

thing or other, is said to be corresponding with Eva Fletcher. Oh, I cannot tell you half, Tom. Aunt and I sat and listened; we could not get a chance to speak. After a while, though, she went back to the old plan of pumping me. Sometimes I wonder if she is a witch, do you know, she has such a clever way of putting this and that together and guessing things right."

"Miss Baxter is an institution. I do not see any use in Peters keeping up that paper of his. If the doctor could only afford to keep a staff of servants, and let Miss Baxter travel round and keep things lively, it would break Peters. But Tecumseth and we Tecumsites give her more worry than all the village. She cannot find out anything about us. Here I am wasting precious time," said Tom, coming to his feet with a bound. "Come, and let us find Aunt. There is something jolly in the wind."

"What is it?" asked Myrtle, as the two ran lightly down the steep stairway to the room which was Miss Douglass' especial retreat; her "*Sanctum*" she called it.

"Something jolly, Aunt Theresa," called Tom as he bolted suddenly in on that lady, who was sitting by a window placidly making up the accounts of expenditure in the Hall. Miss Douglass was famed for domestic *ménage* and Tecumseth with its well-appointed, cheerful rooms, and every token of loving thoughtfulness and careful housewifery, bore strict evidence to the truth of the report.

"Softly, Tom; what is it?" she asked, looking up one moment with her usual calm smile.

"A lark, Aunt; it won't hurt Myrtle to go into the woods, will it?"

"What woods, Tom?" Miss Douglass went quietly on with the butcher's bill.

"Greyley woods; all the Irvings are home; Gerard too. He fell from a mast and sprained his hand. Maud Fletcher and the Vances are going, besides some

more; a party in the evening too. Mrs. Irving sent an invitation to you and Philip; here it is."

Tom handed the note to his Aunt. "It is not anything great, Aunt Theresa, just a jolly, old-fashioned time. The boys want to have a sugaring off, and Guy came in to ask Myrtle and I."

"I'm afraid, Tom," said Miss Douglass doubtfully, "when the sun gets up the fields will be wet, and Myrtle takes cold so easily. Besides, will she like meeting so many strangers. What do you think, Myrtle?"

Miss Douglass glanced over at the longing face gazing out of the window and relented.

"Myrtle wants a change," pleaded Tom. "The Irvings are not airy, Aunt, except Olive; Myrtle will like Gerard anyway, and Mrs. Edwin and the old lady are comfortable kind of people."

"Your boots, Myrtle," said Miss Douglass, inspecting the dainty gaiters.

"I have stronger," said Myrtle, eagerly, and then my rubbers."

"You will do fine," said Tom. "Hurry up now; I'm going to see about the horse."

"Philip has the small carriage, Tom," called Miss Douglass, as the eager boy hurried away.

"The carriage, Aunt! What will we do? I never thought; and Jack is lame—Myrtle cannot ride him. There is nothing but Martineau's French cart. The other carriage has the springs broken; Martineau would not let it out on the roads."

"Take the cart, Tom," laughed Myrtle; "I don't mind,—I would like it."

"Very well, it's settled then," and he ran away.

"I will bring you an evening dress, Myrtle. Wear something strong this morning, and take care of yourself in the woods."

"Yes, yes, Aunt Theresa, I will."

They were soon jolting over the hard, uneven road. The mud had frozen, and made the driving unpleasant,