

The trio were wont to meet several times a year. The Allans came to New York or else Hobby visited them in Buffalo. In summer they went together regularly for three weeks to Maud's little estate, Brook Farm, in the Berkshire Hills.

They regarded their meetings as great events. They seemed to be back once more in the happy times of three or four years ago, living over again the old happy hours of youthful intimacy.

For some reason they had not met at all during this winter and their present delight was keener than ever. They scrutinized each other from top to toe like great children and congratulated each other on their looks. Maud chaffed Hobby over his dandyfied patent leather boots with their rhinoceros horn toe-caps, and Hobby inspected Maud's gown and Allan's new dress clothes with the eye of a fashion expert. As always on these occasions, they asked each other a hundred questions, skipping inconsequently from one subject to another. Hobby as usual had had all kinds of quaint and strange adventures to recount. Finally they came to the question of the concert and of the day's events and of mutual acquaintances.

"And how do you like the building?" inquired Hobby with a self-satisfied smile, for he knew what the answer would be. Allan and Maud never stinted him with their praise. They expressed their admiration of the entire hall.

"And the foyer?"

"Grand, Hobby!"

"My only complaint about the hall," said Maud, "is that it is too gorgeous. I should have liked it to be cosier!"

The architect smiled good humouredly. "Naturally, Maud! That would be quite right if the people came here to listen to the music. But such an idea doesn't enter their heads. They come here to look about them and to be looked at. 'Build us a fairy palace,' the committee said to me. 'The hall must beat all records!'"

Allan assented. What he had been most impressed by, however, was not the decorative splendour but the clever construction of the suspension tier of boxes.

Hobby's eyes twinkled with satisfaction. "That wasn't at all an easy matter," he explained. "It took a lot of