

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## The Last Night.

(Source unknown.)

The term was over at last, and four 'sweet girl-graduates' were together for their last evening in the pretty study-room which they had shared for four years. All around were the various books and belongings of their student life, and through the open doorways one might catch a glimpse of the little bed-chambers, each white as a nun's cell, where they had lain down so many times to happy dreams.

It was all past now—the care-free time of

'Certainly!' was the answer. 'There is a world of work for me yet, if I am to be the teacher that I have always meant to be. Teaching, you know, is too often a girl's makeshift, until something better shall appear.'

'The coming man, perhaps!' laughed Millicent Grant.

'Perhaps!' echoed Lillian, laughing in her turn; but in a moment the lines of her intelligent face sobered again, as she went on, 'You remember the German aphorism which Professor Brown is so fond of quoting: "The good is the enemy of the best."

and I have asked Professor Kingsley to lay out for me such a course of reading as will be the best preparation for the following year of travel which papa has promised me. You see, I have no desire to go abroad simply because it is fashionable to do so, or for the sake of novel scenes and excitement. I want to get at the relations of things, and see them in their historical settings. Mere sight-seeing may be entertaining, without really broadening the mind. I want to be able to bring back something more than the ability to repeat my Baedeker by rote.'

'And you, Millicent?' said Lillian.

'I shall help mamma,' said Millicent smiling. 'Papa and mamma have many social claims. They cannot well be avoided. I am needed at home, for of late mamma's health has been far from strong. She is looking forward to sharing many things with me. But, girls,—and the sweet voice took a softer note—'I have had many thoughts since last winter, and I do mean to show that a girl, when entertaining and mingling with friends, need not be frivolous. It shall be my purpose to carry the spirit of Christ with me, and to let it appear in that real courtesy and thoughtfulness for others, which has been well named "love in action." Do you remember what Dr. Gray said in his sermon last Sunday morning?—"Do not grudge that alms to the poor rich people which you may give in the coin of sympathy."'

The girls were silent for a little while, until Margaret turned suddenly to the fourth member of the little group, who, seated at the other side of the room, and from whose lips not a single word had issued.

'And you, May-blossom! What are you going to do?'

Mary Bell started, as if from a dream, flushing all over her sensitive face.

'What a color!' cried Millicent, mischievously. 'Girls, I more than half believe that we have surprised some tender secret. Speak out, dear! It is the game of "Truth" which we are playing to-night!'

'I will tell the truth!' said Mary, impulsively. 'I have been listening to you and wondering at myself. I never thought about it in just this way before, but—I really am ashamed to confess that I don't believe I have any decided plans. It's just this way, girls. We haven't much money at home, and there are five children younger than I. It has been a hard thing for papa to keep me here at school, and, because I have always felt that so much, I seem never to have thought of anything beyond making the very most I could of my time every day. And now that I am going home, I have been thinking of being everyone's helper there. There is so much to do where there are boys, you know—the cooking, the sewing, the lessons, and all that. I couldn't be spared to be a teacher, and I couldn't afford to travel. A regular course of selected reading would be lovely, but, truly, the plan had not occurred to me until Margaret spoke of it. There is not much of what would be called "society" in the little place where we live, but there is a young people's society that is doing a great deal for the young folks, and there is always room for more workers there. I have been hoping that, going from so strong a young people organization as we have here in the college, I may possibly help them with some new suggestion.'

'So, you see, if I have any plan of life at all, it must be laid out piecemeal—a day



TOGETHER FOR THE LAST EVENING IN THE PRETTY STUDY.

school girl-hood, and with the dawn of the next morning they must take their separate paths, which, possibly, might never converge again. It was no wonder that they lingered, loth to let the night bring the separation and silence which would only symbolize the longer parting of the morrow.

All had been earnest and conscientious students, and it was but natural that in this—their last 'talk'—their thoughts flew forward to the unknown future which lay before them.

'You will go on studying, Lillian?' said Margaret Vaughan to Lillian Lee.

I believe in the truth of it thoroughly. No work is ever good enough which may possibly be done better. Whatever my success may be, of one thing I am assured—I shall not let down my aim.'

'You are right, Lillian!' said Margaret, eagerly. 'I shall try to put the same principle in practice, although I have no expectation of teaching others. But if—as everybody must believe—our powers of mind are heavenly gifts, it is certainly our plain duty to make the most possible of them. One need only read the Parable of the Talents to make sure of that.'

'I shall probably be at home for a year,