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BY THE LAKE.

"What!" said Mrs. Haven, almost in a shriek. "It is true," said her husband. "They're coming to visit us—every one of 'em; My sister Caroline, because the Scarborough hotels are too intolerably hot for endurance; Cousin Herbert Haller, because he is an aesthete, and wants to study nature from a level hitherto untrod; Mrs. Johnson, because the children don't get well after the whooping-cough; Aunt Sadie, on account of a difficulty with her landlady on the subject of poodle-dogs; and Uncle Jenks, because he never has visited us, and wants to know what my wife is like."

"Dear me," faintly gasped Mary Haven looking around her pretty sitting room, draped in pink chintz, fragrant with fresh flowers, and decorated with gilt bird-cages, water-colored sketches, and Kensington-embroidery; "what am I to do?" "Do?" repeated her husband, who was intent on clipping off the end of his cigar so that it should "draw" satisfactorily. "There is but one thing to do—let 'em come."

"All at once?" "Yes, all at once." "And I with only one girl, and the thermometer at ninety in the shade, and the painters in possession of the second story," hysterically cried the lady. "Couldn't be a better combination of circumstances, my dear," said Mr. Haven.

"I don't believe these people care a straw about seeing me," said Mrs. Haven, ready to burst into tears. "Neither do I," said her husband. "It's only on account of their convenience, the hot weather, and the high prices at the hotels," added Mrs. Haven. "Hugh, I've a great mind to commit suicide."

"Don't do that, my dear," said Mr. Haven. "I can suggest a better plan. I was just thinking, do you know—?" "Of telegraphing to the city for a new force of servants, a box of provisions from Fortnum & Mason's, half a dozen coats, with hair mattresses and bedding to match?" eagerly interrupted the lady.

Mr. Haller arrived later in the day—a long haired, shallow complexioned young man, in a velvet suit, followed by a countryman carrying his portable easel, color cases travelling library, and writing desk. He knocked loudly at the door of the cottage with the ivory knob of his cane. "Can you tell me where Mr. Haven lives?" said he. "This is the place," said the hostess. "This?" echoed Mr. Haller. "You are Cousin Herbert, I suppose?" said Mrs. Haven politely. "Walk in. My husband will come by the evening train. Allow me to show you to your room. It is rather small. But we are expecting a good deal of company, and I dare say you won't mind a little inconvenience."

And she left him in a seven-by-nine apartment under the eaves, where he could not stand upright, except in the middle of the room, and where the three pane window was close to the floor. "Humph!" soliloquized the aesthete, looking ruefully around him, "this isn't at all what I expected." Mary Haven had scarcely got downstairs and resumed the manufacture of raspberry pies, when shouts and cries in various keys announced the coming of Mrs. Johnson and her four children from the nearest station.

"Is this Cousin Hugh's house, ma?" said Adelaide, the eldest child. "It ain't nothin' but a shanty," loudly proclaimed Alexander Gustavus, the second boy of the family. "There ain't no paint on it," said Helen Louis. "Lemme get out! lemme get out!" cried Julietta, "and play in that lovely black mud where the frog is sitting."

Mrs. Johnson sailed in with a scarlet face and a perturbed look. "I'm afraid, Cousin Mary," said she, "that we shall inconvenience you. There don't seem to be much accommodation here."

"Oh, there's plenty of room up in the garret, such as it is," said Mrs. Haven smiling. "Of course, one expects to lead a cozy life in a place like this; and the lake will be no vice for the little dears to play in, if only they are a little careful, for it's so fucky you are here, Cousin Johnson, to help me with the pies and bread, for I'm not a very experienced housekeeper, and—"

So the company departed, with various adieus and unimpressive protestations of regard, and only Uncle Jenks was left, and then Mr. Haven took his cigar out from between his lips. "Uncle Jenks," said he, "suppose we go up and see how the carpenter and painters are getting along with the conservatory up at the house." "At what house?" said Uncle Jenks. "Mine," said Mr. Haven. "Don't you live here?" asked Uncle Jenks. "Not all the time," said Mr. Haven smiling. "We only came here to accommodate such of our relations as merely desired to make a convenience of us."

"Oh!" said Uncle Jenks, a slow smile beginning to break over his shrewd face. And Mrs. Haven confessed that her husband's advice had proved excellent. Uncle Jenks, the only one of the troop who really cared two straws for the m, was with them still—the rest had all been frightened away by the rusticities of the Windermere cottage. "And with them bon voyage," said Mr. Haven calmly. "So do I," agreed Mary.

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