

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## The Value of a Degree

(By Mrs. C. F. Fraser, in 'Forward'.)

Frances Carter, B.A., was day-dreaming in the summer house when old Martha ungraciously jerked two letters onto the seat beside her. One of them was inclosed in a square-cut linen envelope ornamented with the familiar monogram of a great women's college. The other, cheap and commercial in appearance, bore in its upper right hand corner the name of the chairman of the local board of school trustees.

Old Martha frowned severely as the girl hastily tore open the college letter.

'If I was you, Miss Fran,' she said bluntly,

The word 'still' rankled not a little. Could it be that college fame was a mere evanescent glory? The girl remembered with pride that no other member of her class had had so distinguished a career.

'Our president,' wrote her friend, 'has received an application for a junior teacher from Latrobe Institute in New York. The opening will be in January. It is possible that you might care for the post though the educational standard is not high, nor the salary large, when the incidental expenses of city life are considered.'

In an instant Frances decided that her work in life was to begin in the fashionable

looked very wan; she gave a second nervous start as Frances called out a cheery 'Good-morning!'

'Dear child, how you do startle one!' she said half fretfully, drawing her wrap closely about her slender shoulders. 'You do not know what it is to have nerves.'

Frances laughed with great, good humor. 'Half the girls at college had nerves,' she said, indulgently. 'They never accomplished much, either, and I often thought that it was a question of carelessness and lack of will power after all. I am sure if I had let myself go to pieces for lack of exercise as some of them did, that I might have been in the same condition.'

The mother's tired eyes quickly filled with tears. 'There are other causes than lack of exercise for nervous prostration,' she said quietly as she sought her chair in the sitting room.

'Some of the girls worried a lot, I remember,' agreed Frances. 'They got into such states before examination times that they were really quite unfit to do their papers, and some of the poorer ones who did tutoring to help out with their class fees were really quite broken down in both body and nerves. I always felt sorry for them, but they had themselves to blame. Unless a girl is really strong and has sufficient to pay her necessary expenses she is foolish to attempt a college course.'

Mrs. Carter's eyes made a last vain appeal for daughterly sympathy, as Martha brought in her daintily prepared breakfast tray. Her daughter, however, was quite unheeding. Her thoughts were far away from the present needs.

'If there is nothing for me to do to-day,' she said, airily, 'I will take a long walk in the woods. I have a chance to go to the Latrobe Institute and I want to think the matter over.'

As soon as she left the room the tears which the mother had been holding back began to creep down her faded cheeks. It was, indeed, only by dint of much coaxing and by a show of authority that Martha could persuade her to sip her fragrant coffee.

'Frances doesn't know yet?' said the old servant, interrogatively.

The invalid shook her head. 'Mr. Carter will have to make an assignment to-morrow,' she said, despondently. 'He has been under such heavy expenses on Frances' account for the past four years that he has nothing laid by. The failure of the city firm, who were heavily in his debt, has been the last straw.'

'Can't you raise some money on the house and grounds?' asked the old servant, in a tone of grave concern.

Mrs. Carter's face showed a deep perplexity. 'We could easily get a couple of thousand in that way,' she said, quickly, 'but the trouble is that my father willed me the life use only of the place. At my death it goes to Frances, and it must, of course, be unencumbered.'

Martha made a queer noise in her throat. 'Miss Fran is not a child,' she said.

'But her father will not allow me to ask her consent to any such arrangement as you are thinking of,' said the mother, warmly. 'He says that she has marked out a life for herself, and that he will not hamper her in any way.'

Martha carried the dishes silently from the room and then did an unheard of thing. Tying on her plaid gingham sunbonnet, she left her work and hurried down the woodland road in pursuit of Frances's graceful



THERE ON THE WOODLAND ROADSIDE FRANCES CARTER, B.A.,  
MADE SEVERAL NEW RESOLUTIONS.

'I'd look at the other first. Most likely it is to offer you a chance at the academy.'

The girl laughed musically as she replied: 'Do you think I have been working like a slave for the last four years in the hope of teaching in this country place?'

'You might do worse,' retorted Martha, shortly; then seeing that the girl's attention was on the letter, she made her way back to the house.

'Somebody's got to tell her before long,' she murmured, her stern face softening perceptibly at the thought. 'Poor Miss Fran! 'Tisn't likely that even that B.A. of hers will comfort her much.'

The letter from an old classmate who was now engaged as a tutor at the college was not wholly pleasing. 'Why should she say, as if it were a matter of wonder,' asked Frances Carter, B.A., with a touch of youthful egotism, 'that the professors still speak of her marked attainments?'

boarding school which she knew by reputation. This was her opportunity. She would accept the appointment, and by virtue of her attainments and personality would completely revolutionize the tone of the school. Having thus established a reputation as a teacher and organizer she would leave her work in proper hands and become a professor in her Alma Mater where she would wield an influence hitherto unknown in the educational world.

So alight was her ambition that her face flushed rosily, and she sighed regretfully to think that so many months must elapse before she would be able to begin her career.

She went toward the house with light, springing steps and threw open the front door.

The sudden flood of light thus admitted served to daze her mother, who, with one thin, white hand on the banister, was slowly making her way downstairs. Mrs. Carter