

The Emancipation of Lydia Duroe.

(Continued from our "Home Magazine" department.)

Lydia's face flashed into brightness. Something warm and vital had suddenly blossomed in her day—something that she might have missed and never known that she had missed.

"I don't know where I'm going," she said. "I'm just going to walk till I get tired."

Blue sparks danced in the girl's eyes. She clapped her hands impulsively.

"I never did anything in my life without knowing what it was going to be," she cried. "I've wanted to do so often!"

"And I'm not good company," Lydia insisted. "I ain't any talker."

"I don't want any talker," the girl sang back. She smiled at Lydia with frank boldness. "I'm coming," she declared. "I'm here. You needn't pay any attention to me, but I'm in the day with the sky and the shadows and those little, dancing leaves. You needn't pay any attention to me, but you can't turn me out."

Lydia smiled back at her. "I haven't said I wanted to turn you out, have I?" she retorted.

"Oh, well!" replied the girl. She threw up her arms and dashed into a heap of dry leaves, scattering them in a fragrant, brown spray about her. "I feel like that!" she cried. Then she puffed out her thin cheeks and mimicked the wind. "And like that," she added. Even as she spoke, a little footpath caught her notice, and she slipped into it, peering back through the brown branches at Lydia.

"Good-bye!" she called. Somewhere, farther on, you'll stumble upon me." The branches swung to; for several moments there was a soft commotion in their tips, but the girl did not reappear. Lydia walked on, smiling to herself. Half a mile farther on she found her. She was sitting on a stone wall, her chin in her hands, staring into a tangle of raspberry-bushes whose vivid lavender stems shone like pale violet flames against the brown hillside. She did not turn as Lydia stopped beside her.

"It's all amethyst," she said, dreamily. "I can't clear my eyes of it to-day. It haunts the woods—I feel it just beyond my sight—and the hills—and the sky—even the stones."

"I hadn't ever noticed before," Lydia returned, wonderingly.

The girl shook off her mood and leaped down lightly. "You couldn't," she explained with gravity. "You see the rest, but not that. It goes with my queer eyes, Miss Lydia."

They walked on then side by side, stopping often, and taking occasionally, yet generally silent. The beauty of the day deepened as they went on. The long sweeps of the fields—brown and gold and palest yellow—across which the cloud-shadows moved in silent procession; the exquisite harmonies of the woods, whose soft tips brushed the sky; the note of the little brook, singing contentedly to itself, though its ways were bare of bird and blossom—these things spoke with more intimate counselling than any words of human speech. Lydia's heart drank them in with the eagerness of one long athirst. The girl who could see had not lived long enough to understand the voices; her wild spirits folded their wings, and she walked in wondering silence—for a long time, that is; then she spoke with a humility which her eyes belied.

"Do you ever—eat anything at home?" she questioned.

Lydia started and looked around in dismay.

"Well, there, dear, how careless of me!" she said. "I never thought to bring a thing! And you must be hungry, and it's so far from home!"

"But not far from a store," Jessie assured her. "A nice little store at the cross-roads. You can buy crackers there and peppermint sticks and maybe cheese, though I won't promise that—I've never seen anything else except blue socks, and they're hardly digestible. Can you eat crackers and peppermint sticks?"

"Try me," Lydia responded eagerly.

The girl nodded. "You can wait—or go on," she said. "I'll find you. I may be some time, because they may have to make the crackers while I wait."

She darted up the road. Lydia sat down on a log and waited. It was good to have time to get the flavor of her great wealth—to find that there were days like this in November—that the youth which was at the heart of all such days claimed her as comrade.

"And I've been thinking everything had gone by!" she cried upon herself in reproach. "Just as if the Lord had forgotten how to make glad things since I'd grown up!" She turned her happy eyes to the world lying golden beneath the noontide sun. "Oh my soul, there's everything left," she cried, exultantly.

She did not know that Jessie was gone a long time, though her words, when she returned, made such inference possible.

"There wasn't any cheese," she reported, opening her bundle and spreading its contents upon a flat-topped rock, "nor any candy. But I could have eggs if I could wait for the chickens to be hatched and grow up and lay them. So I waited. Are you starving, Miss Lydia?"

"I thought it was you," Lydia replied.

"I guess maybe it is," Jessie returned with undisturbed gravity. "Anyway, here's eggs—I know they're fresh for the reasons aforesaid—and salt and crackers—and a brook. And these will have to do you till you get home again."

They ate their simple dinner, and found it a banquet, full of delicate ministrations to soul as well as body. Then they wandered on again and on. It was mid-afternoon before they thought of turning back. It was Jessie who spoke first after a long silence.

"When we get to that bank where the ferns are," she said. "I'm going to dig one up—a little green memory to keep all winter. I'm going to get one for you, too, Miss Lydia."

But Lydia did not hear her; she had turned suddenly aside and broken a spray of ruddy oak leaves and buried her face in them. When she looked up her eyes were shining solemnly.

"I'd almost forgotten," she said, "but it's there just the same."

"What?" asked Jessie, in a hushed voice.

Lydia held out the spray. As the girl bent to it she caught a faint, delicate fragrance, like the dream of spring. "It's like lilies," she cried. "Why, Miss Lydia, I never knew that oak leaves were like that."

"Some of 'em are," Lydia replied; but her voice was dreamy and her eyes saw something far away. Little Jessie looked at her with a thrill of awe and delight in her girlish heart.

"She's thinking of him," she thought, exultantly. "Oh, it's all coming right now."

Then they walked on together.

A week later, Mrs. Warren and Jessie "ran over" to Lydia's in the afternoon. An old man with a mild, white-whiskered face was pottering about the yard. He stopped and started at the visitors with an interest that seemed to hold something proprietary in its composure.

"For the land's sake!" Mrs. Warren muttered under her breath.

Jessie glanced quickly at her mother, but there was no chance for question, for Mrs. Warren had darted forward with a vehemence evidently inspired by some strong emotion; she dispensed with the ceremony of knocking, and burst into the sitting-room like a March wind.

"Lydia Duroe," she cried, "I want to know who that is out in your yard."

Lydia had risen at their entrance; she stood quietly facing them, with a large composure not untouched with humor.

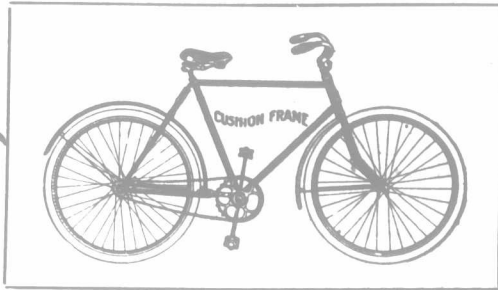
"That's Uncle Si Duroe," she answered, "father's oldest brother."

"Lydia Duroe, you don't mean to say you've gone and taken him on your hands after all the years you've been tied up?"

"I don't know why not," Lydia replied. "He's been with one of his sisters for years, but she's old and sick—I could better than anybody else. I guess I've got sort o' used to taking care of people—it don't seem natural without I've got somebody to do for."

Across Mrs. Warren's agitated shoulder she caught a glimpse of Jessie's disappointed young face. She hesitated a moment and then added a sentence for her.

"There's so many things left," she said—Mabel Nelson Thurston, in Lippincott's.



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HUNTING A TURKEY'S NEST.
Your heart jumps quick as you spy her,
Trotting along down the hill,
For you know it's a nest she is seeking,
Though she suddenly stops stock still.

You tremble for-fear she has spied you,
You stand like a reed in the wind,
And you feel you are losing your
patience
And wish that you never had been

Foolish enough to commence,
Without breakfast, hat or a shawl,
Then you hear your big sister calling,
"Breakfast is ready for all."

You think that your job is quite lengthy,
As you look for a comfortable seat,
And watch that old turkey a scratching
Like she was bent on something to eat.

She heads for the old brier thicket,
Where skeeters are thicker than peas,
And there stands listening at something,
It must be the low hum of bees.

You watch her slow poking actions
Till she jumps on an old rotten log,
And you find you are stuck in a mud-
hole
As you put your bare foot on a frog.

Brother Jim at the gate is a smiling,
I could tell by the curl of his lip,
As he said in a voice that was shaky,
"It's too bad, she gave you the slip."

—L. M. Wade, in Green's Fruit-grower.

A Methodist negro exhorter shouted:
"Come up en jine de army ob de Lohd."
"Ise done jined," replied one of the
congregation.
"Whar'd yoh jine?" asked the ex-
horter.
"In de Baptis' Chu'ch."
"Why, chile," said the exhorter, "yoh
ain't in the army; yoh's in de navy."

"My people have always moved in good
society. My father and grandfather were
often asked to the most exclusive
houses."

He didn't look like a boastful person.
"Yes," he continued, "they moved
more pianos than anybody, and built up
a fine trucking business that's mine
now."

As she was a practical girl, he made
just the impression he had desired.

An old man leaving work got into a
car. He had not gone far before the
conductor asked him for twopence. The
man said it was one penny for the dis-
tance he was going. The conductor said,
sharply, to him:

"Shut up, and pay twopence." So he
paid it.

The next morning the conductor re-
ceived a letter without a stamp, which
was surcharged as usual. When he
opened it, he was surprised to see writ-
ten on paper, "Shut up, and pay two-
pence."