

A LUCKY DOG.

"Do you often wear as rueful an expression as that, Miss Fannie Earl?"

Fannie paused on the shady sidewalk tilting back her broad hat to get a better view of the speaker. "All the while," she responded with a lugubrious smile. "Still I am very glad to see you, Mr. Evans, and hope father invited you down to dinner."

"Of course he did, don't he always? I want you to right about face, go down to the house with me, and tell me the cause of all your woe," and the big jolly man beamed on Fannie in such a whole-souled fashion that she felt quite cheered.

"Oh, it isn't much to tell to another," she said, quite apologetically. "You know I didn't go back to the city to art school this year, because the boys have just entered college, and father did not see how he could manage it for us all. The worst of it is, too, he does not really think my going of very much use, therefore, I have been trying to get up a class in painting here to show what I could do; but everybody has known me since I was so high," measuring an infinitesimal distance from the sidewalk, "and they make the most ridiculous excuses when I go to anyone for pupils. They all think I don't know anything. I have had the offer of just one pupil. Mrs. Huxley, the milliner, said I might give her little girl lessons if I would take my pay in a hat, and her hats would just scare the birds."

"Well, that is too bad," he said, "but it is simply another case of 'a prophet in his own country.' I have always thought you had a good deal of talent. See here! I have thought of the very thing." They had reached the house, and he sat on one of the veranda chairs, in a high state of satisfaction. "You know Mollie and I are located at South Wales for the winter, and only the other day I heard her saying she wished she had a good art teacher. I gather from what she said a big crowd of the women there are fairly pining for art. I believe you could make a pretty good thing among them. Too bad we are boarding, but I know a lady whom I am sure would board you for lessons."

Fannie clapped her hands in delight. "Oh, Mr. Evans! If I only could, but I am afraid father would never let me."

Mr. Evans was one of those enthusiastic men whose zeal knew neither abatement nor bounds in any scheme he had conceived, and he responded readily, "Yes, he will. I'll see to that. Mrs. Evans will take the best of care of you, and it is only fifty miles down the road. Don't fret about that, Fannie. You'll go if you want to."

Mr. Earl looked doubtfully upon the idea, but his little girl's great desire won finally, and he said, "Well, Fannie, you may go and try. Of course I know you will be safe, but I dislike to have my little girl meet the world so soon. You

will have humiliations and disappointments in plenty. Of that I am sure. You cannot rely entirely upon Mr. Evans' statement. He is very sanguine. Another thing, dear, admiring friends and possible patrons are two different classes of individuals. You always have your old father, though, to come back to, and I can afford a few dollars to buy my daughter a little experience. So go ahead and do your best. If you fail it is nothing to be ashamed of. Strong men have done the same."

"I never, never will give up," Fannie thought, and a very business-like demure little personage went down to South Wales the next week, put her advertisement in the paper, engaged a room in one of the business blocks for a studio, and arranged her little stock of pictures in it. She and Mrs. Evans went to see the lady who might board her for lessons; a very sharp-featured, decisive personage who eyed Fannie doubtfully.

"Yes, I told Mr. Evans I wanted to take lessons. I know I have a talent for painting, and now that I have my new house I want to decorate it. I want someone who understands the business, though. He said you'd been studying."

"I have," Fannie answered with reddening cheeks.

"I am sure Miss Earl understands her business, Mrs. Adams," interposed Mrs. Evans.

"Well, seeing you and Mr. Evans recommend her, I'll try. So you might as well come right off. I need a good many pictures and the quicker I commence the better."

"I do not think she had better commence for a day or two, as I wish to introduce her to the ladies; so you need not expect her immediately," Mrs. Evans replied as they arose to leave.

"Now we will call on Mrs. Kent. If she will only take lessons you are all right, for there are about twenty-five ladies who always do exactly as Mrs. Kent does," remarked Mrs. Evans, as she opened the gate leading up to a handsome house. Mrs. Kent was very gracious, but sorry that her time was so fully occupied at present that it would be impossible for her to take lessons. At a score of houses they received the same polite excuses and apologies, the truth really being that Fannie looked altogether too young, round and dimpled to inspire confidence, and her pictures, while really very good, were neither numerous nor showy.

Monday morning she sat alone in the studio painting on her "board contract," and trying her best to keep from crying, when she heard a medley of wheezing, thumping and talking on the stairs punctuated by sharp barks. The door opened with a rush admitting a little fat, breezy old lady with an exceedingly small inquisitive-looking dog under her arm, and a red cushion in her hand. Behind her came a small boy laden down with an easel, paint box and stretcher.

"Good-morning. Lay those things down carefully. There,

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Fido, bless her heart, don't get excited. Goodness, what stairs!" she gasped almost in one breath. "I tried to get up last week, but I couldn't get the cushion done and Fido seemed to have a little cold. Here, take my bonnet. What a little bit of a girl you are. I want Fido to look just as she does when I say 'Rats,' you know."

Fannie, helplessly bewildered and politely smiling, took the old lady's bonnet. Then she suddenly seemed to recollect herself. "Well, I declare, child, I don't suppose you know a thing about me. I am always forgetting that everybody don't know me. I am Mrs. Amory and I want to paint Fido lying on that red satin cushion. Isn't she a beauty? See what a cunning little curl she has got to her tail?"

"Have you ever painted?" asked Fannie in amazement.

"Oh, yes, a few plaques and things," responded Mrs. Amory, airily. "You know you can just sketch in Fido, then I'll paint her. Bless her! Don't I know every hair on her, and if I can't paint her I don't know who can."

Fannie's breath was nearly taken away. To sketch a live dog was certainly an undertaking, and she did not know what to say to her strange pupil, but she was spared the necessity for Mrs. Amory bustled about, arranged her easel where she wanted it, set up the canvas, put the satin cushion on a chair, then called the dog. "Lie down, Fido. Put your paws out. Now, 'Rats,' Fido." The dog's slender ears pointed forward, her small bright eyes fairly snapped, and she crouched as motionless as a little stone effigy. "There, isn't she lovely? That is just the way I want her, cushion and all, life size. Now you draw her in and tell me what paints to get out. Lie still, Fido. Be sure that beautiful curl to her tail shows."

It certainly was an emergency, but Fannie never quailed. She took a stick of charcoal and commenced. Her experience in "cast" drawing came to the aid of her naturally quick eye. But it took nearly an hour, several excursions after the recreant Fido on the part of Mrs. Amory, and numerous ex-

citing references to "rodents" with considerable mental strain on Fannie's part, before a spirited sketch of the vivacious Fido lay on the canvas. Fannie was thoroughly and excitedly interested. She laid out the palette and mixed the paints, then watched in agony of spirit Mrs. Amory's futile little dabs. If Fido had not so insistently reminded them they would probably have forgotten the dinner hour. When she became entirely unmanageable Mrs. Amory reluctantly gathered herself together, tucked Fido under her arm and departed, saying, "We'll be back to-morrow. I think I've done beautifully."

For the next two or three mornings the studio was the field of quite exciting scenes and Fannie had no opportunity of either crying or working on the "board" picture, which Mrs. Adams resented by treating her as though she were in arrears on her bill.

One morning Mrs. Amory said, "Say, my dear, I want you to come and stay with me. You have never seen Apollo yet, and it will give you a better opportunity of studying Fido."

"I would like to, but I have an engagement with Mrs. Adams," Fannie began hesitatingly.

"Oh, bother Mrs. Adams. I don't like her nose. Fido is the only sharp-nosed female I can tolerate. Help her finish that picture if you want to, but come and visit me. Fido and I will call for you to-night."

Fannie was so homesick where she was that she could not refuse, so was ready to go when they called for her, telling Mrs. Adams it was only for a visit and need make no difference in their arrangements.

A fanciful little house, all gables, bay windows and porticos was Mrs. Amory's. As they came up the walk a sullen, black little face gazed solemnly out at them.

"That's Apollo," whispered Mrs. Amory. "He looks as though he was in an awful humor. I don't like him as well as I do Fido, he has such a dreadful disposition, and I'm always afraid that he'll find out that I like Fido the best."

A red-cheeked, pleasant-faced girl opened the door for them. "How