

CHAPTER III

IF Alix Deering had not barked her pretty shins against the centerboard in Gerry Lansing's sailing boat on West Lake it is possible that she would in the end have married Alan Wayne instead of Gerry Lansing.

When two years before Alan's dismissal Nance had brought Alix, an old school friend, to Red Hill for a fortnight, everybody had thought what a splendid match Alix and Alan would make. But it happened that Alan was very much taken up at the time with memory and anticipation of a certain soubrette and before he awoke to Alix's wealth of charms the incident of the shins robbed him of opportunity.

Gerry, dressed only in a bathing suit, his boat running free before a brisk breeze, had swerved to graze The Point, where half of Red Hill was encamped, when he caught sight of a figure lying prone on the outermost flat rock. He took it to be Nance. "Jump!" he yelled as the boat neared the rock.

The figure started, scrambled to its feet and sprang. It was Alix, still half asleep, that landed on the slightly canted floor of the boat. Her shins brought up with a thwack against the centerboard and she fell in a heap at Gerry's feet. Her face went white and strained,