

Ethel Morton at Rose House eBook

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ROGER'S IDEA

For the fortieth time that afternoon, it seemed to Ethel Brown Morton and her cousin, Ethel Blue, they untangled the hopelessly mixed garlands of the maypole and started the weavers once more to lacing and interlacing them properly.

“Under, over; under, over,” they directed, each girl escorting a small child in and out among the gay bands of pink and white which streamed from the top of the pole.

May Day in New Jersey is never a certain quality; it may be reminiscent of the North Pole or the Equator. This happened to be the hottest day of the year so far, and both Ethels had wiped their foreheads until their handkerchiefs were small balls too soaked to be of any further use. But they kept on, for this was the first Community Maypole that Rosemont ever had had, and the United Service Club, to which the girls belonged, was doing its part to make the afternoon successful. Helen, Ethel Brown's sister, and Margaret Hancock, another member of the Club, were teaching the younger children a folk dance on the side of the lawn; Roger Morton, James Hancock and Tom Watkins were marshalling a group of boys and marching them back and forth across the end of the grass plot nearest the schoolhouse. Delia Watkins, Tom's sister, and Dorothy Smith, a cousin of the Mortons, were going about among the mothers and urging them to let the little ones take part in the games. Everybody was busy until dusk sent the small children home and the caretaker came to uproot the pole and to shake his head ruefully over the condition of the lawn whose smoothness had been roughened by the tread of scores of dancing feet.

It was while the Club members were sitting on the Mortons' veranda, resting, that Helen, who was president of the Club, called them to order.

“Saturday afternoon is our usual time of meeting,” she began, “and no one can say that we haven't put in a solid afternoon of service.”

Groans as one and another shifted a cramped position to another more restful for weary feet confirmed her statement.

“What I want to say now is that it's time for us to be thinking up some more service work. We are all studying pretty hard so we don't want to undertake anything that will use up our out-of-door time too much, but we haven't anything in prospect except helping with the town Fourth of July celebration, over two months away, so we might as well be planning something else.”

“Do I understand, Madam President,” asked Roger, “that the chief officer of this distinguished Club hasn't any ideas to suggest?”



“The chief officer is so tired that not even another glass of lemonade—thank you, Tom—can stir her gray matter.”

“Hasn’t anybody else any ideas?”

Silence greeted the question.

“I seem to remember boasts that ideas never would fail this brilliant group,” jeered Roger.



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“There were some such remarks,” James recalled meditatively; “and I remember that you prophesied that the day would come when we’d call on you for information about some stupendous scheme of yours that was literally as big as a house. Let’s have it now.”

“Do I understand that you’re really appealing to me to learn my scheme?” inquired Roger, swelling with amusement.

“If it’s any satisfaction to you—yes,” replied his sister.

Roger burst into a peal of laughter.

“Shoot off the answers, old man,” urged James. “We’re waiting.”

“Breathlessly,” added Margaret.

Roger settled himself comfortably on the top step of the piazza and leaned his head against the post.

“It certainly does me good to see you all at my feet begging like this,” he declared.

“Bosh! You’re at ours and I can prove it,” asserted Tom, stretching out a foot of goodly size.

“Peace! Withdraw that battering ram!” pleaded Roger. “I’ll tell you all about it. Tom’s really responsible for this idea, anyway.”

“Ideas, real fresh ones, aren’t much in my line,” admitted practical Tom, “but I’m glad to have helped for once.”

“I don’t suppose you remember that time last autumn when I went in to New York to see you and you took me down to the chapel where your father preaches on Sunday afternoons?”

“I remember it; we found Father there talking with a lot of mothers and children.”

“That’s the time. Well, those women and children got on my nerves like anything. You see, out here in Rosemont we haven’t any real suffering like that. There are poor people, and Mother always does what she can for them, and there’s a Charitable Society, as you know, because you all helped with the Donnybrook Fair they had on St. Patrick’s Day. But the people they help out here are regular Rockefellers compared with those poor creatures that your father had in his office that day.”

“Father says he could spend a million dollars a year on those people, and not have a misspent cent,” said Delia.



“What hit me hardest was the thin little children. Elisabeth hadn’t come to us yet,” Roger went on, referring to a Belgian baby that had been sent to the Club to take care of, “and I wasn’t so accustomed to thinness as I’ve grown to be since, and it made me—well, it just made me sick.”

“I don’t wonder,” agreed Delia seriously. “That’s the way they make me feel.”

“I know what you thought of,” exclaimed Ethel Blue, who was so imaginative and sympathetic that she sometimes had an almost uncanny way of reading peoples’ thoughts. “You wanted to bring some of those poor women out into the country so that the children could get well, and you told your grandfather about it and he offered you a house somewhere.”

“That’s about it, kidlet. I heard one of the women say that she’d had a week in the country—some sort of Fresh Air business—and that the baby got a lot better, and then she had to go back to the city and the little creature was literally dying on her hands.”

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“You want to give them a whole summer,” guessed Ethel Brown.

“That’s the idea. Since I’ve seen what proper care and good food and fresh air have done for that wretched little skeleton, Elisabeth, I’m more than ever convinced that if we can give some of those mothers and babies a whole month or perhaps two months of Rosemont air we’ll be saving lives, actually saving lives.”

Roger looked about earnestly from one grave face to another. All were in sympathy with him and all waited for the development of his plan, for they knew he would not have laid so much stress upon it if he had not thought out the details.

“I’ve talked it over with Grandfather and he rose to it right off. Here’s where the house comes in. He said he was going to build a new cottage for his farm superintendent this spring—you know it’s almost done now—and that we could have the old farm house if we wanted to fix it up for a Fresh Air scheme.”

“Mr. Emerson is a brick. I pull my forelock to him,” and Tom illustrated his remark.

“Where’s the money to come from?” asked James, who was both of Scottish descent and the Club treasurer, and so was not only shrewd but accustomed to look after details.

“Grandfather said he’d help in this way; if the Club would study the old house and decide on the best way to make it answer the purpose he would provide two carpenters for a fortnight to help us. That will mean that if we want to do any whitewashing or papering or matters of that kind we’ll have to do it ourselves, but the carpenters will put the house in repair and put up any partitions that we want and so on.”

“Is it furnished?”

“There’s another problem. The superintendent has had his own furniture there and what will be left when he goes is almost nothing. There are some old things in the garret, but we’ll have to use our ingenuity and invent furniture.”

“The way I did for our attic.” Dorothy reminded them of the room where the Club had been meeting ever since its members returned from Chautauqua where it had been formed the summer before.

“Just so. We’ll have to make a raid on our mothers’ attics and also on the stores in town that have their goods come in big boxes, and I imagine we shall be able to concoct things that will ‘do,’ though they may be remarkable to look upon.”

“The mothers and children will be out of doors all the time, so they won’t sit around and examine the furniture,” laughed Delia.



“It will be scanty, probably, but if we can get beds enough and a chair apiece, or a substitute for a chair, and a few tables, we can get along.”

“There’s your house provided and furnished after a fashion—how are you going to run it?” inquired Helen. “It takes shekels to buy even very plain food in these days of the ‘high cost of living,’ and we’ve got to give these women and children nourishing food; they can’t live on fresh air alone.”



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“Praise be, fresh air costs nothing!”

“That’s one thing we’ll get free,” laughed Roger. “Grandfather told me to investigate and see what I could find out about finances and then let him know. So I went in to see Mr. Watkins.”

“And never told me,” said Tom reproachfully.

“Of course not. All of you people were too sniffy. I told your father what the plan was and what Grandfather had said. He thought it was great. He’s a corker, your father is.”

Delia and Tom looked somewhat startled at this epithet describing their parent, but Roger meant it to be complimentary, so they made no remonstrance.

“He said right off that he could provide the women and children in any numbers and that he’d select the ones that needed the change most and would be most benefited by it.”

“It’s not hard to find those,” murmured Delia.

“Then he said that he had certain funds that he could draw on for such cases and that he’d be just as willing to pay the board for these women and children at Rosemont as anywhere else, so that we could depend on a small sum for each one of them from the treasurer of the chapel.”

“That ought to cover the expense of their food,” said Helen, “but we’ll have to have a housekeeper and a cook.”

“That’s what Aunt Louise said.”

“Oho, you’ve been talking with Mother about it!” exclaimed Dorothy.

“I knew the Club would come to me sooner or later, it was only a matter of time, so I made ready to answer some of the questions you’d be asking me.”

They laughed at Roger’s preparedness, but nodded approvingly.

“Aunt Louise said she’d pay the wages of the cook, and then I toddled off to Grandmother Emerson and told her I was planning to raid her attic for old furniture, and asked her incidentally if she thought we could run the thing without a housekeeper.”

“I hope she said ‘yes’,” exclaimed Margaret, who liked to administer a household.

“Grandmother was very polite; she said she thought the U. S. C. could do anything it set out to do, but that there would be countless odds and ends that would occupy us all summer long—”



“Like making a continuous stream of furniture!”

“And going marketing and doing errands.”

“And mowing the grass.”

“And playing games with the kids.”

“O, a thousand things would crop up; we never could be idle; and so she thought we’d better have a responsible woman as housekeeper. What’s more she said she’d pay her.”

“It wouldn’t be polite for me to say about a lady what you said about Mr. Watkins,” said James—

“For which I apologize,” declared Roger parenthetically.

“—but I’d like to remark that she’s one of the most reliable grandmothers I ever had anything to do with!”

They all laughed again.

“Where we’ll get these two women I don’t know,” said Roger. “My researches stopped there. But I suppose it wouldn’t be difficult.”



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"I've heard Mother say that the 'responsible woman' was the hardest person on earth to find," said Helen, thoughtfully. "But we can all hunt."

"I know some one who might do if she'd be willing—and I don't know why she wouldn't," said Ethel Brown.

"Who? Who? Some one in Rosemont?"

"Right here in Rosemont. Mrs. Schuler."

"Mrs. Schuler?"

There was a cry of wonder, for Mrs. Schuler was the teacher of German in the high school. She had been engaged to Mr. Schuler, who taught singing in the Rosemont schools, before the war broke out. Mr. Schuler was called to the colors and lost a leg in the early part of the war. Since he could no longer be useful as a fighter he had been allowed to return to America, and his betrothed had married him at once so that she and her mother, Mrs. Hindenburg, might nurse him back to health. He had been slowly regaining his strength through the winter, and was now fairly well and as cheerful as his crippled state would permit.

"You know I've been to see Mrs. Hindenburg a good deal ever since we got her to go to the Home to teach the old ladies how to knit," said Ethel Brown. "I know her pretty well now. The other day she told me she had had an application from a family who wanted to board with her this summer, and she was so sorry to have to turn them away because she didn't have enough rooms for them."

"I don't see how that helps us any."

"You know Mr. Schuler hasn't been able to take many pupils this winter and I shouldn't wonder if Mrs. Schuler would be glad to have something to do this summer when school is closed. Now if they would go to our Fresh Air house and take charge there for the summer it would leave Mrs. Hindenburg with enough space to take in her boarders. She'd be glad, and I should think the Schulers would be glad."

"And we'd be glad! Why, Fraulein is the grandest housekeeper," cried Helen, using the name that Mrs. Schuler's old pupils never remembered to change to "Frau." "German housekeepers are thrifty and neat and careful—why, she's exactly the person we want. How *great* of you to think of her, Ethel Brown!"

"You know she wanted to adopt our Belgian baby, so I guess she's interested in poor children," volunteered Ethel Blue.

"Are our plans far enough along for us to ask her?" inquired Margaret.

“We ought to ask her as soon as we can, because Mrs. Hindenburg’s plans will be affected by the Schulers’ decision,” Helen reminded them.

“I think we are far enough along,” decided Roger. “You see, the idea is new to you, but I’ve been working at it for a good many months now, and if we all pull together to do our share I know we can depend on the grown-ups to do theirs.”

“Shall we appoint Ethel Brown to call on Mrs. Schuler and talk it over with her? She knows her better than the rest of us because she’s seen her at home oftener.”



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“Madam President, I move that Ethel Brown be appointed a committee of one to see our Teutonic friends and work up their sympathies over the women and children we want to help so that they just can’t resist helping too. Is your eloquence equal to that strain, Ethel?”

Ethel thought it was, and promised to go the very next afternoon. The discussion turned to the next step to take.

“Grandfather’s superintendent is going to move into the new cottage next week,” was Roger’s news, “so then we can go over the old house and see how it is arranged and decide how we’d like to change it.”

“And also find out just what furniture is left and draw up a list of what furniture we shall need.”

“Had we better appoint committees for making the different investigations?” inquired Tom, who was accustomed to the methods of a city church.

“Later, perhaps,” decided Helen. “At first I think we all want to know the whole situation and then we can make our plans to fit, and special people can volunteer for special work if we think it can be done best that way.”

“It’s a great old plan you have there, Roger,” cried Tom, thumping his friend affectionately on the shoulder. “I bow to your giant intellect. We’ll do our best to make it a success.”

CHAPTER II

MOYA AND SHEILA

Elisabeth of Belgium was walking sturdily now on the legs that had been too weak to uphold her when she first came to Rosemont in November. Her increasing strength was an increasing delight to all the people who loved her—and there was no one who knew her who did not love her—but her activity obliged her caretakers to be incessantly on the alert. Miss Merriam, the skilled young woman from the School of Mothercraft, who had pulled her through her period of greatest feebleness, now found herself sometimes quite outdone by the energy of her little charge.

The Ethels were always glad to relieve her of her responsibilities for an hour or two, and it was the afternoon of the day after Roger had reported his plan to the Club that found the cousins strolling down Church Street, “Ayleesabet” between them, clinging to a finger of each, not to help her stand upright but to serve as a pair of supports from which she might swing herself off the ground.



“See! She lifted her whole weight then!” exclaimed Ethel Blue. “We shall have to give up calling her ‘baby’ soon. She’s becoming an acrobat!”

“It’s all due to Miss Merriam. I wish she didn’t look so tired the last few days.”

Ethel Blue made no reply. She guessed something of the reason that had made Miss Gertrude appear distressed and silent. A certain note that she herself had placed in a May basket and hung on Miss Merriam’s door might have something to do with her appearance of anxiety. She changed the subject as a measure of precaution, for she had been in the confidence of Dr. Watkins, the elder brother of Tom and Delia and a warm admirer of Miss Merriam’s, and she did not want the conversation to run into channels where she might have to answer inconvenient questions.



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“This scheme of Roger’s is pretty tremendous,” she began by way of introducing a theme in which Ethel Brown would be sure to be interested.

“We—the Club, I mean—never has ‘fallen down’ yet on anything, even some of our ‘shows’ that we didn’t have much time to get up, so we ought to have confidence in ourselves as a Club.”

“With this next undertaking, though, we don’t really know how the thing is done.”

“How to make over the house, you mean?”

“How to make over the house and how to run the Fresh Air settlement when the house is made over.”

“There’s no doubt we’ll know more at the end of the summer than we know now! We’ve got to get information from every source we can.”

“The way Roger has up to now.”

“We must think of every one we know who has made over a house, and Dr. Watkins ought to be able to tell us of some people who have had Fresh Air children staying with them, so we can get some idea about what they need and how a house is managed.”

“Come, come.” A chirp rose from near the ground. Ayleesabet was tired of being disregarded for so long.

“You blessed Lamb!” cried Ethel Blue. “Did you say, ‘Come, come,’ just because you heard it? Did you think we were talking very learnedly about things we didn’t know much about! Never mind, ducky daddles, we’ll know a lot about them six months from now!”

“Just the way we’ve learned a lot about babies in the last six months from this little teacher!” added Ethel Brown.

“Come, come. Home, home,” remarked Elisabeth insistently.

“What’s the matter? Are your leggies tired? Want the Ethels to carry you?”

Elisabeth made it known that she would like some such method of transportation, and sat joyfully on a “chair” which the two girls made by interclasping their wrists.

Not for long did this please her ladyship.

“Down, down,” she demanded in a few minutes.



“We might as well go home if she’s too tired to walk and too restless to ride,” decided Ethel Brown, and they turned about, to the evident pleasure of the baby.

As they were returning along Church Street but were still at a distance from Dorothy’s house Elisabeth suddenly gave a chirrup of delight. The Ethels looked about to see the cause of this unexpected expression of joy. Crawling out through a hedge on to the sidewalk was a child of about Elisabeth’s age, but a thin and dirty little mite, with a face that betrayed her race as Irish.

“What’s this morsel doing here all by herself!” exclaimed Ethel Blue.

“She must have run away; or perhaps she isn’t alone. Let’s look about for her mother.”

Up and down the street they looked while Elisabeth scraped acquaintance with the sudden arrival upon her path.

“It doesn’t seem as if she could be far off.”

In truth she was not far off, for as the girls wondered and exclaimed a weak voice made itself heard from the other side of the hedge.



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“Don’t take her away,” it said.

Leaving the children to entertain each other on the sidewalk they enlarged the hole from which the new baby had crawled, and pushed their way through it. On the ground behind the hedge, and hidden from the sidewalk by its thick twigs lay a young woman, so pale that she frightened the girls.

“Don’t take the baby away. I’ll feel better in a little while. She crept off from me.”

“How did you get here?” asked Ethel Brown.

“I came out from New York to look for work in the country. I felt so sick I lay down here.”

“Did you get any work?”

A slight movement of the head indicated that she had not. The Ethels consulted each other by disturbed glances. There was no hospital nearer than Glen Point, and indeed, the woman seemed so ill that they did not see how she could reach the hospital even in the trolley.

As they stood silent and perplexed the honk of a motor roused the almost unconscious woman.

“Is the baby in the street?” she inquired frantically.

Ethel Brown crushed her way through the hedge, and found that the children were still on the sidewalk, but were so near its edge that the driver of the car had tooted to warn them back. To her delight she saw that the driver was Grandfather Emerson. She waved her hand to stop him.

“You’re a great caretaker!” he cried. “Why do you leave Elisabeth to look after herself in this fashion? And who’s her friend?”

Ethel climbed into the machine beside him and told of the discovery that the girls had just made. Mr. Emerson drew the car alongside the curb and jumped out with anxiety written on his face. The hole in the hedge was too small for him to push through so he ran around the end, and approached the prostrate form of the woman.

Her eyes were closed and she lay so still that Ethel Blue, who was rubbing her hands, shook her head as she glanced up gratefully at the new arrival.

“What’s this, what’s this?” asked Mr. Emerson in his full, rich voice. Its mere sound seemed to carry comfort to the poor creature lying at his feet. He knelt beside her. “Hungry, eh?” he asked. “We’ll see about that right off. Can you eat these cookies?” He took a thin tin box out of his pocket and opened it. “I have a little granddaughter named



Ethel Brown who insists on my keeping cookies in my pocket all the time so that I can eat them when I'm driving. See if you can take a bite of this.”

A fluttering hand took the cookie and put it between the pale lips.

Helped by the girls the woman struggled to her feet and stood wavering before she tried to take a step. She was a young woman with very black hair and gray-blue eyes and a face that was meant to be unlined and pretty and not gaunt with hunger and furrowed by anxiety.

“You're very good,” she whispered feebly.

Supported on each side she managed to reach the sidewalk, where she looked about wildly for her baby. An expression that was sad but infinitely relieved came over her features when she saw the two children sitting in the gravel of the walk filling their tiny hands with pebbles.



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"A cooky won't hurt the baby either," decided Mr. Emerson, and he gave one to each of the children.

The Ethels had no chance to ask him what he meant to do without their discovery hearing them, so they helped the woman into the machine, put in the two children and climbed in themselves. To their great interest Mr. Emerson turned the car about and headed it for his own home.

"I wonder what Grandmother will say," murmured Ethel Brown to Ethel Blue, who was steadying the ill woman's head as it lay against the back of the seat.

Ethel Blue lifted her eyebrows to indicate that she could not guess; but both girls knew in their hearts that Mrs. Emerson would do what was wisest and for the best good of the strays. She came to the door in answer to the sound of the horn.

"How did you get back so soon?" she began to inquire of her husband when her eyes fell on the passengers in the car.

"An accident?" she asked anxiously as she ran down the steps.

"The girls found this woman and her child part way over here and I thought I'd better bring her on and get your opinion about her. I think she'd like something to eat," and the kind old gentleman smiled in friendly fashion as the woman opened frightened eyes at the sound of a new voice.

Among them they succeeded in getting her into the house and into a cool room, where she lay exhausted on the bed, her hand holding tight to the little hand of her baby, lying wearily beside her.

"Sunstroke?" asked Grandmother.

"Hunger," replied Mr. Emerson, and he and Ethel Brown went down stairs at once in search of food, while Mrs. Emerson and Ethel Blue managed to undress their patient and put her into a fresh nightdress and bathe her face and hands. By the time they had done this and were undressing the baby, Ethel Brown and Mrs. Emerson's cook were at the door with jellied broth, milk, gruel and a cooling drink.

Ethel Blue fed the woman, spoonful by spoonful, and Ethel Brown gave the baby alternate spoonfuls of gruel and milk.

"Sleepy now?" asked Mrs. Emerson when the dark head sank back on the pillow. "Take a nap, then. See, the baby is right here where you can lay your hand on her. We'll look in now and then and just as soon as you wake up you must take some more food."



“Must!” repeated the girl, for she was hardly older than Miss Merriam they saw when her hair was pushed back from her face. “Must! ’Tis *glad* I’ll be to be doing it!” and a ghost of a smile fluttered her lips.

Outside of the bedroom door Mrs. Emerson asked for an explanation and the others for her advice.

“I don’t see how we can tell what we can do until we pull her through this trouble and find out what the poor soul wants to do herself.”

“She said she came out from New York to look for work in the country.”

“Then we must find her work in the country. But the first thing for us to attend to is to get her poor body into such a condition that she can work. She’s a sweet looking young woman. I’m glad you brought her home, Father,” and between Mr. and Mrs. Emerson there passed a smile of such understanding as makes beautiful the lives of people long and happily married.



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CHAPTER III

THE FARMHOUSE

It took a long time to bring Moya Murphy and little Sheila back to health and strength, but it was only a day or two before Moya was able to tell her story to Mrs. Emerson.

She was twenty-five, she said, and she had come to America with her father and mother five years before. The New World had not given a warm welcome to the new arrivals, for both of the parents had fallen ill with pneumonia only a few weeks after they landed, and both died within a few days of each other.

Moya, left alone and grieving, had soon after married Patrick Murphy, a lad she had known in the old country. A happy life they led, especially after little Sheila came to bless them.

When the declaration of war in Europe upset business conditions in America, Patrick lost his "job" and all summer long he walked the streets, working for a day now and then, but never securing a permanent position, and always growing weaker and less able to work because he was underfed. The little three-room flat that had been such a joy to them, had long been given up and they lived and ate and slept in one room, and thanked their stars that they had a landlord who did not insist on being paid regularly, as did some they knew about who put their tenants out on the street if the rent was not forthcoming promptly.

"Somehow it's the sudden things that happens to me," said Moya to Mrs. Emerson. She was sitting on the latticed back porch of the Emersons' house, her fingers busy shelling peas for Kate, the old cook who had lived with Mrs. Emerson ever since she was married. "Patrick was crossing the street—'tis only six weeks ago, but it seems years! An automobile with one of the shrieking horns screamed at him. 'Twas the policeman on the crossing told me. Patrick was light on his feet always, but that was when he had enough to eat ivery day. He thried to jump back and his foot slipped and he fell under the car and it killed him."

She sobbed and Mrs. Emerson and Kate wiped their eyes.

"Two days it was before I knew it; there was nothing on his clothes to tell who he was, and I only found out when he didn't come home and I went to the police and they took me to the Morgue and there he lay. They gave me twenty dollars—the policemen did. They collected it among themselves."

"Didn't they arrest the driver of the car?"

"'Twas a light car and it sped away before any one saw the number."



Kate Flanigan gave a grunt of disgust at the brutality of the driver.

“I gave the landlord half the money the policemen gave me. I owed it for the rint. Then I set out to hunt work. Ivery day I walked and walked and ivery day I carried the baby, for where could I leave her? Nobody wanted a girl who wasn’t trained to do anything, and even if I had been able to do something well they wanted no baby. There’s no room for babies when you have to work,” she said bitterly.



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"I want you to feel that you are safe here, you and Sheila," said Mrs. Emerson gently. "Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Smith and I have been talking it over with Kate, and this is what we've planned, provided you agree."

Moya gathered up her baby jealously in her lap.

"It will keep you and Sheila together," said Mrs. Emerson quickly, noticing her gesture, and smiling approvingly as Moya at once let the child slide off her lap on to the floor where she sat contentedly playing with some of the pods of the peas that had fallen from the pan.

"Perhaps Kate has told you that we are planning to have some women and children who need country air come out from New York this summer and live in a farmhouse that we have on the place here."

Moya nodded. "She did."

"We need a cook. We are going to give them simple food, but nourishing and well cooked."

"If it's me you're thinking of for the cooking, ma'am, I'm a poor cook beyond potaties and stew."

"You never were taught to cook?"

"Taught? No, ma'am. I picked up what little I know from me mother. 'Tis simple enough, but too simple for what you need."

"If you'll try to learn, here's what we've planned. Kate needs a helper. Not because she isn't strong and hearty, but because Mr. Emerson and I want her to have a little more time for pleasure than she has had for a good many years. She won't take a real vacation, so we are going to give her a partial vacation."

"Me being the helper?" inquired Moya, her thin face lighting.

"More than the helper. Kate has agreed to teach you how to cook all the dishes that it will be necessary to cook for the women and children this summer. You couldn't have a better teacher."

"I'm sure of it," answered the young woman, turning gratefully to Kate. "I'll do my very best."

"You shall have a room for yourself and the baby, and wages," and she named a sum that made Moya's eyes burn.



“I’m not worth that yet,” she cried, “but I know you’ll need me to dress respectable, so I’ll not refuse it and I’ll get some decent things for the baby and mesilf!”

“If Kate finds that you take hold well she’ll teach you more elaborate cooking. There’s always a place waiting somewhere for a good cook, and here’s your chance to learn to be a really excellent cook.”

So the problem of obtaining a cook was settled without trouble, and as Ethel Brown found Mrs. Schuler not only ready but eager to act as Matron, two of the possible difficulties seemed to have proved themselves no difficulties at all.

CHAPTER IV

PLANS

The work of the carpenters filled in very acceptably the time when the members of the Club were toiling at school.

A visit of inspection toward the end of June gave the onlookers the greatest satisfaction.



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"Everything is as fine as a fiddle!" exclaimed Roger as they all stopped in one of the upstairs rooms. "Now it's up to us to do the papering and painting and to concoct some furniture."

So it was decided that all the bedrooms should have white paint and walls of delicate hues and that Mrs. Schuler's office should be pink with white paint and white curtains at the windows.

"We can get very pretty papers for ten cents a roll," said Margaret. "I saw some beauties when I went to the paperers to get some flowery papers for James to cut out when he was pasting decorations on to our Christmas Ship boxes."

"Are you going to use wall paper?" asked Miss Merriam quickly.

"Aren't we?" inquired Margaret. "It didn't occur to me that there was anything else. There is paper on the walls now."

"It's a lot more sanitary to have the walls kalsomined, I know that," said James in a superior tone. "Haven't you heard Father say so a dozen times?"

"I suppose I have, now I think about it," replied Margaret. "It stands to reason that there would be less chance for germs to hide."

"Do you suppose these old walls are in good enough condition to go uncovered?" asked Roger, passing his hand over a suspicious bulge that forced the paper out, and casting his eye at the ceiling which was veined with hair cracks.

"Probably the walls will not be in the pink Of condition," returned Mrs. Morton; "but, even so, color-washing will be better than papering."

"We can go over them and fill up the cracks," suggested Tom, "and we can whitewash the ceilings."

"That's what I should advise," said Miss Merriam. "Put the walls and ceilings in as good condition as you can, and then put on your wash. Kalsomining is rather expensive, but there are plenty of color washes now that any one can put on who can wield a whitewash brush."

"Me for the whitewash brush at an early date," Roger sang gayly. "What do you suggest for these upstairs floors, Miss Merriam? Grandfather thought they weren't bad enough to have new ones laid, but they do look rather rocky, don't they?"

He cast a disparaging glance at the boards under his feet, and waited for help.

"Were you planning to paint them?"



“Yes,” Roger nodded.

“Then you ought to putty up the cracks first. That will make them smooth enough. They’re not really rough, you see. It’s the spaces between the planks that make them seem so.”

“That’s easily done. We thought we’d paint these old floors and stain the new ones down stairs.”

“I’d do that. Paint these floors tan or gray, if you want them to confess frankly that they’re painted floors, or the shade of some wood if you want to pretend that they’re hard wood floors.”

James moved uneasily. Roger guessed the reason.

“What’s the matter, old man? Treasury low?”

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"It always is," answered James uncomfortably. "How are we going to fill it?"

"That's what I've been thinking," Ethel Brown said meditatively. "It's time we did something to earn something."

"Everybody I've sold cookies to all winter seems to have stopped eating them," complained Ethel Brown. "I'm thinking of getting up a cooky sale to relieve my financial distress."

"There's an idea," cried Tom. "Why can't we have a cooky sale—with a few other things thrown in—and use the proceeds for the decoration and furnishing of Rose House?"

"We've had so many entertainments; can we do anything different enough for the Rosemonters to be willing to come?"

"And spend?"

"I think the Rosemonters have great confidence in our getting up something new and interesting; ditto the Glen Pointers," insisted Margaret who lived at Glen Point and knew the opinions of her neighbors.

"Where could we have it—*it* meaning our sale or whatever we decide to have?"

"Why not have it here? Let's wait until the boys have the house all painted and whitewashed and colorwashed so it looks as fresh as possible, and then tell the town what it is we are trying to do this summer, and ask them over here to see what it looks like."

"Good enough. When they see that it's good as far as it goes, but that our Fresh Air people will be mighty uncomfortable if they don't have some beds to sleep in and a few other trifles of every day use, they'll buy whatever we have to sell. That's the way it seems to me," and Roger threw himself down on the grass before the front door with an air of having said the final word.

"Let's ask the people of Rosemont to come to Rose House to a Rose Fete," cried Ethel Blue, while every one of her hearers waved his handkerchief at the suggestion.

"I'll draw a poster with the announcement on it," she went on, "and we can have it printed on pink paper and the boys can go round on their bicycles and distribute them at every house."

"We must have everything pink, of course. Pink ice cream and cakes with pink icing—"

"And pink strawberries—"



“Not green ones! No, sir!”

“And watermelons if we can get some that won’t make too much trouble for Dr. Hancock.”

“How are we going to serve them? We can’t bring china way out here—and we won’t have any for Rose House until after we give this party to earn it!”

“They have paper plates with pretty patterns on them now. And if they cost too much we might get the plain ones and lay a d’oyley of pink paper on each one,” suggested Margaret.

“Probably that will be the cheapest and the effect will be just as good, but I’ll find out the prices in town,” promised Delia.

“I have a scheme for a table of fancy things,” offered Dorothy. “Let’s have it under that tree over there and over it let’s hang a huge rose. I think I know how to make it—two hoops, the kind Dicky rolls, one above the other, the smaller one on top, and both suspended from the tree. Cover them inside and out with big pink paper petals.”



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“How are you going to make it look like a rose and not a pink bell?” inquired Delia.

“Put a green calyx on the top and some yellow stamens inside and then make a stem that will look like the real thing, only gigantic.”

“How will you manage that?”

“Do you remember those wild grape vines that Helen and Ethel Brown found in the West Woods and used for Hallowe’en decorations? If we could get a thick one and wind it with green paper and let it curve from the rose toward the ground it ought to look like a real stem.”

“We could hang the rose with dark string that wouldn’t show, and fasten the stem to the branch of the tree with a pink bow. It would look as if some giant had tied it there for his ladylove.”

“I have an old pink sash I’ll contribute to the good cause,” laughed Helen. “I’ve been wondering what to do with it for some time.”

“Everything on the table must be pink and shaped like a rose or decorated with roses—cushions, pen-wipers, baskets, stencilled bureau sets—there are a thousand things to be made.”

“Boxes covered with rose paper,” suggested James solemnly.

Everybody shouted, for James’s imagination always seemed to be stimulated whenever he saw a chance to make something with paste-pot and brush.

“How about music?”

This question brought silence, for it was not easy to arrange for music in the open.

“I wish Edward and his violin were here,” said Delia, referring to her brother, Dr. Watkins, who had recently gone to Oklahoma to assist an older physician in a flourishing town there. He had been very attentive to Miss Merriam and she was annoyed to find herself blushing at the mention of his name. Ethel Blue, who had been in his confidence, was the only one of the young people who glanced at her, however, so her annoyance passed unnoticed.

“He isn’t, and a piano is out of the question. I wonder, if Greg Patton would bring his fiddle?”

“Why didn’t we think of him before! He and some of the other high school boys have been getting up a little orchestra; I shouldn’t wonder a bit if they’d be glad to help—glad of the experience of playing in public.”



“We haven’t got to make oceans of paper roses, this time,” remarked Ethel Brown gratefully. “Nature is doing the work for us.”

She waved her hand at the clump of bushes which was to conceal Dorothy’s fortune telling operations, and which was pink with blossoms.

“Our bushes at home are loaded down with them, too,” said Margaret. “Everybody’s are, so I don’t suppose it would be worth while to have a flower table.”

“There’s no harm in trying. We could say on the poster that exceptionally choice roses will be on exhibition and sale and—and why couldn’t we take orders for the bushes? Use the beauties for samples and if people like them, get roots from the bushes they came from and supply them the next day!”

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Ethel Blue was quite breathless with the force of this suggestion and the others applauded it.

“Just as I think of Ethel Blue as all imagination and dreams she comes out with something practical like that and I have to study her all over again,” said Roger, observing his cousin with his head on one side. Ethel Blue threw a leaf at him which he dodged with exaggerated fear.

They decided to have the Rose Fete just as soon as the boys put the house into presentable condition, and then the girls separated, Ethel Brown and Dorothy to see Mr. Emerson about securing the boxes, Helen and Margaret to measure the windows for curtains, Delia and Ethel Blue to work out the design for converting ordinary Chinese lanterns into roses which they had thought of as lending a charm to the veranda and the lawn after the sun went down, and the boys to calculate the quantities of putty and paint and color-wash, based on information given Roger by the local painter and decorator, who was quite willing to help with advice when he found that there was no chance of his own services being called into play.

CHAPTER V

THE ROSE FETE

The United Service Club had made so good a name for itself in Rosemont during the few months of its existence that when Ethel Blue's posters brought to their doors the news that the U. S. C. was to give a Rose Fete at Rose House the townspeople were eager to know what attraction the members had devised. The schools were still in session so the Ethels and Dorothy at the graded school and Helen and Roger and the orchestra boys at the high school made themselves into an advertising band and told everybody all about the purpose of the festival. The scholars carried the information home, and there were few houses in Rosemont where it was not known that Mr. Emerson's old farmhouse was to be turned into a summer home for weary mothers and ailing babies.

Helen and Margaret, after consulting with their mothers and Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Emerson, had decided that a cot or single bed and two cribs ought to go in each bedroom except Moya's, where one crib would be enough. This meant that five beds and nine cribs must be provided, and the number made the girls look serious as they calculated the probable proceeds of the Rose Fete and subtracted from them the amount that they would have to pay the local furniture dealer, even though he, being a public spirited and charitable man, offered them a discount. For a day or two they went about in a state of depression, for they had hoped to be able to supply the furnishings without making any appeal to the grownups. Thanks to Dorothy they could discount any

expense for bureaus and desks and tables, but their ambition did not soar to constructing bedsteads; these had to be bought or given.



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It became evident after a number of householders had inquired how they could help, that there was a chance that the U. S. C. treasury might not be reduced after all by the purchase of beds. When one lady was informed by Helen of their schemes for filling the rooms—how the carpenters had provided them with a table that would do for the dining-room and how shelves innumerable were to do duty for innumerable purposes,—and she had added ruefully, “But we can’t make very good beds, and we do want the women to sleep well, poor things. We’ve got to buy those—” she had cried, “Why, I have a cot in my attic that I should be *delighted* to let you have, and my daughter’s little boy has outgrown his crib and I’m sure she’ll contribute that.”

A week before the Fete, however, they had been promised all the bedsteads they needed—though some lacked springs, some mattresses, and almost all were without pillows—four cribs, half a dozen chairs and two high chairs, and a collection of odd pieces. Helen refused nothing but double beds; there was not space enough for those in a bedroom with three people in it; it would seem to the women too much like the crowded tenements they came from, she thought. Miss Merriam objected also, on the ground that it was not well for babies to sleep with grown people.

“What do you think of this plan?” Ethel Brown asked her mother after the girls had made a careful list of their gifts. “We did think that if we didn’t have a stick in the house the people would be interested in helping us because of our poverty. We’ve found out that they are awfully interested even without seeing the house. Do you think it would be a good scheme to put into the rooms the things we have ready and to fasten on the door a notice saying

‘this room needs’

and under that a list of what is lacking? Don’t you think some of them would say, ‘I’ve got an extra cushion at home that would do for a pillow here; I’ll send it over’; or ‘Don’t you remember that three legged chair that used to be in Joe’s room? I believe these children can mend it and paint it to look well enough for this room?’”

“Ethel Brown, you’re running Ethel Blue hard in the line of ideas!” cried Roger admiringly from a position at the door which he had taken as he passed through the hall and heard discussion going on.

“It’s a capital idea,” agreed Mrs. Morton. “You’d better ask Grandfather again for a wagon and go around and collect the things that have been promised. You don’t want to bother people to send them over themselves.”

Every one worked with vigor during the last few days before the festival, for the renovating of old furniture takes more time than any one ever expects it to. The results were so satisfactory, however, that neither the boys nor the girls gave a thought to their tired hands and backs when evening brought them release from their labors.

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The great day was clear, and, for the last of June, cool. Every plan worked out well and every helper appeared at the moment he was wanted. The box seats and tables, superintended by Ethel Brown and served by half a dozen friends all wearing white dresses and pink aprons, bloomed rosily on the veranda. Under the large rose Delia and Ethel Blue, dressed in pink, sold fancy articles. Dorothy, sitting "under the rose" in the rose jungle, and dressed like a moss rose, with a filmy green tunic draping her pink frock, described brilliant futures to laughing inquirers. Margaret, dressed to represent the yellow Scottish roses, sold flowers from the Ethels' garden and took orders for rose bushes.

The boys were everywhere, opening ice cream tubs for Moya in the background, guiding would-be players to the tennis court and the croquet ground, and directing new arrivals where to tie their horses and park their motors. Every member of the club was provided with a small notebook wherein to jot down any bit of advice that was offered and seemed profitable or to record any offer of fittings that might be made.

Helen took no regular duty, leaving herself free to go over the house with any one who wanted to know the Club's plans, and she had more frequent need than any of the others to use her book. Ethel Brown's scheme had been followed. On the door of each room was posted a list of articles needed to complete the furnishing of that room.

"They certainly aren't greedy!" exclaimed one matron after reading the notice. "This says that this room is complete except for bed clothing."

She waved her hand around with some scorn. Helen dimpled with amusement.

"We thought we'd make one room as nearly complete as we could," she explained. "You see this has a bed, two cribs, a looking-glass, and shelves as substitutes for a washstand and a closet and a table and a bureau.

"There are no chairs, child!"

"These two boxes are the chairs. We had a few chairs given us but they'll be needed down stairs. We think they'll have more exercise than any chairs ever had before. They'll be used in the dining-room for breakfast, and then they'll be moved to the veranda to spend the morning, and in they'll come again for dinner and out they'll go for the afternoon, and in for supper, and after supper they'll be moved into the hall which is to serve as the sitting room!"

Helen's hearer pressed her hand to her head.

"You make me positively dizzy!" she exclaimed. "At any rate I'd like to make this room complete according to your notions, so I'll send you some sheets and pillow cases and blankets and a spread if you'll allow me."



“We’ll be glad to have them,” accepted Helen, beaming. “Roger will call for them if that will be more convenient for you,” and she made a note of the gift and the time when it should be sent after.

Other women remembered as they examined the door lists that they had a mattress that could be spared, or a pillow or two or a pair of summer blankets.



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“What are you going to do for ornaments,” asked another.

Helen laughed.

“James Hancock has an idea for decorating the walls so that they’ll interest the babies, and we’re going to have fresh cheese-cloth curtains at all the windows, but that’s the end of our possibilities.”

“I have several bureau scarves that are in good condition but they have been washed so many times that they’re a little faded. If you’d like those—?” she ended with an upward inflection.

“We would,” replied Helen promptly.

“Could you use some prints of pictures—good paintings?” inquired yet another, a person whose taste Helen knew could be trusted.

“We’d be glad of them. We can frame them in passepartout. We’d be especially glad of madonnas.”

“That’s just what I was going to offer you. A club I once belonged to studied celebrated paintings of madonnas one winter and I made this collection. Many of them are only penny prints and some are cut from magazines—“.

“They’re perfectly good for us,” Helen reassured her, and made another note in her book.

Most of the visitors went home with the falling dark, but some stayed to see the rose lanterns lighted, and others, who had not been able to come in the afternoon, drove or walked out from town in the evening and were served with ice cream and strawberries from a supply that had been wonderfully well calculated.

“Let us have just a week to spend this money and to make up the sheets and pillow cases and curtains and you can tell Mr. Watkins to send out the women,” Helen announced triumphantly to Delia.

“I’m going to spend the week with Margaret so I can come over with her every day and help,” returned smiling Delia.

“Then we shan’t need a whole week. When you go home to-night please ask your father to be making his selection—four mothers with two children apiece. You and Tom can escort them out on the Tuesday after Fourth of July.”



CHAPTER VI

FURNITURE MAKING

It did not take the women long to adjust themselves to life at Rose House, and as for the children, they loved it from the first. It was a great international gathering that was sheltered on the old farm. Mrs. Schuler was German; Moya, Irish. Mrs. Peterson, a Swede, occupied the rooster room with her baby and her flaxen-haired daughter of three; Mrs. Paterno, an Italian, found good pasturage among the cows of the violet room for her black-eyed boys of two and four; Mrs. Tsanoff, a Bulgarian, told the Matron that her twin girl babies were too young to pay attention to the kittens on the curtains of the yellow room; while Mrs. Vereshchagin, a Russian, discovered that the puppies of the blue room were a great help to her in holding the attention of her boys of three and five when she was putting them to bed.

Mrs. Schuler shook her head doubtfully when she took down their names and nationalities in her notebook on the day of their arrival.

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“If we get through the summer without quarrels over the war it will be a miracle!” she exclaimed to her husband.

But she found that the poor creatures were too weary, too sad, too physically crushed to have spirit enough left to fight any battles, even those of words. With almost every one of them there had been a tragedy such as often comes to the immigrants who reach the United States equipped for success only with strong muscles—a tragedy of wasted hope and broken courage and failing vigor if not of death. Mrs. Paterno was the only one of them who could sympathize with Moya’s widowhood; her husband had seen the Black Hand death sign a few months before, had disregarded it and had been stabbed in the back one night as he came home from his work.

Conversation was not carried on fluently among them. They met on the common ground of English, but not one of them could speak it well, each one translated phrases of her own tongue quite literally, and the meaning of the whole talk was largely a matter of guesswork. What they did understand was nature’s language of motherhood. They were content to sit for hours on the veranda or in the grove or behind the house, preparing vegetables for Moya, chattering about their babies and explaining their meaning by gestures that seemed to be perfectly understood.

The women had daily duties to perform according to a schedule worked out by Mrs. Schuler, who apportioned to each a share of the general work of the house in addition to the care of her own room and the washing for herself and her children. With so many fingers flying the tasks were soon done, and then they sat on the porch or in the grove among the sweet-smelling pines, or walked in the pasture or up and down the lane leading to the main road. Once in a while they went to Rosemont, but for the most part they were too languid to care to walk far and too glad of the change and the rest and quiet to want to weary themselves unnecessarily.

The boys had built a platform across the back of the house, and it was here that they did their carpentry, an awning sheltering them from the sun or rain. A cupboard at one end held their tools, and their partly finished articles were neatly stacked in a corner. As they got out their tools now James made a confession.

“To tell you the honest, unvarnished truth, I’m tired of making chairs. It seems as if we’d never have enough.”

“It takes an awful lot to furnish a house,” commented Roger wisely, “and you know we had very few given us so if we want enough we have to make them.”

“We’ve got all the chairs you’ve done upholstered all they’re going to be,” said Ethel Brown. “Why can’t Ethel Blue and I each make a high chair?”

“No reason at all,” agreed Roger quickly. “You’ve watched James and me and seen our really superior workmanship; imitate it, my child!”



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The girls were already turning over the boys' supply of boxes to select those suitable for the chairs for the children. They took four that had held lemons or other fruit and were tall and narrow when stood on end. The boards they were made of were very light but quite solid enough to hold the weight of a small child. To make it firm upon the ground, however, they sawed a piece of heavy plank a little larger than the end upon which the box was to stand and nailed it on from the inside.

When the high chair was done the boys complimented their co-workers on the success of their first experiment.

"I hardly could have done it better myself," said Roger grandly.

All the high chairs were covered with blue and white cretonne to match the blue and white of the dining room and the girls set to work to tack on the outside covering and to cut out the covers of the small cushions that were to make the seat and back comfortable. The cushions themselves they had made from ticking filled with excelsior when they had calculated the number of high chairs they must have.

The boys, meanwhile were constructing two chairs of quite different build. One was a heavy chair for the hall or the veranda, its original condition being a packing box a foot and a half deep, about twenty inches wide and three or four feet long. This also was set on end, and the other end and the cover were laid aside to be used in making the seat and in shutting in the openings below the seat.

"How are you going to fasten that seat so it won't let the sitter down on the floor?" inquired Ethel Blue, as James explained what he was going to do.

"Do you see these cleats, ma'am? These are each a foot long. I nail one of these standing up straight at each edge of the sides and the back—six of them altogether. Then I lay three other cleats across their tops—thusly."

"O, you've made a sort of framework that will support the seat! I get that!" exclaimed Ethel Blue.

"All you have to do now is to nail your seat boards on to those horizontal cleats and it's as firm as firm can be."

"Aren't you going to do something with those sides—those arms, or whatever you call them?" inquired Ethel Brown. "They seem sharp and uncomfortable and in the way to me."

Both boys studied the chair seriously before answering. Then they took a pencil and paper and consulted.



“I should think it would look pretty well to cut out a right angle on each aide,” suggested James. “That would leave a sort of wing effect like a hall porter’s chair, only not so high, and at the same time it would make an arm to rest your elbow on. How does that strike you?”

Roger nodded. “It hits me all right. I was thinking of a curve instead of a right angle, but the right angle will be easier to make. Go ahead.”

So the right angle was decided on and James proceeded to cut it.



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Roger, meanwhile, had been sorting out the wood he needed for a chair of another pattern.

"I wish Dorothy would heave in sight," he growled as he piled some half inch thick strips in one heap. "She told me she'd tell me all she knew about chair legs when I reached this stage of proceedings."

"She will," answered a cheerful voice, and gray-eyed Dorothy appeared from the house. "I felt in my bones that you'd be beginning this lot this afternoon, so I ambled over to see if I could help in any way."

"Keep right on ambling till you reach this end of the platform and tell me whether you said that chair legs could be made of this stripping or whether I'll have to get solid pieces, square-ended, you know, joist or scantling or whatever it's called."

"Strips will do, only you'll have to use two for each leg. Nail them together at right angles. It will make a two-sided leg, but it will be plenty strong enough, though perhaps not truly handsome."

"If handsomeness means solidity—no. Still, they'll do. Can you give me the lengths for these strips?" and Roger waved his saw at his cousin as if he were so impatient to begin that he could not wait to study out the lengths for himself.

"For the one I made for the attic," replied his cousin, "I cut four strips each two inches wide and twenty-one inches long for the front legs and four strips each two inches wide and twenty-five inches long for the back legs. Then there were two two-inch strips seventeen inches long to go under the seat to strengthen it front and back, and two two-inch strips each thirteen inches long to go under the seat and strengthen it on the sides. That's all the stock you need except the box."

"I suppose you've got a particular box in mind to fit those sizes."

"Those sizes fit the box, rather. Yes, I got a grocery box that was about eighteen inches long and thirteen wide and eleven deep. I saw one here just like it before I gave you those measurements, so you can go ahead sawing while I pull off one side of the box—the cover has gone already but we don't need it."

Quiet reigned for a few minutes while they all worked briskly.

"Now I'm ready to put this superb article together," announced Roger. "How high from the ground does the seat go?"

"Nail your cleats across with their top edges fifteen inches from the ground and nail the bottom of the box on to the cleats. See how these two-sided legs protect the edges of the box as well as make it decent looking?"



“So they do,” admitted Roger. “They aren’t so bad after all.”

“I think those sides are going to be too high,” decided Dorothy after examining the chair carefully and sitting down in it. “Don’t you think it pushes your elbows up too high?”

Roger tried it and thought it did.

“Suppose you saw those sides down about five inches.”

Roger obeyed and Dorothy tried the chair again and pronounced it much improved.



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"It's comfy enough now, but these arms don't look very well, and they'd be liable to tear your sleeves," she said. "Let's put on some strip covers. They'll give a finish to the whole thing, and hide the end of the two-sided legs and be smooth."

"Plenty of reason for having them. How many inches?"

"Twelve," answered Dorothy after measuring. "The top of the back needs a strip cover, too. Cut another nineteen inches long. There, I think that's not such a bad looking chair!"

"Do you want cushions for those chairs?" inquired Ethel Brown, appearing at the door with a piece of cretonne in her hand. "We've got material enough for at least seat cushions for both of them."

"They'll be lots more comfy," admitted James, "if the excelsior crop is still holding out."

"It is. I'll make them right off, and Ethel Blue can help you out there."

She retired from view and sent out her cousin, and until the sun set the two boys and Dorothy and Ethel measured and sawed and nailed, with results that satisfied them so well that they did not mind being tired.

CHAPTER VII

TROUBLE AT ROSE HOUSE

"If it weren't that I could come out here and see you every day or so I should be wild to get back to work in Oklahoma."

Edward Watkins was the speaker. He and Miss Merriam were walking through a wooded path that ran from Rosemont to Rose House. The day was warm and the shade of the trees was grateful.

"How is your patient?" asked Gertrude.

"Getting on very well, but the doctors won't let him travel yet."

"Have you heard lately from your doctor in Oklahoma?"

"I hear about every day! I was with him just long enough for him to find that I was useful and he's wild to have me there again. I wired him that I'm ready to go, but that the sick man is nervous about making the return trip alone. Of course he wants to keep on the good side of a good patient, so he answered, 'Stay on'."



“Are you able to do anything for your patient? He’s still in the hospital, isn’t he?”

“I go there every day and he sends me on errands all over town. I’m getting to know almost as much about oil as I do about medicine! But I’m rather tired of playing errand boy.”

“You have a chance to see your family.”

“And you. But I’m supposed to stay at the hotel, much to Mother’s disgust. I’m doing a little medical inspection among Father’s poor people, though. That whiles away a few hours every day, and of course, every time I go to the hospital the doctors there tell me about any interesting new cases, so I’m not ‘going stale’ entirely.”

“As if you could!” exclaimed Gertrude admiringly. “You’re just storing up ideas and information to startle the Oklahoman natives with.”

“The ‘natives’ in Oklahoma are all too young to be startled,” laughed Edward, “but of course I’m stowing away everything new I hear about methods of treatment and operations and so on to tell Dr. Billings when I get back. Now let me hear what you’ve been doing. How are these kiddies at Rose House?”



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"I want you to look them over and talk with the mothers. Dr. Hancock comes over when we send for him, but all these people are so delicate that I feel that they ought to have a physician's eye on them all the time."

"They have you pretty often, don't they?"

"I go over every day either in the morning or the afternoon, and I give them advice about the babies, and teach them and Moya how to prepare their food, but they do such strange things that you can't forestall because you never had the wildest idea that any woman in her senses would treat a baby so."

Edward laughed.

"Russian and Bulgarian peasant customs, I suppose. I never shall forget the first time I saw a two-day old negro baby sucking a bit of fat bacon. I nearly had a chill."

"Didn't the child have a chill?"

"Not the slightest! If they get ahead of you with some pleasing little trick like that you can console yourself with the thought that generally there is some basis of old-time experience that has shown it to be not so harmful as we are apt to think."

"I've done enough tenement house work to know that the babies certainly survive extraordinary treatment, but these babies here are so delicate that they ought to have the most careful diet. Most of them need real nursing."

"Do you think your talks are making any impressions on the mothers?"

"Sometimes Mrs. Schuler and I think so, and just then it almost always happens that one of them does something totally unexpected that gives our hopes a terrible blow."

"Let's trust that this is a good day; I'd rather talk to you than work over a case this fine afternoon."

Gertrude smiled at his tone and they walked on in silence out of the wood and across the brook and down the lane that brought them to the back of Rose House where the Club boys and girls were busy making a piece of furniture of some sort. Mrs. Schuler was talking to Moya in the kitchen.

"I've brought Dr. Watkins to see everybody," announced Miss Merriam gayly. "Where are they all?"

"The ones who are at home are up in the pine grove, but Moya has just told me that Mrs. Paterno and her older boy and Mrs. Tsanoff and one of the twins have gone to town."



“Walked?”

“Walked by the road on this scorching day!”

Miss Merriam turned to the doctor.

“This is one of the unexpected events we were just talking about. Little Paterno is four and too large for that little woman to carry, and far too small and weak to take that long walk on his own legs even on a more suitable day than this, and the Tsanoff twins are just holding on to life by the tips of their fingers!”

She sat down in despair. Dr. Watkins looked serious.

“Is there any way of heading them off or bringing them back. Can we reach them anywhere by telephone?”

“No one knows where they can have gone. It seems it must have been about an hour and a half ago that they started and I should think they’d be back before long if they’re able to come back—”



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“—under their own steam!” finished the doctor with a doubtful smile.

“Let’s go to the grove and see the women and children there and perhaps the others will be in sight by the time you’ve finished your examination.”

They turned toward the pines whose thick needles cast a heavy shade upon the ground and gave forth a delicious fragrance under the rays of the sun. As they disappeared Mrs. Schuler went out on the platform where the carpentering operations were going on.

“I’m so disturbed about those women,” she said, “I’ve come to see what you’re doing to divert my mind from them.”

“We’re going to make two of these seats, one for your office and the other for the veranda,” said Ethel Brown, standing erect and putting a hand upon her weary back. The rest of the young carpenters stopped their work and wiped their perspiring foreheads while they explained the construction of the piece of furniture to their friend.

“This long narrow box is the seat, you see. It’s a shoe case, and it’s just the right height for comfort. Roger has put hinges on the cover, so you can use it for a chest and keep rugs and cushions inside.”

“That’s about as simple as it could be. Does it take all of you to help Roger do that?”

“O, that’s only a part of the entire affair. We’re making these two sets of shelves to go at the ends of the seat.”

“I see. A great light breaks on me!”

“They’re to be fastened to the ends of the seat.”

“Not for keeps. That’s Ethel Blue’s patent. She said it would be awkward to move about if it were all built together, so we’re making it in three parts, and we’re going to lock them together with hooks and screw eyes.”

“That is clever! Then if you want to you can use these sets of shelves for little bookcases in another room or you can fasten on one of them and not the other.”

“Ethel Blue and I thought we’d make pink cushions for your office if you’d like them.”

“I think they’d be charming. That pink room raises my spirits when—”

“—when you get *blue*?” suggested Roger.

“I’ll have to go there now to get revived if those women who walked to town don’t turn up soon,” and the Matron went to the corner of the house whence she could see the



lane that led from the road. "If they come home ill I'll have to ask you to make two bed trays," she suggested as she peered across the grass.

"How do you make them?"

"Ask Ethel Blue."

"Merely put legs on a light board so that the weight of the plates will be lifted from the sick person's legs as he sits up in bed."

"What's to prevent the plates sliding off?"

"Nothing if he's much of a kicker, I should say," laughed Roger; "but you could put a little fence an inch or two high at the back and sides and keep them on board."

"You'd better begin them right off," said Mrs. Schuler dryly, "for here they come."



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She disappeared around the corner and the young people followed to see what was the matter.

Trouble there was in very truth. Mrs. Paterno led the way stumbling and running. Her face was flushed a deep, threatening crimson and her breath came fast. By the arm she held little Pietro, who from exhaustion had ceased to scream and merely gave a gulping moan when the gravel scraped his bare knees as his mother jerked him along regardless of whether he was on his feet or whether she dragged him. Behind them at some distance came Mrs. Tsanoff carrying her baby in her arms—one of the twins that always seemed to be merely “holding on to life by the tips of its fingers,” to use Gertrude’s expression, and now seemed to have lost even that frail hold. It lay in its mother’s arms white and with its eyes closed.

Mrs. Schuler ran to meet the Italian woman and lifted the worn child into her arms where he sank against her shoulder as if in a faint.

“Run up in the grove and get Dr. Watkins and Miss Gertrude,” Helen said to Roger. “Ask them quietly to come here. Don’t frighten the women.”

Roger dashed away, his swift feet slowing to a walk as he neared the bit of woods where he delivered his message in an undertone. Ethel Blue meanwhile, had rushed into the house to tell Moya to heat plenty of water and to crack some ice, and Margaret had opened Mrs. Schuler’s closet of simple remedies and found the bottle of aromatic spirits of ammonia. Ethel Brown and James ran to meet Mrs. Tsanoff, Ethel taking the baby from her and James steadying her shaking steps by a stout arm under her elbow.

As Dr. Watkins ran around the corner of the house he came upon Helen trying to help Mrs. Paterno, who was pushing her away with both hands, while she kept looking over her shoulder and screaming hysterically. Edward seized her hands and commanded her attention at once by speaking to her in Italian. Although she did not know him she responded to his command to tell him of what she was afraid, and poured out a story of terror. “*Mano, nera, mano nera*—the Black Hand,” she repeated over and over again, and Edward, who had heard her history, realized that something she had seen had set her mind in the old train of thought. While Miss Merriam attended to the children he calmed the woman and then turned her over to Mrs. Schuler with instructions to put her to bed in a darkened room and to see that some one stayed with her or just outside her door.

Fortunately for the doctor his experience with the people among whom his father worked in his East Side chapel had given him a smattering of many languages and he was able to make out from Mrs. Tsanoff, although her fright and fatigue had made her forget almost all the English she knew, what had terrified her companion. They had gone to the stationery shop of the Englishman who also sold ice cream and soda, she



said, and they had had each a glass of soda and the children had each had an ice cream cone.



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Edward groaned and over his shoulder directed Delia to run and tell Miss Merriam that both babies had had ice cream cones. "It will help her to know what to do until I come," he explained.

Just as they were coming out of the store a dark man who looked like an Italian had passed them.

So far as she noticed he had paid no attention to them, but Mrs. Paterno had seized her arm, pointing after him, and then had picked up Pietro and started to run toward home. Neither far nor fast could she go in such heat with such a burden and the poor little chap was soon tossed down and forced to run with giant strides all the rest of the eternal mile that stretched between Rosemont and Rose House. Mrs. Tsanoff herself had followed as fast as she could because she was afraid that something, she knew not what, would happen to her friend.

She, too, was sent to bed, with Moya standing over her to lay cool compresses on her eyes, to sponge her wrists and ankles with cool water and to lay an occasional bit of cracked ice on her parched lips.

The condition of the two children was pitiable. The heat, the sudden chill from the ice cream and the terrible homeward rush sent them both so nearly into a collapse that the doctor, Mrs. Schuler and Miss Merriam worked over them all night, resting only when Dr. Hancock, who had heard the story from James and Margaret and came up to see the state of affairs, relieved them for an hour.

"How are we ever going to teach them the madness of such behavior?" Gertrude asked wearily as Dr. Watkins insisted that she and Mrs. Schuler should go to bed as the dawn broke.

"The poor little Italian woman is almost mad already, thanks to this Black Hand business. It will take her a long time to recover her balance, but I think I can teach the others a lesson from this experience of their friends. Wait till to-morrow comes and hear me talk five languages at once," he promised cheerfully as he turned her over to Mrs. Schuler.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME ENTERTAINMENT

The escapade of the Italian and Bulgarian women played havoc with the calm of Rose House for several days. The women themselves had narrow escapes from illness and the children were so seriously ill that a trained nurse had to be sent up from the Glen Point Hospital, as neither Miss Merriam nor Mrs. Schuler could undertake nursing in addition to their other work.



When all was well again Miss Merriam redoubled her efforts to teach the women something of proper care of their children and themselves, and, with the help of Dr. Watkins's knowledge of languages, she began to hope that she was making some progress. Mrs. Tzanoff and Mrs. Peterson, who had little babies, were taught to modify milk for them, the dangers of giving small children foods unsuited to their age was talked about now with the recent experience to point the moral; and ways of keeping well in hot weather were explained and listened to with interest.



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Substitutes for meat were discussed earnestly, chiefly on account of the high cost of living but also because meat was declared to be far too heating for warm weather use. Each of the women knew of some dish which took the place of meat and she was glad to tell the others about it. Mrs. Paterno knew very well that cheese is one of the best substitutes for meat that there is.

“Americans eat cheesa after meata; then sick,” she declared with truth. Her receipt for a risotto Moya wrote down in the blank book in which she was collecting recipes and Mrs. Paterno beamed when it came onto the table.

Chiefly for the purpose of giving the little Italian woman a change of thought, the U. S. C. made a point of providing Rose House with some sort of entertainment every few days. Once they introduced the inmates to an American hayride, and the four women, with Moya and the older children, screamed with delight as they found themselves moving slowly along on a real load of hay—for Grandfather Emerson declared that that was the only kind of hayride worth having.

Again they all stowed themselves away in the automobile and went to a pond ten miles away for a day’s picnic. That proved not to be a success, for everybody was so tired all the next day that there was a nearer approach to disagreement among them than ever happened before. Mrs. Schuler made up her mind that home—meaning Rose House—was the best place for them and that amusements must be found at home and not afield.

CHAPTER IX

A NEW KIND OF GRASS SEED

“Your grand-father told me once about a field he had that was filled with daisies,” said Ethel Blue. “It looked awfully pretty, but it spoiled the field for a pasture; the cows wouldn’t touch them.”

“I remember that field. We used to make daisy chains and trim Mother’s room with them,” said Ethel Brown.

“Mr. Emerson tried ploughing up the field and he had men working over it for two seasons, but on the third, up they grew again as gay as you please. They acted as if he had just been stirring up the soil so they would grow better than ever.”

“Poor Grandfather; he had a hard time with that field.”

“He said he really needed it for a pasture, so he made up his mind that if he couldn’t root out the bad plants, he’d crowd them out. So he bought some seed of a kind of grass that has large, strong roots, and he sowed it in the field. As soon as it began to



grow he could see that there certainly were not so many daisies there. He kept on another year and the cows began to look over the fence as if they'd like to get in. The third year there were so few daisies that they didn't count."

"I remember all that," said Ethel Brown, "but what does it have to do with Mrs. Paterno?"



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“Why, if we—or Edward—could make her get a grip on herself and control herself that would be like Mr. Emerson’s digging up the daisies. It would be hard work and an awfully slow process. But if we also could fill her mind with thoughts about working for her children and trying to make other people happy and with making embroidery which she loves to do, why wouldn’t it help? These new things she’s thinking about would be like the strong, new grass seed that didn’t give the weeds a chance to grow.”

Dorothy stared seriously at Ethel Blue.

“She does perfectly beautiful embroidery,” she said slowly, as she tried to think out a way to put Ethel Blue’s suggestion into effect. “Do you suppose she’d be willing to teach us how to do it? That beautiful Italian cut work, you know. If we should call ourselves a class and ask her to teach us it might give her something quite new to think about.”

“I’d like to learn, too,” agreed Ethel Blue. “I heard Mother say once that there was a school in New York for Italian lace work. Let’s get Delia to find out about it, and when Mrs. Paterno grows stronger and goes back to the city she might go there. They have a shop uptown where they sell the pupils’ work. The class here and the prospect of having regular employment when she went back—”

“Work she likes.”

“What are you youngsters plotting?” asked the cheerful voice of Grandfather Emerson, who came around the big oak from the grass grown lane so quietly that they did not hear him coming.

They told him their plan, and he listened intently.

“The poor little woman has had such a shock that it will be a long time before she can control herself, I’m afraid,” he responded sympathetically, “but I believe you’ve hit on the right way.”

“Then we’ll get Edward Watkins to ask her whether she’ll be willing to teach a class, and we’ll all join it.”

“The other women might like to learn, too.”

“Perhaps they could teach. Bulgarian embroidery has been fashionable lately, you know, and the peasant women do it.”

“Your grandmother and I went through a Peasant’s Bazar when we were in Petrograd and there were mounds of embroidery there that the peasant women had made.”



“The Swedes do beautiful work. Why don’t we have a class for international embroidery?” laughed Dorothy. “I think Mother would like to learn the Russian; she’s crazy about Russian music and everything Russian.”

“We’ll ask Mother and Grandmother, too, and perhaps the Miss Clarks would come and the women could charge a fee and make a little money teaching us and be amused themselves.”

“I dare say it will do the others good as well as the little Italian. You’ve hit on something that will benefit all of them while you were trying to help Mrs. Paterno,” surmised Mr. Emerson. “What I came over here this morning to see you about was this,” he went on in a business-like tone that made them look at him attentively. “Grandmother and I think that Mrs. Paterno has been a trifle too exciting for you young people the last few days. We think you need a change of thought as well as that young woman herself.”



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They all sat and waited for what was coming, quite unable to guess what proposition he was going to make.

“Helen and Roger are somewhat older and stand such upheavals a little better than you girls, so my plan doesn’t include them.”

“Just us three?” asked Ethel Brown.

“Just you three. Here’s my scheme; see if you like it. I have to go over to Boston tomorrow on a matter of business and it occurred to me that it would be a pleasant sail on the Sound and that you’d be interested in seeing the city—”

“O—o!” gasped Dorothy; “Cambridge and Longfellow’s house.”

“Concord and Lexington!” cried Ethel Brown.

“The Art Museum!” murmured Ethel Blue.

“And Bunker Hill Monument, and, of course, the Navy Yard especially for this daughter of a sailor,” and he nodded gayly at his granddaughter.

“Grandmother will go, to take you around when I have to attend to my business, and we can stay a day or two and come back fresh to attend to Mrs. Paterno’s affairs. How does it strike you?”

Without any preliminary conference, the three girls flung their arms around his neck and hugged him heartily.

“Have you talked about it with Mother and Aunt Louise?” asked Ethel Brown.

“I’m armed with their permission.”

“I guess we were all worrying about Mrs. Paterno,” admitted Ethel Blue. “This will be the strong grass seed that will clear up our minds so that we can help her better after we come back.”

“I think you’re the most magnificent Grandfather that ever was born!” exclaimed Ethel Brown, standing back and gazing admiringly at her ancestor.

“Thank you,” returned Mr. Emerson, bowing low, his hand on his heart, “I am quite overcome by such a wholesale tribute!”

“Had we better tell Mrs. Schuler about the embroidery class plan?” asked Dorothy.



“Run up to Rose House now and explain it to her and ask her to talk to the women about it while you are gone, and then when you get back she’ll have it all ready to start,” Mr. Emerson suggested.

The next twenty-four hours were full of excitement. Each of the girls had only a small handbag to pack, but the selection of what should go into each bag seemed a matter of infinite importance. The Ethels filled their bags twice before they were satisfied that they had not left out anything that would be wanted, and Dorothy confessed that she had first put in too much and then had gone to the other extreme, and that it had not been until after she had had a consultation with her mother that she had decided on just the number and kind of garments that she would need for a two-day trip to the Hub of the Universe.

“Why is it called that?” she asked of Ethel Brown.

“I asked Mother and she said that people from New York and other cities used to say that Bostonians thought that their town was the centre of civilization. So they guyed it by calling it the ‘Hub’.”



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Roger and Helen went into New York with the travellers and Delia and Margaret were on the pier to see the steamer leave.

It was a glorious afternoon and the boat slipped around the end of the Battery while the westering sun was still shining brilliantly on the water, touching it with sparkles on the tip of each tiny wave. The Statue of Liberty, with the sun behind it, towered darkly against the gold. The huge buildings of the lower city stretched skywards, the new Equitable, the latest addition to the mammoth group, shutting off almost entirely the view of the Singer Tower from the harbor, just as the Woolworth Tower hides it from observers on the north.

Between them Grandfather and Grandmother Emerson were able to point out nearly all of the sights of the East River—several parks and playgrounds, Bellevue Hospital, the Vanderbilt model tenements for people threatened with tuberculosis, the Junior League Hotel for self-supporting women, the old dwelling where Dorothy's friend, the "box furniture lady," had established a school to teach the folk of the neighborhood how to use tools for the advantage of their house-furnishings.

The boat was one of those which steams around Cape Cod instead of stopping at Fall River, Rhode Island, and sending its passengers to Boston by train. Early morning found them all on deck watching the waters of Massachusetts Bay and trying to place on a map that Mr. Emerson produced from his pocket the towns whose church spires they could see pointing skyward far off on their left. Twin lighthouses they decided, marked Gurnet Point, the entrance to Plymouth Bay, and they strained their eyes to see the town that was the oldest settlement in Massachusetts, and imagined they were watching the bulky little Mayflower making her way landward between the headlands.

Mr. Emerson convoyed his party to a hotel on Copley Square and left them there while he went out at once to meet his business friends.

"How far away Rosemont seems, and poor Mrs. Paterno with her troubles," she said an hour later as they stood before Sargent's panel of the Prophets in the Public Library.

CHAPTER X

TROLLEYING

As for the Art Museum, they wandered delightedly from one room to another, but went away with a sensation of having seen too much that was almost as uncomfortable as that of having eaten too much.

"I should like to come here or to go to the Metropolitan in New York with some one who could tell me about every picture or every object in just one room and stay there for an hour and then go away and think about it," said Ethel Blue.



“We will do that some day at the Metropolitan,” said Mrs. Emerson. “If the Club would like to go in a body some day we can get one of the guides who do just what you describe. We can tell her the sort of thing we want to see—classical statuary or English artists or the Morgan collection—and have it all shown to us from the standpoint of the expert critic. Or we can put ourselves in the hands of the guide and say that we’d like to see the ten exhibits that the Museum looks upon as the choicest.”



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“Either way would be wonderful!” beamed Ethel Blue, and the three girls promised themselves the delight of reporting Mrs. Emerson’s offer to the Club at its next meeting.

The homeward trip was made by a route quite different from the one by which the party reached Boston. Grandfather proposed it at breakfast on the morning of the day on which they had intended to leave in the afternoon.

“Are you people very keen on this drive through the Park System to-day?” he asked.

The girls did not know what to say, but Mrs. Emerson scented a new idea and replied “not if you have something to suggest that we’d like better.”

“How would you like to trolley back to New York?”

“Trolley back to New York!” repeated the girls with little screeches of joy. “All the way by trolley? How long will it take? I never heard of anything so delightful in all my life!”

After such a quick and satisfactory response Mr. Emerson did not need to lay his plan before them in any further detail.

“I see you’re ‘game,’ as Roger would say, for anything, so we’ll go that way if Mother agrees.”

Mrs. Emerson did agree and even went so far as to say that she had wanted to do that very thing for a long time.

“It’s lucky Grandfather insisted that we shouldn’t bring anything but small handbags,” said Ethel Brown. “These little things we have won’t be any trouble at all, no matter how many times we have to change.”

They started in heavy inter-urban cars which rode as solidly as railroad cars and enabled them to be but very little tired at the end of the first “leg” of the journey. The wide windows permitted views of the country and the girls ran from one side to the other of the closed cars, so that they should not miss anything of interest, and sat on the front seat of the open cars into which they changed later, so that they might have no one in front of them to obstruct their view.

They went out of the city straight westward through Brookline, through Chestnut Hill, where is one of the reservoirs from which the city is supplied; past Wellesley, where they saw the college buildings rising among the trees on the left.

The party reached Springfield at dusk and had time to take a walk after dinner. They admired the elm-bordered streets and the comfortable houses, and they thought the Arsenal looked extremely peaceful outside in spite of its murderous activities within.



It was a deep sleep that visited them all that night. A whole day in the open air with the gentle but continuous exercise provided by the car made them unconscious of their surroundings almost as soon as they touched their pillows.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY

With a long and varied day ahead of them they were delighted to find the morning clear when they awoke.



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“There are almost as many points of interest in the Connecticut River Valley as there are on the Concord and Lexington road,” Mr. Emerson told the girls. “We’re going first to Holyoke, which is one of the largest paper manufacturing towns in the world. I have a little business to do there and while I am seeing my man you people can take a little walk. Be sure you notice the big dam. It’s a thousand feet long. The Holyoke water power is very unusual.”

Perhaps because they were not experts on water power they were not greatly impressed by the floods of the Connecticut River diverted into deep canals and swimming along so smoothly as to impart but little idea of their strength. Only the whir of the great mills gave evidence that iron and steel were being moved by it.

“How Roger would enjoy this!” cried Ethel Brown, and “Wouldn’t Helen be just crazy over all the history of this region?” added Ethel Blue, while Dorothy, who had travelled much but never without her mother, silently wished that she were there to enjoy it all.

“There’s another girl’s college of note,” and Mrs. Emerson pointed out Mt. Holyoke at South Hadley, northeast of Mt Tom.

“And we’re going to see Smith College to-day! I feel as if I wanted to go to all of them!” cried Ethel Blue.

“You might take a year at each and find out which was best suited to your temperament,” laughed Mrs. Emerson.

From the foot of the mountain they went northward again to Northampton.

“Here’s where I ought to go if names count for anything,” decided Dorothy.

“If all the girls named Smith who go to college anywhere should go here because of the name there wouldn’t be room for any other students,” said Mr. Emerson jokingly.

“They say,” returned Dorothy on the defensive, “that in the beginning all the people in the world were named Smith and it was only those who misbehaved who had their names changed.”

“You can at least pride yourself on their being an industrious lot. Think of all their crafts—they were armorers and goldsmiths, and silversmiths and blacksmiths.”

CHAPTER XII

THE BERKSHIRES AND BENNINGTON



Greenfield, where the party spent the night, they found to be a pleasant old town with the wide, tree-bordered streets to which they were growing accustomed in this trolleying pilgrimage. A quiet hotel sheltered them and they slept soundly, their dreams filled with memories of colleges and rose gardens and Indians in romantic confusion. The next day they started westward.

Pittsfield they found to be a large town whose old houses surrounded by ancient trees gave a feeling of solidity and comfort.

“Longfellow wrote ‘The Old Clock on the Stairs’ here,” said Mr. Emerson pointing out the Appleton house. “The first stanza describes more than one of the old mansions,” and he recited:—



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“Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw,
And from its station in the hall
An ancient timepiece says to all,—
‘Forever—never!
Never—forever!’”

“I remember that poem, but I never liked it much;” acknowledged Dorothy; “it’s too gloomy.”

“It is rather solemn,” admitted Mr. Emerson. “You’ll be interested to know that merry Dr. Holmes used to come to Pittsfield in the summer. There are many associations with him in the town.”

“I’m sure he wrote gayer poems than ‘The Old Clock on the Stairs’ when he was here.”

“Is this a very old town?” Ethel Blue asked.

“It was settled in 1743. Does that seem old to you?”

[Illustration: “It was settled in 1743”]

“1743,” Ethel repeated, doing some subtraction by the aid of her fingers, for arithmetic was not her strong point. “A hundred and eighty-seven years,” she decided after reflection. “Yes, that seems pretty old to me. It’s a lot older than Rosemont but over a hundred years younger than Plymouth or Boston.”

“A sort of middle age,” Mr. Emerson summed up her decision with a smile.

After luncheon at the hotel an early afternoon car sped on with them to a station whence they took an automobile for a drive through Stockbridge and Lenox with their handsome estates and lovely views.

The trolley whizzed them back over the same route to North Adams and westward to Williamstown.

“One of my brothers—your great-uncle James, Ethel Brown—went to Williams College,” said Mr. Emerson, “and I shall be glad to spend the night here and see the town and the buildings I heard him talk so much about.”

“Why don’t we get out, then?”

“We’re going now to Bennington, Vermont.”



“Vermont! Into another state!” exclaimed Ethel Blue.

“When we come back we’ll leave the car here.”

“Are those the Green Mountains?” asked Dorothy as the trolley ran into a smoother country than they had been in while traveling in the Berkshires, but one which showed a background of long wooded ranges rising length after length against the sky.

“Those are the Green Mountains; and this is the ‘Green Mountain State,’ and the men who fought in the Revolution under Ethan Allen were the ‘Green Mountain Boys’.”

“But, ranged in serried order, attent on sterner noise,
Stood stalwart Ethan Allen and his ‘Green Mountain Boys’
Two hundred patriots listening as with the ears of one,
To the echo of the muskets that blazed at Lexington!”

quoted Mrs. Emerson. “They were bound northward to the British fort at Ticonderoga.”

“Did they get there?”

“They took the British completely by surprise. That was in May, 1775. It was in August, two years later that the battle of Bennington took place.”



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“We’d better agree to have dinner or supper here if we don’t want to get back to Williamstown after all the food in the place has been eaten by those hungry college boys,” suggested Mrs. Emerson.

Mr. Emerson took a hasty glance at the setting sun.

“You never spoke a truer word, my dear,” applauded her husband, “though this is vacation and the boys won’t be there! Still, I’m as hungry as a bear. Let’s have our evening meal, whatever it proves to be, in Bennington.”

They were all hungry enough to think the plan one of the best that their leader had offered for some time, so it was only after what turned out to be supper that they went back to Williamstown.

In the moonlight the towers of the college buildings glimmered mysteriously through the trees, and the girls went to bed happy in the promise of what the morning was going to bring them.

Ethel Brown was sorry that there were no students to be seen on the grounds when they wandered about the next morning, for she would have liked to see what sort of boys they were, and, if she liked their looks, have suggested to Tom or James that they come here to college amid such lovely surroundings. She liked it better than Amherst but Ethel Blue preferred that compact little village, and Dorothy clung to her deep-seated affection for Cambridge.

“After all, our Club boys have their plans all made so we don’t need to get excited over these colleges,” decided Ethel Brown; “and I’m glad they’re all going to different ones because when they graduate we’ll have invitations to three separate class-days and other festivities.”

“What a perfectly beautiful tower,” exclaimed Dorothy.

“It’s the chapel. That light-colored stone is superb, isn’t it!”

“Some of these other buildings look as old as some of the oldy-old Harvard ones.”

“They can’t be anywhere near as old. This college wasn’t founded until 1793.”

“That’s old enough to give it a settled-down air in spite of these handsome new affairs. There must be lovely walks about here.”

“Hills almost as big as mountains to climb. But the boys don’t have any girls to call on the way the Amherst boys do, with the Smith girls and the Mt. Holyoke girls just a little ride away.”

“Perhaps they’d rather have mountains,” remarked Ethel Brown wisely.

As the college was not in session Mr. Emerson was not able to see any of the records that he had hoped to look over to search for his brother’s name, and as almost all of the professors were out of town, he could not question any of the older men of the place as to their recollection of him. He was quite willing, therefore, to take a comparatively early train for Albany.

They arrived early enough to go over the Capitol, seated at the head of a broad but precipitous street. It was very unlike the stern simplicity of the Massachusetts State House, but they amused themselves by saying that at least the two buildings had one part of their decoration in common. In Albany the tops of the columns were carved with fruits and flowers, all to be found in the United States. In Boston a local product, the codfish, held a position of honor over the desk of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.



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"All made in the U. S. A.," laughed Dorothy, quoting a slogan of the wartime, intended to help home industries.

They wanted to see the Cathedral and St. Agnes' School as well as the State Board of Education Building, and after they had hunted them out with the help of a map of the city, and had taken a trolley ride into the suburbs, and had eaten a hearty dinner they were glad to go to bed early so as to be up in time to catch the Day Boat for New York.

"What splendid weather we've had," exclaimed Mrs. Emerson as they took their places on the broad deck of the handsome craft. It was not the same one that had taken them to West Point at the end of May. This one was named after Hendrik Hudson, the explorer of the river. They found it to be quite as comfortable as the other, and the day went fast as they swept down the stream with the current to aid them.

Occasionally broad reaches of the river grew narrower and wider again as the soil had proven soft or more resistant and the water had spread or had cut out a deep channel. Off to the west the Catskills loomed against the sky, more varied than the Green Mountains and more rugged.

"More beautiful, too, I think," decided Ethel Blue. "I like their roughness."

A storm came up as they passed the mountains and the thunder rumbled unendingly among the hills.

"Listen to the Dutchmen that Rip Van Winkle saw playing bowls when he visited them during his twenty years' nap," laughed Ethel Brown who was a reader of Washington Irving's "Sketch Book."

"I don't wonder he felt dozy in summer with such a lovely scene to quiet him," Mrs. Emerson said in his defence. "I feel a trifle sleepy myself," and she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes with an appearance of extreme comfort.

They passed Kingston which was burned by the British just two months after the battle of Bennington; and by a large town which proved to be Poughkeepsie.

"Here's where we should land if we were going to finish our investigation of colleges by seeing Vassar," said Mr. Emerson.

"I'm glad we aren't going to get off!" exclaimed Ethel Brown. "I'm so undecided now I don't see how I'll ever make up my mind where to go!"

"Something will happen to help you decide," consoled Dorothy. "Isn't this where the big college boat races are rowed?" she asked Mr. Emerson.



“Right here on this broad stretch of water. A train of observation cars—flat cars—follows the boats along the bank. I must bring the Club up here to some of them some time.”

“O-oh!” all the girls cried with one voice, and they stared at the river and the shore as if they might even then see the shells dashing down the stream and the shouting crowds in the steamers and on the banks.

Below Newburgh the river narrowed beneath upstanding cliffs and a point jutted out into the water.

“Do you recognize that piece of land?” Mr. Emerson asked.



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No one did.

“You don’t recall West Point?”

“We’re in the position now of the steamers and tugs we watched while we were having our dinner at the hotel. Do you see the veranda of the hotel? Up on the headland?”

They did, and they felt that they were in truth nearing home. The remainder of the way was over familiar waters, and they called to mind the historic tales that Roger and Mr. Emerson had told them on the Memorial Day trip.

“We’ve seen so much history in the last week, though,” declared Ethel Blue, “that I don’t believe I can ever realize that I’m living in the twentieth century!”

CHAPTER XIII

HUNTING ARROW HEADS

The week after the home-coming from the Massachusetts trolley trip was a time of busyness for the Ethels and Dorothy. Helen and Roger and the grown-ups who had stayed at home had to be made familiar with every step of the way, and the whole long history lesson that they had had was reviewed especially for Helen’s benefit. She looked up battle after battle in large histories in the library and was so full of questions as to how this place and that looked that the girls regretted that they had not taken a kodak so that they might have gratified her curiosity by showing her pictures of all the historical spots in their modern garb.

Affairs at Rose House had to be brought up to date. Mr. Emerson undertook the management of Mrs. Tsanoff’s affairs and went into town the very day after his return to call on Mr. Watkins and find out where Tsanoff was working. He found that he had been discharged from his position but a few days before. He had become so downcast as a consequence that he had not sent word to his wife of this fresh disappointment, and he was unspeakably grateful to Mr. Emerson for the chance that he opened to him. A kodak of his dark, sensible face was easily obtained to send to Massachusetts and Mr. Emerson went home feeling that the first step had been well taken.

Making Mrs. Tsanoff understand the new proposition was not easy, but Mrs. Schuler and Moya had learned something of her language as she had learned more English during the summer and, when Mr. Emerson showed her a photograph of the Deerfield farm and told her of its advantages for her husband and the children she was eager to go to it at once.



“The fields, the cows,” she kept saying over and over again, and the girls realized how strong within her was her love for the country for which she had made the poor exchange of the city, and they sympathized keenly.

The result of the correspondence between Mr. Emerson and the Deerfield people was that the Bulgarians were put on the train for Springfield within ten days, each one of them, even the twin babies, wearing a small American flag so that they might be recognized by their new employer who was to meet them at Springfield and convoy them home. Mrs. Tsanoff left Rose House in tears, kissing the hands of all the girls and murmuring her gratitude to all of them over and over again as she wept and smiled by turns.



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The other women had started the embroidery class, teaching each other and Mrs. Morton, Mrs. Smith and the Miss Clarks. The plan was working out very well, Mrs. Schuler thought, especially with Mrs. Paterno, who evidently loved the work and in it was already losing something of her fear and anxiety.

Roger had made a sideboard for the Rose House dining room assisted by the members of the Club who were "not off gallivanting," as he expressed it.

"It's mighty good looking," commented Dorothy as she examined it. "Was it hard to make? It looks so."

"No worse than that seat we made for Mrs. Schuler's room. We made two cupboard arrangements for the ends just like those, only we put a door over each one of them. Instead of a big box between them to be used as a seat we put a shelf resting on the cleats that went across the backs of the bookshelves. Then we connected the two cupboards with a long plank."

"You put a back behind the shelf."

"We put on thin boards for a back, but we haven't decided yet whether we made a mistake in putting doors in front or not. I like them with doors the way we have it, but Margaret thinks it would have been rather good without any doors. What do you think?"

"I think Mrs. Schuler will like it better with doors. The linen or whatever she keeps in there will be cleaner if it isn't exposed to the air on open shelves and the doors will serve as a protection against dust."

They all agreed that it was one of the best pieces of furniture that they had yet made for the house, and the travellers were sorry that they had not had a hand in its construction on account of the experience the progress of the work would have afforded them.

A few days later the Ethels planned an excursion for the benefit of the younger children which was to be somewhat in the nature of a picnic, but it was arranged to have everyone attend who could do so.

There was intense excitement among the smaller children when the announcement was made that the picnic would be held early the following week, providing the weather proved clear enough not to interfere with their plans.

Dicky's share in the excitement of the journey was the stirring up of a deep interest in Indians. When the Ethels told him that they were going over to the field that Grandfather Emerson was having cleared he insisted on going with them to hunt for arrow heads. They waited until a day after a rain had left the small stones washed free of earth, and they made an afternoon of it, all the Club and all the Rose House women and children going too. The boys carried hampers with the wherewithal for afternoon



tea, and the expedition assumed serious proportions in the minds of those arranging it when Dicky asked if they would need one of Grandfather's wagons to bring home the arrow heads in.

As a matter of fact they did not find many arrow heads. Whether the earth had not yet been turned over to a sufficient depth or whether the Indians who had lived about Rosemont had been of a peaceful temper or whether the field happened not to be near any of their villages, no one knew, though every one made one guess or another.



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They planned the search methodically.

"I saw a lot of Boy Scouts one day clear up the field in Central Park in which they had been drilling," said Tom Watkins. "They stretched in a long line across the whole field and then they walked slowly along looking for anything that might have been dropped in the course of their evolutions."

"Did they find much?"

"You'd be surprised to know how much!"

"Let's do the same thing here. If we stretch across the field then every one is responsible for just a small section under his eyes—"

"—and feet."

"—and feet. I wish we had an arrow head to show the women so they'd know exactly what to look for."

"Father had one in the cabinet," said Roger, "and I put it in my pocket for just this purpose. I don't know where he got it, and it may not be of exactly the kind of stone these New Jersey Indians used, but it will show the shape all right."

"They always used flint, didn't they?" asked Margaret.

"Flint or obsidian or the hardest stone they could find, whatever it was."

"Bone?"

"Sometimes. I saw quite large bone heads at the Natural History Museum."

"I've seen life-size boneheads frequently," announced James solemnly, not smiling until Roger and Tom pelted him with bits of sod.

The arrow head was passed from hand to hand and every one studied it carefully. Then they stretched across the field and began their search. The result was not very satisfactory from Dicky's point of view, for he concluded that he need not have worried as to how the load was to be carried home. There were only seven found. Of these, however, Dicky found two, one by his unaided efforts and the other through Ethel Blue's taking pains not to see one that lay between him and her. Nobody else found more than one and several of them found none at all, so Dicky, after all, was hilarious.

In a corner of the field they built a fire and heated water for the tea in a kettle thrust among the coals. Ears of corn still in the husk were roasted between heated stones,



bits of bacon sizzled appetizingly from forked sticks and dripped on to the flames with a hissing sound, and biscuits, fresh from Moya's oven, were reheated near the blaze.

It was while they were sitting around the fire that Dicky's mind turned to the remainder of the Indian's equipment.

"What did he do with thith arrowhead?" he inquired.

"He tied it on to the end of an arrow, and shot bears with it."

"What'th an arrow?"

"A long, slender stick."

"Do you throw it?"

"You shoot it from a bow."

"What'th a bow?"

"A curved piece of wood with a string connecting the ends."

"How doeth it work?"

Roger heaved a sigh and then gave it up..

"Me for the bushes," he cried. "Language fails me; I'll have to make a bow and arrow."



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"It's the easiest way," nodded Tom. "Bring me a switch and I'll make the arrow while you make the bow."

"Who's got a piece of string?" inquired Roger a few minutes later as he held up his handiwork for the admiration of his friends,

James produced the necessary string and Roger strung the bow.

"Now, then, let's see what it will do," he said.

Adjusting the arrow he drew the cord and sent the simple shaft whizzing through the air against a tree where it stuck in the bark for an instant before it fell to the ground.

"Do you think it's safe for Dicky to have an arrow as sharp as that?" inquired Helen.

"That's not sharp enough to do any damage. It didn't hold in the tree."

Dicky was delighted with his new toy and went off to test its power, followed by Elisabeth of Belgium, Sheila, Luigi and Pietro Paterno, Olga Peterson and Vasili and Vladimir Vereshchagin. The romper-clad band stirred the amused smiles of the elders watching them.

"They certainly are the cunningest little dinks that ever happened!" cried Ethel Brown, establishing herself comfortably to help make small bows and arrows for the rest of the flock.

The girls as well as the boys of the United Service Club knew how to use a jackknife and the diminutive weapons of the chase were soon ready.

The Ethels were hunting through the luncheon basket for string when a howl from the other side of the field made them drop what was in their hands and rush toward the trees where the children were playing. The mothers followed them, Mrs. Paterno and Mrs. Vereshchagin in the lead.

"I certainly hope it's not the little Paterno," said Ethel Blue breathlessly to Ethel Brown as they ran. "Mrs. Paterno never will forgive Dicky if he's got him into trouble again."

They concluded when they came in sight of the group of children that the Italian woman had run from nervousness and the Russian because she recognized the voice of her offspring, for it was Vladimir whose yells were resounding through the air. Dicky was bending over him and the other children were standing around so that the runners as they approached could not see what was the matter.

Mrs. Vereshchagin increased her speed, uttering sounds that fell strangely on her listeners' ears. The group of children fell away as their elders came near, and the



Ethels, who were in front, saw that Vladimir was pinned to a tree by Dicky's arrow which had pierced the fullness of his rompers. He could not be hurt in the least, but the strangeness of his position had startled and angered him and was causing the shrieks that had frightened them all.

Fortunately for Dicky, Mrs. Vereshchagin, unlike Mrs. Paterno, had a sense of humor, and as soon as she saw that her child was neither injured nor in danger she burst into laughter as loud as his cries of rage and terror. Roger quickly unfastened him from the tree to which he was bound and handed him over to his mother, none the worse for his experience except that his rompers were torn. Turning to Dicky, Roger decreed that the head must be taken from his arrow.



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"It's not your fault, old man," he said; "but Helen was right—this thing is too sharp."

"I'll tell you what to do, Roger, get some of those rubber tips that slip on the ends of lead pencils. The English stationer must have some. If you put them on all these arrows they can't do any harm."

"Meanwhile the kiddies had better not have them," Mrs. Schuler decided, so they were put aside with the basket, to be finished later when the needed tips should be procured in Rosemont.

"You got off pretty well, that time, sir," laughed Roger. "What were you trying to do?"

"I wath an Indian thooting bearth. Vladimir wath a bear."

"A Russian bear. You got him all right; but let me tell you, young man; you must be mighty careful what you aim at, for international complications may follow."

"What'th that?"

"That means it's dangerous to aim at *anybody*. I'll make you a target and when you get so you can hit the bull's eye three times out of five at a distance of fifteen feet I'll give you a better bow. Is it a bargain?"

Dicky shook hands on it solemnly.

"Remember now, no shooting at any living thing."

"Not a cat?"

"Not a cat or a bird, a dog or any other animal on two legs or four."

"All right," nodded Dicky, and Roger knew that he would keep his word, for that is a part of the training of a soldier's son.

The experiences of the afternoon were not yet ended. The arrow episode over the children looked about for other amusement. They drifted away from the group still gathered about the embers of the dying fire and made their way among the bushes standing uncut on the edge of the new clearing. Once in a while their laughter was borne on the breeze. It was a long time before any one thought of seeing what they were doing. Then Ethel Brown rose and sauntered in the direction whence the sounds came.

"With Dicky in the lead," she thought, "it's just as well to keep an eye on them."



As she approached the woods she saw the little army of rompered youngsters, each armed with a switch, and each doing his best to strike something high over his head. They all stood with their eager faces looking upward and their arms working busily with what muscle the summer had given them. Leaves were falling from the bushes and the lower branches of the saplings that were struck by their rods, and it was evident that they were causing great destruction to the foliage, whatever the real object of their attack.

Ethel's wonderment increased.

"Children do get the greatest amount of fun out of the smallest things," she thought. "What can they be doing?"



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When quite near the thicket, however, her slow steps quickened into a run. Her sharp eyes discovered hanging from one of the trees over the heads of the children one of the large wasps' nests which seem to be made of gray paper. It had caught Dicky's attention and he had coveted it for purpose of investigation. Summoning his cohorts he had pointed it out to them and had urged them to bring it down. Each one had broken a stick; some had stripped off the leaves entirely; others had left a tuft at the end. In both cases the weapons looked dangerously destructive to Ethel, as she ran toward them and saw one pole after another swish past the home of the paper wasps and expected the colony to rush forth to defend their abode. With a cry of warning she bore down on them and with a sweep of her arms turned them all back into the open field. Dicky was indignant.

"What you doing that for?" he demanded angrily. "One more thwat and I'd a had it."

"You don't know what it is," cried Ethel breathlessly. "You'd all be stung if there were any wasps at home. That's their house and they get awfully mad."

The children looked back fearfully at the object of their attack.

"You've had a narrow escape," insisted Ethel, and then to divert their minds from what had happened she made them stretch themselves in a line and hunt for arrow heads all the way back to their mothers.

"Thith ith a funny thtone," exclaimed Dicky, picking up a rather large oblong stone that had a groove all around its middle.

"It looks like Lake Chautauqua. doesn't it? You know they say that 'Chautauqua' means 'the bag tied in the middle'."

"Did the Indianth uthe it?" Dicky asked as he laid his trophy in Roger's hand.

"I rather think they did," returned Roger excitedly. "It looks to me as if this was a hammer or a hatchet. See—" and he held it out for the girls and James and Tom to see, "they must have lashed this head on to a stout stick by a cord tied where this crease is."

"It would make a first-rate hammer," commended James.

"The Indians didn't manufacture as many of these as they did arrow heads, because, of course, they didn't need as many. I rather guess you've made the big find of the afternoon," and Dicky swelled with pride as his brother patted him on the shoulder.

When it became time to go home the Ethels offered to take the short cut to Rosemont and get the rubber tips for the children's arrows.



“If we go across the field and the West Woods we come out not far from the stationer’s, and we can leave the tips up at Rose House on the way back so they’ll be ready for you to put on to-morrow and the youngsters can have the bows and arrows to play with right off.”

“Let me go,” begged Dicky.

“All right,” agreed Roger. “Be careful when you go over the railroad track, girls. Mother isn’t very keen on having Dicky learn that road, you know.”



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They promised to be careful and set forth in the opposite direction from the rest of the party whom they left putting together the remnants of the feast and packing away the plates.

It was an interesting walk. They played Indian all the way. Ethel Blue's imagination had been greatly stimulated by the tale of the attack on Deerfield and she pretended to see an Indian behind every tree. Ethel Brown pretended to shoot them all with unerring arrow, and Dicky charged the bushes in handsome style and routed the enemy with awful slaughter.

"This is just the kind of game we ought not to play if we want to make Dicky think of peace and not of war," declared Ethel Blue at last when she had become breathless from the excitement of their countless adventures.

"That's so. It's funny how you forget. It's just as Delia says—we don't realize how fighting and soldiers and thinking about military things is put into our minds even in games when we're little."

"I'm really sorry we've done this," confessed. Ethel Brown as they fell behind their charge. "Dicky's 'pretending' works over time anyway, and he may dream about Indians, or get scared to go to bed, and it will be our fault."

"It's rather late to think about it—but let's try not to do it again. Isn't there something we can call his attention to now to take his mind off Indians?"

Dicky was marching ahead of them drawing an imaginary bow and bringing down a large bag of imaginary birds, while from the difficulty with which he occasionally dragged an imaginary something behind him it seemed that he had at least slain an imaginary deer.

Naturally, with his hunting blood up, the Ethels found him not responsive to appeals to "see what a pretty flower this is" or to examine the hole of a chipmunk. He was after more thrilling adventures. Still, by the time they reached the railroad track, everyday matters were beginning to command his attention. This short cut across the track was one that he had seldom been allowed to take, and the mere fact of doing it was exciting. He stopped in the middle and looked up and down the line while the girls tugged at him. It was only when he saw a bit or two of shining metal which, according to his arrow head game of the afternoon, he picked up and tucked away in the pocket of his rompers, that his attention was once more turned to the gathering of the wonders that seemed to be under his feet all the time if only he looked for them hard enough.

The errand to the stationery shop was successful. The stationer said that most pencils now were made with erasers built into them, but that he thought he had a box of old tips left over. He hunted for them very obligingly, and set so small a price on them that the



Ethels took the whole box so that they might have a liberal supply in case any were lost off the arrow heads. Dicky put one in his pocket so that he could place it on his arrow as soon as he got it into his hands once more, and he begged the Ethels to go home by way of Rose House so that he could fix it up that very night.



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“Is it early enough?” asked Ethel Blue.

Ethel Brown thought it was.

“But we’ll have to hurry,” she warned; “there’s an awfully black cloud over there. It looks like a thunder storm.”

They scampered as fast as their legs would carry them and reached the farm in the increasing darkness, but before any rain had fallen. They found all the bows and arrows standing in a trash basket which Roger had made for the dining room.

“Mr. Roger stood them up in that so the children wouldn’t be apt to touch ’em,” explained Moya.

Dicky sat down on the hearth and set to work on the arrow which he recognized as his because of its greater length.

“You’ll have to hurry or we’ll get caught,” warned his sister.

“We ought to start right off,” urged Ethel Blue. “We’ll have to run for it even if we go now.”

Mrs. Schuler brought in the cape of her storm coat.

“Take this for Dicky,” she said. “If it does break before you get home it will rain hard and his rompers won’t be any protection at all.”

“Put it on now, Dicky,” commanded Ethel Brown. “Stand up.”

Dicky rose reluctantly.

“Why do you fill up your pocket with such stuff,” inquired Ethel impatiently. “There, throw it into the fireplace—gravel, toadstools, old brass,” she catalogued contemptuously, and Dicky, swept on by her eagerness, obediently cast his treasures among the soft pine boughs that filled the wide, old fireplace.

“I’ll clear them away,” promised Mrs. Schuler. “Hurry,” and she fairly turned them out of the house.

“You made me throw away my shiny things,” complained Dicky as they ran down the lane as fast as they could go.

“Never mind; you’d have jounced them out of your pocket anyway, running like this,” and Dicky, taking giant strides as his sister and his cousin held a hand on each side,



was inclined to think that he would be lucky if he were not jounced put of his clothes before he got home.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STORM

After all, they need not have jerked poor Dicky over the ground at such a rapid pace for the storm, though it grumbled and roared at a distance, did not break until a late hour in the night. Then it came with a vengeance and made up for its indecision by behaving with real ferocity.

To the women at Rose House, accustomed to the city, where Nature's sights and sounds are deadened by the number of the buildings and the narrowness of the streets, the uproar was terrifying. Flash after flash lit up their rooms so that the roosters and puppies and pigs and cows on the curtains stood out clearly in the white light. Crash after crash sent them cowering under the covers of their beds. The children woke and added their cries to the tumult.

As the electric storm swept away into the distance the wind rose and howled about the house. Shutters slammed; chairs were over-turned on the porch; a brick fell with a thud from the top of the chimney to the roof; another fell down the chimney into the fireplace where its arrival was followed by a roar that seemed to shake the old building on its foundation.



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"Grrreat Scott!" ejaculated Mr. Schuler, who had learned some English expressions from his pupils. He was returning through the hall from a hobbling excursion to make sure that all the windows down stairs were closed. The candle dropped from his hand and he was left in the dark. His crutch slid from under his arm, and he was forced to cling to a table for support and call for his wife to come and find it for him.

Mrs. Schuler reached him from the kitchen where she had been attending to the fastenings of the back door. Fortunately her light had survived the gusty attack and she was able to help her husband to his prop.

"What is it?" she cried breathlessly, "Is the house falling? Did you ever hear such a noise!"

Mr. Schuler never had. The outcry upstairs was increased by the shrieks of Sheila who had slept until the last shock and who woke at last to add her penetrating voice to the pandemonium.

"Do you smell something queer?" asked Mrs. Schuler. "Do you think that was a lightning-bolt and it set the house on fire?"

Her husband shook his head doubtfully. "The lightning has gone by," he said, but they went together on a tour of investigation.

Nothing was burning in the kitchen, but the rays of the uplifted candle showed a zigzag crack on the wall behind the stove.

"That wall is the chimney," said Mrs. Schuler. "Something has happened to the chimney."

"Let's go into the dining-room and see if anything shows there."

Into the dining-room they went. An acrid smell filled the room, and as they entered a smouldering flame in the fireplace burst into a blaze, from the draught of the door. Its fuel consisted only of some trash that had been tossed into the fireplace and hidden behind the fresh pine boughs that filled the opening through the summer. The drinking water in the pitcher on the table was enough to put an end to it.

"It's hardly large enough to bother to put out," exclaimed Mr. Schuler, "if it weren't that the chimney seems to be so shaken that the flames might work through somewhere and set fire to the woodwork."

"There's no doubt about something serious having happened to the chimney," and Mrs. Schuler stooped and pushed back three or four bricks that had tumbled forward on to the hearth.



“The back is cracked,” she announced from her knees. “With that big crack on the kitchen side I rather think Moya had better use the oil stove until Mr. Emerson can send a bricklayer to examine the chimney.”

“Everything but this seems all right here; you’d better go up and try to calm the women,” advised Mr. Schuler.

The wind storm was dying down and the inmates of Rose House were becoming quieter as the din outside moderated. The Matron went from room to room bringing comfort and courage as her candle shone upon one frightened face after another.

“It’s all over; there’s nothing to be afraid of,” she said over and over again. Only to Moya did she tell what had happened to the chimney, so that she might prepare breakfast on the oil stove.



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"It almost seems I heard a giant fall down the chimney," the Irish girl whispered hoarsely.

"I dare say you did hear the bricks falling. There's a gallon or two of soot in the dining-room fireplace for you to clean up in the morning."

"'Tis easy, that, compared wid cleaning up the whole house that seemed like to tumble!" said Moya with a sigh of relief.

The children were already asleep and the remainder of the night was unbroken by any sound save the dripping of the raindrops from the branches and the swish of wet leaves against each other when a light breeze revived their former activities.

Little Vladimir was up early with a memory of something queer having happened in the night. He was eager to go downstairs and find out what it was all about and his mother dressed him and let him out of her room and then turned over to take another nap. When Moya went down to set the oil stove in position for use he was amusing himself contentedly with the rubbish in the fireplace, his face and hands already in need of renewed attention from his mother.

"'Tis the sooty-faced young one ye are," she called to him good-naturedly. "Run up to the brook and wash yerself an' save yer mother the throuble."

She opened the back door and he ran out into the yard, but instead of going up the lane to the brook he scampered round the house and down the lane. Moya called after him but he paid no attention. "Sure, I've too much to do to be day-nursing that young Russian," she murmured.

There were wonderings and ejaculations in many tongues when all the women and children came down and examined the cracks in the kitchen side of the chimney and in the back of the dining-room fireplace and saw the heap of rubbish and bricks piled up in the fireplace. It gave them something to talk about all the morning. This was lucky, for the grass was too wet for the children to play on it, and when mothers and children were crowded on the veranda idle words sometimes changed to cross ones.

"'Tis strange; they's good women, iv'ry wan, take 'em alone," Moya had said one day to Mrs. Schuler and Ethel Blue when they heard from the kitchen the sounds of dispute upon the porch; "yit listen to 'em whin they gits together."

"That's because each one of them gets out of the talk just what she puts into it," explained the Matron.

"Manin' that if she comes to it cross it's cross answers she gits. It's right ye are, ma'am. 'Tis so about likin' or hatin' yer work. Days when yer bring happiness to yer work it goes like a bird, an' days when ye have the black dog on yer back the work turns round an' fights wid yer."



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Ethel Blue listened intently. Things like that had happened to her but she had not supposed that grown people had such experiences. She remembered a day during the previous week when she had waked up cross. A dozen matters went wrong before she left the house to go to school. On the way the mud pulled off one of her overshoes, and her boot was soiled before she was shod again. The delay made her five minutes late and caused a black mark to deface her perfect attendance record. Every recitation went wrong in one way or another, and every one she spoke to was as cross as two sticks. As she thought it over she realized that if what Mrs. Schuler and Moya said was true the whole trouble came from herself. When she woke up not in the best of humor she ought to have smoothed herself out before she went down to breakfast, and then she would have picked her way calmly over the crossing and not tried to take a short cut through the mud; she would not have been delayed and earned a tardy mark; she would have had an unclouded mind that could give its best attention to the recitations so that she would have done herself justice; people would have been glad to talk to her because she looked cheerful and was in a sunny mood and no one would have been cross.

"I guess it was all my fault," she thought. "I guess it will pay to straighten myself out before I get out of bed every morning."

All was well in and out of Rose House on the morning after the storm. Every one told her experiences as if she were the only person affected and they all talked at once and enjoyed themselves immensely. Vladimir came running up on to the porch in the middle of the morning and threw himself across his mother's lap.

"Where have you been now?" she asked him. He had come to breakfast only after being called a dozen times and he had disappeared immediately after breakfast. "What have you been doing?"

The little fellow laughed and poured into her lap a handful of nickels and ten-cent pieces.

"Where in the world did you get those?" demanded Mrs. Vereshchagin. "Who gave them to you?"

"A man in the road."

"A man in the road? All that money? What for?"

"I gave him the shiny thing and he gave me those moneys."

"What shiny thing?"

"The shiny thing I found on the floor."



“Where on the floor?”

“In the dining-room, and the youngster ran into the house to point out exactly the place where he had found the ‘shiny thing.’”

“A ‘shiny thing’,” repeated Moya, who was putting the room in order and heard the Russian woman’s inquiries. “‘Tis two of ‘em I found mesilf on the floor when I cleared up the mess from the fireplace this morning. ‘Twas two bits of brass. See, I saved ‘em,” and she shook from a scooped-out gourd which served as an ornament on the mantel two bits of metal.

“Was it like these, Vladdy?” she asked, but Vladimir was too tired of being questioned and ran away without answering.



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His mother shook her head as she gazed at the bits lying on her palm.

“Not worth all these moneys,” she murmured as she counted forty cents in the small coins in her other hand. It was a mystery.

Moya put the bits of brass back into the gourd and went on with her dusting.

Mrs. Schuler telephoned to Mr. Emerson early in the morning, telling him of the damage to the house and asking him to come and see what had happened so that the bricklayers might be set to work as soon as possible.

“I’m afraid to let Moya light the kitchen stove until I’m sure the chimney is sound,” she explained.

Mr. Emerson telephoned the news to his grandchildren and he and all the Mortons with Dorothy and her mother and Miss Merriam and Elisabeth arrived at the farm at almost the same time.

“I’m glad the house is in as good condition as it seems to be,” exclaimed Mrs. Morton. “I couldn’t bear to have the old homestead fall to ruin. I was startled at Father’s message.”

“Not so startled as all the people here were in the night,” laughed her father who had been talking with Mrs. Schuler. “It seems that the worst noise came after the electric storm was over, but while the wind was at its highest.”

“The chimney wasn’t struck by lightning, then.”

“It was not lightning,” asserted Mr. Schuler. “The wind knocked bricks from the top of the chimney. I saw one or two on the roof this morning. As you see, several fell down the chimney into the fireplace.”

“I can’t see how bricks from the top of the chimney could have made the crack in the kitchen side of the chimney and this crack in the back of the fireplace.”

“Nor I,” agreed Mr. Schuler. “The roar was tremendous. I could not believe that I was seeing rightly when I beheld only these few fallen bricks.”

“It sounded as if the whole chimney had fallen,” Mrs. Schuler confirmed her husband’s assertion.

“Mrs. Peterson says it sounded to her like an explosion, sir,” said Moya, who had been talking with the women on the porch. “Her room is right over this. The bricks fell through the chimney, banging it all the way, says she, and then there was a roar like powder had gone off, as far as I can understand what she says.”



“If Mrs. Paterno heard that she must have thought the Black Hand was getting in its fine work, sure enough,” smiled Mr. Emerson.

“Praise be, her room is on the other side of the house. We were all wailing like banshees up there, but she no more than the rest. ’Tis better she is,” and Moya nodded reassuringly to the grown-ups, who were, she knew, deeply interested in the Italian woman’s recovery of her nervous strength.

“This explosion business I don’t understand,” Mr. Emerson said slowly to himself. “What did you find in the fireplace this morning, Moya? I wish you had left all the stuff here for me to see.”



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"I'm sorry, sir. I was only thinkin' about havin' it clean before breakfast. There was the bricks, sir, two of 'em; and a pile of soot and some bits of trash wid no meanin'—"

"Did you find my two thinieth I picked up on the track yesterday?" asked Dicky. "Ethels made me throw away all the thingth in my pocket and my thinieth went too."

"What does he mean by his 'shinies'?" asked Mr. Emerson.

"He picked up a lot of stuff yesterday when we were hunting arrow heads and walking to Rosemont by the short cut over the track. When I was putting Mrs. Schuler's storm cape on him I emptied out his pocketful of trash into the fireplace."

"What did the shinies look like, son?" inquired Dicky's grandfather.

Dicky was entering into an elaborate and unintelligible explanation when Moya took the bits of brass from the gourd.

"Would these be the shinies?" she asked.

Mr. Emerson took them from her and examined them carefully.

"I rather think the explanation of the explosion is here," he decided. "You say you picked these up on the track, Dicky?"

"Yeth, I did, and Ethel threw them away," repeated the youngster who was beginning to think that he had a real grievance, since his "shinies" seemed to have some importance.

"These are two of the small dynamite cartridges that brakemen lay on the track to notify the engineer of a following train to stop for some reason. They use them in stormy weather or when there is reason to think that the usual flag or red light between the rails won't be seen."

"Dynamite!" exclaimed Ethel Brown, looking at her hand as she remembered that she had not been especially gentle when she tossed the contents of her brother's pocket into the fireplace.

"There is enough dynamite in a cartridge to make a sharp detonation but not enough to do any damage, unless, as happened here, there were two of them in a small space that was enclosed on three sides—"

"The trash was blown out on the floor of the room," interrupted Mr. Schuler.

"—by walls that were none too strong. With a wind such as last night's knocking down the chimney at the top and bricks setting dynamite cartridges into action below I only wonder that the old thing is standing at all this morning."



They gazed at it as if they expected the whole affair to fall before their eyes.

“I’ll call up the brickmason and find out when he can come to examine it; he may have to rebuild the entire chimney.”

Mr. Emerson was moving toward the hall where the telephone was when his eye fell on Elisabeth sitting contentedly on the floor close to the wall turning over and over something that gleamed.

“What have you got there, small blessing?” he asked, stooping to make sure that she was not intending to try the taste of whatever it might be.

“Hullo!” he cried, straightening himself. “Hullo!” and he held up his discovery before the astonished eyes of the group.



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"It looks like a gold coin, Grandfather!" exclaimed Ethel Brown.

"That's just what it is. A guinea. Its date is 1762. Where did you find it, Ayleesabet?" he asked the child, who was reaching up her tiny hands for the return of her new plaything.

"Here, here," she answered, pointing to the floor where the casing of the chimney yawned from the planks for half an inch. "Here," and she pushed her fingers into the crack.

"I saw her pull something that was sticking out of there a little bit," said Dorothy, "but I was interested in what Mr. Emerson was saying and I didn't pay much attention to what she was doing."

Miss Merriam took Elisabeth on her lap and peered between her lips to make sure that no dirt from the floor was visible. Then she took a small emergency kit from her pocket, extracted a bit of sterile gauze and wiped out the little pink mouth.

"I live in hopes that the day will come when she'll outgrow her desire to test everything with her mouth," she remarked amusedly.

"Is it guineas ye're speaking about?" asked Moya. "Perhaps 'twas a guinea young Vladdy the Russian found this morning. He said he found a 'shiny thing.' I thought 'twas one of thim cartridges, like I found myself."

"Another shiny thing? What did he do with it? Let's see it?" demanded Mr. Emerson.

"He said he gave it to a man in the road and the man gave him a handful of ten-cent pieces and nickels. There was forty cents of it. I heard Mrs. Vereshchagin counting 'em."

"Forty cents! It must have been a valuable shiny thing that a man in the road would give a child forty cents for. He knew its value. I should say Vladimir and Elisabeth had tapped the same till. Helen, go and see if you can find out anything more from the child or his mother. And Roger, get a chisel and hammer and hatchet and perhaps you and Mr. Schuler and I can take down these boards and see what there is to see behind them."

"Wouldn't it be thrilling if there should be a hidden treasure!" exclaimed Ethel Blue.

"Aren't you shivering all over with excitement, Miss Gertrude?"

Meanwhile Roger and his grandfather were prying off the boards that covered in the chimney on the right side and supported the mantel-shelf. As it fell back into their hands two more gold coins tumbled to the floor.



“Just take off this narrow plank, Roger and let me squint in there. Stand back, please, all of you, and let us have as much light as we can.”

“I have a flashlight,” said Mr. Schuler.

“Just the ticket. Now, then—,” and Mr. Emerson kneeled down, peering into the space that was disclosed when the boards fell away. “I see something; I certainly see something,” he cried as the electricity searched into the darkness. He thrust in his arm but the something was too far off.

“Take my crutch,” suggested Mr. Schuler.



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Mr. Emerson took it and tugged away with the top.

“It’s coming, it’s coming,” his muffled cry rose from the depths.

Another tug and a blackened leather pouch, slashed with a jagged tear from which gold pieces were pouring, tumbled into the room.

“Pick it all up and put it on the table, Roger, while Mr. Schuler and I decide how it happened,” ordered Mr. Emerson.

The investigation seemed to prove that there probably had been a crack in the bricks at the back of the mantel at the time when Algernon Merriam, Miss Gertrude’s ancestor, had thrust the bag into the mantel cupboard. It had fallen off the back of the shelf and into the little crevasse where it lay beyond the reach of arm or bent wire or candle light for over a hundred and thirty years.

“Evidently last night’s big shaking widened the crack and let the bag fall down. The ragged edge of a broken brick tore the leather and the two coins that Vladimir and Elisabeth found slipped out and fell just inside the plank covering of the chimney and below it out on to the floor.”

“So did the two that fell out when we were working,” added Roger.

“Let’s open it and count the money. This may be some other bag,” suggested Helen, who had brought back no farther information from the Russian. “If it’s Algernon’s it ought to have—how many guineas was it?”

“Five hundred and seventy-three, and a ring and a miniature,” continued Ethel Brown who had heard his story.

“In a box,” concluded Ethel Blue. “I can’t wait for Roger to undo it!”

They gathered around the table on which Roger had placed the stained bag, the gold coins gleaming through a gash in its side. Moya cleaned the outside as well as she could with a damp cloth.

“See, here are some crumbs of sealing-wax still clinging to the cord,” and Grandfather Emerson cut the string that still tied the mouth. Before their amazed eyes there rolled first a small box and then guineas as bright as when they were tied up in their prison.

“We shan’t have to count the guineas; if the ring and the miniature are in the box that will prove that it’s Algernon’s bag,” said Helen.



“Here, young woman; hands off,” cried her grandfather as Helen was preparing to open the box. “Algernon and Patience were no direct ancestors of yours. Miss Merriam is the suitable person to perform this ceremony.”

Helen, smiling, pushed the basket toward Miss Gertrude who slipped off the string with trembling fingers.

“I’m almost afraid to take off the cover,” she whispered.

“O, do hurry up, Miss Gertrude,” implored Ethel Brown. “I think I shall burst if I don’t know all about it soon!”

With misty eyes Gertrude slowly lifted the cover from the box. Wrapped in a twist of cotton was a ring set with several large diamonds.

“Is it marked ‘Gertrude’?” asked Dorothy breathlessly.

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Miss Merriam nodded.

Below the ring lay a miniature, the portrait of a fair woman with deep blue eyes. It was set round with brilliants and on the gold back was engraved, "Gertrude Merriam."

Miss Merriam stared at it and then handed it to Mr. Emerson.

"What a marvellous likeness!" he exclaimed. "You must be able to see it yourself."

Gertrude nodded again, not trusting herself to speak.

"There's no question that she's your ancestor. Now, I'd like to see if the correct number of coins is here if you'll let Roger and me count your guineas for you."

"Count my guineas?" cried Miss Merriam.

"Certainly they're your guineas. You're a direct descendant of Algernon and Patience. The bag and its contents belong to you."

Gertrude stared at Mr. Emerson as if she could not understand him.

"Mine?" she repeated, "mine?" but when Mr. Emerson insisted and the other elders congratulated her and the girls kissed her and Roger shook hands formally, she began, to realize that this little fortune really was hers by right and not through the kindness of her friends.

The count of the coins proved exact. There were 569 of them.

"Here are the two that fell on the floor when we were hammering," said Roger, laying them on the table. "They make 571."

"And here is the one that Ayleesabet found," added Mr. Emerson, drawing it from his pocket. "That is the five hundred and seventy-second. Young Vladimir's trophy has gone for good, I'm afraid. He must have sold it to some passer-by who knew enough to realize that it was a valuable coin and wasn't honest enough to hunt for the owner or to pay the child its full value."

"Every one of the 573 is accounted for, anyway," declared Roger. "You won't think it impertinent if I figure out how much you're worth, will you Miss Gertrude?"

"I shall be glad if you will," she answered.

"A guinea is 21 shillings and a shilling is about 24 cents in American money. That makes a guinea worth about \$5.04. Five hundred-and-seventy-two times that makes \$2882.88."



“Almost three thousand dollars!” exclaimed Gertrude, her face radiant; “why—why now —” she broke off suddenly and hid her face on Mrs. Smith’s shoulder, sobbing.

“Now I can pay all my indebtedness and be free to do what I please,” she said to her friend in an undertone.

Mrs. Smith patted her gently, for she knew what it was she wanted to be free to do.

“This fortune is going to mount up to more than three thousand dollars,” declared Mr. Emerson. “There isn’t a coin here that was minted later than 1774. There can’t be, because Algernon came to this country in the early part of 1775. Pile them up according to the dates on them, children, and let’s see what there is that will appeal to the dealer in antiquities.”

“At that rate every coin here, even the youngest, is worth more than \$5.04,” exclaimed Roger.



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“You get the idea, my son,” smiled his grandfather. “We’ll sell these coins separately for Miss Gertrude and get a special price on each one. Here’s one, for instance, that ought to be worth a good bonus; it is dated 1663. It was over a hundred years old when your respected great-great-grandfather brought it over here, and if I remember my English history correctly it was in 1663 that guineas were first minted. This is a ‘first edition,’ so to speak.”

Gertrude leaned back in her chair, smiling happily.

CHAPTER XV

GERTRUDE CHANGES HER NAME

The Club had been prominent figures at Mrs. Schuler’s wedding, but that was a very small affair at home, and Miss Gertrude’s was to be in the church with a reception afterwards at Dorothy’s house. The Club felt that they wanted to do every bit of the work that they could, not only because they loved Miss Gertrude but because she was going to marry the brother of two of the Club members. She had said that she would like to have the church decorated with wild flowers so that she might take away with her the remembrance of the blossoms that she had seen and loved in the Rosemont fields.

The Club held a special meeting to talk over their plans for the wedding. It was at Rose House, for they had become accustomed to meeting there during the summer, when every moment could be utilized for work on something connected with the furnishing of the house while at the same time they could talk as they hammered and measured and screwed and sewed. They were gathered under the tree where the squirrel lived. As they established themselves, he was sitting on a branch above them, twitching his tail and making ready for a descent to search for cookies in their pockets.

Helen called the meeting to order and told them what Miss Gertrude had said about the decorations.

“Has any one any suggestions?” she asked.

“Shall we have all the different kinds of flowers we can find or select one kind?” asked Ethel Brown.

“We can get goldenrod and asters now.”

“And cardinals and cat-tails.”

“And ‘old-maids’.”

“And hollyhocks.”



“Nobody has said ‘Queen Anne’s Lace.’ I think that’s the prettiest of all,” urged Ethel Blue. “Wouldn’t it be delicate and fairy-like if we trimmed the whole church with it!”

“O, Ethel, I see it in a flash!” cried Delia. “Not banked heavily anywhere, but always in feathery masses.”

“On the altar and winding the chancel rail.”

“A cluster on the end of each pew.”

“Long garlands instead of ribbons to close the ends of the pews.”

“An arch about half way up the aisle.”

The whole scene grew on them as they talked and they waxed enthusiastic over the details. They had learned that flowers to be used for decoration should be picked the day beforehand and placed in water over night so that the moisture should have time to force itself into the stalks and to drive away the first wilting. They decided to gather all the Queen Anne’s Lace that they could find in all Rosemont, accepting the help of all the children who had asked if they might help.



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Mrs. Smith was building a new house, and Dorothy and the Ethels had planted a flower garden on the new lot although the house was not yet done. They had arranged to have a succession of pink blossoms. For fear it would not turn out well because they had not been able to have the soil put in as good condition as they wanted on account of the disturbed state of the place with workmen constantly crossing, they had tried another pink garden at Rose House, and the Ethels had planted still another bed in their own yard.

“Among them all I should think we ought to find enough, if all the blossoms don’t take it into their heads to fall off the very day before,” said Ethel Brown gloomily.

“Don’t talk that way!” insisted Ethel Blue. “We’ll find lots of pink flowers and Aunt Louise’s drawing-room will look lovely.”

“We can put some of the feathery white with it.”

“And we must find some soft green somewhere. The coloring of the room is so delicate that the pink and white effect will be charming,” and Helen leaned back against the tree trunk with a satisfied smile.

“The next point is that Aunt Louise says she’d be very glad if we’d all assist at the reception just as we do at Mother’s teas—handing things to eat and being nice to people.”

They all nodded their understanding of their duties.

“Are all of you girls going to be dressed alike?” asked Tom.

“No, sir. Delia is to be maid of honor. She’s to wear the most delicate shade of pink you can imagine. The Ethels are to have a shade that is just a wee bit darker, and Margaret and I are to come last—”

“Being the tallest.”

“—wearing real rose-colored frocks. It’s going to be beautiful.”

“I can easily believe it,” declared James, making an attempt at a bow that was defeated by the fact that he was lying on his back and found the exploit too difficult to achieve. “I also seem to see you flitting around the house under those pink decorations. You’ll run the bride hard.”

“Edward won’t think so,” laughed Tom. “Now what are we going to give to Gertrude—”

“Hear him say ‘Gertrude’,” said Ethel Blue under her breath.



“She asked us to. Of course we call her by her name. She’s going to be our sister.”

The Ethels looked quite depressed, for calling Miss Gertrude by her first name was a privilege they knew they never should have.

“I was inquiring what we’re going to give Gertrude as a Club. We Watkinses are going to give her something as a family, and Delia and I have each picked out a special present from us ourselves—”

“That’s the way we’re doing,” came from the Mortons.

“—but I think it would be nice to give her something from the whole of us, because if it hadn’t been for the Club and the Club baby she wouldn’t have come here at all.”

“Let’s put our colossal intellects on it,” urged Roger.



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“If we could think of something that no one else would give her—”

“And that would remind her of us and the things the Club does.”

“The Club makes furniture,” laughed Roger, “but I shouldn’t suggest that we repeat our latest triumph and give her a sideboard made of old boxes.”

They all roared, but James came up with a serious expression after a roll that took him some distance away from his friends.

“Boxes am ree-diculous,” he remarked, “but furniture isn’t. Isn’t there some piece of furniture that they’d like better than anything else we could give them?”

“I’ve got an idea,” announced Roger.

“Quick, quick; catch it!” and Tom tossed over his cap to hold any notions that might trickle away from the main mass.

“Since we’ve been doing this furniture making for Rose House I’ve spent a good deal of time in the carpenter shop on Main Street. You know it belongs to the son of those old people down by the bridge, Mr. and Mrs. Atwood.”

“The ones we gave a ‘show’ for?” asked Delia.

“The same people. The son was pleased at our going there and he hasn’t minded my fooling round his place and he’s given me a lot of points. He makes good furniture himself.”

“As good as yours?” asked James dryly.

“Go on!” retorted Roger. “He’s a real joiner rather than a carpenter, but there isn’t any chance for a joiner in a town like Rosemont, so he does any kind of carpentering.”

“Go ahead, Roger. We don’t care for the gentleman’s biography.”

“Yes, you do; it has some bearing on what I’m going to propose.”

“Let her shoot, then.”

“Mr. Atwood has a whole heap of splendid mahogany planks in his shop. I came across them one day and asked him about them. He’s been collecting them a long time and they’re splendidly seasoned and he’s just waiting for a chance to make them into something.”



“A light begins to break. We’ll have him make our present. Are you sure he’ll make it well enough? It’s got to be a crackerjack to be suitable for Miss Gertrude.”

“This is what I thought. The doctor and Miss Gertrude both like open bookcases. I heard them say once they liked to be able to take out a book without having to bother with a door.”

“Me, too,” agreed Margaret. “And I never could see the use of a back.”

“That’s what I say,” said Helen. “I’d rather dust the books more carefully and not have the extra weight added to the bookcase.”

“You know the furniture they call ‘knockdown’?”

Everybody nodded. They had all become familiar with various makes of furniture since their attention had been called to the subject by their summer’s interests.

“I think Mr. Atwood can make us a bookcase that will consist of two upright end pieces with holes through them where each shelf is to go. The shelves will have two extensions on each end that will go through these square holes and they will be held in place by wedges driven through these extensions on the outside of the uprights. Get me?”

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They all said they did.

“That’s all there is to the bookcase. It can be taken to pieces in ten minutes and packed flat and shipped from Rosemont to Oklahoma with some chance of its reaching there unbroken; and it can be set up in another ten minutes. What do you say?”

There wasn’t a dissenting voice, and they were so pleased with the scheme that they went to Mr. Atwood’s that very afternoon, looked at the wood, talked over the finish, and left the order. It was so simple that the maker thought that he could have it done before the wedding and he agreed to take it apart and pack it for shipment so that there would be no danger of its not making its journey safely.

The wedding day was a trifle too warm, Dorothy thought as she gazed out early in the morning and considered the flowers that must be set in place several hours before the time when they were to be seen.

“We must take care not to have them look like those dandelions in the book wedding that began so joyously and ended all in a wizzle,” she murmured, and she was more than ever glad that they had taken the precaution to pick them the day before and have them in water.

By early afternoon all was in readiness and the girls were resting. Miss Gertrude had not been allowed to help but had stayed quietly in her room.

The wedding was at half past four, and at that hour the little church, which looked perfectly lovely in the opinion of the decorators, was pleasantly filled with murmuring groups of Rosemont people, who agreed that the feathery decorations proved yet another plume in the caps of the Club members, and of New York people who gazed at the modest country chapel and found it charming.

There was a happy *brrrr* of pleasant comment while the organ played softly. Roger and James were two of the ushers. Friends of Edward’s, young doctors, were the other two.

As the organ broke into the Lohengrin march and Edward, with Tom for his best man, appeared at the chancel, Gertrude came down the aisle from the other end of the church. She wore a simple white trailing dress of soft silk, clasped at the breast with the ancient brilliant-framed miniature of another Gertrude Merriam. A pearl pendant, a gift from Ayleesabet, hung from her neck. On her ungloved right hand the older Gertrude Merriam’s ring blazed beside Edward’s more modest offering.

The Ethels held each others’ hands as they stood behind the bride, wreaths of Queen Anne’s Lace over their arms, and a delicate blossom or two tucked under a pale blue ribbon in each filmy white hat. It seemed but a moment to them and it was all over and Miss Gertrude was no longer “Miss Gertrude” but “Mrs. Edward.” The doctor seemed to



have put on new dignity and the girls found themselves wondering if they should ever call him “Edward” again.

Gertrude swept by them with her eyes full of happiness, but when she reached the back of the church she gave a lovely smile to the women and children of Rose House seated in the last pews.

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“I want every one to see my lovely presents,” Miss Gertrude had said, so the guests exclaimed over the pretty things grouped in the library.

It was all simple and happy, and a bit of pathos at the end of the afternoon brought no depression. Gertrude was just about to go upstairs to change her dress and she stood with her maids and ushers, around her, exchanging a laughing word or two with them, when a little procession made its way toward her from the dining-room. It consisted of all the women and children from Rose House, dressed in the fresh clothes which the women had made for themselves and the children during the summer. They were all so smiling that they could hardly have been recognized as the forlorn creatures who had come to Rosemont early in July. Each woman held in her hand a centrepiece, embroidered in the characteristic work of her country.

Mrs. Vereshchagin led the way, because she could speak English a little better than the others, but her English failed her when she came face to face with the bride.

“We love you,” she said simply, making a sweeping gesture that included the bridegroom and all the U. S. C. members who were standing about. “We give you these embroideries of our lands. We love all of you.”

And all the women and children cried in chorus, “We love all of you.”