."

"Well, if you'll take our advice," said Mary Lee, "you won't take much."

"I don't expect to," replied Ruth.

"You don't?" exclaimed the other two girls in amazement. "Look what you already have laid out and I suppose you'll declare that you haven't half your things," said Mary Lee.

"Here, let's show you," added Letty, who forgot that Mary Lee had earlier in the day urged her to cut down her own luggage.

Despite the excited exclamations of Ruth over things she insisted she must have, the two other girls determinedly had their way.

"Now, isn't this better?" asked Mary Lee, when they were through packing, and her trunk, but half the size of the original, still had room for more things. "You mustn't forget you are only going for a few days."

"Very well," replied Ruth, "I suppose you're right. But please," she begged, "just let me include these shoes—just these."

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"Shall we, Letty?" asked Mary Lee, pretending to be stern, but the least bit undecided.

"If it's only these shoes, we will," replied her chum.

"Thank you," Ruth said with mock humility. "Thank you very much."

CHAPTER XXIV

BOUND FOR THE CAMP

Spring was late in the year 1917. The trees were just beginning to show in full foliage and the grass had the freshness and fragrance that only the early mornings of spring can give to it. 196

Mary Lee, Letty and Ruth had awakened and dressed at four o'clock that morning. Mary Lee had suggested the night before that they do this and the two girls had loyally but sleepily carried out the plan.

The party bound for Mount Hope had left on the seven o'clock Adirondack Express, the night before. When the three girls reached the observation platform, after going through a long line of sleeping coaches, the train was running parallel with Champlain and was nearing Plattsburg. 197

It was a gorgeous sight and the three stood for several minutes enwrapped in its splendor.

The lake, with the woods running close to its shore, presented a picture of crystal-like clearness. On the other side of it, the White and Green mountains were beginning to show in more definite outline. The sun, too, began to herald the dawn of the new day, forming a rosy pink in the eastern sky, just over the mountain ranges.

"My," said Letty. "I'm glad we did get up."

"We never really saw the Adirondacks before, did we?" added Ruth.

"If Mary Lee had ever been up here before," Letty further remarked, "I'm sure she never would have missed doing this kind of thing. It *took* her to get us to do it now; without her, I think we would have come up here again and again and never have summoned sufficient energy to get up so early."

On Mary Lee, the clearing outlines of the towering mountains on both sides of her, the magnificence of the lake, had all made a tremendous impression. Never had sunrise meant so much to her. 198

The girl had never, from that first day, when she was brought to the city, ever been further away from it than the farm. The beauty of this new environment dazzled her. Her two friends, though not nearly so impressionable, yet found themselves stilled by the majesty of the quiet everywhere.

So engrossed were the girls that they did not notice that Dr. Anderson had stopped just inside the door and was watching them as well as the dawning day.

He stood there for ten minutes, then came out and joined them.

Mary Lee gave him a brilliant smile. The three girls looked very pretty and attractive in their blouses.

"Isn't it perfect?" she offered with a sigh of pure joy in the splendor all about her.

The doctor nodded smilingly.

"It certainly is that," he answered.

A little later the train entered Plattsburg. 199

"There's a two hour wait here, girls," Dr. Anderson informed them. "While the sleepy-heads are getting up, let's go up to see the famous Plattsburg camp. Shall we?"

"Splendid," replied Letty enthusiastically, "let's."

"Of course," added the doctor, "we have but little time and so shall not be able to see very much. But even that little should prove interesting. Many of our officers for the war will be turned out here and some of our great men have come here for training."

As the doctor had remarked there was but little time to spend at the camp. The sergeant on guard showed them all that could be seen at that hour. Both Dr. Anderson and Mary Lee were specially interested in the first aid equipment. Although they had to make a hurried departure they were glad to have had this closer view of a camp destined to make history.

It was almost six-thirty when they returned to the train which was scheduled to leave in twenty minutes. They found Mrs. Anderson and one or two of the girls already awake. 200

"We've had a heavenly morning, Aunt Madge," said Mary Lee.

"And I suppose you called the rest of us sleepy-heads for not being with you?" Aunt Madge answered.

"I never had any idea it could be so beautiful," Mary Lee said in reply to a question of Mrs. Anderson's.

"Well, dear, you will find it even more so as we climb the Adirondacks. We are to do that from now until we reach our point. Let's all have breakfast, at least all of us who are awake and ready for it. I suppose you early risers must be starved."

The three chums suddenly realized how hungry they were. It had not occurred to them until the subject was mentioned.

It was almost nine o'clock when the party reached their station. The Anderson camp was twelve miles away and the two automobiles waiting for them took almost an hour to climb to it.

Mary Lee as well as the rest of the girls found the whole trip a panorama of delights.

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The country was wild and seemed to have escaped civilization.

"To think," said one of the girls, "that a place as wild as this should be so near so big a city. It's hard to imagine, isn't it?"

The camp picked by Dr. Anderson was truly in a wonderful spot. Far from human habitation it was hidden from the narrow road up which the automobiles had come. It was three-quarters of the way to the top of Mount Hope. Nearby Lake Ormond, a small body of water was almost hidden by trees and bushes all about it.

The girls quickly changed to clothes that were comfortable and suitable. Some of them found hammocks, some walked down to the lake.

Dr. Anderson had told them that there were no fixed plans and that each one could do the thing that seemed most desirable.

When he went into the house to interview the caretakers, Mrs. Anderson and several of the girls found a comfortable nook. Irma and Clara who were not inclined to be as strenuous as the rest of the girls joined her. Mrs. Anderson was doing some sewing. Clara welcomed the opportunity to finish some beautiful tatting and Irma was equally anxious to finish a story she had begun on the train.

202

Mary Lee, Letty, Ruth and Edith had decided on following one of the narrow foot-paths to the top of Mt. Hope. They stopped for a few minutes and added to the group about Aunt Madge.

"I'm so glad I came," said Edith. "There never was such a place."

"How did you ever find it?" asked Clara, looking up from her yoke.

"It must have been a wonderful place for your honeymoon," said the sentimental Irma.

"Yes, we think it rather pleasant," replied the hostess. "It would not have been easy to find, you may be sure. But Dr. Anderson knows this part of the Adirondacks well and he claims that he picked this spot long ago for just such a purpose."

"Wasn't that lovely?" Irma remarked, delighted at any promise of romance.

"It's going to be very dear to us, always," Aunt Madge added. "And if our dear friends get half the fun and joy out of being here that we do we shall indeed think they are having a happy visit."

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"Well, I for my part feel that I've already had an awful lot crowded into my holiday," said Mary Lee. "All the pleasure that's coming is so much added."

"Be sure to get back for lunch," Aunt Madge cautioned the four girls as they started off.

"We wouldn't miss it for the world," Letty called back.

CHAPTER XXV

LOST IN THE WOODS

Letty and Edith were soon considerably ahead of Ruth and Mary Lee who stopped often at the many pretty spots along the way.

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"Isn't it lovely the way the path trails and yet continues ever upward?" said Mary Lee as the two made their way slowly ahead.

"It seems so far from the city and war and Liberty Bonds," replied Ruth dreamily.

"But it's our country and it simply adds to our reason for being proud of it," the other girl answered. "But you are right, it is far away from things."

At first the voices ahead were clearly distinct but now they were no longer heard. The road, too, in one or two places trailed into the woods and Mary Lee and Ruth found that it was necessary to keep a sharp lookout not to wander off on one of these side trails. 205

"Here's how we can tell," the former suddenly called to Ruth. "See these trees. Someone must have marked them so as to show how to go."

"It's what they call a blazed trail, I guess," Ruth replied. "I've often heard my brother tell how he and his guide had found it necessary to blaze trails as they go."

"I wonder where Letty and Edith are," Mary Lee suddenly remarked. "We haven't heard their voices for a long time."

The two girls called for their friends. But there was no answer.

"Let's hurry," said Ruth beginning to be alarmed.

They hurried out but found no sign of their friends nor any answer to their calls.

"I wonder where they can be," said Mary Lee. "Do you suppose they wandered off on one of these trails? I suppose that's what they have done," she added, answering her own question. 206

"Let's turn back, Mary Lee," Ruth advised.

They did this at once. Mary Lee felt certain that the two girls could not have gone much further ahead.

They came across one or two of the side trails but there was no sign of footprints. At one of these narrow paths they did see the mark of feet but after cutting into the woods for several hundred yards, they decided it was the point where they had found themselves branching off on their way up.

They did not cease their calls but were unable to get a response.

By this time it was midday and they were far from the camp. They had lost considerable time in zagzagging uncertainly from one point to another in their anxiety to locate their friends.

"I wonder, Ruth," Mary Lee questioned her friend, "whether you could find your way back and get help. It's only about two miles from here."

"What will you do in the meantime?" Ruth replied. "I hate to leave you alone."

"I shall try to locate them. But I shall be always coming back to this point, so that you will know where to find me. See, I shall put this branch in the middle of the trail so that you will know." 207

Ruth hurried off. Mary Lee tied her handkerchief on a small branch of another tree so that there would be no mistake. She realized that Ruth would not be able to bring help in less than an hour and so decided she was going to study the number of trails within a half mile and follow the one that seemed the most likely.

A little further up the mountain she found a path that seemed almost as wide as the main trail and decided to follow it. She had gone but a little way when she noticed that it cut directly to her right and began to go down hill.

Now she hurried and began to call again. She received no answer but decided to continue on her way.

The woods became thicker. The thorns and trailing branches scratched her arms and her face but she was unmindful of this. She made sure, however, of her way back. She had no wish to join the lost. 208

She had cut into the woods about a mile by now and had ceased her calls. The woods were thick about her and almost inaccessible.

"I must turn back," she thought dejectedly. "They're not this way." Her dress was torn, her hair too, was not in its usual neat order.

"Letty, oh Letty," she called with a last forlorn hope.

There was silence for a few seconds. Then from a considerable distance, she heard an answering voice.

A little uncertain as to the location and inclined to believe that the hail might come from Dr. Anderson and the rescue party, she called again.

The answer was clearer and seemed to come from about a quarter of a mile ahead of her.

She hurried forward. Soon she heard someone tearing through the brush and finally Letty and Edith appeared.

As soon as the two girls saw Mary Lee they sat down and began to cry.

"Aren't we the sillies?" said Edith tearfully. "We didn't think of crying until you found us." 209

"We're certainly glad you did find us," Letty added.

The two girls presented a sorry picture. Their faces and arms were scratched even more than Mary Lee's. Their dresses, too, were torn and one of Letty's stockings had a big hole in it.

The three hurried back to the point Mary Lee had marked. As well as the two girls could, they explained how they had wandered off on a side trail without being aware of it. Then they had suddenly realized they were in the thick of the woods. They had halloaed, but could not hear any answer.

Dr. Anderson and Aunt Madge were already waiting for them. The girls could hear them calling their names and Mary Lee shouted in response that she found the two.

When the party reached the camp, there were three girls who could not decide whether they were too hungry to be tired or too tired to be hungry.

After luncheon had been finished and the girls' scratches dressed, Dr. Anderson joined his wife. 210

"Better not tell those children what a narrow escape they had. It is best for them not to know that there have been people lost in these woods who have starved to death."

"I think, too, we had better not let them go off by themselves again," replied Mrs. Anderson. "They're not all Mary Lees, you know."

So the Andersons made light of the fact that Letty and Edith had strayed off.

By the next day, the girls had almost forgotten the incident in the excitement of the pleasures and enjoyment of the vacation.

CHAPTER XXVI

RETURNING HOME

The stay at Mount Hope came to a close much too swiftly for the girls, who had never enjoyed any outing so much. Bob had come on Saturday for the two days and after the first half hour of stiffness and shyness over being in the company of so many girls he found himself thoroughly at home. 211

The boy had grown more manly. Mary Lee soon found that he preferred the company of boys now. She was glad of that, even though she knew that it took something from their own close friendship. She wanted Bob to be a boy's boy and he was certainly proving himself that.

He was greatly interested in the success of the girls' "Liberty" sale. Mary Lee told him of the plans for the Red Cross week which was to begin on June 18th. The boy knew of that for his mother had written to him about it and he told Mary Lee of the plans his school had made to help during the same week. 212

"I'm one of the committee, too," he told her with great pride.

It was a still bright day when the party started for the station in the automobiles after waving a farewell to the caretakers. The train was due at the station at five o'clock. Aunt Madge had no wish to rush things and so had decided on an early start.

Bob left them at Plattsburg. He was to cross Champlain to Burlington and from there take a train for the school.

It was the idea of the girls that they would stay awake until late in the evening. But ten o'clock found most of them in their berths. At seven o'clock the following morning, the train arrived at the Grand Central. Letty, Edith and Mary Lee still showed traces of the scratches they had received in the woods. But they were not in the least disturbed by this for they carried the pleasantest recollections of a delightful party. If the truth were told, the incident of being lost, now that it was a thing of the past, carried a certain zest. 213

Letty had been quite vexed at herself for having cried when Mary Lee found them. She would have liked to pretend that she had not been at all frightened.

Edith, however, made an outright admission of how frightened she had been.

"And Letty," she rebuked the latter, "you know how scared you were. You needn't try to pretend you weren't."

"Well, *I was*, and so was Ruth," Mary Lee admitted.

"I suppose I must admit that I was, too," Letty ruefully added. "Though I would have liked to pretend that I was brave."

"Letty," said Aunt Madge very gravely as she put her arm about her and gave her a hug, "it's the brave people who are scared and frightened. It's people who are able to overcome their fear who are truly brave."

The girls gathered together at the station and surrounded the Andersons. Aunt Madge, happy, somewhat embarrassed, was the center of the group and received the evidence of the good time the girls had had with flushed face and genuine pleasure. People passing by stopped to watch the pretty party. 214

"Now for school," said Edith, as the girls began to separate to get ready for the same. "Another month and our real vacation time begins."

"Yes," replied Mary Lee, "but we mustn't, in the meantime, forget the things we must plan and do for the Red Cross before that vacation time comes. Remember our promise, don't you, for the week of June 18th?"

"We certainly do," replied the other girls enthusiastically.

CHAPTER XXVII

ANOTHER ADVENTURE

"Oh, what a long week this is!" cried Letty, a few days later as she walked home from school with Mary Lee and Edith. 215

"Yes, school is certainly dragging along at a slow pace these last few weeks," added Edith.

"I suppose it's because our thoughts are more on our coming vacation than on our studies," said Mary Lee. "We ought to feel bright and perfectly willing to work hard after our delightful outing, but somehow I must confess I don't."

"Neither do I. The taste of fun we had was so good we want more. I wish some one would invite us to another week-end party or something," said Letty.

"Oh, wouldn't that be great! Mother has some friends who are at their lovely country home over on Long Island. If they would only invite us over," said Edith. 216

They had just reached Letty's home when they spied the postman coming out.

"Did you leave a letter for me?" cried Letty.

"Yes, indeed," replied the postman, "a nice big fat one, too."

"Oh, come on in, girls, till I see if there's anything worth while in it," cried Letty bounding up the front steps.

The girls were glad to stop in for awhile, for the house was cool and delightful, while the heat outside was intense for a June day.

Letty tore the letter open hurriedly, and glanced first of all at the signature.

"Oh, girls, it's from Cousin Edna! What do you suppose she wants?"

"Why not read it and see?" asked Edith, who was quite consumed with curiosity.

Letty did. A smile lighted up her face as she turned over the first page. By the time she finished the letter she was ready to dance, she was so excited. 217

"Calm yourself, child, calm yourself, till we know what it's all about," cried Mary Lee.

"Talk about luck!" exclaimed Letty. "Just think, Cousin Edna's Camp Fire Group is off on a camping expedition. She thinks it would be a 'lark' if some of our girls could come over and visit them for a day or so at their camp."

"*Can* we?" cried Edith, "well, I should say we could. Tomorrow is Friday, so why not go this week? I'm sure my mother will consent to let me go. Whom else shall we ask beside us three?"

"Nobody," said Letty. "We can have a better time if we go by ourselves. Cousin Edna says they are living in tents about five miles out from the railroad station. Of course we shall have to 'hike' all the way over from the station, but won't it be fun? We can wear our khaki suits and carry our

blankets strapped around us. The camp is on the beach and we can take our swimming suits along."

"And we can sleep on the beach," cried Mary Lee, "and watch the stars. I've always wanted to do that."

"Come on home," cried Edith to Mary Lee, "and see what mother has to say. I'm sure she will think it a lovely plan. Letty, you find your mother and get her consent."

218

"When shall we start?" cried Letty.

"Tomorrow afternoon, right after school," said Mary Lee. "We can go by train to Port Washington and 'hike' over to the camp."

"Yes," said Letty, "I'll have father look up the time-table and see how late a train we can get, so that we can do our walking as the sun is setting. The woods will be so pretty then."

"But suppose it gets dark before we reach camp," said Edith.

"All the more fun. We can take along a flash-light. Father has one that gives out a big light. He bought it when he went fishing not long ago. I'll ask him to lend it to us," said Letty, "and mother has some regular U. S. Army blankets that she takes when we go to the mountains every summer. She'll let us each take one. They will be just the thing if we want to sleep on the beach."

CHAPTER XXVIII

HELP! HELP!

When the three girls started on their expedition the next day, they were the center of attention at the depot. Each wore a khaki suit, consisting of a middy blouse and bloomers, heavy leggings and soft felt hat. Their blankets were thrown over their shoulders and strapped at the side. Inside the rolled blanket each had a sweater, a bathing suit and a cap. One girl carried a camera, one a box of lunch and the other a flash light.

219

"Aren't we loaded though?" cried Letty as they seated themselves in the train.

"I should say so. I feel like Tartarin when he started to climb the Alps," said Edith.

"I never heard of Tartarin," said Mary Lee. "Who was he?"

"Didn't you ever read 'Tartarin of Tarascon,' by Alphonse Daudet?" asked Letty.

220

"No, but I've heard of Daudet. He was a celebrated Frenchman, wasn't he?"

"Yes, and Tartarin was the dearest old fellow. He started out to climb the Alps—loaded himself with rope, woolen clothing, Alpine stick, etc. We had to read the book last year in our French class," said Letty.

"Wasn't it the hardest French you ever read?" asked Edith. "It seemed to me I had to use my dictionary for every other word. But dear me, why talk about school and studies when we're off on a 'lark'?"

"That's what I say," said Mary Lee. "Let's make up a song that we can sing as we trudge along the road."

"How about using the tune of 'The Bear Went Over the Mountain'?" asked Edith.

"Just the thing," cried Letty. "How's this?—

"We took our beds on our ba-acks—"

"Oh, no," said Mary Lee. "It's better to say 'we took our beds on our shoulders.'"

The girls were so busy working on their song that they were surprised when the conductor called "Port Washington."

221

How the townspeople did stare as the three girls set out down the road! Several soldiers, standing on a corner smiled as they whistled the song:

"Oh here she comes, there she goes
All dressed up in her Sunday clothes."

"Don't you feel like a freak?" asked Edith, rather sorry now she had worn her bloomer suit.

"Indeed I don't," answered Letty. "These khaki bloomer suits are the latest fad for 'hikers.' I had a letter from my aunt who is at a fashionable summer resort in Michigan. She said that there was a party of young people spending the week end at the same hotel and that all the young women of the party wore bloomer suits and looked just too cute for anything. They are university students and had walked all the way from Chicago. They were making a study of the sand dunes, lake currents and change of river beds. A professor was with them."

"How delightful," said Mary Lee. "I'd love to join a party like that, only I'd rather study Botany." 222

By this time the road led into a deep wood where the setting sun flashed its red light through the verdant foliage.

"Isn't this ideal?" exclaimed Edith. "Look at those noble looking trees!"

"What kind are they?" asked Letty. "I never could tell one tree from another."

"Those are red oak and those over there are white," explained Mary Lee.

"They look just alike to me," said Letty. "How can you tell which is which?"

"The red oak has pointed leaves and its acorns ripen every year. But the white oak's leaves are rounded and it takes two years for its acorns to ripen," explained Mary Lee.

"Oh, look here," cried Edith, bending over a bed of dry leaves. "Here's an Indian pipe growing. I haven't seen one for years."

"Why, it's pure white," said Letty. "Not a bit of green on it. Even the root and the stem are white. It is like a regular miniature white clay pipe, isn't it?"

"One could almost blow soap bubbles through it," added Edith. "But come, girls, we must hurry on. It will be dark before we know it." 223

"Who is afraid?" said Mary Lee, "we have a flash light."

"How would you like to have a cup of sassafras tea?" asked Edith, examining a small shrub.

"Where would you get the sassafras?" asked Letty.

"Come over here and help me pull up this baby tree and I'll show you," said Edith.

All three girls pulled and up came the little tree, roots and all. Then Edith took her jack knife which hung on a chain from her belt and peeled off bits of the bark down around the roots, and gave each of the girls a taste.

"It's sassafras all right," said Edith, "but it doesn't look like the kind the women sell on the street corners in town. That's more reddish looking. Why is that, I wonder?"

"Don't ask me," said Edith. "I think I'm smart enough in knowing it's sassafras. Why worry over its color?"

"Oh, here's a snail in its shell," said Mary Lee, picking up a round, brownish shell from the sandy path. "Come out here, Mr. Snail and show yourself," she said, holding the end of a long stick at the opening of the shell. 224

After a few minutes, there was a movement within, and out came a head.

"Look at its horns," said Letty. "Aren't they long?"

"Those aren't horns, those are its eyes at the very end of what appear to be horns. Watch, it is crawling entirely out of its shell. Isn't it funny looking, as it crawls along, carrying its shell on its back?" said Mary Lee.

"And to think people eat the horrid little things," said Letty.

"They do?" exclaimed Mary Lee. "Whoever would eat them?"

"The French are very fond of them," explained Letty. "Haven't you ever seen the word 'escargots' on the menu cards?"

"I have," said Edith, "but I must confess that my French is so limited I never dreamed it meant snails, though."

By this time the road led again into the open, with woods on one side and farm lands on the other. The sun had now disappeared and night would soon settle down, so the girls quickened their pace. 225

"Do you think we can make it before it's pitch dark?" asked Edith, the most timid of the crowd. "It seems to me we have walked about five miles already."

"Oh, no, we haven't, but I do think we are within two miles or so of our destination. Cousin Edna and the Camp Fire Guardian are going to walk out and meet us. I suppose they have started by this time," said Letty.

"I'm glad we don't have to go through any more woods. This road is fine and hard," said Edith.

It was now quite dark, so Mary Lee walked ahead and flashed on the light.

Suddenly they heard a strange noise.

"Oh, what is that?" cried Edith, rushing on ahead, not waiting to find out from which direction the sound came.

Suddenly there was a dreadful scream from Edith, on ahead. "Help, help!" she cried. "Oh, girls, where am I?"

Mary Lee and Letty rushed on ahead, flashing the light. In the middle of the road sat Edith and near her was stretched a big cow, half asleep. 226

Edith, in trying to run from the mooing cow, had run upon it instead. It had evidently strolled away from a nearby farmhouse.

"The big boob," said Edith, "to stretch itself out in the middle of the road. It was a dreadful sensation to fall against that big hot animal, and not know what it was," she laughingly said, now beginning to see the funny side of the incident.

"Listen," said Letty, "what's that whistle?"

"It's the Campfire Guardian's whistle," exclaimed Mary Lee. "They must be near us now."

"What a relief," sighed Edith, picking herself up, and trudging on after the others.

When Cousin Edna and the Camp Fire Guardian met the girls, there was great rejoicing and before long all five arrived at camp.

The "hikers" were pretty tired, so they soon unstrapped their blankets and made ready to sleep. 227

"I'm so glad Cousin Edna could manage to get us cots to sleep on up here in the tents. I'm too tired to try it on the beach tonight," said Letty.

"Me too," said Edith. "Falling over that cow in the pitch dark was sensation enough for one night."

"Perhaps we'll feel more like it tomorrow night. I'd hate to go back to town without sleeping down on the beach one night," said Mary Lee, unrolling her blanket.

"Isn't this a scheme to sleep in our bathing suits, so as to be all ready to run down and take a dip at sunrise tomorrow morning!" exclaimed Letty.

"I should say so. I do so love to take an early morning plunge," said Mary Lee, jumping into bed.

CHAPTER XXIX

LETTY'S SURPRISE

"My! doesn't this bacon taste delicious!" exclaimed Mary Lee, the next morning as the Campfire Girls were gathered for breakfast in the mess tent. 228

"And this corn bread and the cantaloupe," added Letty. "That early plunge surely gives one a great appetite, doesn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, but don't eat so slow. Remember we have to wash our dishes and clear up our own tents before we can do what we like."

"That's so," said Mary Lee, "see, some of the girls are through already."

As each girl finished, she gathered up her own dishes, walked to the end of the big table and washed and rinsed them in the big pans, placed there for that purpose. 229

After breakfast the tents were put in order, and when everything was ready the guardian inspected them all, to see which tent should be awarded first honors for the day.

The Guardian was about to select the tent in which Letty's cousin Edna slept when she discovered a hair pin sticking up between the boards in front of the tent.

"My, isn't she a strict Campfire Guardian?" whispered Edith to Letty.

"I should say so! Weren't we lucky to have Aunt Madge for our Guardian?" said Letty, "instead of one like her?"

Cousin Edna came up just then to tell the girls that she wanted them to come over and meet her

friend Josephine.

"She's the dearest little French girl. Her father was killed two years ago over in France. Immediately afterwards she and her mother came to this country to raise funds for the French Red Cross. The mother can't think of anything but the war. She's a regular fanatic on the subject. She gives lectures around at the houses of the 'four hundred' and has made no end of big money for the good cause."

230

"But how did the daughter get to be a Campfire Girl?" asked Edith.

"The Guardian of our camp met her several times at lectures and felt sorry for her. She seemed to be growing melancholy from so much war talk. She never went anywhere except with her mother, so our Guardian took her under her wing, asked her to join our camp and now she's the favorite everywhere. She's getting her color back and is almost jolly at times."

"I suppose she can tell blood-curdling stories about the war scenes she saw before coming to this country."

"Yes, indeed; but we try to get her mind off the war because it has such a depressing effect on her. But she can tell you the most fascinating things about 'gay Paree' before the war. Her father was a member of President Poincaré's cabinet before he enlisted, and she used to attend all the state balls at the Elysee Palace."

"How thrilling!" exclaimed Letty. "Do introduce us."

"Isn't she a perfect darling?" whispered Edith to Mary Lee, after the introduction was over.

231

The girls then passed a delightful hour, playing their ukuleles and telling stories.

At eleven o'clock all went down to the beach for a swim. What fun they had diving from the spring board and learning the "Australian Crawl."

After dinner they had rest-hour till 2:30. They had to keep pretty quiet, so our three "hikers," Cousin Edna and the French girl decided to sit outside their tent and read.

"But whatever shall we read?" asked Letty.

"We have some books here," said Cousin Edna, rummaging around in an empty soap box, which stood on end, and took the place of a wash-stand in the tent.

"How are these titles: 'Woodland Nymphs,' 'Oh Jerry, Be Careful,' 'Mr. Ripling Sees it Too,' 'The Baby and the Bachelor'?"

"That's the one," cried all the girls in chorus as the last title was called out.

The book proved to be an interesting one. In fact, it made them laugh so, that it was not long before the Guardian came to hush them up and to remind them that it was "rest hour."

232

"Are we going to have our beach supper tonight?" asked Cousin Edna.

"Yes, and if you like," replied the Guardian, "we can take our blankets and sleep all night on the beach."

"Lovely," cried all the girls at once. "Let's get ready at once, shall we?"

Soon the picnic basket was packed and off they started to a pretty point two miles down the sandy beach.

The first thing they did upon arriving was to gather enough wood to make a fire.

Then they hunted up a large clean-looking stone and put it in the fire to heat.

While this was heating some of the girls gathered long blades of strong grass and wove two mats the size of the top of the stone.

As soon as the stone was heated, they pulled it out of the fire and dug a big hole in the sand in which they placed it. Around and over it they put hot ashes. They had brought a supply of nice fresh fish already cleaned and seasoned. These they placed between the grass mats and then covered the mats over with more ashes.

233

"Do you mean to say that the fish will cook like that?" asked Mary Lee.

"Indeed they will," said Cousin Edna, "and they will be so delicious you will wish you could have them cooked like that all the time."

"How long will it take to cook them that way?" asked Letty.

"About an hour," replied Cousin Edna. "In the meantime, we can all gather wood for our big fire tonight. We are going to roast corn and toast marshmallows this evening."

"We have a lot of wood already," said Letty. "See the big pile over there!"

"Bless you, child, that's nothing. We have to have enough to keep the fire going all night."

"All night?" exclaimed Edith. "Whoever has to sit up and tend it all night? I'd certainly hate that job."

"Oh, no one has to tend the fire *all* night. A number of us are chosen and each one has to keep watch an hour at a time," explained Cousin Edna.

234

"It must be hard to sit up a whole hour; I'm sure I'd go off to sleep," said Letty.

"You can doze if you like, but you have to keep one eye on the fire. You see, it gets very chilly on the beach before morning and the fire helps a lot. Besides, it keeps away the mosquitoes."

What a delicious beach supper they had and what a delightful evening they passed afterwards, telling stories, etc.

When nine o'clock came each girl put on her sweater and rolled herself in her blanket.

"Here's where I sleep," said Letty, throwing herself down on the beach and piling sand into a heap for a pillow.

"Good idea," said Edith, "let's all make pillows out of sand."

The night on the beach proved to be a delightful one, to all but one of the girls. She woke up next morning with a stiff neck from sleeping in a cramped position, and could not go in bathing.

Thanks, however, to Mary Lee's training under Dr. Payson, and her Red Cross first aid lessons, she knew just how to massage the girl's neck and thus relieved the pain in a short time.

235

After bathing, the girls all walked back to camp, where the cook had prepared a good substantial breakfast for them. They then passed the day quietly as it was Sunday. Late that afternoon, Letty, Mary Lee and Edith said good-bye and started on their homeward journey.

"Wasn't it a delightful trip?" said Mary Lee, as they finally reached the railroad station.

"Just splendid," answered the two other girls in one breath.

"I have some good news for you, too," said Letty.

"Oh, don't keep us in suspense," cried Edith.

"I have invited Cousin Edna and her little French friend Josephine to come and spend a week with us when we go up to our log cabin in the Catskills in July," said Letty. "Mother said I could invite a party of girls for a week, before she begins to fill the house with her company. You see, there will be five of us."

236

"Oh, Letty, you darling," cried Edith, leaning over and giving her a hug.

"That's the best plan of any," said Mary Lee. "I'd love to go if you will let me devote a part of the time to making those 'housewives' that we have to make. You know, Uncle Sam only provides one housewife for each four soldiers and that is not enough. Each soldier must have his own."

"Indeed he should," said Letty. "Now that brother Ted's number was chosen in the draft, I am going to get right down to serious work and do everything I can to help. We can devote a certain part of each day to our Red Cross work and in that way set a good example to all the nearby summer colonies. You ought to see the quantity of yarn that mother is laying away to take up there for knitting wristlets and scarves."

"It won't be like work up there, either," said Mary Lee. "I've heard it's just wonderful up in the Catskill mountains."

"It is," answered Letty, "and our cabin is immense. It has a porch screened in on three sides, a wonderful fireplace, and the most fragrant pillows of pine needles. You'll just love it, I know."

237

"Here we are at the station, already," cried Edith. "After we ferry over, let's take a taxi up home. It's Sunday, you know, and I'd hate to meet anyone in these togs."

"I don't particularly care about how we look, but a taxi would be just the thing," exclaimed Letty. "I'm beginning to feel tired."

"The next few weeks of school won't drag a particle," said Edith, "now that we have our mountain trip to look forward to."

"Indeed not, thanks to Letty," said Mary Lee, giving her hand an affectionate squeeze

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