



The Green Paper Doll

(Continued from last week.)

"I'm going to tell you," said Maude to Dorothy, as they pushed out on the lake, "but I promised Mrs. Halstead I wouldn't say anything to Martha about it. I've lost five dollars, and I can't help thinking she took it."

"Who? Mrs. Halstead?"
"Mercy, no! Martha."
"Never! I don't believe it!"
"Well, didn't you notice that new five-dollar bill she paid for the ice-cream with?"

"Yes."
"It was exactly like mine. You see, I had a new crisp bill that father gave me to spend while I was here. And when we went to town yesterday, I thought I wouldn't take it for fear I'd lose it. And Martha, or somebody, must have taken it, for when I got home it was gone."

"I don't believe Martha took it."
"Who else could have done it? Mrs. Halstead says she knows her servants didn't take it. She's had them for years, and they're perfectly honest. And you know how queerly Martha acted while she was paying for the ice-cream. She doesn't have much money, does she?"

"No," said Dorothy, reluctantly.
"Then how would she happen to have a new five-dollar bill just like mine, all of a sudden? And why would she act so embarrassed and queer about treating us to ice-cream?"

"Martha loves to treat," said Dorothy, a little lamely. "But I'm sure she never took it," she added, doggedly. "I'm going to ask her."

"No, you mustn't, Mrs. Halstead said she'd make up the loss to me, but we must not speak to Martha about it. Of course I won't take five dollars from Mrs. Halstead, but I promised I would not tell Martha that she took it."

"You were very 'uppish' to her, though!"

"Well, who wouldn't be? That bill was on the table in my bedroom, and Martha was in the room after I was. And when I came home, it was gone."

"You were very careless to leave it on the table."

"No, I wasn't. I didn't want to take it with me, so I stuck it behind a picture that stands on the table. Nobody would have seen it, but Martha knew it was there; she was in the room when I put it there."

"Maybe it blew off the table."
"It might have, but I've looked all over the room everywhere."

Dorothy sat silent. She hadn't wanted Martha to come, but Betty had coaxed her into it, and this was the result.

"Well," she said at last, "I'm going to tell Betty about it, anyway, I know she'll think as I do, that Martha couldn't have done such a thing."

"No, don't tell Betty."

"Yes, you will tell Betty, too!" said a voice, and looking up, the two girls saw Betty looking at them. The boat had drifted near shore, and Betty beckoned to them to come in.

"Now, you tell me what it's all about," she said, as they landed. "I'm not going to be kept out of it any longer."

When Betty spoke like that, her comrades usually obeyed her.

Half scared at Betty's frowning face, Maude told her story.

"What foolishness!" said Betty, as she finished. "Martha could no more take a penny that didn't belong to her than I could!"

"Then what made her act so flustered when she invited us to have ice-cream and when she paid for it?" demanded Maude.

"I don't know," said Betty.
"And where is my bill?" wound up Maude, triumphantly, and again Betty was forced to reply, "I don't know."

"But all the same," she went on, "Martha didn't take it! And I'll prove it somehow!"

"You can't prove it unless you find my bill."

"Then I'll find your bill!"

"You can't; I've hunted everywhere for it."

"Well, I will find it, and I'll make



PLAY BALL

you take back all you've said about Martha."

"I'm sure I'd be glad to," said Maude, staring at Betty's angry face. "I've no wish to make her seem dishonest if she isn't."

"I'll clear this matter up!" exclaimed Betty, "and then you'll feel sorry for what you've said. And first I'll go and tell Martha, and let her speak for herself."

"No, you mustn't do that! Mrs. Halstead forbade us to mention it to Martha."

"All right; then I'll take Martha and go straight to Mrs. Halstead and let her tell her."

"But you can't now, for Mrs. Halstead is superintending the May-pole. The carpenters are putting it up, and she asked us to keep away."

"Well, I've got to do something! I can't rest until Martha is cleared. Poor Martha! I don't see how anybody could think such a thing of her!"

Betty put her arm through Dorothy's, and they went on ahead, leaving Maude to follow alone.

"Betty," said Dorothy, "we know Martha never has spending money. And for that to be a new bill that she had yesterday does look queer. And she did act awfully funny about it all."

"I know it, Dorothy," said Betty, in a tone of despair. "I think it looks awfully queer. But I wouldn't own up to Maude that I thought so. And even if it does look queer, I won't believe Martha took Maude's money unless she tells me so herself, so there, now!"

Betty had unconsciously raised her voice in her indignation, and as they turned the corner of the path, they came upon the other girls, sitting on a settee, waiting for them.

"What are you saying, Betty?" asked Martha, her face perfectly white.

There was no blushing embarrassment now; Martha looked horrified, and even incredulous, but she was calm and self-possessed. Betty quite forgot what Maude had said of Mrs. Halstead's orders, and spoke right out to Martha.

"Martha," she said, "did you see Maude take some money out of her purse and lay it on her table yesterday?"

"Yes, I did," said Martha.

"Did you take it from the table—to put it in a safer place—or anything?"

"No, of course I didn't. Why should I?"

"Well, it wasn't a very safe place," began Betty.

"I should say it wasn't!" exclaimed Maude.

"Well, I didn't touch it!" said Martha.

"What are you talking about, Betty?"

"Then where did you get that new five-dollar bill you spent yesterday?" burst out Maude, unable to control her tongue.

Martha looked at her.

"Do you mean to say that you've been thinking that was your money?" she said, in a low, scared sort of voice.

"Yes, I do!" declared Maude.

"Oh, oh! I didn't, I didn't! Betty, Betty, what shall I do!" said Martha burst into a fit of crying that nothing could stop.

"Now, you see," said Betty, as she caressed her weeping friend. "Please all leave her to me."

The others went away a little shamefacedly, while Betty remained with Martha. She waited until the first

around there, and he's such a cunning little chap."

"Bobby! I've an idea! Now you stay right here till I come back! Don't you move."

Betty flew into the house and went in search of four-year-old Bobby. She found him in his nursery, mounted upon his black hobby-horse.

"Tell me, deary," she said, "when you were in Maude's room yesterday, did you see any money around?"

"Pennies?" asked Bobby.

"No, not pennies. Paper money. Green money."

Ess, green paper, but not moneys. I cutted out a paper dolly; see! It's not vewy good 'cause my sissiz was dull."

Bobby dived down into a box, and produced a queer-shaped paper doll which was surely cut from a five dollar bill!

Betty's eyes danced, but she only said quietly:

"Where did you find the green paper, deary?"

"In ve was'e-bastick," said the child; "I can always have what's in ve was'e-basticks. Muvver said I could."

"Yes, of course you can. That's all right. But lend this dolly to Betty, won't you? Just for a little while?"

"Ess, I will," and the child gave it up willingly enough.

Back ran Betty with her prize.

"There," she cried, triumphantly waving the five-dollar doll above her head. "I told you Martha didn't know anything about Maude's money. It must have blown from the table into the waste-basket, and Bobby picked it out."

"Oh—I do—remember!" said Maude, slowly, "the waste-basket was upset when I came home! So I looked through all the scraps carefully, but of course I didn't find it. I'm awfully sorry, Martha—truly I am—more sorry than I can say! I don't suppose you can ever forgive me."

"Oh, yes, I can," said Martha, smiling through her tears.

"I'm going to forgive you, too, Maude," said Betty; "but it will take me a little while. I am afraid it will be half an hour before I can feel toward you as if you hadn't done this."

"I don't wonder," said Maude, contritely; "but, Betty, I didn't know Martha as you did, and it did look queer."

"Yes, that's so," conceded Betty. "I think I'll get over it in a quarter of an hour."

She did and when it was time for the May party, the late unpleasantness was ignored by all, if not entirely forgotten.

Mr. Halstead gave Maude a five-dollar bill to replace the one his son had spoiled, and he then also presented her with the green paper doll, as a reminder not to trust too much to appearances.—St. Nicholas.

PLAY BALL AT SCHOOL

Dear Cousin Dorothy:—As this is my first letter to the Western Wigwam I will make it short. I go to school and I'm in the 5th book. I am thirteen years old. We play ball at school. We have taken the *ADVOCATE* for three years and like it fine. I read the letters and like them very much. I wish the editor would please send me a button. We have eight horses and four head of cattle and two pigs.

ORVAL STRETTON.

A GREAT READER

Dear Cousin Dorothy:—It has been such a long time since I wrote to your club, but I enjoy reading the letters very much. How many of the Wigs like reading? I am very fond of reading. I have read *Lucy Winter*, *Little People of the Snow*, *Our Little African Cousins*, and a great many other books about the children in Japan, China, India and other countries. We have been living in town for about a year and a half. I have been on the farm all the time until then. But we are living on the farm down at Arden. Keyes is three and a half miles from our farm, and Arden is five and a half miles from the town. I like the farm better than the town. We go to church and Sunday School in Arden. Sunday School is at twenty minutes to two and church is after Sunday school. Well, Cousin Dorothy, I will close for this time. Good-bye to all the Wigs.

MARY ORANGE LILLIE