THE GIRLS of MISS CLEVELANDS'

BEATRICE EMBREE

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"MEMORY BOOKS" *(See page 99)*

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By

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To Canadian School Girls
—Past and Present

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ILLUSTRATIONS

THE GIRLS OF MISS CLEVELANDS'

CHAPTER I.

The Choosing of Miss Clevelands'.

THERE was a whirr of a motor up the drive leading through the ranch, and the car—a gray roadster—came to a stop before the large, solidly-built stone bungalow set in a clump of trees. A big, clean-shaven man with iron-gray hair jumped out, ran up the steps of the house, and with no other ceremony than a vigorous blow on the iron knocker, he burst in on the expectant group in the hall.

"Well, well, here I am, advice and all! So there's a family conclave on about Miss Mabel going to school in Toronto this winter? Nothing like choosing a place that's nice and near, so we can all run down and see her every little while. Now then, tell me where I come in on this, for I'm in a bit of a rush. Have to be back in Calgary to-night to see another law fellow—and I'll bet he'll pay a whole lot more attention to my opinion than you good people."

All this was said while Uncle Jack Rutledge pinched the rosy cheeks of Mabel, a tall girl of sixteen, giving her his ulster and gloves, kissed his sister, Mrs. Robertson, and shook hands with her husband, the owner of one of the biggest cattle ranches between Canmore and Calgary.

"Now, Jack, stop your nonsense and be sensible," said Mrs. Robertson as she led the way into the cozy living-room with its big stone fireplace and low beamed ceiling. "You know you'd be wild if we didn't consult you about the best school to send Mabel to. Just sit down here and look over these things," and she pointed to a chair in front of a big square library table covered with prospectuses from all the schools in and near the capital of Ontario. She and Mr. Robertson sat near and watched Uncle Jack as he settled down to his task—glancing through each prospectus in turn. Mabel soon came back, and stealing over the polished floor with its islands of big fur rugs, she perched on the arm of her uncle's chair, a picture of healthy, happy girlhood, her curly black hair hanging down her back in a thick braid, her khaki skirt and middy with its scarlet tie bringing out the pink in her cheeks and the sparkle in her brown eyes.

"Look here, you don't mean to say that there are all these schools in Toronto now! There used to be a good many when I was at Varsity and

Osgoode—we used to serenade 'em—but not nearly such a bunch as this. Let me see—'Ideal home for growing girls'—'Eminently qualified staff'—'Preparation for University and degrees in Music and Art'—'Beautiful playing grounds'—'Domestic Science and Physical Culture'. Sounds all right. Now what does this one say? 'Healthful and home-like atmosphere'—'Highly efficient body of' "—and in an indistinct murmur, Uncle Jack enumerated rapidly the advantages specially mentioned in each prospectus, while his audience of three patiently waited.

"Suffering saints!" he finally exclaimed, throwing down the last booklet, "Why, they all say about the same thing. Strikes me if our Mabs here went to any one of them she'd be guaranteed a perfectly finished and accomplished young lady, and I fear me, a bit uncomfortable to live with. Seems to me just a matter of chance which one you choose. Personally, I don't see what's the matter with her keeping on at the Collegiate at Calgary, where she can drop in and cheer her old uncle sometimes. But if she must go, and if you think it would be a good experience for her, why, we'd better decide jolly quick, as the 'ideal homes' will be opening in less than three weeks. What one did you think of, Alice?" turning to his sister.

"Well, Archie and I have gone over these so often that we're nearly crazy. First we'd decide

on one, and then another. If we asked advice, we were referred to a different school each time as the best. Now, Mabel would like to go to Miss Clevelands'. Last Christmas she met Gladys Hungerford in Winnipeg, and she got her interested in that. She has been going there ever since she left the convent two years ago. I got a letter from Mrs. Hungerford yesterday in answer to one I wrote, and she said that Miss Clevelands' is a very nice school—small compared with some of the others, but quite home-like. The teachers are very good—and kind, though Miss Clevelands herself is very strict. It's non-denominational, though they usually go to a Presbyterian church which is quite near. That will suit us and they can go farther down town if there's anything special. I think the school is in the north-west part of the city, but not too far from the shops and concert halls. But the thing she said that I liked best was that money seemed to make no difference—you couldn't tell which girls had money and which hadn't. I do think that an important feature, for, really, we hear so much about money out here that it's going to have a bad effect on us. I know it's getting on my nerves."

"And then," said Mr. Robertson, "it will do Mabel good to knock round with girls a bit. She's been the only girl round so long with the boys and

men on the ranch except for the little time we're in Calgary in the winter."

"Well, why not choose Miss Clevelands' and be done with it?" asked Uncle Jack. "They ought to put in their prospectus, 'No moneyed snobs need apply', but I suppose that wouldn't appeal to some. By the way, it wasn't Miss Clevelands' old Bill Ferguson sent his girl to, was it? No, it couldn't be. It was a large school. By George, you should hear him talk about the money it cost—most expensive school he could get. Lots of millionaires' daughters, and so on. I saw Ella—the girl, you know—on the street the other day in Calgary. You remember what a gawky, countrified-looking little shaver she was when they first moved to Calgary after they made their pile? She was with her mother. Everything the latest style with Ella—fancy boots, tight skirts, earrings, and all the rest of it. But her mother looked just the same woe-begone, tired creature as ever—so typical of many of these women out here—who have lived away from civilization till the husband strikes it rich and they move into some town. The husband and the youngsters usually can get along all right, but it's too late for them, poor things! Oh! while I'm at it, I may as well tell you. You know, poor old Bill used to use his knife for almost everything—peas or anything that came along. Well, the other day, in

the hotel café, he was starting in to shovel with his knife in the same old way, when he suddenly stops and grabs his fork. Ella had evidently been coaching Dad. Gee whiz! it was funny—but it was pathetic too. He's so proud of her. Well, I'm glad our girl is going to a school where there's a chance of her getting away from hearing about this eternal money. I'm getting fed up with it too. Well, how about it, little one?"

"Uncle Jack, you darling, I am just crazy to go to Miss Clevelands'. Glad Hungerford's a dear, and she says there are some awfully nice girls there", and Mabel strangled her uncle in a vigorous hug. She had been an eager listener, but had thought it much the best policy not to interrupt.

"Let's see the prospectus again, if you would just leave a little breath in my body, Miss. Here we are—'Home-like environment'—Guess they'll need a few cowboys and gophers to make it really home-like for this tom-boy. 'Highly qualified staff'—remember that, young lady, when you feel like being saucy. 'Domestic Science and Physical Culture'—Well, your mother seems to think she's made a good housekeeper of you, and you don't look as though you needed much physical culture. 'Music, art, dancing and elocution.' That's where the frills come in. Well, have all you want of the first three, but cut the elocution, or there'll be trouble with your old uncle. Oh! that reminds

me—Bill Ferguson said, 'You had just ought to hear my gal Ella elocute!' Excuse me! 'Swimming'—Hope you haven't forgotten the strokes I showed you at Banff last month. 'Riding'—Well, I don't believe I'd bother with that. Jogging along on some livery nag through the streets of Toronto would seem a trifle tame after tearing round the ranch on Wildfire. 'Tennis, Basketball, Ice Hockey' — Nothing new to you there. 'Ground Hockey'—Oh! yes, that's what we used to call 'Shinny'—Used to see girls playing it in Vancouver. 'Cricket'—My word, how very English, don't you know! Never heard of it for girls, to tell the truth, but I should think that's about what it's fit for. Any time I've watched it, I've nearly croaked. Slowest game on earth. I never could imagine an able-bodied man preferring Cricket to Rugby or Baseball. Why, you no sooner get on to what they're trying to do than some umpire yells 'Over'—or something like that, and they all stroll up to the other end. Well—but wait a second—Great Scott, is that the time? I've got to run. Where are the boys?"

The last question was answered by a rush from the door on the part of the three Robertson boys —aged fourteen, thirteen and ten. They had been restlessly waiting outside the door—as they had been told to keep out, while, to their jealous disgust, Mabel was allowed in. They worshipped

big, jolly Uncle Jack. Sometimes he would take them racing across the prairie in his high power roadster, or would invite them to visit him in his big house in Calgary, where he lived all alone with his kind old housekeeper and his Chinese cook who could make wonderful things to eat, as the boys well knew. Three years ago the big house had been built for Uncle Jack's bride, but she had been killed in a land-slide in the Rockies on her way home to Calgary to be married, so Uncle Jack lived on in the house, devoting himself to his numerous nephews and nieces, children of his two brothers and three sisters, all married and living in different parts of the country between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

As usual, the boys mauled their hero and made surreptitious dives into his pockets.

"Get out of there, you rascals!" cried Uncle Jack. "Go and look in the car and see if you can't find a baseball bat and some gloves. All I had time for this trip. By the way, Alice and Archie, I have an idea. I haven't been to Toronto for years and some of the boys want me to come for a reunion they're having on the 13th of September. So I might go along with the child—but for Pete's sake, I hope the others won't want me to keep it up, or I'd be chaperoning nephews and nieces for the rest of my life. Might get a permanent job at Miss Clevelands'. Well, I must run—bye-bye

for the present. I'll be out some time next week to talk things over more. Now, all who want a ride to the cross-roads jump in—all right, Mabs—I'm on—race you to the cross-roads!" This to Mabel, who had slipped away and mounted her lean little horse, Wildfire, and who now came tearing up. Away they flew, Uncle Jack keeping the car in pace with the horse till they reached the cross-roads. There they separated, and the young people came back to the ranch.

Time passed quickly, and the day of Mabel's departure for the east soon dawned. Her clothes, chosen in accordance with the prospectus issued by Miss Clevelands, with individual touches thrown in, were all packed and at the station. Excitement had kept her awake most of the night and towards morning she got up and went to her window to get a last view of her beloved plains and foothills. The house was built on a fairly high knoll and commanded an extensive view. The Bow River glistened white as it wound among the foothills, on whose slopes—still quite green though it was nearly the middle of September—horses and cattle were grazing, tossing their heads and tails in the morning sun—now slowly rising in the east. A faint mist gradually came up from the moist green hills obscuring some of those more distant.

Most wonderful of all—on the western horizon,

bounding the softly-rolling foothills, towered the gray mountains like a battlemented barrier of granite guarding some enchanted land. Their lofty snow-capped peaks reached to the clouds—some hidden by them, while the snow on others glowed rose and lavender and saffron, as the sun's rays touched its glistening surface. To Mabel, who loved these hills and mountains and who never grew weary of watching the change of light and shade, there came the sudden thought that she was going away to leave them for many months, and how she envied the train whose smoke she could see in the distance, for it was going into —not away from—that enchanted land where, beyond Field and Glacier, towered in rugged grandeur even loftier peaks than those which had been so much a part of her short life! Tears came, and only the fear that Uncle Jack would tease if her eyes were very red kept back the sobs that almost followed. The same feelings came again when she said good-bye to Daddy and mother and the boys, and then to Wildfire—brought down to the station by one of the cowboys—but the same fear again restrained. When Uncle Jack joined her at Calgary, homesickness was forgotten in the joy of being with him, and the excitement of the long journey east over the C.P.R. Many friendships were formed with girls going to different schools, and many promises, some destined

to be unfulfilled, were made of seeing one another in Toronto.

All over the Dominion the great "trek" had begun—to fill the schools that opened in mid-September. From East and West they came—in larger numbers to Toronto, but many to other centres of secondary private education. Not only in Canada was the movement noticeable, but from many places in the United States the call of Canadian schools was answered, sometimes an almost random choice of school being made, and sometimes a choice for some special reason.

Because his Canadian cousins had gone to Miss Clevelands' school, and because while visiting them he had met his future wife, Leigh Allen, junior partner in the law firm of Beveridge and Allen, Richmond, Virginia, had always intended that his only child, Letty, should go to Miss Clevelands'—though his friends often urged that between Richmond and Toronto lay a district fertile in famous girls' schools. To this Leigh Allen always replied that his wife had been Canadian and his daughter must see something of the life and people of her mother's land. He himself was far from strong and could not leave his sunny climate. Since her mother's death, Letty had been brought up by one of her father's sisters, Aunt Lucy, a sweet and gentle woman, and by her

black mammy, Chloe, and other adoring darkey servants.

Aunt Lucy firmly believed in clothes that were both sensible and pretty, and soon Letty's simple and dainty wardrobe was ready for her departure. It was a serious matter for Letty to make the journey to New York where Aunt Elizabeth was to meet her and go with her to Toronto. A grave little miss of seventeen it was who waved "good-bye" to the darkies grouped to say farewell to "Miss Letty" on the lawn of her cozy, vine-clad home, and who kissed her sobbing mammy with a tremulous "Good-bye, Aunt Chloe; I'll miss you dreadfully." She drove off between her father and Aunt Lucy, who both looked so sad in spite of their efforts to be cheerful—and even these efforts gave way when the final parting came and Letty was off at last. It was a cool little head on those slim shoulders, and all instructions about changing and other information were gladly given to the little dark-haired lady with the soft voice and dignified manner—whose gravity of countenance would lighten with a dimpling smile of thanks. She had been told to speak to no one but officials in official caps, and had obeyed her instructions to the letter, except in the case of one dear old gentleman with a white "imperial". She had come to know him through helping him find his glasses which he had dropped on the floor

near her chair. After that, he seemed to take her under his grandfatherly wing, and when the train pulled into the gorgeous station in New York, he stayed with her till Aunt Elizabeth found her. Letty and her Aunt thanked him for his kindness, and then, with a stately bow, he disappeared. Aunt Elizabeth was a Southerner, like Aunt Lucy, but much more bustling and decided in her manner. Her home was too far from the station for them to spend there the time that intervened before their departure for Toronto, so Letty was hurried to a taxi and a strenuous day was spent in shopping in the big stores and driving through the crowded streets. After an early dinner at a huge hotel, called "La Plaza", which seemed like a palace to Letty, they boarded the train for Toronto. When she awoke and peeped out next morning, Letty saw her mother's country for the first time as a flash of trees and fields and houses, so unlike those of her far-away Virginia.

CHAPTER II.

Schoolmates—New and Old.

ALL day long, on September the twelfth, an almost continuous stream of people had been going in and out the front door of Miss Clevelands' School for Girls. A large, red brick house, built in the square Georgian style, had been made to serve as the front part of the school, and over the pillared entrances on the front and east side were balconies. To the house proper had been added schoolrooms and offices which altered its appearance from the side but not from the front. A high fence lined with Lombardy poplars enclosed the large grounds. On the east was the basket-ball court with the swimming-tank behind, connected with the school, and on the west a tennis-court in front, and through the clump of trees behind could be seen another large stretch of poplar-lined grass—more tennis courts, the cricket crease and hockey field.

Pupils and guardians coming in by the front walk, and delivery carts and Canadian Express lorries, laden with trunks full of school apparel, clattering up the side driveway, made a sudden increase of activity in that otherwise quiet and rather remote part of the city.

It was a hot, sultry day—as a day in September can so easily be—and the cool, dark, square entrance hall gave welcome relief to the hot and dusty travellers. Among these were Mabel and her Uncle Jack. Mabel's spirits were gradually falling, though she was trying to conceal the fact from her uncle. On their request to see Miss Clevelands, they were shown into the library, a home-like room, with well-filled book-shelves and cozy leather chairs. Mabel's glance first rested on a dear old lady in a soft black dress and lace cap with lavender ribbons. She was limping toward the door, with the aid of an ebony cane, and from one arm dangled her knitting bag. As she beamed in kindly fashion on Mabel and her stalwart uncle, the girl's heart beat high with the hope that this might be Miss Clevelands. But no—for with the words, "I'll come back presently, Charlotte," the old lady hobbled away.

Then Mabel turned toward the big desk near the window and saw a tall, very thin woman with straight black hair, streaked here and there with gray. Piercing gray eyes looked keenly through a pince-nez, and seemed to penetrate with cool scrutiny the faces of Mabel and her uncle. Hers was a clever face—a fine face, showing breeding and distinction—but of an austerity and reserve that had a noticeably subduing effect on even Uncle Jack, to say nothing of Mabel.

In clear, courteous tones she introduced herself as Miss Clevelands and asked them to sit down. After some minutes spent in enquiries about their journey and in ascertaining Uncle Jack's exact relationship, she rose, and, ringing for the maid, she told her to ask Miss Hargraft to come. Miss Hargraft proved to be a tall English woman with an athletic walk and a high colour. On being introduced, she shook hands in a cold, impersonal way, and asked Mabel if she would like to see her room. As it was obvious that Mabel was supposed to go to her room, Uncle Jack took very solemn leave of the two ladies, asking permission to come the next day before he left for the West. This was granted, and they left the library, both uncle and niece hoping to get a quiet word before they separated. But no, there was Miss Hargraft in their wake, evidently waiting for them, as she exchanged a few words with another teacher—rather young and jolly-looking—whom Miss Hargraft called Miss Dewson.

Uncle Jack kissed his almost tearful niece goodbye and promised to come next day. As he was shown out the door by the kind-faced maid called Rose, he caught a glimpse of forlorn little Mabel disappearing into the end of the hall, guarded by the most efficient-looking Miss Hargraft. Peter, the large Maltese cat, rubbed against his legs, as he escorted him down the steps, and feeling glad

of this show of friendliness after his experience in the library, Uncle Jack stopped and patted Peter, while he relieved his mind—

"Thundering blazes! Glad I'm not in poor little Mabs' shoes! Poor little kid! She'll be so homesick. Thought she was going to go all to pieces in the hall in front of those two—one looked all right, but the other looked disapproving enough. That old girl in the library looked at me at first as though I were masquerading as Mabs' uncle. One thing sure, I couldn't have kept up the bluff if I had been. Nice gratitude after my galivanting all the way down here! I must send some stuff up and try and take the kiddie for a drive or something to-morrow—but, gee whiz, I hope I don't see the Lady of the Gimlet Eyes when I come. Eh, what, old Sport!" and he gave Peter's aristocratic ears a friendly tweak as he went off.

In the meantime, Mabel, perilously near to undignified sniffing, followed Miss Hargraft. She passed several rooms, and in one she could see some girls sitting round a big, sunny room in easy chairs and on a low wicker couch, chatting and laughing together. That made things look better and it seemed that it might be possible to laugh again in spite of an intense longing for home. With a quavering catch in her breath, she trudged up the stairs, and by the time she reached

the top she was feeling quite cheerful. It was with quite a bright smile that she thanked Miss Hargraft, who had helped her carry her club bag, and who now seemed much kinder than first impressions had led her to believe, as she said: "This is your room. Your roommate, Letty Allen, came this morning; she'll be up presently I imagine. You might just unpack your bag and I shall tell the man to fetch your suit-case", and with that she left.

Mabel glanced around the large square room whose windows looked on to the clump of trees separating the tennis courts. Her share of the room was next the window, and as she looked at the neatly arranged dressing-table of her roommate and the few pretty knickknacks already in place, she said to herself, "She's not one of those messy people anyway." And then, before unpacking her bag, she took off her hat and went over to the open window. The sun was getting low in the west behind the trees, and the sight brought the thoughts of her dear, gray mountains with the deep gold of the setting sun showing up their rugged outlines. Back came that troublesome lump in her throat and the tears were threatening in all earnest when she heard a sound near the door. Mabel turned and saw a slender girl with curly dark hair and a sweet face. She just managed to choke back those tears, as a shy,

soft voice said, "Why, you must be my roommate; I didn't know you had come—but oh! I am so glad. My name's Letty Allen. What is yours?"

"Mabel Robertson. I've only just come."

"Oh! I'm mighty glad you came to-day. We surely are going to be friends. Do you know the girls downstairs were teasing and saying my roommate might be somebody I wouldn't like and I was most afraid to think about her—but now—Where do your folks live? Far away?"

"Yes, way out near the Rockies—near Canmore—guess you never heard of that," said Mabel, feeling much less dejected as she saw that Letty's eyes looked suspiciously red, as though she too had had dealings with lumps in throats. Suddenly Mabel felt as much at home with Letty as though she had known her five years instead of five minutes. "It's the first time I've been away from home so far. Uncle Jack brought me here, but he's going to-morrow night. Tell me where you come from. You speak differently from me."

"I come from Richmond, way down in Virginia, but isn't it nice, honey, that we should both be new and both away for the first time? Why, I reckon we're going to be so happy together. Such a big, jolly girl called Georgie thought my way of talking funny too—said I spoke like a darkey, and I reckon it does seem that way. Oh! if I could only see my old Chloe for just a little minute!"

Here it was Mabel's turn to play the rôle of comforter, for Letty's voice began to quaver in a funny, jerky way.

"What time did you get here? You seem to be nearly all settled."

"Oh, Aunt Elizabeth and I got in this morning from New York and we got up to the school about nine. My trunk came soon after and I just unpacked right away to keep from being lonesome. A senior girl, called Babs, helped me and such a nice teacher, Miss Dewson, told me what to do with my things."

"Is a girl called Gladys Hungerford here yet? She was here last year."

"Yes, she's here. I met her at lunch. Listen! Why, I reckon that's her voice now." She had just finished when in came a tall, dark girl with a frank, jolly expression and off-hand manner.

"Anybody here I know? Well, I should say. Hello, Mabel, it's great to see you", and Mabel was given a vigorous hug. "Sorry I couldn't connect at Winnipeg, but I had to come down with Lois—my sister, you know. She's going to train for a nurse. And you can bet I was good and sorry when one of the Gaynor School girls I met down town just now told me about that good-looking uncle of yours. Jean said all the girls were crazy about him and wouldn't look at any of the college boys when he was around. Has he gone?"

"No, not yet. He's going to-morrow night, though, but he's coming to see me in the afternoon."

"Well, little Gladys will stick around to try and get a peep at him. Did Miss Clevelands look as though he ought to have brought a written certificate of uncledom?"

"Listen here, Gladys, I think you might stop talking about a man long enough to introduce me," said a short, fair-haired girl with gray eyes and slightly turned-up nose, who had been standing just behind Gladys.

"Oh, Constance, dear, a thousand pardons, as Mamselle says. Girls, Letty and Mabel, this is Constance Hilliard, from Halifax; she's one of those codfish-eating blue noses you read about. She says 'bawth', and 'lawst' and 'awnt'—just like that—but she's not bad—not nearly so airified as she sounds. I ought to know for I roomed with her for a year and am going to risk it again."

"On behalf of the Nova Scotians, I thank you, Miss Hungerford; but we're not worrying. You know, I shouldn't dream of mentioning Glad's faults—she has far too many and is one of the worst plagues you ever knew. Oh, come in, Babs and Georgie, and let Glad introduce you in her own sweet way,"—this to two girls who had appeared at the door.

"Thanks, I think I prefer to do it myself. Be-

sides, I don't need one—just look at me. I'm Babs Fortescue, from Fredericton. I am so glad to meet you, Mabel, for I've heard such nice things about you from old Glad over there", and she shook hands with Mabel who lost her heart at once. From under wavy, golden-brown hair, two merry blue eyes looked at her, and the bright smile accompanying the clear, musical voice, made her feel that this tall, really beautiful girl, who carried herself so well, would be a friend who would prove very dear, and she felt the same towards Georgie Dillworth, Babs' devoted roommate—evidently two or three years younger than Babs who was eighteen. Georgie was from London and was a big, sturdy girl with very fair, straight hair, blue eyes, and the jolliest, frankest smile—that was really a grin. It was difficult to withstand that infectious grin of Georgie's; Letty had succumbed at once—and it was Mabel's turn now.

"Never mind unpacking now", said Babs in her imperious way. "Let's all go down to the sitting-room and see the other victims."

"Oh, say, Babs", asked Gladys, "did you meet that little girl called Phyllis Smythe? Most affected little thing you ever set eyes on. Told me her name was spelt with a 'y' and an 'e' first go off. Must have guessed I was wobbly on spelling and wanted to help me out."

"Yes, I met her. She's rather pretty, but you make up your mind not to think so, she's so sure of it herself."

"She and Gertrude are as thick as anything already. Gertrude Heyd is worse than ever. Still acts as though she knew it all. Says the same old thing about it being such an old-fashioned school. Can't see why her father picked it out. Guess he thought it a good deal better than any American school. She needn't be putting on any more of her Yankee airs round here or there'll be trouble", said Georgie hotly, remembering a heated argument of an hour ago. In the meantime, Letty's attitude had become quite bristling and her gentle gray eyes very bright as she listened to Georgie's tirade. Babs realized what the trouble was, and seizing Georgie round the waist she swung her round toward the indignant Letty.

"Break, break, break, Georgie dear, as usual. Perhaps you don't know it, but there is one of the citizens of the great Republic right here—so when you get mad at one you don't need to include the whole country. Something tells me Letty and the blasé Gertrude won't have much in common. Letty, don't mind Georgie," (as Letty appeared to be mollified by Georgie's sheepish grin). "She's much more harmless than she sounds. But do let's go downstairs."

And away they trooped to the cozy room Mabel had seen on the way upstairs. It was known as the "Girls' Own Sitting-room" — shortened to "The Girls' Own", for, unless too riotous, here the girls might lounge and talk and read in any free time. There was a large fire-place, flanked by book-stands containing magazines—such as "The Graphic", "London News", "Punch", "My Magazine", and books, new and old, dear to the hearts of girls in their teens. A big square table, cozy wicker arm-chairs, and two low wicker couches with bright cushions that harmonized with the curtains at the big bay window, facing west, and with the rugs on the polished floor, completed the furnishing of the room.

"Isn't this a nice room?" asked Constance of Mabel. "Dear old Granny Clevelands fitted it up for us three years ago."

"Is she the dear old lady with the cane I saw in the library with Miss Clevelands? Oh! I thought she was lovely, and do you know at first I hoped she would be Miss Clevelands!" said Mabel eagerly, while the other girls laughed.

"Well, not exactly. No such luck," said Gladys. "Wouldn't it be great if she were! Do you know, they say Miss Clevelands is quite jolly with her mother. Wish she'd let us see a little of it. She almost does sometimes—but we haven't time to get over the shock before she's her old self again.

Why, even Babs, the dauntless, is afraid of her."

"Here, Glad, don't talk so much. Remember we came down to introduce Mabel to the assembled throng. Girls, here's another new arrival, Mabel Robertson, from the wild and woolly west. Mabel, this is Phyllis—let me think—oh yes!—Phyllis Smythe" (to a pretty little fair girl with a languid air)—"and next is Gertrude Heyd from St. Clair, Michigan, in the U-nited States of America", as a tall, rather heavily-built girl with a very mature manner and style of dress smiled at Mabel with a glance that took her in from top to toe. "This is Madeleine Carstairs from Vancouver", to a slender girl with dreamy brown eyes. "Then Ethel—oh dear! I can only remember first names—oh! now I have it—Ethel Hawley from — Moose Ear — no — gracious me! Moose Jaw. I'd make them change the name if I were you, Ethel." Ethel was an awkward, overdressed girl with a self-conscious manner. "Well that's all. Oh! hello; here are two more," as a tall discontented-looking girl with light hair came in followed by a shorter one—quite demure-looking with smooth dark hair hanging in long braids. "Come over and be introduced. This is Mabel Robertson"—to the tall one—"Marie Baxter from Brandon — and Ellen Johnson who lives right here in this flourishing metropolis of Toronto. Now, I resign from sheer exhaustion, as

master of ceremonies. So go ahead and get acquainted. Come on, Letty, I'll show you the tennis-courts. You'll simply have to learn to play," and the two started out to the smooth, green courts while Babs explained the mysteries of the white lines and the court they marked off. Presently they were joined by Gladys and Mabel and Georgie, and then later by Constance. From their easy, friendly manner, and from the way in which the two new girls were made to feel that their presence was congenial, a casual observer would have predicted a warm bond of friendship among the members of the group.

While waiting for the signal for dinner, other new girls came out, usually escorted by one or more of the old girls who were only too keen to show their superior knowledge of the eccentricities of the mistresses and of the inner workings of the school. Two old girls who especially delighted in this were Gertrude and Marie, two devoted roommates who were telling their attentive audience, composed of Ellen, Ethel and Phyllis, highly-coloured tales of last year, relating some of the exciting escapades they took part in. In fact, Ellen, who had been sent to the school while her father and mother were in England, and who was among girls older than herself for the first time, was simply spellbound by these tales of prowess. Ellen's simplicity was too great a

temptation for Gertrude. She called Marie aside for a moment, and held a whispered consultation. Then, after some casual remarks, she turned to Ellen and asked in her drawling, somewhat nasal voice, "When's your roommate coming, Ellen?"

"Miss Dewson said she was to get in at a quarter to nine on the train from Montreal. Her name's Frances Edwards and she comes from Quebec."

"Yes; I know, but it's too bad she's deaf, isn't it? Oh! didn't you know?" seeing Ellen's look of surprise and disappointment. "Oh! I wouldn't worry about it. I daresay if you speak loud enough it will be all right. There's the dinner-bell at last. Let's hurry, Marie, we can sit where we like to-night." And soon the girls, hungry after their travelling and unpacking, were assembled in the big, square dining-room.

After dinner and prayers in the assembly-hall, there was more strolling in the garden, as the evening was warm and as work had not begun. Then the "room-bell" rang earlier than usual, for it was felt that the best cure for the inevitable homesickness would be sleep. Letty and Mabel made feeble attempts at unpacking and conversation, but finally desisted, for between being very tired and very homesick, their voices became very quavery. Just when each thought she could not keep her feelings in a moment longer—so great

was her longing for home and its familiar faces—a tap was heard at the door. Letty said, "Come in", hoping it might be the kind-looking teacher with the dark, curly hair and rosy cheeks, called Miss Dewson. The two girls had taken a great fancy to her, for she had tried to cheer them up several times during her rounds on "corridor duty".

Instead of Miss Dewson, appeared Mrs. Clevelands, a little out of breath from her long climb up the stairs on her visit to the new girls, for her kind heart told her that they were all longing for the sight of a motherly face. In their sweet and natural way, Letty and Mabel made her welcome, pulling up their most comfortable chair and relieving her of her cane. Then they sat side by side on Letty's bed, while she gently plied them with questions about their homes. As each in turn gave a glowing description of her home and her people, Mrs. Clevelands could almost picture those homes, so different in environment yet so alike in ideals. Presently she kissed them both good-night and told them to come and see her in her part of the house just as often as they could. And she went on her way, leaving behind just that touch of home for which their young hearts had been longing so hard.

Meanwhile, Gertrude and Marie, as seniors, had got permission to remain in the sitting-room

for a while longer, as they said they wished to write some important letters. Shortly after nine o'clock they saw a young girl of about fifteen, tired and dishevelled-looking from her long journey, tramp wearily by with her suitcase, under the escort of Rose. They knew this was Frances Edwards, Ellen's expected roommate, and both rushed out and seizing the suitcase they offered to help her upstairs with it. A pleased smile lighted up the girl's plain face and big gray eyes, but this soon gave place to a look of gloom, when after a few enquiries about her journey, Gertrude said:

"It's too bad, your roommate's deaf, but if you speak loud enough I guess you'll be able to manage."

"Oh, jiminy!" said Frances, abruptly. "That's the limit. I've had to talk to a deaf old lady—a friend of mother's—all the way from Quebec. Oh, dear!"

Miss Hargraft, at the top of the stairs leading to the first corridor, had not heard the conversation, but from past acquaintance with the two senior girls, she was amazed to see Gertrude and Marie doing such a thoughtful thing as carry a suitcase for a junior girl—and one who was not very prepossessing at that. "They must have reformed more than we deemed possible", was her inward comment, and after greeting Frances,

she allowed the evidently regenerated seniors to escort her to her room, where Ellen was awaiting her. Gertrude and Marie were lingering on their way upstairs to their own room, when an unusually loud conversation from both Ellen and Frances began. It continued to get louder and then a decidedly angry note crept in. Miss Hargraft listened, amazed that two such quiet-looking girls should make such a sudden disturbance. Finally, her amazement drew her down the hall, just as Gladys remarked to Constance, in a room nearby.

"So that's what Gertrude and Marie were up to—that old, deaf roommate trick. It's as old as the hills. Rather mean, I call it, to try it on so late at night when they're both dead-tired and homesick. For goodness' sake, listen!"

Miss Hargraft, trying to be gentle, asked the flushed and excited Ellen and Frances what the trouble was that they were shouting so, and the storm broke out again.

"They said *she,*" pointing to Ellen, "was deaf and I had to shout, but she needn't make such a row herself."

"Why, they told me *she*", pointing to Frances, "was deaf, aren't you?"

"Well, I just guess not", returned Frances. "I wondered what those two were so sweet about. If that's a good sample of the girls round here—I —I wish I hadn't come"—and tears came to poor,

tired Frances' eyes. Ellen was not in much better case, for she had been brooding over the disappointment of having an afflicted roommate.

Miss Hargraft, on her way down the hall to tell Gertrude and Marie what she thought of their ill-timed joke, met Mrs. Clevelands slowly coming down from her mission of comfort. Suspiciously tearful sounds reached her sympathetic ear, and she asked Miss Hargraft if anyone were in trouble.

"Two of the old girls have been hoaxing two new ones. Those are the new ones you can hear. They would love to see you, Mrs. Clevelands, if you are not too tired. I am going up to interview the other two. I shall ring the 'lights out' bell directly." And they separated, one on a successful errand of sympathy, the other on one of rebuke—also successful for the time being.

The "lights out" bell soon rang; Mrs. Clevelands left the now reconciled Ellen and Frances, and with a reminiscent smile on her sweet old face at the sorrows of youth so quickly lightened by a loving word, she entered her daughter's room. On hearing her, Miss Clevelands looked up from her time-table with an affectionate smile softening her severe and worried face.

"I am going to bed now, Charlotte. Don't sit up too late. I've been round to see the new girls tucked in. Some of them are such sweet children.

It's too bad you were too busy to come, for they always love to see someone, especially the first night."

"Well, I fancy, mother, that the one who did go was the more comforting visitor," said Miss Clevelands with a dry smile, and, kissing her mother good-night, she turned again to her work.

CHAPTER III.

Autumn Days.

AT a quarter to seven, next morning, most of the still slumbering girls were rudely awakened by the persistent ringing of a bell throughout the house.

"Merciful goodness! What's that?" ejaculated Babs. "Oh, it's the rising-bell! Same old story in the same old way! Georgie, awake, my love!" but no sound came from the other bed. "Georgina, wake up! That's the rising-bell!" as Babs' pillow was hurled at Georgie's still motionless form.

"Oh, cut it out, Babs; keep quiet and let a fellow sleep."

"Georgina! Did you hear me? Humph! didn't know I had asked to room with such a grouchy dormouse! Georgie, listen! Be an angel and go and get your bath first and then turn on the water for me!"

"Who's your servant last year? Leave me alone, Babs."

"Well, what nerve! That from a Junior to a Senior!" cried the indignant Babs, jumping out of bed. "I'll settle her pretty quick." She flew

into her kimono and slippers, seized soap-dish and towels in one hand, and with the other dipped a face cloth in the water jug and flung it so that it alighted neatly on the sleeper's face. With a squeal of rage, the thoroughly aroused Georgie leapt out of bed and made a rush for her tormentor. Too late! Babs slammed the door as Georgie reached it, crying, "Now, perhaps you'll learn to be respectful to your betters!" Then Babs flew down the corridor to her bath, only stopping long enough to half-open Letty's door and call, "How are the leading lights from Virginia and Alberta this bee-oot-iful September morn? Listen to the good roommate down the hall! I are going to be killed, I are! Farewell!" Dire threatening sounds had been coming from Georgie down the corridor.

The sound of the bell had disturbed Letty's dreams just as she was helping Aunt Lucy plant the last of the Dorothy Perkins roses in the new bed near the porch, and had interrupted Mabel in a mad gallop over the prairie on Wildfire. Both girls sat up and looked around in utter bewilderment.

"What is that? Where am I?"—they chorussed.

"Oh dear! I thought I was home. What time is it, Letty? My watch has stopped."

"Nearly ten minutes to seven. When did Miss

Dewson say we had breakfast? That couldn't have been the breakfast bell then—surely not so early."

It was then that Babs made her hurried visit and her attire set their minds at rest about which bell had rung. So great was the excitement of the first morning and their desire to do things right that they were dressed and had their room ready for airing long before the signal for breakfast. Virtuous resolutions were made that this would be the case every morning—that they would not have any hurried scrambles to dress that the old girls had been describing to them. No, indeed, it was by far the nicest time of the day—early in the morning! They decided they would ask if they might go for an early stroll around the garden before breakfast every morning—and other resolutions of that sort. Alas! for these first day resolutions!

When the bell for breakfast finally pealed, there was a hurried opening of doors and laughing greetings on all sides. Some doors opened later than others, and figures frantically tying middy ties and hair ribbons rushed after the others. Hungry and forgetful of the homesickness of the night before, they trooped down to the dining-room, where they were wished a cordial "Good morning" by one of the teachers in charge for the day—the "dragon" as the girls called her.

They had not seen this one the night before. Miss Spencer was tall, with fluffy brown hair, gray eyes and a bright smile which made the new girls think "dragon" much too harsh a name, as in friendly tones she showed each girl where to sit. They were about to take their places after the short grace, when, amid a sudden hush, in came Miss Clevelands and her mother.

Mrs. Clevelands usually had her breakfast in her room, but she joined the others for the first few days, for her keen interest in "the children" made her anxious to see them and to get to know them as much as she could. She knew their lives would soon become so full of organized work and play that she would not have as many opportunities of seeing the girls as her generous heart would like.

The chatter was almost subdued as the hungry girls disposed of the "wholesome" breakfast of whole-wheat porridge, bearing the disrespectful nickname of "Bran," bacon, toast and marmalade. Then followed the ceremony of bed-making, during which Gladys and Constance were despatched to impart instructions with regard to the simple hats, middies, dark skirts and gloves to be worn on the walk.

"All aboard for the Crocodile. Bell at eight-fifteen," called Gladys, putting her head in at Letty's door.

"THE CROCODILE"

"The crocodile?" said Letty, perplexed.

"The daily constitutional, my dear, which we take—when we can't get out of it—for the good of our health and the amusement of the people we meet. Better hurry, it's nearly time. Miss Spencer's the most good-natured soul, but don't be running away with the idea that she is the easy mark she looks—for she isn't, and neither is Miss Dewson. Word to the wise!"

A few minutes later, Miss Spencer surveyed her little army of about fifty girls with general approval, noting with an eye to a private word after the walk, the pale blue satin bow on Florence Kay's middy, so out of harmony with the black, navy or red of the other girls, and the pearl necklace and brilliant hatpins affected by Ethel Hawley. Kindly prudence restrained her from introducing immediate reform.

As they followed the lead of Babs and Gladys, the new girls tried hard to cultivate military precision of bearing and step, and they realized for the first time how difficult a matter walking really was—especially in a body—a body in which each seemed to herself to be the only one in step!

The country district was too far away for their shorter walks, so the itinerary they got to know so well—houses, occupants and passers-by—led through shady streets lined with comfortable-looking houses, interspersed here and there with

a few fairly large churches. For the girls who preferred games in their recreation time these walks meant boredom in the extreme, but there were some who thoroughly enjoyed them—those to whom exercise requiring much effort was a burden and whose aim in life was to see and to be seen—their opportunities for this being almost limited to these daily walks. Of this class, the most promising were Gertrude, Phyllis, Marie and Ethel. It was felt by them to be a great drawback that Miss Clevelands' was not near enough to the more central part near Bloor Street, to meet the lines of girls from other schools, and so waves and greetings arranged for on the journey to the city were not possible, and even the cars were no nearer than a block away.

To Letty and Mabel it was a new experience and at first the notice they excited was embarrassing. Life was so interesting at their age, that to see was what they wished—but the pleasures of being seen were of small importance as yet. Letty's Southern principles got rather a shock on seeing a woman sweeping her own verandah steps or a man mowing his lawn or attacking intruding weeds, quite as though it were the most usual and natural thing in the world—but most unusual and unnatural to Letty from the South, where such so-called menial tasks were performed by black servants only.

Boys and men a-plenty passed them on their way to school, college, and business, with varying degrees of interest, for, from time immemorial, a line of school girls has been the butt for masculine remark, mature or immature. After a few weeks, Letty and Mabel, both rather observant little people, decided to classify the most outstanding types of the passing males. They called their table "The Four Ages of Man and a Line of School Girls," and if they had tried they could probably have matched Shakespeare's immortal seven.

TYPE I.: Small boy.

SPECIES 1.—Usually jeering and mischievous.

Outward comment:

"We love our teacher, we love our teacher,
We love our teacher, Oh yes, we do!"
or "Left, right, left, right, left, left, left, left."

SPECIES 2.—Scornful and indifferent.

Inward comment:

"Gee, pack of girls! Silly things! Glad I'm not one!"

TYPE II.: Youth.

SPECIES 1.—Self-conscious, dapper, ogling, sometimes flashy.

Inward comment:

"Some pretty girl that little blonde there! Looks all right to me—this way every morning for mine!"

SPECIES 2.—(Rather rare) Pre-occupied, shy, usually blushing, often wearing glasses.

Inward comment:

"Oh, what a nuisance! That school's open again. Have to go another way to miss those giggling girls."

TYPE III.: Man between thirty and fifty.

SPECIES 1.—Dapper, "jolly fellow" — "heart-smasher" look.

Inward comment:

"Well, by Jove, here are those girls again! Poor things, it must do them good to see a man that's worth looking at once in a while. Some are jolly good-looking, especially the tall blonde! Bit frosty though—has to be I suppose."—referring to Babs who looks haughtily through Type III., Species 1.

SPECIES 2.—Not so dapper, severe, somewhat defiant and conceited-looking.

Inward comment:

"Humph! School-girls! Well, they need'nt be trying any of their wiles on me. I know them!"

SPECIES 3.—Alert, frank and kindly-looking, both well-dressed and not.

Inward comment:

"Hello, those girls back again! Poor kids! It can't be much fun going round like that. Look happy just the same. Now I wonder if I can manage to meet Johnson———"

TYPE IV.: Old man.

SPECIES 1.—Severe and crabbed-looking, gouty or rheumatic as a rule.

Inward comment:

"Girls of to-day are not the retiring young maidens of my time—just look at 'em!"

SPECIES 2.—Whole face one kindly beam.

Inward comment:

"Bless my soul! what a bonny lot of faces! makes me feel young just to see them!"

Only the most conspicuous types were classified in this table, copies of which were in great demand by appreciative admirers of the two originators. Their classification did not mention facetious workmen on roads and buildings, groups of college boys and ushers in church, as they might be included in Types 2, 3 and 4. This famous classification was all the interest aroused in girls like Mabel and Letty, but not in Gertrude and Phyllis. Their presence meant that the "dragon" had the unpleasant task of seeing that no response was made to advances from Types 2 and 3, Species I.

Soon after their return to the school each morning the bell would ring, and after meeting in each class-room all would march to the Assembly Hall for prayers, including the day girls of whom there were only a few, as Miss Clevelands preferred a small, resident school.

On the formal opening day, more teachers appeared to play a small or large part in the lives of their charges. There was Mademoiselle Lenoir —"Mamselle"—tall, with large, dark eyes, dark hair and olive colouring. She looked, in her dark brown linen dress, like some startled, woodland creature, until her charming smile flashed, and she spoke in her pretty English—very broken when angry or excited. In contrast with her, was Miss Prendergast—because of the impression she gave of cold, unyielding criticism—far from being a favourite with the girls. An excellent teacher, as far as imparting knowledge of her subjects—Literature and History in the senior school—was concerned, and apparently a good disciplinarian, for the girls were quiet and most subdued in her presence, but to her a breach of rule was a breach of rule, and mitigating circumstances were almost unknown. Charitable leniency on the part of a teacher was scorned as sheer weakness—an attitude of mind that was reflected in the almost grim expression of her face. She was devoted to what she considered the welfare of the school, and was Miss Clevelands' constant adviser.

With her neat brown hair, sturdy build and determined manner, Miss Mockridge, the Science mistress, was the personification of energy, and into the games played under her direction, she instilled a spirit of fairness and good sportsman-

ship—a spirit which can make games a wonderful factor in the development of character. From the Highlands of Scotland Miss Wallace had come that year to teach the sometimes loved but generally detested subject of mathematics. Red-haired, plain-featured and fiery-tempered, she had had a strenuous life, and to the girls who found her subject difficult, or who were apt to shirk, there came the feeling that strenuous times were in store for them too. Miss Wallace shared with Miss Clevelands, Miss Prendergast, and Miss Hargraft, the idea that a teacher must never forget that she is a teacher—and neither must the girls—a most effectual barrier to sympathetic intercourse between young minds and those more mature.

Of a different mould were Miss Dewson and Miss Spencer—the former a teacher of a variety of subjects in the junior division, while the latter was the English specialist in the senior division. Tolerant and fun-loving themselves, they preferred to err on the side of leniency — except where deceit and cruelty were involved. They thus won the affection and, strange as it may seem, the respect of the girls, but also a measure of disapproval from other members of the Staff, to whom the idea of Big Sisterhood did not academically appeal. Miss Hargraft, Mistress of

Classics, came to feel the appeal, it is true, but the bonds of early training proved too strong.

Miss Snelgrove, in charge of the French and German department, was a slight, nervous woman, impulsive in her ways. She had a tendency to show favoritism to a few—a tendency girls are so quick to detect and to resent as unfair. Miss Delisle was the only teacher of music who lived in residence. Other teachers of music, art, elocution, physical culture and domestic science came at regular intervals to perfect their charges in the social and domestic graces.

From nine-thirty till one-thirty every day but Saturday, a programme of hard work was rigorously followed, and the course mentioned in the prospectus "from Preparatory to Second Year University" was earnestly pursued. Babs, Gladys, Constance and Gertrude were in the highest form, though not all in the same division; Letty and Mabel, to their delight, were together in the form below, while Frances, Ellen, and Georgie were two forms lower still. There are always difficulties to be encountered at first amid new surroundings, new methods, and new terms for old.

"To call a deduction a 'rider' may make it sound more interesting and romantic—but don't you forget it—it's the same old stumbling-block

to this child," said Constance, the unmathematical, in pathetic tones.

From two till four-thirty o'clock every afternoon, there were games, and in these lovely days of September and October what glorious games they had! Tennis was very popular and eager spectators watched the tournament until the exciting finals when Georgie defeated Frances—two of the junior girls having been disrespectful enough to win out to top! Basket Ball, when it was not too warm, brought out skill in most unexpected places. Dainty little Letty looked much too slight to be a valued player, but her lightness meant speed in running and dodging, and under Babs' patient guidance as Captain, she became one of the most skilful players, and won a coveted place on the team, of which Mabel and Frances had been made members almost at once, as they were already experienced players.

Cricket and ground hockey were unfamiliar to many of the new girls but it was not long before their mysteries were penetrated. To be sure, many were the bruises and bumps acquired, but likewise came skill and muscle.

The first thrill of catching a ball, with fingers stung almost to numbness, amid loud applause, was only a spur to further efforts, especially when the player "in at bat" was one of such batting prowess as Georgie. The game that Uncle

Jack had scorned as only fit for girls proved not so easy as it looked—even to the athletic Mabel. It was all very well to say it was a simple matter to "bowl"—but to send the ball with such a curve that it missed the broad bat facing you at the other end and gave the fatal tap to the wobbly "bails" on the "wickets"—that was a matter whose difficulty was appreciated only by the initiated. This was the tenor of an enthusiastic letter to Uncle Jack.

On cooler days, ground hockey, the mere mention of which broke down Miss Hargraft's reserve and made her eyes glow in enthusiastic reminiscences of games "at home in England", produced more bumps and bruises, and enthusiasts in spite of all. The curved stick, so absurd-looking to the novice, proved a most effective weapon of attack and defence—the intended object of the assault being the ball, though often feet—especially those harbouring "pet corns"—were the unwilling recipients of the blows. In all these games, Miss Dewson, Miss Spencer, Miss Hargraft and, of course, Miss Mockridge were ardent participators. Paper chases were another source of joy, indulged in through the country district to the north. Skirts were torn, boots were plastered with clay, and hands and legs badly scratched, but those were minor details to the happy group of muddy, glowing girls and teachers, pursuing "hounds"

and "hares", captured or uncaptured as the case might be, as they tramped back in time for tea, and then, alas! for work!

In the evening, shortly after dinner and prayers, work again till nine o'clock, except on Friday evenings which were always set apart for special entertainments and party frocks. On Hallowe'en, of course, the usual seasonable gaieties were afoot. It had been a lovely day and they had had one of the jolliest paper chases. To be sure some of the hounds were foolish enough to lose the paper trail dropped by the fleet-footed hares and for a time seemed hopelessly lost, and Miss Hargraft, in crossing a muddy stream, chose too slippery a stepping-stone and fell face downwards in the muddy water. The girls, sympathetic, but in fits of giggles, tried to scrape the clay from the soaked and mud-beplastered form of what was at first scarcely to be recognized as their once extremely neat Mistress of the Classics. On looking back, these incidents seemed but to add zest to the enjoyment of the afternoon.

In the big assembly hall, the girls—in middies—no party frocks this time—were enjoying themselves around a large tub "ducking" for apples, biting at apples suspended from a string, floating needles and pins, and indulging in other of the time-honoured customs. Each had done this every Hallowe'en since she could remember, but it all

was just as much fun as ever. The only one to whom these ceremonies were new was "Mamselle". With much gesticulation and broken English, she had in vain been trying to bite a large red apple, swaying before her in tantalizing fashion. At last the white teeth fulfilled their mission and the apple lost a generous bite.

"Ah! see there! I have at last success—ah! What success! I have her bit at last! Voilà!" screamed "Mamselle" in delight and all turned rather startled at these cannibal sentiments from the gentle French lady. Then a burst of laughter was added to the giggles round the bitten apple as they realized what a personal touch gender can give even to an apple. After more games and dancing, a taffy pull was organized as a last preliminary to wash-basins and bed. Even Miss Clevelands was forced to join in this and sacrifice her dignity, as she went through the usual contortions of the ancient and sticky rite of taffy-pulling. She was allowed to escape none of the stickiness under the supervision of Babs, inwardly filled with delight as the front of Miss Clevelands' white crêpe blouse was finally festooned with strings of yellow taffy.

Of course, during the evening, as it ever was, small boys and large had been ringing the door-bells, shooting peas at the windows and blowing horns, but the merry din in the hall had almost

drowned these sounds. When, however, the sticky hands and faces had been duly washed and when the girls were presumably asleep, along came some of the students from the University.

They had bestowed their usual Hallowe'en attentions on the girls' colleges in the more central part, and now came to repeat their programme for the benefit of the girls of Miss Clevelands', some of whom were more appreciative than others. To the disgust of the girls on the west side, the boys finally lined up on the east side of the building and began their serenade. None of the girls could do more than peep cautiously out, and giggle in subdued notes, aware of the patrol kept by Miss Clevelands and Miss Prendergast in the halls. One youth, more daring than the others, climbed up to the balcony above the side entrance amid cheers of encouragement from his fellows as he prepared to clamber to the window above. These soon turned to shouts of derision as he released his hold and dropped to the ground—his clothes completely drenched on that chill October night by the contents of Miss Spencer's water jug being suddenly poured on this too venturesome "porch climber". He realized too late that the suppressed laughter he had heard came from official and not student lips. Somewhat abashed by this offensive movement, the serenaders withdrew and peace reigned again.

CHAPTER IV.

Apple Sauce.

"SERVICEABLE" and "wholesome" are terms seldom used by the average schoolgirl except to express the most withering contempt. If her mother buys her a dress which is both serviceable and pretty, she will wear it with delight because it is pretty, but if it lacks that quality and has only the first—as it must be confessed some school dresses have — she will wear it grudgingly because—well—because she has to, not having any other that she dare wear. Sometimes feelings of bitter envy of the other girls' pretty clothes stir her soul, as that dress still persists in being as good as new. Her best dress might seem to have a perfect mania for acquiring tears and ink-spots, but never the despised everyday one, destined still for weeks of holeproof service!

The same with food. To the growing girl, busy with school and with outdoor games, all food is enjoyable as a rule—some, of course, being more enjoyable than others, as ice cream and such delicacies. But, when a mother says, "Eat plenty of the rice pudding, dear, it's good for you,"

the edge of appetite seems straightway to disappear. The idea that certain food must be eaten because it is good for one is not appealing when one is in the best of health, precaution not being characteristic of youthful minds. To be told that carrots are good for the complexion, simply lessens their attractiveness as food, for the getting or retaining of a good complexion is not so vital then. The case, of course, is somewhat different with the average growing boy—food is food to him, qualified or not.

How unfortunate that boarding-school food should be described as "good, plain and wholesome", for, unconsciously, the ready criticism of youth is roused in the prospective, and otherwise appreciative eaters, even before they enter the school. As long as boarding-schools have existed, tapioca has figured in the menu, and for the same length of time has masqueraded under some realistic and appetizing name as "Fish-eyes", and when adorned with browned white of egg gets no better treatment than "Fish eyes and Soap suds". The "Shepherd's Pie" of the thrifty cook bears the mystic name of "Resurrection Pie" or "Review of Reviews".

It had been a banner year for apples in Canada. Consequently, it was a duty to the produce of one's country and the welfare of one's body—apples are so wholesome—that apples should be

consumed in every shape and form by good Canadians, especially by those in schools. Now, everyone will agree that there is nothing more delicious than properly cooked, green apple-sauce, and the girls at Miss Clevelands' knew that perfectly well. But, when you had apples under many different guises appearing at the dessert course—at least five or six times a week—with the disagreeable idea of duty included—whether duty to one's country or one's self mattered not—it was too much of a good thing.

Such were the feelings of a group of girls, as they sat resting on the lawn after an exciting hockey practice one afternoon. Presently, Constance, who had been having a music lesson, appeared, her face lighted up with an expression of rapt excitement as though she were the bearer of good news.

"Girls, you simply will never guess what we are going to have for dessert to-night!"

"Ice cream," said Georgie, always an optimist.

"Peach jelly with whipped cream," from Mabel.

"Washington Pie," added Letty, suddenly homesick for Southern dainties.

"Wrong, all of you, but then I knew you couldn't guess. Why, can you believe it—the cook just told me—it's—apple-sago! Ouch!"

As the indignant girls made for her, Constance tore off with Georgie in hot pursuit, brandishing her hockey stick. When the deceiver had been duly punished and forced to beg for mercy on her knees, she was allowed to return to the group, now resigned to their disappointment.

Gladys, who had been thumping the ground with her stick, suddenly said:

"It's a funny thing, but you know last year apples were so scarce, it was quite a treat when we had apple sauce—glad to have it as a change from citron and sour plums and gooseberries. Did you ever hear how we stole some one night last year?" turning to Mabel and some of the other new girls. "You were there, of course, Con, and you, Babs and Georgie, heard about it; well, you can just think of something else while I tell these others the thrilling tale. Ahem!—you know I never can describe things, but here goes.

"One night, at dinner, we were all excited about a cricket match we had won that afternoon, and I guess we were making rather a row. Those of us at Prendy's table were feeling peeved at her because she hadn't shown any interest in the game, —just said in an icy tone she supposed we were glad we had won. The other govs had been awfully decent—had either gone up to watch—for it was the final match with Gaynor School—or else had asked us first thing about the score and had

hunted up the team to congratulate us. Not so, old Prendy. She had kept watching us at dinner with the light of battle in her eye, and had romped on every girl who laughed out. Finally, she forbade any talking, so we sat in dignified silence—so dignified that we hardly ate anything more, and my word, we were hungry!

"Well, by ten o'clock, we were nothing but an aching void, so hungry we could eat tacks. As luck would have it, not a soul had a crumb to eat. The more we thought about it, the worse it got—so, finally, when the teachers had disappeared, Bessie Galbraith—she was a good sport—another of our great lights from the West, Mabel dear,—well, she came to our room—you remember, Con? —and said,

" 'Glad, I can't stand it a minute longer. I'll have to eat my boots and I can't afford that. Let's go and forage in the pantry. I'm so hungry I'd do anything.' So was I—how can I help it—with my last name? Well, Con and Bess's roommate agreed to look after our interests while we were away, and we started off. It just happened that two or three days before I had been in the pantry about something or other, and I had seen one of the maids put the bread in a large drawer, and then I had noticed that extra jam and fruit for breakfast and lunch next day were kept on the shelf above, so I knew the spot to make for.

"Well, we got down the stairs to the main hall, and through the dining-room all right, though I nearly disabled myself for life running into one of the doors. We had just gone down that little flight of stairs leading to the pantry when we heard a noise—just what kind of noise, I don't know. We stopped and were almost going to turn when we thought of that aching void. It was too much, and we decided to chance it. We both tip-toed over to the drawer where the bread was kept. I reached in—and joy—first thing I touched was one of those long loaves—French sticks. I thought I had better take only one—as it was a good big fellow, and would be heaps for the four voids. Then we decided we wanted some decorations and began feeling on the fruit-shelf above.

"We felt some low glass dishes—three or four of the same kind — though I am not sure how many there were. We couldn't tell what was in them in the dark so there was only one way to find out—stick your finger in and taste—so Bess did.

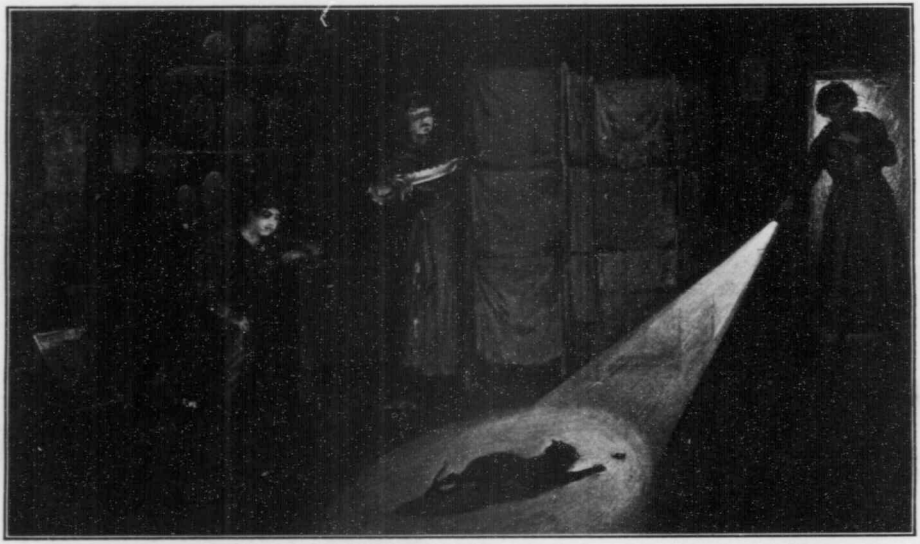
" 'Apple sauce and warm' says Bess. 'Must be for lunch to-morrow. Do you suppose we'd dare take one? It's rather—like stealing.'

" ' Sure, we'll take one!' I said, too hungry to care what happened. 'This is supposed to be our second home, and it isn't stealing when you help

yourself to apple sauce at home, though I suppose the hour makes a difference.'

"Suddenly we heard another sound, like something chewing, but it stopped again. Bess was just lifting the dish of apple, when something furry brushed against her and then against me, and two large green eyes glared at us in the darkness. Bess had sense enough not to squeal—and she was scared to death of cats. Of course, we knew in a minute it was Peter, but it was no joke having animals hump into you in the dark, especially when you were stealing—no, I mean helping yourself to school property. Bess didn't squeal, but she grabbed her dish in such a hurry that she knocked down one of those big, black, serving-trays. Such a row!

"We heard someone coming from the housekeeper's room, and then we heard Miss Jones say, 'Who's there? Come out, you, at once!' and her electric flash began to poke around. I crouched behind some kind of a flour bin affair and in one of the flashes I caught a glimpse of Bess hiding behind a rack for cup towels, still clutching the bowl of apple sauce. It had tipped a bit, and some was dripping on her kimono. She didn't see it, for she had her eyes glued on Miss Jones as she peered around with such a fierce look on her face. She had her hair screwed in a knot on top of her head and was clutching her red wrapper like the



"I caught a glimpse of Bess hiding behind a rack for cup towels, still clutching the bowl of apple sauce."

thingumadodger of a Roman Senator. Funny was no word for it. Between that and Bess and the apple sauce, I thought I'd pass away. I was afraid I'd laugh out and give the whole show away. I nearly lost my balance and had to use my French stick as a crutch, and I was nearly petrified for fear the thing would cave in in the middle. Oh, dear, I nearly die when I think of it!" Here Gladys had to stop and wipe her eyes. The girls urged her to begin again, for new and old had been enjoying her story hugely.

"Well, you'll never guess what saved us—Peter strutted into the middle of the floor with a mouse in his mouth! Hence the chewing sound we had heard! Miss Jones made for him with her flash.

" 'You awful cat, you'll be the death of me yet, making noise enough to wake the dead'—Poor Peter—it was a shame to blame him! 'Get to your box at once,' and she chased him out and then we heard her shut the door of her room.

"Well, we didn't stay for any formalities but just beat it as fast as we could. Bess tripped once and spilt some more apple sauce as we came upstairs. It's a good thing Hoyles was the one who did the stairs, for if he thought it was queer to find apple sauce on the way to the second floor, he'd have too much sense to say anything about it.

"Con and Ruby, Bess's roommate, were nearly beside themselves. We'd been so long—they

were sure something must have happened. They nearly died when we told them about it. It's a wonder somebody didn't hear us laughing."

"I just wish you could have seen them," said Constance, wiping her eyes. "Glad clutching her French stick like some kind of a bludgeon and Bess with a bowl half full of apple sauce and a trail of it down her kimono! Oh, you missed it!"

"I can tell you," resumed Gladys, "it didn't take us long to dispose of that bread and apple sauce—at least what was left of it after Bess's efforts to lose it. It was the best I ever tasted, just the same, and I've always had a soft spot for apple sauce ever since. We got Hoyles to slide the dish in when the maids were washing up after lunch and we never heard a word about it—which was a funny thing. One of the tables had plum instead of apple for lunch. We thought we knew why, but we didn't feel called upon to say.

"Mercy, is that the time? I've got to finish that essay on 'The Defence of Brutus' before the bell rings, or I'll never get it done, I've got so much other stuff to do."

"Glad," cried Babs in dismay, "finish it! Why, I haven't even begun mine. Don't tell me Miss Spencer wants it to-morrow!"

"She sure does, Babs, you'd better play ill," said Gladys as she got up to go.

"No, sirree, I did that once before and never again for me. Burnsie gave me some of the worst old dope and made me stay in bed. It was calling day, too, and I never saw a soul. Oh, dear! 'Defence of Brutus' indeed—more like 'Defence of Barbara Montgomery Fortescue!' "

And away she ran to add another to the thousands of essays, written and to be written, in defence of Shakespeare's poor, misguided Marcus Brutus.

CHAPTER V.

A Hungry Look.

LIFE was dismal indeed, for Frances Edwards one Thursday afternoon in November. It had been an awful week, and as she sat staring out of the window her mind went back in gloomy retrospect over the events of the past few days. Yes, the week had begun badly and at present it gave no prospect of ending in any better way. The faculty, represented at the desk by Miss Dewson, busy correcting the ideas of the young on spelling, had regarded the week as a series of flagrant misdemeanours on Frances' part, while she herself ascribed it to the hard usage of Fate.

It had all begun with the false camera Mr. Thompson had given her last Saturday when she was spending the day at his house. Mr. Thompson was possessed of a sense of humour that found expression in all kinds of practical jokes. This false camera was a harmless-looking black box, from which, on the pressure of what looks to be a camera bulb, a horribly realistic rattlesnake would spring out, and coil, rattles and all, about its victim, innocently posing for a picture. Need-

less to say, this gave Mr. Thompson great pleasure for it frightened his wife nearly into hysterics and Frances into giggling screams. Frances was sure now that it was Fate that made him give the toy to her when he brought her back to the school, telling her to "have a bit of fun with it."

She, under Fate's evil influence, could hardly wait for the fun to begin. As she went along the hall, she was trying to decide whether to begin on the girls, or on Miss Dewson, who, she thought, would be sport enough not to mind, or on Miss Snelgrove or Miss Wallace, both of whom would be furious. She was still undecided when she met Gladys in the hall struggling with a large "box from home." Boxes from home are mines of delight to the receiver and her friends. In fact, on the receipt of a box a girl will often find that the number of her friends has suddenly increased. Now, Frances was an acknowledged friend of Gladys, so, putting her parcels, the precious box among them, on a chair near the stairs, she offered to help Gladys carry her box upstairs. So absorbed was she in helping unpack and sample the contents—roast chicken, cake, cookies, and other delights—that she was still in Gladys' room when the "room-bell" rang. She must go straight to her room. No more going down stairs that night! Her entreaties to Miss Wallace on "corridor duty" were of no avail. She was forced to

buoy herself up with the prospect of the "bit of fun" in the morning, hoping to goodness that neither Miss Clevelands nor Hoyles would find her precious box, before she rescued it.

Next morning, the "church line" was waiting for the signal to go, and there was not a teacher in sight. Fate now tempted Frances.

"Phyllis, turn round and let's get a snap," said Frances, and Phyllis, who never refused a request of that kind, turned.

There could have been noticed an unusual calm among the young ladies of Miss Clevelands' that Sabbath morning in November. Perhaps it was that each girl felt serenely sure that her "Sunday best" was more of a success than ever, perhaps it was the effort to cultivate repose of manner to prevent fidgeting later on, or perhaps it was the rumour that at least six of the faculty were coming with them, as it was a special service. Whatever had been the cause of it, that Sabbath calm was broken with alarming suddenness. Phyllis' scream as the snake sprang at her, was followed by a score of others. Then events happened quickly. At the screams, teachers seemed to rush from every corner of the building. Frances, realizing that disaster was impending for her, had just rescued her disturbing reptile, when she was pounced on, deprived of her toy, told to sit by Miss Prendergast in church, and after church bid-

den to stay alone in her room except for meals and prayers. So much for Sunday.

Monday, except for a battle of words with Phyllis, was fairly serene, until after study in the evening, when Fate made her fall again. Miss Dewson, Frances' favourite "gov" was on duty, but that was nothing to Fate. So, as Frances passed down the corridor, she saw that Gladys' room was empty, and the temptation proved too strong. She stole in; "apple-pied" the two beds in a highly successful manner, and left them looking most neat and attractive, and was stealing out again when she heard Miss Dewson coming down the corridor. As her own room was too far round the corner, and as Gladys and Constance came in at that moment, she stayed. A loud burst of laughter from the three girls over some joke from Gladys, brought the indignant Miss Dewson to the door. As visiting and receiving visitors out of hours was regarded as a serious offence, because it was a breach of trust, Gladys and Constance were severely reprimanded; Frances was sent to her room and deprived of visiting privileges for three days. That was Monday's record.

Tuesday, Frances was in a sullen mood, which grew worse as the day advanced. She realized that Gladys and Constance were distinctly chilly in manner to her. It transpired, that the night before, having weighty matters to discuss, they had

neglected to undress until after "lights out" bell, which was the signal for bed and silence. Hearing voices from their room, Miss Dewson, whose good-nature was already upset by Frances, whom she had always defended, was now exasperated. The girls felt this, as they heard her rapid step approach their door, and they jumped into bed, clothes and all. Now, the only way to conceal the fact that you are fully dressed under circumstances of that kind, is to pull the clothes up to your head. But alas! that cannot be done in an "apple-pied" bed, with the sheet doubled to form a neat but abbreviated bag! Their full dress state was discovered and prescribed for, but, fortunately for Frances, Miss Dewson was too perturbed to enquire why their forms were so huddled in the bed. Hence the coldness to Frances on the part of her victims. The Faculty seemed to ignore her existence except in class, but for this Frances was secretly thankful.

At dinner, she had felt too gloomy to eat, but at bed-time hunger was keenly rampant. Gladys came to the rescue and sent in half a bottle of ripe olives — remains of the "box from home" — through Ellen's agency. Gladys had relented at the sight of Frances' unhappy face, and besides she didn't care for ripe olives much. Neither did Ellen, so Frances consumed them all. She had liked them ever so much at first, but as she neared

the end of the bottle, she began to think she didn't care for them so very much, and soon she was sure she wouldn't care if she never saw another. A deadly surfeit of ripe olives figured largely in her dreams, and the memory was still with her as she slowly and sullenly dressed next morning.

Several minutes before time for the breakfast bell, Ellen was all ready, spotless in clean middy and skirt. This was another grievance, for Frances had no clean middy, having forgotten to send her others to the laundry. Seized with a desire to give timely advice, Ellen said, "Miss Mockridge is going to take us for a run in the country on Saturday, so do try and be good, so you can come too, Frances." This from a roommate younger by one year and neater by one clean middy! It was too much! Ellen was one of these people who never get into trouble—who seem born well-behaved, and Frances was beginning to think she had been born the reverse. Beside herself with rage and—it must be confessed—indigestion, Frances hurled the contents of her waterglass at her unsuspecting roommate. To be sure, there was not much water in the glass, but enough to soak Ellen's hair and middy. Her involuntary squeal brought Miss Mockridge in a half-dressed state to the door. Frances said an inward farewell to any trip to the country for her!

"Frances, there you are up to your tricks again.

Go downstairs at once. You will write two hundred lines for me in recreation time. Ellen, stop crying and change. You will be excused if you are late for breakfast." So Wednesday had begun, and but for a sympathetic present of some chocolates from Babs there had been nothing to lighten the gloom.

Such was the retrospect that kept Frances staring out of the window, her face, which was never pretty, heavy and sullen-looking, her whole attitude one of hopeless gloom and depression. Nothing was worth while—there was nothing to look forward to. Then, suddenly, she remembered that there was some temporary joy in store. There were stlll some of the chocolates left. Because of the olives, she had not fancied them before, but things were different now. She could still see three large fat chocolates in the box. As she thought of them, they grew more seductive and worth while. It was forbidden to go upstairs without permission, but she certainly wasn't going to ask Miss Dewson, after Monday night. So she sat and pondered, listening to some of the day girls who were taking advantage of the mild weather and were playing tennis on the far court. "Douce—Vantage—Set." She loved tennis so, and she and Georgie had planned to have some good games, but here she had been cooped up all week, all because Fate was against her.

While she was meditating thus, Miss Dewson's thoughts had been far from idle as her blue pencil flew.

"Mercy, how sullen that Edwards child looks! She just looks as though she hated the world and everybody in it. Come to think of it, she has had an awful week with everyone down on her. I must try and cheer her up. She can look so nice when she's interested. Her eyes are lovely. They remind me of something—I can't think what."

In the meantime, Frances, still thinking of those chocolates, so succulent and inviting, decided to fill in the time till the bell rang for her to practise. She began to work at her Latin, which had been lying unheeded on her desk.

"Of all the Gauls, the Belgians are the bravest." Caesar says that of all the Gauls the Belgians are the bravest. Silly stuff, Latin. Why not say it straight out as in English instead of using that crazy Accusative and Infinitive? What good did it do any one to learn about that? Was it only last week she had been so interested when Miss Hargraft was explaining it? Well, that was a long time ago. The world had changed much since then. She wondered how she'd say in Latin, "Frances thinks that of all the box those chocolates are the nicest," but that didn't work as she only knew the words for, "think", "all", and "those", and besides she didn't know the gender

of chocolates. They probably didn't have them in Cæsar's time. She stopped work, and her reflections were interrupted by hearing Miss Dewson say gently—

"Have you finished your work, Frances?"

"Yes. I have," rejoined Frances rudely and sullenly, while the rest of the girls looked up aghast. Miss Dewson flushed, bit her lips but said nothing, as she thought—

"Impertinent little monkey. She deserves all she's getting. I won't say anything now but I shall tell her what I think later on." Then the half-hour bell rang.

Upstairs tore Frances on chocolates bent, but what was her disappointment on looking into the box to find it empty! Trifles became tragedies in her state of mind. She saw it all. Ellen had come in hungry from basket-ball, and remembering Frances' former indifference toward the chocolates, she had taken them or had given some to another girl. It would have been all right any other time, for at school it was "give and take" in spite of advice to the contrary—only some did more giving and some more taking than others, a trait not wholly confined to school-girls.

The loss of the chocolates was the last straw. Heedless of wasted practice time, Frances sat on her bed and brooded. She hated this place. She was glad she'd be home in twenty-seven days—she

had counted them yesterday. At home, she could do what she liked—if she were allowed. She would run the car every day—if her brother didn't get it first. She wouldn't practise unless she wanted to—unless her mother insisted before allowing her to go out. She would eat as much candy as she liked—if her father didn't forbid.

Another girl not so sensible as Frances would not have seen all these "ifs", but she did. Life would be just as restricted at home as here. What was the use? She might as well go down and "face the music", for Miss Dewson would be sure to find her out.

Clomp! Clomp! Clomp! down the stairs came Frances—still sullen, still with the determination not to be sorry for her misdeeds, even if it meant a Saturday detention. Down the hall at the same time came the indignant Miss Dewson, who had missed Frances, the "Black Sheep" of that week. Suddenly the teacher realized what the expression in Frances' eyes reminded her of. A friend of hers had an Irish terrier. Terry had been naughty for days—destroying property and behaving in a most unthoroughbred manner. Miss Dewson had met him at the gate after he had received another severe beating. His mouth looked resentful and snarly, but his eyes seemed to say "I have been wicked; I deserve it all, but I won't give in unless there's a chance of a kind word

again!" She had patted Terry because of his eyes. Of course, she did not pat Frances, but she did not say, as both she and Frances had expected—

"Frances, what do you mean missing practice? I shall punish you on Saturday for your deceitful behaviour!" or words to that effect. To her academic horror, she heard herself say to the culprit—

"Frances, if you have finished your work would you like to go out and see the tennis?"

She was inwardly aghast at what she knew most of the others would call her "weak leniency in a case of insubordination," and Frances was dumbfounded for a moment. Then the sullen mouth began to quiver, and the eyes so hungry for chocolates and kindness began to fill. Soon all the barriers were down, and Miss Dewson retreated with the sobbing and repentant Frances to a more secluded spot.

Of course, it cannot be said with truth that the culprit never offended again, but Frances never forgot what that kindness meant, and Miss Dewson never had cause to regret her sudden recollection of the hungry-for-kindness look in Terry's eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

Safety First.

TO the mind of many a girl, long after she has left school, the words "Fire-drill" will call a vivid picture of a sudden wakening from the sleep of youth—usually so deep, when pickles have not been consumed with the aid of a hat-pin before going to bed. The cause of the awakening proves to be the loud clanging of a bell, sounding unusually insistent and near. Drowsy thoughts at first suggest that it must be the rising bell—though a heavy storm must be coming to make it so dark. Still that clanging goes on, growing louder and louder, and at last, horror-stricken, you realize that it is the Fire-bell.

At first the awful paralyzing fear seizes you that it may be a real fire, but in a second you recover your energies and make a wild dash to turn on the light, coming in violent collision with your roommate on the same purpose bent. After mutual unflattering remarks about being clumsy, each thinking of the things she'd like to rescue in case it should be a real fire—that new pink chiffon, those new fox furs, and that picture of Jack, your chum's brother—dashes for her kimono and

slippers, which, of course, that night were left in the cupboard. More collisions and more uncomplimentary remarks, while each pulls frantically at the wrong kimono in mistake for her own.

Sometimes it happens that it was the very night you chose to do your hair in myriads of curl papers and to smear your chapped face plenteously with cold cream, firmly resolved to be beautiful for once. Frantic but rather ineffectual efforts are made to remove the curl papers plus large quantities of kinky hair, and with a towel to rub off some of the shining cream. Meanwhile, a self-important fire-monitor upbraids you from the door, until her indignant remonstrance, "The whole line is waiting for you!" makes you dash from your room, knowing that you look for all the world like "Sis Hopkins" or the "Schoolboy with his shining morning face." Resigned to this, from force of habit, you follow in your place until all line up in the main hall—for, as usual, it was a false alarm.

After roll-call, all are commended for promptness, for it only took two minutes and fifty-three seconds—why! it seemed ages since you first heard the bell! Just as you are sure that you have escaped notice and are congratulating yourself, a cool and penetrating voice is heard, and you know a cool and penetrating gaze is fastened on your luckless horny head.

"I think that some of the girls might arrange their hair in a more seemly way before retiring, and if, because of the weather, it is necessary that you use cold cream, always be sure that it is of the very best quality." Your one wish is that the floor would open and engulf you, for you feel that the line is one long snicker, no less felt because forbidden and therefore subdued. You slink back to your room, and after more unflattering conversation with an irritable and sleepy roommate, you fall asleep again to dream that your ill-fated head is covered with countless horns—you were too tired to undo the rest of the papers—and that behind iron bars you watch while forms in dressing-gowns and tightly-brushed-back hair mock you in cool and penetrating voices and ring deep clanging bells.

"Safety first," combined with consideration for your neighbour, was the rule at Miss Clevelands', and many fire-drills both outdoors and in, with and without the fire-escapes, were held to be in readiness in case that grim emergency—a real fire—should arise. The occupants of the building—more than seventy including pupils and staff—soon learned to move and to obey with military precision, and to have an almost mechanical knowledge of what to do.

The girls had been told, however, that they would have a drill some night after they were

asleep, and that the procedure would be the same. The result had been that for several nights after that, maidens who fancied themselves more highly strung than others, used to pester the teacher on corridor duty to confirm their suspicions that the late fire-drill would take place on that particular night. Some would sit in their dressing-gowns—flimsy kimonos having been banned as dangerous—on the edge of their beds, till from sheer weariness they would fall asleep, while some owners of despised straight hair forebore to use curl papers so as to be ready. The more sensible, on the other hand, merely placed gown and slippers in convenient readiness—too sleepy to stay awake for all the fire-drills in the world.

Thus it happened that, one night about half-past eleven, when all the girls were asleep, both sensible and highly strung—the latter having tired of their watchful waiting—the dreaded sound of the fire-gong broke upon their slumbers. Most of them staggered into dressing-gowns and slippers at the first sound, and out into the hall, half-blind with sleep, but with some this feeling soon gave place to fear when the faint smell of burning first was noticed. A real fire! True, a panicky murmur and a few hysterical giggles ran through the lines, and might have promised trouble but for the different rebukes, fiercely whispered by fire-monitors, chosen for their coolness and resource-

fulness, "Don't be a donkey, Phyllis, keep your head and stay in your own place," and others of the same pointed nature. Then all tramped downstairs, almost too sleepy to worry whether it was a real fire or not.

How superior those who had kept their heads felt toward their more easily alarmed neighbours when they saw that the source of the smoke was a large frying-pan containing some smoking powder, which was still held in Miss Wallace's hand, while she was creating the greatest disturbance of all by her coughing and sneezing. She had persuaded Miss Clevelands to add this bit of realism to test the self-control of the girls in case of a real fire, and they had stood the test well. The monitors' report showed only a slight delay on each floor, which was not surprising, as it was a very different matter to respond to the fire-gong when on the alert for it to ring, and when aroused from the first deep sleep of the night.

Frances, it transpired, had required the united efforts of Gladys, Constance and Ellen to arouse her from her sleep of sound nerves and body. Only half-conscious, she was clad by the monitors and her roommate in her dressing-gown and slippers, shaken into a standing position and forced to stumble down the stairs. When the name "Frances Edwards" was called in roll-call, there was no response, for the owner of the name was

sound asleep, with her head on Georgie's shoulder. A sleepy laugh greeted this discovery, and Georgie, almost as far gone as Frances, prodded her into a more responsive state.

Letty and Babs had had their own troubles with Mabel. When the gong first sounded, Mabel was roused enough to sit on the bed, and with eyes half-closed began to feel for her gown and slippers. Letty, all keyed up with excitement, got ready in a flash, and thinking her roommate to be coming, she flew into her place in the hall. When the line was ready for Miss Hargraft's order "Quick march—single file!" Mabel was found to be missing. Letty and Babs ran back, and as they reached the door they heard a groan. Amazed and alarmed they dashed into the room.

There sat Mabel, with a satin-frilled slipper on one foot, while she rubbed the other on which she had been trying to draw her satin-frilled workbag with its prickly contents of needles and pins. She was still too dazed with sleep to notice what she had done, and was looking in bewilderment around the lighted room. Finally, she was roused by the pain in her foot—she had come in contact with a large darning needle—and by the jeering remarks of the two girls who pulled her to her feet, after Letty had quickly put the other slipper on her still bleeding foot. With groans and giggles she limped to her place in the line, and for

days the sight of poor Mabel hobbling on her bandaged foot would revive the tale of her style of footwear, while her bag and slippers ceased to live in such close proximity.

The out-door fire-drills had been even more successful—the respite from the labours of the class-room, coupled with the excitement that a fire-gong always brings, being no doubt responsible. But one lovely morning Peter's nephew introduced a disturbing element—himself. Now,Peter's nephew was a small white kitten—in no way like his aristocratic Maltese relative—and he had been sunning himself in the drawing-room window, dreaming of deeds of prowess still to come, wrought against the rats, so fearsome to him now. He decided to saunter down the hall to see if any stray balls could be found in the garden.

Just as he reached the long passage leading to the garden door, a tall person, whom he did not like ever since she had roughly shaken him off her knitting which he had found so comfy, came down the hall, shaking a large brass thing which made a most appalling noise. His small cat-heart stopped beating at the sound. Then he decided that it would not be wise to remain—such a large sound must mean something disturbing soon. He tried to escape, but, wherever he went large numbers of steadily marching feet seemed to take up all the space, and, what was worse, they were not content

with the building, but even followed him out with the same steady tread right into the garden.

There were feet and boots of all sizes and shapes and their owners seemed very quiet and subdued; only one seemed to be speaking, as she read out of a large thin book, and made marks with a pencil. As luck would have it, in his distracted wanderings, he came close to the bell-ringer's feet. She didn't seem to like him any better than he her, for she made a move as if to strike him from her path. It was too much for Peter's nephew's nerves! He made a rush for the owner of a pair of feet, standing amid some that were quite small.

One lightning leap and he was up that owner's back. He knew that back and that soft dark hair, for he had climbed up when the owner had been writing in the library and she had only laughed and tickled his cheek. To his hurt surprise, neither laugh nor tickle greeted him now—but her hand grasped him hard and, when he clung still closer, held him so tight that his tail was pinched. He knew it was an accident, but he couldn't help that "meow" of pain—and still another as the grasping and pinching continued evidently in earnest. He had noticed a funny gurgling sound which had passed through the owners of the feet, when he made his ascent, but it gradually stopped when a voice said—

"Show the stuff you are made of. Young Canada must learn to bear with patience and self-control."

It was just after this that his tail was pinched and the first involuntary "meow" escaped. Another short-lived gurgling sound and then a very cold voice said—

"The girl who made that sound, stand forward." It was a shame that he had to break the silence but his tail was pinched again and he couldn't help one extra big "meow!" Another silence—then a gurgle getting stronger—until a loud laugh came from all, though not so loud from the ringer of the bell and the owner of the cold voice, who said—

"Miss Dewson, where did that kitten come from? Ah, it's gone now. Form in line, girls, and proceed to your class-rooms in the regular order!"

Peter's nephew, after more pinchings and pullings, had finally been disentangled from the dark hair with the very red face below. He had slipped to the ground and had scampered to a more secure spot.

His participation in the fire-drill gave rise to several comments. Said Miss Clevelands to Miss Prendergast, the ringer of the bell—

"It's a strange thing. Miss Dewson is an excellent teacher, and, on the whole, a splendid

disciplinarian. The girls are never disrespectful to her, and yet, somehow, I wish she would not seem quite so much one of them. To my idea it is scarcely fitting."

Said Miss Prendergast, "Indeed, I agree with you there"—she always did—"A teacher should never forget that she is a teacher."

Said Miss Dewson to Miss Spencer—

"My dear Mary, it's no use. The stars in their courses and even the kittens conspire against my having an academic deportment. I just know Miss Clevelands and Miss Prendergast think I called that poor little thing over to me. They laughed—I know—they had to. No, I am afraid I shall never be academic in my manner!"

Said Miss Spencer—

"I don't believe I'd worry much about it if I were you, Evelyn."

Said Babs to Gladys—

"Will you ever forget Miss Clevelands' face when that kitten meowed? She surely never thought we'd have the nerve! Poor old Dewsy, she got so red! I guess that kitten knew where to go for sympathy in time of trouble."

Peter's nephew made no comment, but he always hurries through the passage where he met the bell-ringer.

CHAPTER VII.

"The Truth Club."

A SOCIETY had been formed for the promotion of truthfulness among the girls of Miss Clevelands'. It had for its guidance the uncompromising motto, "The Truth, the whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth," which greatly interfered with the success of the Society.

It was shortly after the Christmas holidays. Everyone seemed to have had a very gay time with the exception of girls like Letty and Mabel, whose homes were too far away and who had been visiting relatives in different parts of Ontario. Letty had spent a quiet but delightful holiday with her father's cousins near Belleville, the chief excitement being long drives through the deep snow in her cousin's sleigh. Mabel had been the guest of her father's mother, a cheery old invalid, who lived with her unmarried daughter not far from Chatham. But among many of the girls who had been home there seemed to be a sort of competition in which each tried to make her holiday seem the gayest. No doubt much local colour was used—one box of candy was made to seem several boxes; a booklet with Christmas greetings

became a book; one pair of silk stockings became silk stockings in a tone to suggest several pairs; and three or four people "invited in" for the evening could be made to sound like a dance.

The use of this local colouring was, it must be confessed, fairly general, but the worst offenders were Phyllis and Gertrude and Marie. It happened one afternoon that these three had joined the usual group in Babs' room—Babs had received a special box from home—when Phyllis, seated opposite Georgie's mirror, suddenly said—

"I know I look a perfect fright. I've been up till two and three every morning. It was perfectly awful but I just couldn't help it. Why, I had three and four invitations for every night."

Here Letty and Mabel looked just a little envious, much to the indignation of Babs. She had been at her home in Fredericton where she and her people had always lived, and her life had been one merry round from the moment of her arrival. She often told what good times she had, but never boasted of her own popularity. More amusing tales were related about others—not herself.

"I had heaps of invites too," said Gertrude, busy polishing her already shining fingernails. "If people at home weren't having dances, a crowd of us would motor into Detroit and go to the theatre, and then to supper at the 'Inn' or the 'Pont Chatrain!' Believe me, we had good fun. Some-

time I'll tell you about some of the things I saw—at least some of you. And presents—my dear, I got some wonderful things. Of course, silk stockings galore, and all that sort of thing."

"Why, Gertrude, I thought you said you hadn't any when you borrowed the only black pair I have—the other night—in such a hurry. Seems to me if you've got such a mighty lot—" Here Letty's cheeks began to flush as she thought of those extra nice ones that Babs had sent her for Christmas—no ankle length like most of Gertrude's, but silk from top to toe. She had never heard of borrowing stockings before, unless an accident happened—falling into the water or something like that—but some girls seemed capable of borrowing anything.

At Letty's protest Gertrude looked a little at a loss for a minute, and then she said—

"Well, what I meant was that I hadn't any darned, and Marie hadn't either. You see, I danced so much that it was hard on my stockings."

"Humph!" said Gladys, "you must be getting heavy on your feet, and you told me once a man said you were so light. Well, Marie, what kind of a time did you have? Of course, I had a beastly time, as Grafty would say, never went anywhere, and never saw anybody. Winnipeg's awfully slow at Christmas." Gladys had had a very jolly holiday, for she was as popular at home as at school,

with her bright, frank ways; but all this sarcasm was lost on the three trying so hard to make an impression on their audience.

"Oh, I had a gorgeous time," said Marie, gushingly, "but the best was one evening when I went with a surprise party to the home of one of my girl friends. I picked up the crowd as we went along in our new touring car. It holds nine but we managed to squeeze twelve into it."

"It must be some car—sort of baby rubberneck waggon," said Frances, a bit skeptical, but also rather envious of anyone who could take her own friends around. Their car at home was a Wolseley limousine, but it was not much good to her, as her mother and sister used it most of the time.

"Well," continued Marie, "we had got to Norah's house, and were ragging in the music-room when the 'phone rang for me, and what do you think—I was so flabbergasted! A lot of people—one of the nicest boys—had come to our house to surprise me. Dad and mother were away, and there was no one home but the kitchen maid, for the cook and parlor-maid were out. There was nothing for me to do but to tear home—I had the worst time getting the chauffeur. Some of the others came with me, and we had the greatest time. I'll never forget it, I was so excited. We

danced till nearly four in the morning! Talk about fun!"

During this tale, revealing incidentally, as it were, the size of the Baxter household, Mabel had been watching Marie with great interest.

"Oh, Marie, I almost forgot," she said, "At one of the few outside affairs I went to—a tea in the church parlors—"here she was favoured with a bored and pitying look from Phyllis—"I met someone who knew you—Myrtle Brown. She and her mother stayed with your mother when they came east last month, didn't they? They were great talkers—knew all about everyone in Brandon, but you were the only one they spoke about that I knew."

"Oh yes, the Browns!—Yes, they're friends of mother's. Why, what did they say?" asked Marie, looking decidedly uncomfortable. "Oh, for the land's sake, I forgot I've got to go and get a shampoo. Come along, Gertrude, and let's ask what she charges for a manicure!" and they both departed.

"Mabel, do you mean to say that you only went out a little—and one of the affairs was a stupid tea at a church? Why, you poor child, you must have been bored to tears. Mercy, I went to fourteen dances, four moonlight snowshoe parties, and just heaps and heaps of teas and bridges—Ottawa was the gayest place. Babs, whatever are

you doing with that old calendar?"—to Babs who, seized with a sudden idea, had reached up and pulled down an old calendar which she looked at with close attention. "By the way, I've got the sweetest snap taken of me, on skis, I'll go and see if I can find it. I know you'll think it dear," and away Phyllis tripped, casting one uneasy glance at the absorbed Babs and another at her own reflection in the mirror.

"'I know you'll think it dear'", mimicked Gladys. "Well, I suppose we'll have to say so, when she comes back—if she does—but I'm so sick of all this bluffing—I just feel—well, I just feel I'd like to say the truth right out!"

But each was so absorbed in her own thoughts that no one paid much attention to Gladys' remark.

"You know I think it's just about the limit about Marie Baxter and her nine-seated car. I can't make it out"—said Mabel. "Why, when I said the Baxters must be very wealthy—goodness me! I had heard enough from Marie to make me think so—the Browns thought I must have meant a different family till I told them about Marie. It was the same family all right, but when Mrs. Brown said she didn't see as much of Brandon as she would have liked, for Mrs. Baxter had no maid part of the time and Dr. Baxter had to use the car most of the time—she said it was a

Ford runabout. So there you are—a cook and two maids plus a nine-seated car and a chauffeur on one side, and a two-seated Ford and mostly no maid on the other side. Don't think I'm despising Fords—not a bit. Dad has one when he wants to get to and from the ranch in a hurry in between train-time and the roads are too skiddy for the big car—Oh, dear, I'm just as bad as Marie! I just love to go along in the Ford. They are the funniest things. You can always tell them for miles coming along the bumpy prairie roads—leaping along like frogs. They cover the distance, only there's a lot of road they don't touch. But if it's true about Marie, wouldn't her boasting make you want to curl up and die! Does she think we're from the backwoods? Humph! I guess Calgary can show Brandon a thing or two!"

"Mabel, dear. Whatever has happened to our quiet little Mabs! You're wound up—you'd think you were some kind of an agent for Ford cars. Here I've been trying to get a word in edgeways but I couldn't make it," said Babs, with the calendar still on her lap. "Now, listen to me for a minute. Friend Phyllis just asked me what I was doing with this calendar. Well, her superior tone to Mabs was too much for this child, and when she began piling it on about the fourteen dances and the four tennis—no, excuse me! snow-

shoe parties, it was a bit thick. I began to look for mathematical aid from this old calendar. Well, lend me your ears. Phyllis left on the eighteenth of December—thirteen days left in December—and came back on the fifth of January—five days in January—makes eighteen days. If you don't believe it, take this and look. Well, fourteen dances and four snowshoe parties makes eighteen—very neat fit, but two of the days were Sundays, and two were spent in going and coming. Now, I don't believe the fair Phyllis went to either moonlight snowshoe parties or dances on Sunday. Mercy, she's too keen on going to church! You remember she used to get Miss Hargraft to take her to early service, till Grafty discovered that it was because the curate was so good-looking that Phyllis was so devout. Her demure pose is one of her best—like this"—and Babs gave an imitation of demure and pious coquetry, a good deal at variance with her vivid face.

"Oh, I'd just like to take the three of them, for Gertrude with her stockings is just about as bad, and roll them on the lawn till they hollered!" said Georgie, the open and honest. "Gee! there's fun enough in just being home, and in being able to skate and snowshoe when you like, and eat as much as you want, without telling a whole lot of fibs to make things sound better than they really are!"

"Yes, very true, Georgina, but don't interrupt

my scientific explanation. As I was saying, I don't believe Phyllis went snowshoeing on Sunday either, and I don't believe they dance on the Ottawa train. The M. P.'s would object—so how did she get it all in?"

"Perhaps, Babs," suggested Gladys, "she went to the dance first and the snowshoe party after or the other way round. A bit difficult to arrange about clothes to be sure—Well, I really think, as I said before, only no one listened—we ought to do something to stop it. This bluffing is getting to be a regular disease!"

"So do I," came in chorus from all the others except Babs, who was deep in thought.

"I have it," she suddenly said, her face glowing with enthusiasm. "Let's form a Truth Club. Motto—The Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth. Emblem—a Billiken—I've got a whole collection of them. I'll sell them as far as they go—I'd like to give them to you, but I must save up to buy two more seats for the car at home so we can have nine. Ahem! Why have a Billiken, do I hear you ask? He's the god of things as they are—only the idea is different to some—anyway, it'll do for an emblem. Now, listen—how many times a day do I say that?—don't say a word to the governesses. The ones who would never have inspired the idea in a month of Sundays would take all the credit for the young

showing the right attitude at last," and Babs nodded her head in grudging approval, in imitation of Miss Prendergast.

A slight pause followed, as each girl thought of what the "Truth Club" with its sweeping motto would mean for her. Georgie, Letty and Frances did not seem alarmed at the comprehensiveness of "The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth", for they had unconsciously followed that motto, as a rule, and indulged in "local colour" but rarely. The other girls found the first two parts easy enough to guarantee, but it was the third that promised trouble. Gladys thought, regretfully, that she would have to tone down certain exciting tales of her convent life that the girls loved to hear, and Mabel sighed to think that she would have to modify some of her stories of early Western life, while Babs decided she must observe careful watch over her tongue—but oh! it spoilt a story not to be able to add a little local colour. Why should writers and such untruthful people be able to tell such lurid tales, while ordinary people were not supposed to brighten things up a bit? Still, she was willing to sacrifice local colour after the examples they had had that afternoon of the extremes it could lead to.

"Well, what do you mean by the Truth, Babs?" asked Letty, to break the thoughtful pause.

"Hm! Let me think! It's a bit hard to say. Of

course, you must not hurt people's feelings unless you have to, but then, too, you must have the courage of your convictions. Doesn't that sound wonderful? Now, for instance, supposing one morning Georgie had noticed that my complexion was very muddy''—Babs was never anything but pink and white—''why, it would be unkind for her to say anything about it, of her own accord; but if I asked her if she didn't think my complexion looked muddy—instead of saying, 'Why, Babs, what are you talking about? It looks perfectly all right!'—she should say, 'Yes, it does, Babs. You ate too many chocolates.' She'd probably get a ducking or hit with a pillow, but, as I said, you must have the courage of your convictions and tell the truth and shame the fibbers.''

''And,'' said Mabel, ''if a girl says she has a 'T. L.' for you and you're just dying to hear it—and she won't give it unless you have a 'Trade Last' for her, you mustn't make one up. Just deny yourself and wait.''

''Like Grafty did to Mamselle, the other day,'' said Gladys.

''Tell us about it, Glad,'' said the girls.

''Well, at tea last Saturday, we had been having rather a jolly time. Miss Hargraft had been telling some good stories and we were laughing like everything. Suddenly Mamselle said, 'Ah—Mees Hargraft—I have—how do you call it—a

'T.L.' for you. You see? I will geef it to you if you have also one for me, you see?' 'But, Mamselle, I scarcely ever hear you mentioned!' It was truthful but it was awful. Poor Mamselle just froze and looked so hurt. You could see Miss Hargraft wondering what had happened. The fun seemed spoiled. Lucky thing, the others got up then. Truth like that causes trouble, so breakers ahead for the Truth Club!

"'Trade Lasts' are always exaggerated anyway, don't you think? I told Daddy in a letter what they were, and he said we were getting so commercial we couldn't say a kind word now without value received."

"Well, here we've been nearly an hour talking or thinking about Truth," said Babs. "Miss Clevelands had better look for wings on our shoulders soon. Let's meet here and report progress to-morrow at this time. We can all be members of the 'Truth Club' on probation—and we can see if it's going to work. Mercy! it's nearly time for the Study Bell. The noble army of Truth better get arrayed in its spotless white jolly quick or from force of habit they'll be saying—'I'm so sorry, Miss Spencer, I didn't hear the first bell' or 'I was dressing and couldn't get ready any sooner'. None of that, or names off the roll of 'Truthful Turtle Doves' or 'Turkey Cocks', just whichever you like!"

And the seekers of Truth dispersed to try their mettle.

The next day, at about the same time, found Babs in her room, looking somewhat perturbed but firmly resigned. Georgie, whose unruffled countenance showed that life must have gone smoothly for her—the advantage of a firmly established reputation for Truth—was saying:

"Well, Babs, I don't believe you need to have a Club to make you tell the Truth. We're all friends, and clubs always cause rows—" when in came Gladys.

"Humph! 'Truthful Turkey Cocks' is good. I've just nearly had my head taken off by Gertrude. She had asked me to take Letty's silk stockings back to her and then she said, 'Tell her I forgot to darn the hole that must have come in them. She won't mind, will she?' Then little Gladys held forth, and I just told her good and plain what I thought of her way of doing things and her stuck-up, purse-proud ways. Said we didn't care for that brand at this school, and a few home truths like that. She answered back and so did I, till Miss Mockridge came and dispersed the riot and I came here. I'm not going to speak to Miss Gertrude for a good while!"

"But, my dear, your little row with Gertrude is a mere toy affair compared with the wholesale massacre little Babsie got from Clevey. I was

sitting next her at lunch to-day, and as luck would have it, she asked me if I hadn't enjoyed Dr. Jordan's sermon yesterday—on the frivolity and extravagance of the younger generation. She had been quite genial for her, but oh! the difference in a minute, when I said, remembering the Truth Club, 'No, I didn't, Miss Clevelands', for I could have shaken him, storming away at us on that lovely day, especially when I was wearing my new hat that I didn't really need. Well, Miss Clevelands just gave me one look, then she turned to Florence Kay and in such a sweet tone said, 'Did you enjoy it, Florence?' 'Yes, Miss Clevelands, very much', says Florence in her most pussy tone. Ugh! I can't stand hypocrites. Why just the day before she had told me she thought Dr. Jordan was a tiresome old crank! Excuse me from being a teacher's pet because of my sweet face and gentle manner! My eye! but I got it when I was summoned into the state presence and talked to about my flippancy and undisciplined ways, and I'm just convalescing now. Hello, Mabel, come in! You look as though you had stolen the spoons. What's up?"

"Here's where this child gives up the 'Truth Club'. I haven't got the nerve. I met Miss Wallace in the hall, as she was coming along, carrying a rose sweater coat, 'nooly oot' from Scotland. She was so pleased that for a wonder she saw me

—she usually looks through me. She said 'Isn't it a bonny colour, Mabel?' It was, so I said 'Yes, Miss Wallace', and instead of stopping there, like a goose I said, 'Is it yours, Miss Wallace?' 'Yes,' she said. 'It's a present from Scotland. Do you think it will suit me?' Well, you know her carrotty hair, and just think what that would look like with old rose! I've not much of an artistic eye, but some colours you can just hear. I wanted to say, 'No, it would be awful, Miss Wallace!' but I got scared and said, 'Yes, it would be great!' so no 'Truth Club' for Mabel, she's too big a coward."

"I wasn't a coward at lunch-time but since my official interview, I'm yellow clear through," said Babs ruefully.

"Well, Frances," asked Gladys, as the owner of that name appeared, "do you resign too?"

"Huh, I guess it's just as bad to tell a lie to get out of telling one as tell it first, so that's what I've been and gone and done. Phyllis came up to me just a little while ago, and says, 'Frankie, dear, have you a T. L. for me? I have one for you—such a lovely one!' I thought I'd be smart and truthful at the same time, so I said as near like Grafty as I could—'I never hear you mentioned, Phyllis', and off she went as mad as anything. Well, I've just been thinking that's as much a fib as making one up would be, for we had talked

about her for half an hour yesterday, though it wasn't exactly in the T. L. line, so what am I going to do about it? Georgie was saying she thought we were crazy to have a club and I guess she's about right."

"Well, wait till Letty comes," said Babs. "She'll be here soon.—Ho! Speak of the angels —what's up, Letitia dearest, you look perturbed in soul."

"Why, my dears, I knew it would be hard what you all were going to do, but oh dear, I've just told a lie to get out of telling one—what you folks laughing at?"

"Frances' very words", said Babs, "but tell us your tale Letty. We didn't mean to laugh, but it was funny!"

"Well, I was coming along the practice corridor, when I heard Ethel Hawley trying over a song. You know what she's like—she's not bad herself but her voice is awful, so loud and harsh. Miss Delisle is nearly crazy—wants her to stop but her people want her to keep on. Oh, why will they make people study music who haven't any in them, and Ethel Hawley hasn't."

"Should be Howley instead of Hawley," said Babs in an aside—and she was rewarded by two pillows being flung at her. "Thanks, Glad, just what I want to rest my head, cloven in twain by Clevey—oh, don't please, I'll be good," this as

the contents of the water-pitcher threatened to follow the pillows. "Proceed, Letitia, dear, the floor is yours!"

"Well, I wouldn't have minded her singing some songs, but this one was that lovely 'Down in the Forest.' I love it, especially after I heard Melba sing it way down in Richmond. I tried to get past before she reached that part where it says, 'It was only the note of a bird.' It just floats and dies away like a real bird. Poor Ethel went at it hammer and tongs, and, well, the bird was—well, it was like some bird—but I reckon it must have been a screech owl—surely not the kind the song meant. I was standing there, wondering if I could ever like it again, when the door opened and out came Ethel, looking so pleased with herself. She asked me right off, 'What's the matter? Wasn't I singing it all right?' She seemed so disappointed. I must have looked mighty disgusted to make such a change, so I hadn't the heart to say what I felt and yet I wanted to tell the truth, so I said, 'Why, it isn't that; it's a song I don't care much for," and that was an awful fib, worse than the first. So I reckon *I'm* no 'Truthful Turtle Dove or Turkey Cock'. Oh, dear!"

"That settles it—if even Letty has fallen. Well, ladies and gentlemen," said Babs, addressing the last to the half-dozen varieties of Billikens on her

dressing-table, "the 'Truth Club' of Miss Clevelands' is hereby dissolved after one day of feeble life. The only one who can tell the whole truth without getting into hot water is Georgie," bowing to Georgie, "and she did not want the Club."

"Let's keep the idea, though, Babs," said Gladys as they got up, "for we must put the lid on that sickly, boasting snobbery of our three friends who shall be nameless."

"Oh, I guess we're all game for that. Anyway, we can try. Now, I've got to put my poor rejected Billikens back in their old places!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Memory Books.

ONE Saturday afternoon in February, a group of rather depressed-looking girls sat around the bright fire in their sitting-room. These were Letty, Mabel, Babs, Georgie and Olive Carson from Hamilton, a new girl who had been in the school only a week. It was a miserable day. Not even the most determined optimist could find a good word to say about it. True, the sleet storm that had been raging all day had come to a sudden stop, and it might be possible to go on the usual walk for the girls who had no Saturday invitations, if they did not mind getting their feet and skirts soaked in the slushy puddles, or slipping on places where the sleet had frozen, or losing their hats or umbrellas in the cold, raw wind that was howling outside. Some rainy days are glorious for walking, but not this one, so mean and miserable it was, and mean and miserable the spirits of the girls were getting to be, for indoors, except near the fire, it was chilly from the east wind, and the sky was so overcast that the rooms looked gloomy and desolate. Yes, indeed, it was a miserable day.

"Hello, Glad! I thought I saw you all ready to go out," cried Babs as Gladys appeared in a serge middy suit with—wonders of wonders! a work-bag on her arm. "Aren't you any more of a social success than the rest of us poor uninvited-out-for-the-day creatures?"

"Oh, Aunt Belle just telephoned to say that she couldn't come herself. She was in bed with a cold, but, if the storm didn't get worse, Uncle John would come for me. Well, I had a hunch, as it were, that, between Aunt Belle and her cold and Uncle John and his rheumatism, little Gladys would be more welcome another time, so she said she wouldn't come. They were awfully nice—insisted and all that, but so did I. Besides, I've got some mending to do. Don't look alarmed. It's a case of have to. Then, I didn't like to leave you poor things without my cheering society. Why, you all look glum enough to be the chief mourners at a dozen funerals!"

"Glum," said Babs, "isn't in it. Why, we'll all turn active members of the 'Suicide Club' if we don't cheer up. What can we do? I feel so all in with this wretched cold that I don't feel like doing anything—not even anything I shouldn't, so I must be nearing the end," and Babs indulged in mock grief for her own sufferings.

"Is anyone going out with Miss Prendergast on the walk? Didn't she say she'd take us if any

wanted to go?" asked Letty for the sake of something to say.

"Poor old Prendy! Is she the dragon? Why, she's got such a cold, she can hardly see. It would be positive cruelty to take her out on a day like this," said Gladys, making a somewhat feeble attempt at mending.

"Let's don't go out then," sad Mabel, "for she really has an awful cold. Besides, it would be so gloomy in that dingy little tea-room to-day. Miss Prendergast would never let us go to a bigger one, down town."

"Alas! any kind of a tea-room, even a dingy one, is out of the question for this child," came mournfully from Babs—"and for Georgie too, for we're both financially indisposed. Isn't that true, Georgie? and isn't 'financially indisposed' a lovely expression? Georgie, what's that story you're so deep in?"

"Wait a minute, Babs, I'm at the most exciting part. It's about an aeroplane," mumbled Georgie, half-buried in a magazine.

"That's just like my roommate, wants to read when I don't and t'other way round. Only thing we have in common is our financial stringency—another good expression—I'm just full of them. Oh, dear! I wish I had never told Dad that I could manage on an allowance, but I'm going to try and do it even if I have to pawn my clothes! Dad

always chuckles so when I have to ask for extra. He wagered I couldn't get along and I want to win that wager! Well, what can we do that's amusing and inexpensive? Georgie, when you've settled the aeroplane, what next?"

"Me? Oh, I'm going to paste a lot of stuff in my memory book. I haven't done it for ages."

"Good idea, I haven't either," said Babs, "and everything falls all over the floor if I touch the book. Let's all do memory books and forget our troubles!"

"I haven't got any yet," said Olive, wistfully, "but I've heard so much about them, I'd love to watch."

"Poor child! You haven't been long enough to have any memories. You can be our audience when we go over the old tales. It wouldn't be nearly so much fun if we didn't have some one they were new to. Well, come along, people, whose room shall we do them in? Sorry, ladies, but you can't do them in ours. Georgina and I house-cleaned this morning, and we just go in on tip-toe and speak in whispers for fear of making a disturbance. We stroll past the door and look in admiringly. We are hoping and praying that Miss Clevelands will pay her weekly visit to-night, for it might not look like the same room to-morrow. The strain is beginning to tell on our nerves already. Thanks, Glad, for the pressing invita-

tion to go into your room—but we shall go just the same. No amount of disturbance would make any difference that you'd ever notice!"

"Babs Fortescue," cried Gladys, "You have more nerve than anyone I ever hope to see. You needn't show your raving jealousy just because Miss Burns praised Con and me for our neatness! Well, come on, girls, but hadn't someone better tell Prendy we aren't going on the walk?"

"Oh, Glad, let me!" exclaimed the irrepressible Babs. "Just imagine the thrill of approaching and knocking at that door when you have not been sent for, to be reduced to a jelly through sheer fright, and when you are actually coming on a friendly mission! Come on, Glad, you come and support me, in case I get paralyzed with fright from force of habit. Bye-bye, girls, till we meet again. Will tell you all about it later!"

While Babs and Gladys were gone the other girls went to get their "Memory Books" before meeting in Gladys' room. "Memory Books" are made from any book that looks conveniently like a school-book, and so can be carried without arousing suspicion, except because of its exceeding plumpness and raggedness. In it you paste anything and everything that recalls memories, painful or pleasant, lawful or unlawful, closely or remotely connected with school. Letty, Mabel and Georgie arrived with their precious burdens, while

poor Olive joined them in the role of envious and curious spectator and audience.

The room occupied by Gladys and Constance was typical of school-girls who have many friends and interests. Banners and pennants of every kind and description, bearing the names of colleges—both boys' and girls'—cities, summer resorts and fraternities; large posters; passepartouted heads and groups from the "Saturday Evening Post" and "Ladies' Home Journal"; pictures of teams and groups of boys and girls; mottoes bearing such pointed suggestions as "Come in without knocking and go out the same way"; motor-licenses; snow-shoes, tennis-rackets and everything destined to fill in any space that might be left on already full walls. On the beds and window boxes were rugs and cushions bearing crests and monograms of various kinds. The effect was interesting but not restful, and the thought of the havoc one heavy gust of wind might cause fairly made one tremble.

The two visitors to the sick room soon returned, Gladys holding Babs by the back of her collar, while on Babs' face was a look of injured innocence that could deceive no one.

"There's no two ways about it," said Gladys grimly—though she seemed to find it hard to keep from laughing at some recollection—"this person is not fit to be out without a nurse. Just wait till

I tell you," as she and Babs sat down on one of the beds. "Well, we went up to the lady's door and knocked. There was a sort of scramble inside and then Prendy said 'Come in!' so we came in. My word! She looked wretched, sitting on the edge of the bed in her red dressing-gown. She'd been lying down—you could tell by the hole in the pillow and she looked a bit anxious. She probably thought we'd come to suggest an expedition of some sort and she didn't look up to anything just then. Babs chips in with that mother's-baby-lamb voice of hers—now be quiet, Babs, I've got the floor, or the bed rather. Well, she says, 'Oh, Miss Prendergast, none of the girls are going out to-day. It's such a horrid day for your cold.' This was almost too much for Prendy—she thought we must be up to something—and her sense of duty—if only she'd lose it somewhere—was too strong, so she said her cold must make no difference if the girls wanted to go.

" 'Oh, but Miss Prendergast', goes on Babs just as sugary as ever, 'We really would rather not go out. We are all going to be down in Gladys' room and are going to paste things in our scrap albums.' Prendy softened at once and almost beamed at Babs, and even I got a little.

" 'Why, Barbara, that's capital. Have you got some interesting clippings?' 'Yes, indeed, Miss Prendergast. You ought to see them,'

"'Yes, I must,' says Miss Prendergast. Then, if you please, Babs asks if she is warm enough and if she can pull down the blind. I don't know whether she tucked her in and kissed her good-night or not—I got out!"

"Yes, you coward, you left it all to me! Glad stood there like a bump on a log and left me to do all the talking!"

"That must have been mighty hard for you, Babs," came in gentle tones from Letty.

"Letitia Allen, this from you! I can never believe in friendship any more!"

"Well, girls, we'd better get at our scrap-albums so we can have them all ready when Miss Prendergast comes. Seems to me, there are some things in some of our books she'd particularly like to see! Letty, you're an angel to bring the paste and scissors. Now, for mercy's sake, don't smear up the bed-clothes and the rugs. I don't care about anything else."

"Here's something you people would like to have, I reckon, as Letty says," cried Babs, waving a narrow slip of paper over her head, "and Prendy would like to have it along with me! Behold! 'Laundry List—F. Prendergast—January seventeenth.' I saw it reposing on a bag with her name on it. It was too good to miss—a souvenir like that—just when I'd come up from doing lines for the lady, so I annexed it. A little while

later, I heard her rowing poor old Amy for losing her slip. I felt like thirty cents, but my life wouldn't have been worth that if I had confessed, so I lay low till Amy came past. Then I told her what I had done, and salved my conscience by giving her a blouse—perfectly good—that didn't match a thing I had, so now I have my cherished laundry slip." Babs was obliged to make a sudden move to dodge Georgie and Gladys who were trying to snatch the slip from her. Her book with its loose collection of souvenirs slid to the floor, scattering its contents, crumbs of cake, sticky bits of paper, faded flowers, bits of ribbon, programmes, menus, pictures, lines of poetry, notes in Miss Clevelands' writing, and so on—all over the floor.

"Nice looking mess on my floor," said Gladys when she and the others had stopped laughing at Babs' dismay.

"Gee, Babs, you have an awful lot of junk there," said Georgie, pasting away in her own book.

"What are the cake crumbs for?" asked Olive.

"Which kind? There are both light and dark, if you will but examine carefully," said Babs sweeping what treasures she could into her lap, and beginning to sort them. "The dark crumbs are from some wedding cake Madeleine had sent her. She gave some to me to dream on for three nights

to see what my intended would be like. You see, she's engaged herself and I suppose she wants to see what she can do for me! Well, the first night, I didn't dream of anything I could remember, the next night I dreamed that Letty and I were in some kind of ballet at the Alexandra—don't be shocked, Letty dear, but the third and last night—oh! girls, you will never guess—it thrills me yet to think of it—I can see HIS face still—in fact there is not a day passes that I don't see it—oh! I dreamed of—Hoyles! And I get so fussed every time I see him—for—you know he's a widower!" Here Babs went into a series of rapturous shrugs and smirks, while the girls laughed till they nearly cried.

"Georgie," said Mabel, "what is that dirty-looking piece of rag you've got there? It looks like a piece of old duster that has got in by mistake."

"It's nothing," said Georgie, putting the piece in question hurriedy out of sight.

"Georgie, you old fraud, you know that's a piece of the bandage from the time I nearly put your eye out with the cricket ball! I've got a piece of it, too. Oh! I don't believe I'll ever get over the time I saw you go wobbly and realized that you had stopped the ball with your eye—instead of it being the fence. Then when I saw your orb when they took the bandage off! Oh, I just

can't bear to think of what I might have done to dear old Georgicums!'' and impulsive Babs' eyes filled with tears as she looked at her beloved if sadly abused roommate.

''There now, Babs and Georgie, easy on the 'soft sawder', as my blue-nose roommate says. It certainly was some lamp our Georgie had, but that was nothing to the time we had from keeping you from eating 'Rough-on-rats' or something interesting and appetizing like that!—My word! how very grand! When did you do that, Babs?'' pointing to a page with a dance programme bearing the school crest in the centre with bits of pink, blue, green, white, mauve and yellow pasted round the side.

''Doesn't it look like a drummer's sample book? You know what these are, Glad. They're souvenirs of the Christmas dance—bits of people's dresses and my programme. There's a piece of your yellow, Glad, Mabs' pink, my green, Georgie's blue and Letty's white. You heard about it, didn't you, Olive? We had the loveliest time. Of course, we all looked adorable—so sweet and girlish as per instructions. Miss Clevelands didn't see eye to eye with the ideas of all, for Gertrude had to go upstairs and put some more simple and girlish tulle in the top of her dress, and Marie and Phyllis had to amputate the coy little curls on their cheeks that they had been cultivating all

afternoon, but the rest of us passed. Of course—this is a mere detail that I notice in passing—there were some very nice boys there—mostly from St. Leonard's and Varsity. There were some older men, too—some very nice and some very queer. Some of them were friends of the govs and they made them dance with some of the younger girls who didn't know many. You should hear Frances describe her partners. Guess if they heard her they wouldn't think she was as slow as she looks! Well, for several days it was nothing but 'He said' and 'He said he said' around here. Then most of us recovered from the masculine invasion—though Gertrude and Phyllis have spasms of it yet."

"I can make out all your samples but the mauve. Where did you raise that? It seems familiar, somehow—"

"Wouldn't you like to know, Glad," said Babs teasingly.

"Huh, I know—Smitey dear—" said Mabel. "It's a piece of Miss Dewson's dress. Who cares? I have some of Miss Spencer's bouquet."

"So have I," said Letty. "Besides, she let me tote it round for her nearly all evening."

"Gee, since you're all boasting, I have one of Miss Clevelands' orchids. She had dropped it and someone had stepped on it—so it wasn't mashed or anything—but I rescued it. Wait a jiffy—

Here it is!" and Georgie held up a crushed and faded petal of an orchid.

"You people needn't talk to me about smites—Here's Georgie with one on Miss Clevelands', said Babs. "Letty, whatever is that bone you're looking at with such a love-lorn expression?"

"Oh, dear!" sighed Letty, who had been examining the end of half a wishbone in a most regretful manner. "It looked so interesting before, for it had such a nice little red mark on it where my hand bled, but now that's all worn off."

"Mercy, Letty, you bloodthirsty villain. What are you talking about?"

"You remember the first night we had roast chicken and how excited we were? Well, I was sitting next to Frances and she got the wishbone. When Miss Hargraft wasn't looking she slipped it off her plate into her table napkin, and when we were waiting for dessert we pulled it and I got the biggest and jaggedest half. We had kept the pieces all through prayers, and afterwards I was just going upstairs when Miss Clevelands saw me from the library door and called me in. At first I thought she must have seen us pulling the bone. But no! She just wanted to have a little talk with me. She was awfully nice, made me sit down on the sofa beside her, and I wasn't a bit afraid of her—only I wished I hadn't that bone, for I had to keep my hand closed all the time, and you

all know how I like to wave my hands round when I talk. Well, Miss Clevelands talked to me for a little while, asking me how I liked it here and things like that. Everything went beautifully, and I reckoned I was safe with my bone, but when I got up to go she suddenly gave my two hands the most awful squeeze and said something about getting more roses in my cheeks. Well, maybe you folks think that jagged piece of bone didn't hurt. I almost squealed right out, but I didn't. When I looked, the bone was all red and I had to bandage my hand and put peroxide on it. So you see I wouldn't lose my precious bone for worlds," said Letty, as she firmly anchored it to her memory book with strips of court plaster.

"Bravo!" cried Babs, "we read of how 'The Corporal saved the Colours' and now we've heard 'How Letitia saved the Bone.' "

"Oh, I wish I had a Memory Book, too," said Olive, who had been listening and watching with the greatest interest.

"A simple matter, my dear," said Babs. "Collect everything that might remind you of anything. That's clear, isn't it? And the more rubbish the better—from Miss Clevelands' stray hairpins to the gum you had to stop chewing when Miss Hargraft suddenly came in. Of course, you haven't been here long enough to get notes arranging for official appointments in the library,

but if you don't get any, I can easily spare you some," and Babs held up a handful of notes in Miss Clevelands' writing. "What's that long screed you're pasting in, Glad?"

"Don't you remember the time Prendy caught you and Con and me having a feast of pickles and biscuits in my room after 'lights out' and gave us 'The Cloud' to write out six times? You know her way of coming on you suddenly without making a sound. Well, I thought I'd chance it and see if she'd notice if I improved on 'Percy Bysshe' a bit—make him more adaptable to school-girls' use, don't you know. So in the middle I changed that part about 'her unseen feet' and 'my tent's thin roof, etc.' to

'Whenever the beat of her unheard feet
Which for size have never a peer
Hath stopped at my door on the east first floor
The girls drop their pickles in fear.'

"Well, I handed it in to her next day, and when she made me wait till she glanced through it, I thought it was all up with Gladys and she wished she hadn't tampered with 'P. Bysshe', but it was my lucky day, for Prendy hadn't her specs on and missed the original bit. She threw the whole labour of my loving hands in the basket and told me I might go. I asked Hoyles to let me fish it out of the rubbish in the basement. I had one

young time finding it, but here it is! I thought I told you about it, Babs, but I guess I was too excited. It was just before the dance."

"No, you didn't. Just like you to tell me a whole lot of unimportant things and forget about something really brilliant like that! Do you remember that lecture on English Literature that we went to when that man spoke about the beauty of Shelley's poetry—and among a lot of others, mentioned our friend, 'The Cloud'. I could hardly keep from jumping up and telling him that he had better make teachers stop giving poetry that was supposed to be beautiful to write for 'lines'. Precious little beauty you see in anything when you're writing for dear life trying to see how many lines you can skip out. 'The Cloud', 'The Revenge' and 'The Bard' and imposition favourites like that have lost all their beauty for me. I guess my introduction to them was unfortunate. I think Mamselle's way of having you write over and over again one line like 'Je me tiens comme un bébé' is better. Haven't I the most wonderful French accent?—Well, by the time you have written that a good many times, you begin to have a faint idea that perhaps after all you have been acting like a baby."

"I wonder what a goody-goody like Florence Kay does for a memory book. Jinks! I should think she'd want to do something sometimes to get

some lines so she could say she knew what it was like," said Georgie. "Say, Glad, come out of it; What are you so quiet about?"

"Babs, you know 'The Bard' would be a great one to alter. 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless gov. Confusion on thy manners wait,' but I guess it would be a bit risky to start in on the first line.—Mabs, where did you get that piece of glass? Oh, it isn't a piece of *the* glass, is it?"

"It surely is," said Mabel, who had been smearing a large piece of glass with paste.

"Now, Mabs," be an angel and give us a piece. Just break off a tiny, weeny bit. I couldn't get out in time to get any," said Gladys.

"Come on, Mabs, be a dear," pleaded Babs and Georgie.

"What ever are you so keen to have the glass for, Babs?" asked Olive.

"Olive, you're simply a perfect audience, for you see we all know this tale, but now someone will have to tell you and we can indulge in tender—yes, very tender reminiscences. Go ahead, Mabel, it's your turn now."

"Why, one night, not long before the Christmas holidays, it was the most lovely moonlight night, and there had been a snowstorm all day, and the snow was so deep and soft. Well, you know the fire-escape that runs down to the garden from the door by Miss Snelgrove's room. It's only locked

at night by her when she goes to bed. Well, we just happened to hear her say that she was going to the theatre that night and to supper afterwards, and that she was afraid she would be very late. It seemed kind of providential that we should overhear her—but we weren't so sure of that afterwards. When we saw what a wonderful night it was, six of us—we five here and Constance—thought it would be great to have a moonlight snow-ball fight, so at half-past ten—Miss Dewson and Miss Hargraft had disappeared—we put on sweaters and tuques and moccasins. Glad and Con got up to our floor safely and then we slipped down the corridor, out the door and down the fire-escape. Oh, will you ever forget it! Wasn't it exciting?—Babs you go on!"

"All right, Mabel, you tell it beautifully but you make it sound so perfectly natural and respectable, when it was a really exciting lark. Well, as Mabs said, we slithered down that fire-escape. It's exciting enough going down it in a fire-drill but that is nothing to doing it when it's coated with snow, and there's a full moon. I left my muff in the door so that it wouldn't slam or stick—much good it did us after all! When we got down, we just skipped over to the tennis court behind the grove, like young spring lambs rushing the season. The only places we could be seen from were the kitchen, which was all dark, and

Miss Snelgrove's room, and we thought we had her settled. Well, we had the most glorious snowball fight! It was Letty's first. We certainly did have fun, the only nuisance was that you had to squeal softly. We were thinking we'd do this as a regular thing, when suddenly there was the most awful clang! clang! We could hear it through some of the open windows. The fire-bell! Well, we just about keeled over, till Glad and I suddenly remembered we were fire-monitors. Then, we just flew up that fire-escape, but—my muff was gone and the door was locked! We tried that lock, shook the door, and banged on it till one of the panes of glass fell in with a crash. Then we saw someone move inside. We didn't waste any time, I can tell you. I don't believe that old fire-escape has got over the shock yet, we went down it so fast and made for the door into the garden.

"It wasn't locked so we rushed in. At first, we didn't know which way to go for a second. We never stopped to think that it was queer that the main hall was in darkness with a fire-drill on. Then I said 'Hustle, girls, we may make it yet!' and started to rush for the stairs. The lights flashed on just as someone grabbed me by the arm and said, 'Well, before you do make it, Barbara, I should like a word with you first!' Miss Clevelands! I shall never forget it as long as I live! There were the two lines of sleepy but scared-

looking girls, there was Miss Clevelands in her kimono, Miss Dewson, Miss Spencer, Miss Hargraft, and, the cause of it all, Miss Snelgrove in her evening cloak!

"We hadn't counted on her having such a headache that she had to cut the supper and come home early, and that while looking at the moonlight shining on the snow through the trees in the grove, she might see something besides moonlight on the snow. She must have locked the door when she heard us rush—my muff gave it away how we'd got out—after, she had asked Miss Clevelands to have fire-drill. She always did have an eye for dramatic effect, but she looked rather sorry she'd been so foxy when she saw her 'white-headed' Letty among the wicked. Now, Letty, don't get mad. You can't help people being fond of you! We must have been a sight—covered with snow, and with faces as red as beets compared with the others! Miss Dewson and Miss Spencer suddenly beat it, and I heard that Dewsy said afterwards it was so funny she couldn't stand it—we were the jolliest, rosiest-looking culprits she had ever seen. Well, we'll just draw a veil over our interview with Clevey, and our cancelled invitations for the next Saturday, and the suspension of Glad and me as fire-monitors for two months!"

"But, Mabs, how did you manage to get the glass?" asked Gladys.

"Why, you know at that time I had hardly anything for my memory-book. I couldn't sleep for thinking what a lovely souvenir that glass would make, so I finally got up about one o'clock and slipped down and picked up the first piece I felt. I was scared to death Miss Snelgrove would hear me but she didn't. Well, here's a piece for all. You can have a bit, too, Olive, just to make a start!" and Mabel doled out the pieces she had broken off by using Gladys' hair brush as a hammer.

"Gee, I'm hungry," groaned Georgie. "I wish we had gone out and got something to eat. I don't see why I bought that other pair of skating boots and used up all my allowance. Most of the things I've been pasting in are about things to eat. Here's the programme of 'Pinafore', Babs. Do you remember when your Uncle took us to see it, and then to the 'Mission' afterwards? Here's the menu. Oh! it makes me so hungry just to look at it!"

"Poor Georgie! Here's the menu of the 'Plaza' in New York. Just take your choice, honey!" teased Letty.

"Wait—look over this first. It's from the 'Ritz' in Montreal—What is your order, Miss?"

said Babs, bowing to Georgie, with her handkerchief flung over her arm.

"Oh! but you'd rather have one from the dining-car of the C.P.R., wouldn't you, Georgie?—Here you are—Pay your money and take your choice!" from Mabel, as all three girls threw menu-cards that had been carefully preserved in their memory-books, at the hunger-stricken Georgie.

"Merciful goodness! Methinks I hear footprints," said Gladys. "Oh, Babs! you've done it! It's Prendy to see our albums!" and memory books were frantically pushed aside or sat on while Babs with her boasted presence of mind, said—

"I'll be telling you a story"—a knock came at the door—

"'He went down a long, dark corridor—oh! I can't think of a thing—Say 'come in' Glad!—'and just as he got—Oh! Rose, you nearly gave us heart-failure!"

This to Rose, who to the surprise and relief of the girls, appeared at the door.

"Please, Miss Hungerford, I've been looking for you young ladies high an' low. Please, Mrs. Clevelands would like the young ladies who are stayin' in to come an' have a bit of tea in her sittin'-room. You're to come just as soon as you like."

"Rose, talk about the beautiful feet of those who bring good news—or something like that. You must have the most lovely understandings!" said Babs, jumping off the bed.

"Oh, Rose, you saved my life!" cried Georgie, her spirits revived by the prospect of food. "Tell Mrs. Clevelands we'll be there just as fast as we can," as the girls began to smooth their hair, and made use of Gladys' soap and towels.

"Yes, rather, with bells on!—Isn't she a dear!" come in appreciative chorus from the others, and memory-books were forgotten till another day.

CHAPTER IX.

Lent and the Spirit of Renunciation.

IT was Shrove Tuesday, and the girls of Miss Clevelands', like a large portion of the rest of the civilized world, had been enjoying a goodly feast of the time-honoured pancakes with new maple syrup to speed them on their way. The feelings of Martha, the cook, would have been deeply hurt if her crisp confections had not been appreciated. So the girls made most amazing efforts that her feelings should not suffer even at the risk of damage to their own of a different variety and location.

At the table where Miss Hargraft and Miss Spencer presided, the conversation, which had become somewhat subdued because of the number of pancakes consumed, turned upon giving up luxuries and indulgences for the Lenten season which would begin next day. Frances was the first to show a spirit of renunciation, when she volunteered to do without porridge for breakfast, slightly taking from the effect of her offer by the somewhat qualifying remark, "I don't like the kind we're having now, anyway," much to the amusement of Miss Hargraft and Miss Spencer. Phyllis, with her virtuous expression strongly

emphasized, said with a sigh, that she would do without sugar in her tea and coffee. "And I love it so!" she added, with the virtuous expression becoming stronger, till Gladys, interrupted scornfully—"Noble Phyllis! That's a bit too much! I wonder how much Lent has to do with that, or how much that article we read last night in 'The Woman's Home Companion' about sugar being so bad for the complexion is responsible!"

"Hush, Gladys," said Miss Spencer. "What are you going to give up?" by way of changing the subject, for she saw that Phyllis was too upset by Gladys' thrust, even to pose.

"Well, it's this way, Miss Spencer. Con and I have been talking about what we were going to do, but it was hard to decide. We thought it should be some sort of real sacrifice, but you'll never guess what it is. You see our room is about the coldest in the house in winter, so—" with a sidelong look towards Miss Hargraft—"we've been saying our prayers in bed—and for Lent we thought we'd say 'em outside—though it's still good and cold."

Miss Hargraft and Miss Spencer looked somewhat taken aback at first by this novel sacrifice until, struck by Gladys' tone, so serious for her, they began a laugh in which the whole table joined.

Olive said she was going to stop curling her hair

for Lent, and Georgie that she was going to give up eating between meals, which suggestion from the ever-hungry Georgie caused a titter of derision and doubt as to her ability to keep to her resolution. Letty said that she and Mabel had resolved to abstain from gossiping and saying unkind things.

"Well, Letty, you won't find that hard. You so often have a good word to say for people that I sometimes wish you'd say something that wasn't!"

"Oh, no, Babs. Why, we're dreadful gossips!" Babs had not decided what she was going to do. Of course, she was going to give up candy, but she wanted to think of something more interesting.

"Well," said Miss Hargraft, "judging from what you are going to give up, I imagine your health might be very much better. Those making the real sacrifice seem to be Gladys and Constance, Mabel and Letty, and of course, Georgie," with a laugh.

"Poor old Georgie! But I guess she's eaten enough pancakes to last her between meals for some time to come. By the way, Miss Hargraft," said Babs, mischievously, "what are you going to give up?"

Miss Hargraft blushed and looked confused for a moment.

"What am I going to give up, Barbara! Why,

my dear, I'm afraid I sha'n't be able to tell you, but I assure you it's very hard! Shall we rise, Miss Spencer?" said poor Miss Hargraft, who felt that the girls would scarcely understand if she told them she was going to give up postponing a friendly visit to each of them. This was something she had been planning to do for some time, but her natural shyness and reserve, and the feeling that she was not a favorite with the girls, made her put it off.

"Whatever do you suppose it is?" said Letty to Babs on their way upstairs. "You don't suppose she is interested in the good-looking curate Phyllis talks about, and that she's going to give up going to early service, so as not to see so much of him?"

"What a romantic but impossible idea! I'd love to know, but I haven't the vaguest notion. By the way, Letitia, it's a jolly good thing for you Lent doesn't start to-day, or your resolution about gossip would be all up in the air. What could be more gossipy than whispered remarks about Miss Hargraft and a good-looking curate! I'm surprised!"

"Well, Babsie dear, I told you I was an awful gossip. Oh! I didn't tell you what Glad suggested about Marie—said she'd better give up making eyes at the tall fair usher in church—you know, the one you all call 'Sweet William'."

"It's a wonder she doesn't give it up out of sheer despair, for he never looks at her—he's always rubbering at Babs," said Gladys, joining the other two on the landing.

"Goodness knows I wish he would look at Marie," said Babs. "He makes me so mad, I'd like to shake him. You remember the row he got me into when he wrote some silly stuff in the front of my hymn book, and left it just where Miss Clevelands happened to sit that night. Clevey wouldn't believe me and doesn't yet—that I had nothing to do with it."

"Those Smart-Alecks," said Gladys, "never seem to care how much row we get into. They think they give us enough pleasure just to see them, the dear sweet things! I admit, it's fun to get them going, but you get tired of it after a while. Excuse me from a mushy man! I'd much rather have the tall, dark one who just looks through us."

The same day, after games, they were sitting in Babs' room. Babs and Georgie had long ago given up having a room so tidy that friendly gatherings were not to be permitted. Gertrude was there also, having, as usual, dropped in to borrow something—this time a magazine. Presently, Frances came in cold and hungry from "keeping goals" in the raw March wind, while an unusually long hockey practice was in progress.

"Say, have any of you kids got any eats? If you have, please trot 'em out. I'm starving!"

"Ah! I have it! I know what I'm going to give up for Lent—oh, excuse me, Frances, there are some oranges and things in that box—help yourself!—Let's give up slang! What do you say?"

"Just like your generous nature, Babs," scoffed Gladys, "You say 'I know what I'm going to give up—and then you 'Let *us* give up slang!'

"Well, let me or us or anyone give up slang! Frances' remark suggested it to me. First, let us consider Frances' opening speech—wouldn't I be a shining light in the teaching profession!—Well, as I said, let's take Frances' first words. 'Say, have any of you kids got any eats'—we'll begin with *say*. Did you know, young ladies, that it was a sure sign of being a Canadian or American to begin with *say?* You see English people would never dream of doing that—they would begin with *I say* or even *I sy!* And then when we can't think of anyone's name we use *'Say'*, or *'Say there, you with the red hair'!* or some such graceful expression! Didn't you know we all did that? Resolution One—we won't preface our remarks by *say*. Next comes *kids*. Frances, how can you be so crude in your language?—only sheep and goats and—brothers should be allowed to use that. Never should it sully the lips of young ladies. Therefore, dear friends, Resolution Two—We will

not address our intimate friends as *Kid* or *Kids*, much less *O you Kid or Kiddo*—corrupt forms of the same corrupt expression."

"Oh, Babs, how you do run on—Babbling Babs, you should be called!" cried Letty, as Babs paused for breath.

"Nothing original about that, my dear. That's one of Dad's specials. Excuse the digression, but did I ever tell you about Dad and the talking-machine? Now, Glad, don't interrupt," as Gladys seemed about to interpose a remark—"Well, one rather stormy day last Christmas holidays, we were fooling around in the library. Dad was trying to work out a new move in Solitaire, and I was trying to get him to listen to a much more important scheme of mine. He had been making some remarks of the 'Babbling Babs' nature when the telephone on his desk rang. He answered it, and we were so surprised to hear him say—

"Do I want to buy a new kind of talking machine? No! but do *you* want to buy one—for, if you do, I've got one to sell'—looking at me. Well, Dad must have got the surprise of his life, for the man at the other end said he might—would come out and look it over that afternoon. Dad, who was getting more and more fussed, for the rest of us were in fits, said 'Well, come to think of it, I'd better not sell it; it belongs to the family—sort of heir-loom—there might be a lot of talk if I sold

it.' The man insisted—said that if it should run down and stop he could put it in order. 'Run down and stop,' said Dad, 'That's just what it never does—my only objection to it! Good day!' That man probably thought Dad was crazy. When he makes any remarks about my talking, I just say, 'Want to buy another talking-machine, Daddy dear?' and he's like a lamb. Now, to go back to our sheeps, as the French say—most appropriate, when we've been speaking of *'kids'*—we'll continue with Frances' remarks—while Frances continues with the oranges and biscuits. No, go on, Frances, I've got heaps, for a wonder. Well, let me see—oh, yes—the next word was *eats*. Horrible sound! I really do detest that word, though a victim of fashion, I use it. Frances should have said, 'Have any of you girls got any food?'—Can't you see her doing it?—or 'Any victuals?'

"Oh Babs! I hate *victuals* worse than *eats!*" said Mabel. "Speaking of eats, it was rather funny when we were down in Seattle last spring. We were down town, and wanted to get something to eat before we went to the theatre in the evening. Well, loads of people there go to cafeterias—they're very good there. We were told where the best one was, and when we got there we saw the name on a big sign over the door. 'The Good Eats'. The place looked very nice, orchestra and flowers and everything, but Mama wouldn't go

in at first, she was so disgusted with the name. She had never heard *eats* before, though she's heard lots of slang. Uncle Jack and heaps of people out West use it all the time. We finally coaxed her to go in, but the name really spoilt her appetite, and the things were so good, too. I wouldn't dare say *eats* to her."

"Resolution Three—'We'll not use *eats* again that is the word—I'm not thinking of fasting, so don't be alarmed."

It was unfortunate that Georgie, who had been detained by two of the staff, should enter at this moment—when the anti-slang movement seemed to be making such progress. She looked very worried, and when asked the cause, as she rummaged through her bureau drawers, she said—

"Somebody must have swiped my arithmetic note-book. It's completely vamoosed. Miss Dewson's been romping all over me for not knowing my history, and now I am gong to get it in the neck from Wally. Oh dear! I don't know where the old thing is!" and almost in tears Georgie went out again.

"Strikes me—I mean it occurs to me, Barbara, that you had better begin your slang reform on your roommate. She's even worse than I am, and that's pretty bad," said Gladys.

"I reckon she'd be mighty hard to reform," said Letty.

"Letty, you will have to say *presume* instead of *reckon,* and *very* or *extremely,* instead of *mighty.* Only that funny little drawl of yours makes it sound different. What's more, we'll have to reform Miss Hargraft with her *beastly* and *rotten.* Isn't it funny? She's so proper in some ways, and I'm not a bit, but Dad would be furious if I said *beastly* and *rotten.* I suppose it all depends on the point of view. To use *beastly* means like a beast, and *rotten* suggests cold storage eggs, or something nasty or odoriferous, but apparently it doesn't in England."

"Yes, and Miss Hargraft said I shouldn't say *bug* when I meant *insect!* Imagine calling a June-bug a June-insect!" said Frances in disgust. "*Cut out* is slang, too, isn't it, Babs?"

"Yes, my love."

"Well, Miss Prendergast said 'Girls, you must cut out that noise in the corridor.' "

"She should have said *eliminate,* my love."

"What, eliminate that noise? That sounds crazy, Babs."

"What will we do, will we have an Anti-Slang Society to eliminate slang, and have everyone pay a fine when they use slang?"

"Mabel, where are your lessons in composition? If you aim to be a purist in speech, you should say 'What *shall* we do'—not will. It's another sign of being a mere Canadian muddling *shall* and

will. And 'have everyone pay a fine when *she* uses slang'! As for forming a Society, our 'Truth Club' seemed to die a sudden death. No. I don't think we had better form any society or have any fines. We had just better cut out—gracious! I mean eliminate the slang for Lent, at least. I admit, it will be very trying to my newly sensitive ears having a roommate like Georgie."

"Well, Babs Fortescue, you make me tired," said Gertrude sneeringly, as she got up to go—taking the magazine she had been reading when not listening to the discussion. "So you actually formed a Truth Club. Well, I must say I'm hurt because I wasn't asked to join! The good fits you have get me! Heavens! You'd think you never got into any scrapes, but I suppose you think you're trying to be like George Washington—'First in war and first in peace'—doesn't matter to you as long as you're *first!*"

"I am also a great believer, Gertrude Heyd, in everyone having a right to their own opinion—I mean—her own opinon—but I can't very well give mine of you, as you are a guest in my room!" cried Babs, white with rage at Gertrude's taunt.

"Never mind, Babsie honey," said Letty, as Gertrude went out, slamming the door, and still keeping possession of Babs' magazine. "She should have added, 'First in the hearts of her countrymen!'"

CHAPTER X.

Interrupted Revels.

FOR nearly two months, the wheels at Miss Clevelands' had run with marvellous smoothness, for during Lent the girls had seemed more subdued, and, moreover, leading spirits like Babs and Gladys had been too busy with managing plays and "Lits" for Friday evenings, and with games, to have time for anything disturbing to the routine of the school, and there had been an increase of regular social and athletic activity since Easter. The results of this busy and orderly life had been blissful for the faculty and pupils, but a trifle dull, especially for the more active minds among the latter.

Such seemed to be the impression of some, at any rate, one day after lunch, when Gladys and Constance had dropped in, with rather an aimless air, to see Letty and Mabel. All were sitting idle, making rather listless conversation, with the exception of Letty. She was mending her clothes—actually mending them before she needed them—a home-grown habit which she had not lost in spite of the happy-go-lucky ways of her friends at school. Presently, in burst Babs, her eyes spark-

ling and her whole face full of mischief—a look that had not been seen of late, but one that, to those who knew her best, portended events of not too lawful a nature. On Babs' animated appearance the girls looked up expectant, and Letty dropped her mending—

"Girls, listen. I have an idea, and I think it's high time somebody had one! Why we're getting so good round here that pretty soon we shan't need any dragons on duty, and the govs will all be having cynosures—no, I mean—sinecures. I always did get those two words mixed up—means they get paid for doing nothing—that's for your benefit, Mabel—and that would be more than any right-minded person could stand. Well, I have started to think about this quite a lot lately, but I've been too busy to get much farther. Now, don't interrupt till I get to the idea at least. Miss Clevelands says you should come to the point at once. Well, as I was saying, or as I intended to say—"

"Hurry up, Babs, and say it, or we we won't listen," said Mabel.

"Well, keep perfectly cool and I'll get there. When I was coming up from lunch, I was talking to Dewsy—now you needn't giggle—I have told you heaps of times I haven't got a smite on her—and she was telling us about a feast they had late last night for Miss Snelgrove's birthday. Humph!

Wonder how many she's had! Now, that set me thinking; we haven't had a feast for perfect ages —not even anything exciting between meals—we haven't had time—not even Georgie. Well, you know it will simply mean that our digestions will get so perfect that they will never stand it if we should have to have a perfectly legal feast. Besides, in Prendy's history to-day we were hearing about a Frenchman called Voltaire. He believed in reason in all things—said it wasn't right for people in power to have more privileges than the lower classes—that's where we come in. Therefore it is not right or reasonable for the govs to indulge in riotous living and birthday feasts and be exempt from penalties, while we poor underlings have nothing more exciting to do than to go to bed early and sleep! Reason in all things! Hence—Idea Number One—We'll have a feast. Idea Number Two—We'll have the said feast in the swimming tank this very night!"

"The swimming tank!" cried Letty.

"Now, don't interrupt—that was just a pause for dramatic effect. Yes, we'll have it in the swimming tank! We'll slip down to the dressing-room, get on our suits, have our dip, and then we'll have some of the most gorgeous eats—see what a reckless mood I'm in—even using the word I foreswore!—and then we'll come back to our downy couches. Now, wait a minute—we heard

about another chap called Rousseau to-day. My word! Education is a great thing! He wasn't so keen on reason as on being natural and communing with nature, and the simple life for all. Well, we'll begin communing with nature by our dip in the crystal waters of the tank. Well, what do you say, now you get the chance?"

"That you talk just as much nonsense as ever, Babs, when you get wound up. It's all very well to talk about slipping down to the tank, and having a dip and eats and then slipping back again. There'd be a good many slips in between with teachers mixed up in them. In the first place, how'd you get into the tank; the door's locked at night, you goose!"

"Poor, dear, little innocent Gladys! Bribery and corruption are not entirely confined to the great political parties. Why, I'll get after Hoyles. He'll do anything for me after I gave him those jig-saw puzzles for his crippled nephew. Leave Hoyles and the door to me, only I fervently hope that cranky old engineer, Jarvis, isn't around. But the thing that is really worrying me is how are we going to get the eats? Anyone going out to-day?"

"I'm going to the dentist. Rose is chaperoning me," said Gladys, now as keen as Babs, since it all seemed possible.

"Beautiful! Just a little more bribery and cor-

ruption. Get Rose to wait while you slip into Preston's and order some chicken sandwiches. charlotte russe, maple ice, and lemonade. Yum, doesn't it sound good!"

"Oh yes, Babs, but how can we get them? Gladys can't bring them home," said Constance.

"Once more all is simple. Send them to Hoyles—'Mr. James Hoyles.' They'll think he's celebrating the anniversary of his deceased wife's death or something like that. Besides, Rose will probably answer the door, and she can keep them out of Miss Jones' way. By the way, I'll have to get my share on tick. I have only enough for collection on Sunday—I draw the line at buttons—they're too useful anyway. My wretched allowance doesn't come till next week."

"I'll lend you some money. I'm quite flush just now," said Gladys. "Well, who'll be coming to the feast?"

"Only those who are invited, we trust! Our five selves, Georgie of course, and Frances—Ellen is out with her aunt over night, so that's all right. I'd like to ask Madeleine, but you can't ask a girl without her roommate. It's been done, I know, but I think it's a mean trick. It's too bad not to have Madeleine, but Phyllis would spoil all. You see, we'd have to be in the dark most of the time, and when people—even girls—can't see her, it's just so much waste time for Phyllis!"

"Meow, meow, pussycat," called Mabel, as the girls all laughed at Babs' thrust.

"There's the bell. I've got to go and get ready. Come along, Babs, and tell me how much to get, and then you go and tackle Hoyles. Con, be an angel and lend me a pair of gloves. Mine are full of holes.

"Gee, it will be great sport if only it comes off," said Mabel excitedly after the others had gone.

"Oh dear, it would be awful to be caught, but it will be heaps of fun," agreed Letty, for even her gentle soul was pining for a lark.

* * * *

That evening, both corridors were serenity itself. Even Miss Hargraft, so little given to praise, was forced to admit that "really, the girls are behaving like lambs." About eleven-thirty, when the whole building was still, faint sounds could have been heard coming from the rooms of some of the lambs. Babs' last instructions, given as they filled their pitchers from the filter, had been—

"Everything's all right. Be sure and stop the creaking of your door with soap, or something, so that you can shut it after you. Then, when you hear the hall clock strike twelve, slide out and down to the domestic science room and wait there till we all come. Don't breathe a word, and for Mercy's sake, don't step on a creaky board outside Prendy's room. Au reservoir!"

In obedience to instructions, Mabel and Letty, all ready for their descent to the depths below, were about to minister to the squeaking of their door—which was very loud, and which had been found to be a serious drawback to their room. But, to their disgust, no soap could be found, and it was far too risky to try and get some from another room.

"Haven't we anything that will do?" asked Mabel, almost in despair, groping among the things on her washstand. "If we open and shut that door, we'll be found out sure, for it makes a worse row than ever. It's too mean about the soap. Mine was all used up, and I lent yours to Marie. I might have known she wouldn't return it. There's no use looking there, Letty. Shoe polish would make an awful mess. Here's something of yours. Look, it's some kind of medicine," and both girls blinked as Mabel switched on the light for a moment, that Letty might see the little bottle in her hand.

"That—oh, that's Jamaica Ginger. It's too thin to be much good, but I reckon we can try it."

"Come on and help. We'll use it to stop the groans of the suffering door," and Mabel, with giggles from herself and Letty, proceeded to pour the contents of the bottle on the hinges of the door, thereby adding External Application to the uses of that excellent but old-fashioned remedy.

It evidently gave the promised prompt relief, as no sound was heard when the door opened.

A little later, an occasional unsuspicious creak of the stairs was the only sign that seven of the lambs were not lost in Dreamland. It did not take long to reach the appointed place, which seemed "spooky" enough in the dark, with its passages leading off to furnace-rooms and store-rooms.

Further whispered instructions were given by Babs, the ring-leader—"The last one in must close the dressing-room door, and try and see as much as you can while the light is switched on, for we'll have to be in the dark. Don't be afraid, anybody, for we all know it so well. Oh, be sure and put the crumbs and papers in the boxes, so Hoyles can get them first thing in the morning. Everybody ready? Lead on, Macduff!" to Gladys, whom they began to follow on tip-toe down the long gallery leading to the swimming-tank. They had to pass a door which opened on to the side lane, and which was usually left unlocked till after ten, so that the maids could come in. When they came to this, even the stout hearts of Babs, Gladys and Georgie quailed a little, while the others heartily wished that they had been content with the former peaceful life, and had remained in their secure beds. To reassure them, and also herself, Babs tried the door as she passed, and found it locked, to

their relief. Their spirits rose once more, and they were really beginning to enjoy their lark, especially when Babs found the door of the dressing-room unlocked and with the key in it. Hoyles, the victim of bribery and corruption, had kept his part of the bargain.

When they had all got safely into the warm dressing-room, Babs repeated her injunctions—"Now, girls, take a good look and see where everything is, for I don't dare leave the light on. Prendy might be looking at the effect of the moonlight on the tank, like Miss Snelgrove, the night of our famous snow-ball fight!" She switched on the light. The girls obeyed and took a good look. Then seven hearts stopped beating for an instant. What a sight met their gaze! Instead of a neat pile of boxes with the "eats" and a row of bathing suits on the line, the coveted boxes were open and empty, and the ice cream can and lemonade jar were lying woefully empty on their sides, and horror of horrors! on a pile of bathing-suits was lying a man—no, a boy—sound asleep. He was very thin and dishevelled-looking, dressed in shirt and trousers and no coat. As he lay with mouth wide-open, he stirred and muttered, then, during the instant the terrified girls stood transfixed he opened his wild eyes, and in a thin, queer voice, moaned—

"Go 'way; leave me alone, leave me alone!"

"We'll just do that," said Babs, suddenly roused to life by his voice, and displaying her genius for leadership. She switched off the light, literally shoved the speechless and trembling girls into the gallery, and locked the dressing-room door. So far, so good! What was to be done next?

"Girls, think and think quick! We can't leave that man there, even if we are caught, but if we can get him out without that, so much the better. Now, who's that starting to whimper? Frances, don't be a baby. He's locked in there. Goodness! I was scared to bits at first mysef, but he looked scareder still. I wonder what's the matter with him. He didn't seem like a real—Glad! Whatever is the matter with you, jumping like that. I thought you had more nerve."

"Babs, listen, listen! I know he's an escaped lunatic!"

"Rubbish, Gladys, you're delirious! Escaped nothing! If he is, why didn't you try the power of the human eye on him, they—"

"Oh, Babs, do listen! I'm right. Rose told me that the dentist's assistant was telling her about an inmate of the asylum escaping this afternoon, and that they couldn't find him. You know the Asylum just over there—they're not dangerous —just weak in the upper storey."

"Why, Glad! Herlock Sholmes come to life! I'll bet that's who it is. Isn't it exciting? Well,

we'll try and restore him, but we'll also try and do it anonymously for our own sakes. Listen. I have it. You people wait in the domestic science room, and Glad, you come with me and interview Hoyles!"

"Oh, no, Babs, let's all stay together!" said Mabel, shivering with cold and fright and excitement.

"Why, there's nothing to be afraid of. Well, Glad you stay, and Georgie you come with me. Glad will keep her precious lunatic from hurting you. Come on, Georgie!"

Hoyles was dreaming uneasily of the evil ways he had been led into by golden hair, blue eyes and a merry smile, with a kind heart into the bargain, when he was suddenly aroused to the reality that the voice of the owner of these attributes was pleading through his key-hole.

"Hoyles, Hoyles, wake up! Dear, kind, good Hoyles, do wake up, or we'll all be killed. Are you there Hoyles? Oh, Georgie! You don't suppose it's that cranky old Jarvis' room. No, I'm sure it's Hoyles' room! Hoyles! Oh, good! Here he is coming now. Hurry, please! We've got a lunatic locked up in the dressing-room, and if you don't come quick, we'll all be killed—not by the lunatic, but Miss Clevelands! Oh, good for you, Hoyles. Now listen!"

A very much awry Hoyles, wrapped in an over-

coat, had opened the door, and was standing with an electric flash turned on the wide-eyed, kimono-clad girls. At their entreaty he turned off the flash and followed them to the gallery. There they told their tale to the conscience-stricken janitor. He had purposely left the dressing-room door unlocked all evening, for fear he should forget to unlock it later and the girls should be disappointed. He wanted to tell Miss Clevelands at once, and call the police, but Babs begged him to let them get safely upstairs first, for the man was safely locked in, and matters would be made far worse for him if they were discovered.

He finally agreed to do this—and the girls fled, this time almost reckless of creaky stairs and doors. They lost no time in jumping into bed, where none but Georgie slept a wink all night. Who could sleep when, shortly after they had reached their rooms, stealthy sounds came through the windows, in the direction of the swimming tank! These were followed by a policeman's whistle. Then presently the sound of wheels was heard, stopping near the school.

"'The Black Maria,'" whispered Gladys, as she crouched, shivering, under the bedclothes. Then, as she listened, she could hear a thin, protesting voice saying, "Go 'way, leave me alone!"

They could not see what was happening, and, to tell the truth, they did not want to see. Each of

the would-be revellers decided that she had had enough excitement to last her through weeks of dull and prosaic goodness.

Downstairs, in the library, sat Miss Clevelands, Miss Prendergast, Miss Dewson, and the housekeeper, all a little pale and startled-looking still, from the effect of Hoyles' sudden announcement that he had a man locked in the swimming-tank. Miss Clevelands had summoned the police at once, and the lad was recognized as the missing asylum inmate and taken way, while the Principal and some of her staff watched at a respectful distance in the gallery, little dreaming of the group that had been standing there a few minutes before.

"I am so thankful that it did not happen while the children were around for they need never know a word about it. I shall keep it from the papers. But I am surprised at Hoyles, leaving that key in the door. He is usually so careful! But he seemed to feel so badly about it that I shall let it pass this time," said Miss Clevelands.

"Isn't it extraordinary that that poor wretch should have hidden here, of all places," added Miss Clevelands.

"He must have stolen those boxes from Preston's cake shop that were scattered all round the floor, for none came here to-day," said Miss Jones, decidedly, for she had not seen Hoyles'

name on the boxes, as he had removed them at once.

At this speech, a look as though she were struck with an idea had come into Miss Dewson's eyes, but it died down as she reflected that nothing but painful complications ever came from following up ideas of that kind. Soon, they all withdrew to retire to bed for the second time.

The next day, the guilty seven tried, in rather pale fashion, to look as though they had enjoyed the best sleep of their lives. When she had a chance to speak to the others alone, Babs said with an unusually grave face—

"You know poor old Hoyles is dreadfully upset. He says he wouldn't do it again for the world. He says it's a wonder he wasn't fired—and that's perfectly true. No more back-to-nature revels for us. It would have been awful if he had lost his place. We would never have forgiven ourselves. You know, I believe just plain ordinary garden thoughtlessness is behind most of the trouble in this world!" A somewhat amazing speech for the impulsive Babs.

CHAPTER XI.

Jill at Work and Play.

EVER since they first danced round the May-pole to usher in the month of May, a protesting world has felt that May, of all the months, should be kept as a universal holiday, instead of being one of the busiest months of the year. It is a very special month for out-of-doors, for people have recovered their freshness and energy after the wear and tear of the winter, and it is but a platitude to say that Nature is at her best—making urgent summons to all to leave their indoor tasks and come and make holiday with her, before the heat and dust have dimmed her beauty. True, the summons is heard by nearly all, but most urgently by the eager young, obliged, in the pursuit of knowledge to be derived from books, to stay cooped up in school, while outside the oriole flashes by, whistling clearly, as the deep, swaying cradle grows in size, and the flicker beats his loud tattoo and flutters his golden wings.

Longing eyes were cast through the class-room windows of Miss Clevelands' at the green of trees and grass, the pink and white of blossoms, and the cloud-flecked blue of sky, but stern duty bade the

eyes turn aside. For, as the school year draws to a close, many and varied are the duties that claim attention—rehearsals for closing plays, extra lessons, and the dreaded bogey of those last term days—final examinations. A studious atmosphere that was almost frenzied would prevail at intervals, in the effort to get a hurried grasp of a subject neglected till the eleventh hour. Poor Constance, preparing for her matriculation, would be reduced to a state bordering on panic as the result of some scathing comment from Miss Wallace regarding Constance's deficiencies in Mathematics. A wonderfully inspiring teacher Miss Wallace was to people like Gertrude and even, Babs, who showed an aptitude for her subjects, and who needed but a word to clear the difficulty, but for "helping lame dogs over stiles," when the dog was as lame as Constance and the stile as formidable as Algebra and Geometry can be, the brilliant scholarship of Miss Wallace was of no avail. Nor did sarcasm or ridicule ever help, for Constance's apparently stupid weakness had always been the subject of much scorn and ridicule —though none of the scornful had even thought to substitute really sympathetic patience and the idea that the simple point in question might possibly present difficulties to another. So, as the examinations loomed nearer, the old, old story was repeated. Constance, in spite of her painstaking

efforts, became more and more muddled, while Miss Wallace, in despair, kept repeating the old formulas which the girl had never understood.

One night, a number of the senior girls were working in their study after ten o'clock, as they had got "late leave". Babs' golden head was almost hidden by the towel pinned around it. She had heard about a wet towel being a wonderful aid to concentrated thinking, so, with the prospect of a difficult examination in European History facing her for the next day, she had resorted to it in order to keep clearly before her the contemporaneous events of nearly all the countries of Europe. But, to her disgust, instead of being able to concentrate her thoughts, she found herself obliged to think of many things at once—keeping stray drops from falling on her book, which was borrowed from the Library, and from trickling down her neck and ears, and the pin which fastened the towel from pulling on single hairs. This went on for nearly an hour, and her ideas of the European situation at the beginning of the sixteenth century were more hazy than when she began to study. Finally, when the cloth slipped down to her nose, the infuriated Babs hurled her faithless aid to concentration at the kalsomined wall, where a large wet mark, succeeded later by a stain, appeared to remind her of her lack of self-control.

The other girls had looked up, startled.

"Hey, Babs, what do you think you're celebrating? Rehearsing Luther getting after the devil with his ink-pot?" asked Gladys, also deep in European history.

"Don't any of you people get the idea that having a whole lot of wet dry goods pinned round your head is any help to study. It isn't a bit. You can take this child's word for it. Believe I'll go to bed now, and get up early. I'm so muddled now, I've got Luther and the Pope all mixed up," said Babs, as she picked up the despised towel.

As she came back to get her books, she noticed the look of despair on Constance's face. So kind-hearted Babs sat down beside her and asked the trouble, as she had many times before. This time itwasquite a simple problem in Algebra, and Babs patiently explained till, struck by one of Constance's questions, she had a sudden light.

"Why, Con, I don't believe you understand the ordinary rule of subtraction—changing the signs and adding?"

"No, I don't Babs. I never have, and it comes in so often."

"Well, I ought to be able to show you that. It's so easy when you get it. It's like this—" and very patiently, very simply Babs explained it from the first, step by step, till at last poor Constance "got" it.

"Babs, you're a darling. Why, you'd make a wonderful teacher. It's easy when you know how, all right—but you can't know how, if you don't get it straight from the first. That's all clear now, but I suppose something else will come to take its place. Anyway, I am going to bed for once understanding something in Algebra! Come on, Babs, ministering angel to the mathematically feeble-minded!"

The next night in Gladys' room, the grateful Constance had been telling the usual group about the help Babs had given her.

"Well, of course," said Babs, simpering in an affected manner, "I hadn't thought of intruding myself upon the teaching profession, but, Connie, dear, if you really think it a shame to hide my marvellous teaching light under a bushel, I might think the matter over!"

"Just imagine Babs with the same expression as Prendy. I'd give you five years to get it to perfection!"

"Glad, behave yourself, and don't be so flippant when I am being so serious about my career. By the way, speaking of careers, what are you good people going to do when you go out into the great world?"

The girls settled down for one of the cosy talks that had become the rule almost every night before bed-time, and that they had grown to love.

"I'm going to be a doctor," said Constance, decidedly.

"Just like that—she says it," said Gladys. "But Con, you know I've told you heaps of times that no one would ever take that turned-up nose seriously.

"Humph, it would be pretty serious for Con if anyone did take it—Ha! Ha! Joke!" (as the girls groaned). "Do you know, Connie, I have often wondered why you always look so solemn when you're not smiling. You must be cultivating professional gravity of manner, but why on earth do you want to be a doctor?"

"I've always wanted to, Babs. Father is one, and ever since I was a little tot, I've watched him every chance I could get—when he'd get his bag ready, and all that. I don't know—I think I'll do it yet—in spite of Glad's discouraging remarks. I'd have given up mathematics long ago if I didn't need my matric. to go into medicine."

"Ugh! Just imagine cutting people up, and the awful responsibility of giving people poison instead of medicine," said Gladys.

"Why, that's what I want to do!" said Mabel, eagerly. "Oh, no, you sillies," as the girls burst out laughing. "I don't mean poison people, but what Glad said made me think of my ambition to be a nurse. Uncle Jack says I make a fine one. I

looked after him last year, when he broke his ankle and was laid up at the ranch."

"Just the same, Mabs, it would be an interesting train of thought to a psychology student—Poison—suggesting a nurse's career! I hope it's not a bad omen for your future patients. Letty, how about you?"

"Oh, Babs, I don't seem to have any definite career. But my ambition has always been to have a big, big garden full of lovely flowers that I could look after myself—with heaps and heaps of roses. We have such wonderful ones down home. Then I'd tote them round to the hospitals and to the poor folks round who loved them, and who didn't have any. Aunt Lucy and I do some of that now—but I want to have so many I wouldn't know what to do with them. I love them so and I have missed them such a lot. The poor little hyacinth that I got from Cousin Mary at Easter is most gone now."

"Why, you poor little flower-girl, if I had known I would have kept you in American Beauties all year! Now, don't be hurt, Letty, I think your idea is lovely. It's just like you, somehow. You suggest rose-gardens, and lavender, and nice old furniture with chintzy things around, even in a middy, but you don't, Glad. What are you going to do besides turning the city of Winnipeg topsy-turvy?"

"What I'm going to do to Winnipeg is a mere circumstance compared to what's going to happen to Fredericton when you blow in! As for my career, Mother says I'm to be home for a year at least—I've been away so much. I may go to the University after that, but between my piano, housekeeping, and running the car, and 'coming out', I won't have much time for a career. But, as usual, Babs, you have been pumping the rest of us, and not giving yourself away. What is the career to be pursued by Miss Barbara Fortescue?"

"Well, didn't you hear Con suggest that I should be a teacher, and don't I always take people's advice?"

"Come on now, Babs, you're fencing!"

"You people always laugh at me and my schemes so that I am almost afraid to tell you," and Babs really did look shy and somewhat embarrassed, as was often the case, when she was revealing the deeper side of her merry, apparently frivolous nature. "You see, I start so many things and then they all peter out. Why, I couldn't begin to tell you the number of times I've made resolutions to do wonderful things—and, well—nothing much seems to come of it—"

"Oh yes, it does, Babs. You don't always know. Did you ever read Browning's 'Abt Vogler' where it says: 'On the earth, the broken

arcs; in the heaven the perfect round'? We had it in class the other day. That's like you, Babs, with all your resolutions to do big things—"

"That's very nice of you, Con, but poor old Saint Peter, or whoever has the job, will be kept pretty busy patching up my broken arcs before he can find any kind of a perfect round."

"Tell us, Babs, what it is you want to do, and are so afraid about?" asked Mabel.

"Well, it's—Social Service."

"Social Service?" said Constance in surprise.

"Social Service?" repeated Gladys. "Oh, you mean slumming! Oh, Babs, you do look like slumming! What would you wear—your black velvet and black fox furs?"

"Gladys, I think you are horrid. I knew I'd be sorry I said anything about it. I always am. They all tease me at home, too, but I'm going to show them next fall. Slumming! No, indeed. If I were poor, and any slumming person came to see me, they'd get turned out pretty quick. No, nothing like that for me. I mean to take a course in New York, or somewhere, and learn how to help. I just love studying people and seeing what you can do for them. Mother nearly went crazy when we were staying in Montreal. I used to get one of my friends to take me down to her settlement house, and sometimes we'd make trips down to the colonist cars to see if we could help any one;

but then—Oh, I'll be able to tell you all about it later."

"Well, Babsie, we could give you a few references round here if you need any."

"Thanks, Letty, but what an idea! I never do anything for anybody! Just ask Miss Clevelands!" then, as the girls seemed about to protest, "Mercy! aren't we getting serious and sentimental! We should leave all that for the last day! Here's Georgie—with some candy, bless her heart! Georgie, tell us what you'd like to be most of all!"

"Me, oh I want to be a boy more than anything else, but I guess there's no use wanting!"

"Well, I think you're right there, Georgina! Oh dear, just think—this time next month—where shall we be? This little crowd will be all broken up then, and—right this very minute"—as the 'room-bell' rang. "Come along and get our beauty sleep to be ready to tackle the sporting govs to-morrow! Good-night, Glad and Con!"

A cricket match between the girls and teachers had been arranged for the following day. It gave promise of great entertainment, for it was a very "scratch" team that the staff had organized. They had had one practice well out of sight of the girls, but that had not helped much, as only four of them had ever played before. The others knew nothing about the game, and had never held a bat

in their hands before. Miss Dewson and Miss Spencer positively envied the girls the fun they were going to have. Fortunately, the faculty went in "to bat" first, for it is doubtful if they could have put the girls "out" within the time, so feeble was the general skill in catching and bowling.

Miss Hargraft and Miss Prendergast went "in" first. The former was an excellent player, but Miss Prendergast would have been caught "out" after her first successful strike, had Ellen, who was "square-leg" not got so excited and let the ball dribble through her fingers. She was taking the place of Frances, who, because of a sprained ankle, was an interested and impatient spectator from a bench nearby. However, it was not long before Miss Prendergast was caught "out" by Mabel. Her place was taken by Miss Spencer, and the score of the faculty began to mount rapidly as the two teachers made runs at every chance. Miss Hargraft became too reckless, and was "stumped out" by Gladys just as she reached the line. A secret titter went round as Miss Hargraft's place was taken by Miss Clevelands. It was Georgie's turn to bowl, but she became so confused at the prospect of bowling to Miss Clevelands, holding the bat wrong, but looking most grimly prepared to do her best, that her balls went "wide" for the whole "over", and once more the staff gained points rapidly. Babs, from

the other end, decided that, for the honour of the team, there must be a change, and she bowled her hardest and straightest to Miss Spencer. What looked to be a perfectly safe ball for a run was stopped by Gladys. The two "grown-ups" had begun their run, but when Miss Spencer saw Gladys throw the ball to Babs, she called Miss Clevelands to go back. The latter obeyed, ran her fastest, but too late! There was Babs with the ball touching the wickets, as, half-triumphant, half-apologetic, she "stumped" her Principal "out".

Miss Snelgrove took the bat next, in a very nervous state. When the ball bowled by Gladys came straight for her, she dropped her bat in a panic, stepped in front of the wicket, and caught the ball neatly, but contrary to rule, as it struck her on the knee. "L.B.W." came from Miss Wallace, acting as umpire. As she was completely mystified as to what that meant, Miss Snelgrove was told to surrender the bat to Miss Dewson, a very good player. The faculty again scored, with the skilful batting and running. But, becoming reckless, they tried to steal a run on a ball that missed Miss Dewson's bat. It was a risk, as Georgie pounced on the ball and threw it to Babs at wickets.

"Go it, Dewsy, go it! You'll get there!" shouted Frances from the spectators' bench, entirely

unconscious of her form of address, as faculty and girls turned to look in startled surprise. But Frances' cheering was of no avail, for Babs was at the wickets before Miss Dewson got her bat over the line. And, strange to say, the look on Babs' face was wholly apologetic at this moment. Frances hobbled over to where Miss Dewson was recovering her breath and receiving condolences.

"Oh, Miss Dewson, it was hard luck! You're a dandy player! That last ball you hit was a beauty! What are you girls laughing at? What's the joke, Miss Dewson?"

"Oh, Frances! I'm surprised. Didn't you know what you called Miss Dewson? Everybody nearly had a fit!" said Gertrude in a half-whisper. Frances' face went suddenly scarlet and she turned to Miss Dewson again. "Oh say, Miss Dewson! I'm awfully sorry—I didn't mean it—I was so excited—I didn't know—"

"Didn't know what, Frances?" asked the puzzled Miss Dewson.

"I didn't know I called you—why, Dewsy—oh, I'm awfully sorry!"

"I didn't hear you, Frances, and I know you wouldn't have said it if you had thought, so we'll forget all about it," said Miss Dewson, loud enough for Miss Cevelands and the others to hear, for she pitied poor Frances' flushed face and shamed, unhappy look.

It was not long after this that the faculty were put "out" with a score of twenty-nine. The girls went "in" and were still "in" and still unconquered with a score of seventy-three, when the time was declared to be up. The faculty cheered the victors in a surprisingly lusty way. Pictures taken of that memorable game were much in demand for "Memory Books".

The eagerly-anticipated twenty-fourth of May was a dismal failure as far as weather was concerned, for it rained all day. The picnic that had been promised the large number of girls who were not invited out was postponed—indefinitely, it appeared, for Saturdays seemed all taken up, and the time before study on ordinary days was not long enough. Some of the seniors were beginning to feel a little the strain of rehearsals for the English and French plays, the "gym" closing, and the "cramming" of neglected subjects, which had become a serious matter.

On Thursday afternoon, just after lunch, a number of the girls were in the "Girls' Own", wishing they could go outdoors and stay. To be sure, it was their recreation time then, and they were at liberty to go out, but they felt that that was not enough on that lovely day. Presently they were roused from their somewhat discontented grumbling on seeing Babs literally stagger into the room with a drawn expression on her face

and a wild look in her eye. Groaning, she threw herself down on one of the couches—murmuring something about a shock—"I know I'll never get over it—I know I won't" and her eyes continued to stare so wildly that Letty's anxious expression became very alarmed, and she crouched beside her beloved Babs.

"Babsie, honey, what is it? Tell me what dreadful thing has happened;" and her voice began to quiver.

At this moment in came Gladys, evidently in much the same state of mind and body as Babs. With a sudden convulsion at the sight of Babs lying there with Letty kneeling beside her, Gladys threw herself face downward on the other couch, while the girls, now really alarmed, flocked over to her. Georgie remained where she was, and seemed to be lost in thought as she watched her apparently suffering roommate writhing and moaning on the couch. When Babs, with a deep groan, said—

"Oh, my heart has been affected. I'll never get over it!" and put her hand to her right side. Georgie pounced on her.

"Babs Fortescue, you wretch, I knew you were bluffing! and so is Glad——scaring the wits out of people—not me——but look at Letty. She was nearly crying." As Babs burst out laughing—

joined by Gladys—Georgie shook her till she stood up.

"Georgie, you old Pinkerton detective, don't shake me to pieces. There's no use putting anything over you. But you'll have to admit it was a shock. Girls! Listen! We are going to study for an hour right away, and then we are going on the loveliest picnic up North—for the rest of the afternoon and evening. Isn't it glorious? I nearly collapsed when Miss Clevelands told me, and I feel wobbly still."

"Then, in that case, Barbara, perhaps you had better stay home," said Miss Clevelands from the door, looking very grave, though her eyes had a twinkle in them, and her mouth twitched as she took in the scene before her. Babs seemed to recover quickly after this second shock, and soon became her usual self.

After the hour of study, the girls, in middies, dark skirts and sweater coats, were all ready in the hall—each anxious to carry a kettle or one of the baskets which had been prepared in a very short time, as Miss Cevelands had only yielded to the pleadings of her mother and some of the staff as they came up from lunch shortly before she told Babs and Gladys that the promised picnic was about to take place.

It did not seem long before they had left the car on Yonge Street, several miles north of the city,

and, guided by Miss Mockridge and Miss Hargraft, were following a road which ran east and then wound into a hollow. Here their guides, who had tramped through this part many times, assured them they would find an ideal picnic-ground. It was, indeed, an ideal spot—so fresh and green, with shady trees drooping over a velvety stretch of grass which sloped down to a little stream fed things on her washstand. 'If we open and shut crystal.

Baskets were soon unpacked, and the table cloth was spread on the ground and anchored down with stones. Some of the girls helped in this, while Miss Hargraft and Miss Dewson looked after the building of the fire, sending a detachment of energetic girls to gather firewood, of which there seemed to be plenty in this out-of-the way place. The girls had thought that Miss Clevelands had intended coming, but, it must be confessed, they felt rather relieved that she had evidently changed her mind. They were free to wander where they chose on the understanding that they would not go too far, and that they would return when Miss Mockridge blew her whistle so familiar to them in their games.

Some of the girls who were not staying to help in the preparations for tea, started off to gather the wild flowers that grew all around in great variety and abundance, while a few of the Juniors

wandered about with Miss Mockridge, eagerly looking for the various kinds of birds that were warbling so sweetly in the trees and bushes. Great was the squealing and giggling when Frances found a spotted salamander, and introduced it, all wet and wriggling, to a group of girls peacefully sitting on the bank sorting their flowers. After Frances was satisfied that Mr. Salamander had created enough disturbance, especially when he slipped out of Frances' hands and started to run over the table-cloth, he was given a temporary home in a biscuit tin, whose former contents had been put on an extra plate. The cover had been perforated for the benefit of the contents—to be exhibited in Nature Study classes next day.

In the meantime, Gertrude and Phyllis had decided to wander farther along the winding road, which seemed quite good, though evidently little used. They had not cared to join in anything so strenuous or juvenile as looking for wild flowers or birds. They sauntered along for a while, lost in deep converse, trying to decide how Phyllis could best communicate with Howard Harper, a most promising specimen of the Type Two Species I, of the "Four Ages of Man," classified by Letty and Mabel. He occupied a prominent place in Phyllis' thoughts just then, and she was most anxious to let him know that she could be reached at her aunt's on Saturday, but ways and

means of letting him know seemed difficult to arrive at. They had walked quite a distance, and, in order to come to a decision more comfortably, they sat down on a log under an apple tree hanging over the "snake-fence" which bordered a rather tumble-down-looking farm nearby. A few straggly-looking chickens strutting through the open gate near them got no attention from the two conspirators, and neither was any notice taken of five or six little pigs that came through the opening and, with friendly, baby grunts, approached the two girls.

Now, others might have found them "cute"—those small piglets—black, or dirty-pink, or dirty-white in colour, with their kinky tails and inquisitive noses, but not Gertrude and Phyllis. They were deep in lamentations about Miss Spencer's meanness in making Phyllis walk next her, and so miss even smiling at Howard waiting close by as they came out of church last Sunday. All at once, their absorption in their troubles was disturbed by an aroma far from pleasing to their fastidious noses. At first they were rather puzzled as to the source of this until they saw the pigs. Then Phyllis struck sharply at one of these with the branch of apple-blossom in her hand, probably regarding the wee pig she hit as a substitute for Miss Spencer and her meanness. Such

a sqealing and confusion among the little family of pigs!

The sound of distress reached the sympathetic mother heart of Mrs. Pig, rooting in the field near by. The girls were suddenly startled to hear a loud snort of rage behind them, as Mother Pig made for the blue and white middies on the log, whose owners had dared to hurt one of her precious piglings. With a scream, the superior Gertrude and the languid Phyllis forgot the difficulties in the Howard affair, and fled as for their lives, stumbling and tripping in the high-heeled pumps they had worn in spite of Miss Mockridge's advice. Mother Pig was close behind, angrier now than ever at having to run so hard before she wreaked her vengeance. With open mouths and staring eyes, the two girls dashed on—though nearly dropping from exhaustion as they neared the picnic-ground. To make matters worse, Gertrude had lost one of her pumps, and was forced to limp as she ran, cutting her foot on the sharp stones in the road.

Their screams had brought the others running to meet them, armed with sticks and saucepans. At the sight of more creatures of the same kind, Mrs. Pig was making a still more furious onslaught on her victims, when around the bend in the road, with the loud blast of a horn, came a man on a motor cycle—a monster unknown to her on that

"With open mouths and staring eyes, the two girls dashed on."

peaceful road. It was coming straight towards her with terrific speed, urged on by the creatures with the sticks and saucepans. Forgetful of her desire for vengeance on the fugitives, now lying on the grass by the road with others bending over them, Mrs. Pig fled to her home and children and never stopped till she reached the barnyard. Meanwhile the rescuing Don Quixote sped on, not to look for more tourneys with large irate pigs, but to see what were the chances of using the land through that part for future city lots, for, alas! for the bygone days of chivalry and romance, the knight of the motor cycle was an enterprising agent of a down-town real estate firm.

It was some time before the exhausted and badly-frightened Gertrude and Phyllis were themselves again. Hairpins were loaned; Gertrude's foot was bathed and bound up with a handkerchief, and her missing pump brought back by Babs and Georgie, who had bravely ventured down the road in search of it. Miss Hargraft was obliged to get a fresh supply of firewood and water, for in the excitement caused by the screams of the fugitives, the kettle of water was upset over the roaring fire, and was later seized as a weapon. With much smarting of eyes and poking of sticks, the fire had been coaxed to burn, and the kettle was just at the boiling point when around the bend in the road came another vehicle, much

more peaceful-looking than the motor cycle—a governess' cart, drawn by a sturdy little pony, soon the pet of all the girls, for in the cart were Miss Clevelands and her mother. The joy of seeing the latter took away the feeling of restraint usually brought by the former, especially as Miss Clevelands was holding with great care a large flat box that had most interesting-looking red spots coming through.

After the two new arrivals had heard all about the thrilling adventure with the pig, and Mrs. Clevelands had been escorted to a place of honour under an old willow tree, whose gnarled roots formed a wonderfully comfortable seat when cushioned with rugs, the preparations for tea were rapidly completed. Sandwiches of various kinds, "devilled" eggs, olives, tarts and other picnic delicacies, were spread out on the cloth in the middle of which was a fragrant centrepiece of ferns, trilliums, yellow and blue violets, and columbine. After the first course had been disposed of by the hungry group squatting round the cloth, the cover was taken off Miss Clevelands' treasure, and a tempting-looking strawberry short-cake was disclosed to view, while from the cart a large bottle of whipped cream was produced from a pail containing ice. It transpired that the cart and the short-cake had come from the country home of Mrs. Clevelands' son, which

was near by, and to which she had gone in advance.

"Isn't it scrumptious?" said Georgie, voicing the sentiments of all in regard to the short-cake with its mounds of cream.

After tea, the girls hunted more wild flowers for a while, then sat around the fire, while Letty told fortunes and Miss Mockridge and Miss Hargraft revealed undreamed-of talent for story-telling. Miss Clevelands and her mother left earlier in the pony-cart, taking Gertrude with them, as her foot was still too lame for the long walk.

Then the baskets were packed with the picnic things, the rubbish burned and the fire extinguished. Dusk was just falling, making the light of the young moon seem brighter, as the happy group followed their two guides back along the road to the car .

"Humph," said Babs, just before she and Georgie fell asleep that night, "I was so tired of everything this morning I was glad we had only three weeks more of school, but we had such fun to-day that I hate to think of going, don't you?"

"Um-um," agreed Georgie, almost asleep, "and wasn't that the most scrumptious short-cake?"

CHAPTER XII.

Closing Days.

THE first two weeks of June seemed to be one round of closing ceremonies, with final examinations thrown in as a sort of leaven. The first event of real importance was the "gym closing", when the girls, with great skill and grace, went through the mazes of Swedish drills and Folk dances of various kinds. The only mishap occurred when Frances varied one of the figures in the drill by losing her balance and falling flat on her face, much to the subdued amusement of guests and girls, and to the annoyance of Miss Barker, the physical culture teacher.

Then came the English play, which this year was Tennyson's "Princess", under the management of Miss Spencer. Babs was the dignified and convincing Princess, while the rôle of the prince was played by Gladys, rather inclined to fits of giggles at dramatic moments. The whole performance won great approval, and a pretty sight it was to see the graceful figures of the girls in their classic garb moving in front of the trees in the little grove between the tennis lawns, for that had been chosen as the picturesque background.

The day was ideal, so the plan to have the play out of doors was a great success.

On the evening of the same day, the French play took place. For weeks "Mamselle" had been becoming more and more tragic in appearance and manner, and her English more and more broken, as she wrestled with Georgie, Mabel and Gladys and their ideas of the proper pronunciation of the French tongue—ideas they seemed unable to give up in spite of their own efforts—in their various parts in the scenes from "Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon". Babs, Phyllis, and Letty had accents that seemed almost perfect in the ears of poor "Mamselle", as she compared them with the others.

"It's a funny thing," said Gladys on her way to study after one of the last rehearsals, which had almost reduced their French governess to tears of despair, "but we think Mamselle's English all the prettier when it is broken and accented in the wrong place, so I don't see why she doesn't like my French—for it's broken enough and it surely is accented in the wrong place. But somehow I gather that she doesn't like mine. Just the same, I don't see why broken French should make you feel as though you were murdering any French person who happened to be round, any more than broken English."

"But Glad, dear, excuse me for being so flat-

tering, but your broken French doesn't even sound like a forty-second cousin to French. It sounds more like Chinese, and Georgie sounds like some dull, slow-tongued Finn!"

"Thanks, Babs," said Georgie, coming up behind, "that same Finn will smite you pretty quick when you get upstairs!"

"I'll be with you, Georgie, to lend a hand in teaching this person to be more respectful to the Chinese and Finns! I suppose you've become so very French that you'll be having frogs' legs and nice, gooey snails for breakfast, instead of bacon and marmalade! Trays bienne! Ah revoar! Very well, we'll see you later! I'll translate, just in case you don't understand my Chinese!" said Gladys in threatening tones, as the bell for study rang.

However, the French play proved a great success, as the sprightly acting of the girls atoned for occasional lapses into most un-French sounds and inflections. Mademoiselle Lenoir's tragic expression gradually disappeared as the play neared its close, and as the audience, a good many of whom did not understand French, good or bad, seemed to appreciate the efforts of the girls. When it was all over, she rushed behind the scenes and embraced the actresses in true French fashion.

"Gee," said Georgie afterwards, having ex-

perienced the double French kiss for the first time, "if a French girl wanted to send love and kisses in a letter, she'd have to make twice as many crosses!"

After each of these closing functions, Miss Clevelands held a reception and the girls acted as assistants, looking very charming in their light summer dresses or simple evening frocks as they attended to the needs of the guests. Many of the latter were parents and relatives of the pupils, friends who had entertained them on Saturdays and week-ends, and, joy of joys to some! specially-invited youths—"boy friends" of some of the girls.

"Gracious!" said Babs, after one of these receptions, "I have been putting my best foot forward so much that it will get all worn out and I'll have nothing left but my other one."

"Not like that with me," said Gladys. "My other one gets a jolly sight more use in the morning at those exams. I get so muddled. So it's appearing about as much as my best one!"

"Yes, isn't it awful?" said Constance, "the way you have to sit down and write all you know about German for an hour, then sit in another place and write all you know about Latin. Just as if you could press a button for the ideas and they'd come!"

"Oh do they?" said Glad. "Well. it's easy

enough for this child to write all she knows about either of those subjects, but it doesn't take any hour, and what's more, all I know doesn't seem to suit Miss Snelgrove or Miss Hargraft, judging from the rowing I got after they had glanced through my papers!"

"Cheer up!" said Georgie. "Exams will all be over to-morrow, and then closing, and then home —Hooray!"

This idea seemed most cheering at first, until it occurred to them what Georgie's words would really mean—the breaking up of their happy life together at school, for Gladys, Babs, and Constance were not returning in the fall, and Letty was hopeful but not at all sure that she might come back. Frances, Georgie and Mabel expected to be back, but they fully realized how much they would miss the others, even though new friendships would, of course, be formed. The little group was together whenever they were free for a moment from packing or other duties, so that they might lose none of the precious time that was left. There was a possible reunion for some before long, as Gladys was going to stay with Mabel part of the summer, and Babs had half-promised to visit Gladys during the winter—Winnipeg being greatly in need of "social service workers," according to a sudden idea of Gladys. Letty and Mabel were

almost inconsolable because their homes were so far away that there was little hope of visiting, though warm invitations had been interchanged between each home. For the picture given in letters written home by each girl had shown that she had formed a lasting friendship. Mabel's sweet unspoiled nature, so frank and merry, had made her a most congenial comrade to the gentle Letty, who at first, because of her companionship with those older than herself, had seemed so old and grave beyond her years. In this happy circle of friends, however, she had begun to show a quiet love of fun and frolic, and her winsome face soon lost its former sedate and grave expression. Her lovable, unselfish nature had proved a potent influence with all the girls.

The final event, the presentation of the prizes, came at last. Pupils in frocks of dainty white lined the seats near the front, and with their forms, or in a row behind, sat the members of the staff—with faces somewhat tired above the armfuls of flowers that many held, for long vigils had of late been spent over examinations and reports. On the platform with Miss Clevelands was the usual group of grave and reverend gentlemen, some belying these customary attributes and appearing genial and benevolent from sheer kindness of heart, while others felt constrained to relax their habitual dignity and severity of expres-

sion, as they viewed the rows of "happy girlish" faces, so frequently referred to by the worthy representatives of the Church, the Law, and Education.

Prizes for every branch and department were awarded to the deserving. Sometimes a girl won honours for scholarship alone, and sometimes for athletics alone, as, for instance, Georgie, whose graces of heart and body excelled those of her good but far from brilliant mind; but there were those who excelled both in scholarship and athletics, in work and play—a tribute to a judicious combination of study and games. Here Babs led, with Letty, Mabel, Gladys, Frances and Constance close behind. The prize for the neatest room was won by the two home-trained little housekeepers, Letty and Mabel, much to the pretended disgust of Babs and Gladys and their respective roommates.

A surprise came in the form of a prize presented by Mrs. Clevelands. It was a pretty sight to see all eyes focus with loving attention on "Granny Clevelands", as she, rather nervously, came near the platform and explained her prize—for the one who had in her opinion done most to promote the best feeling and school spirit among the girls—who, in short, could be regarded as the most representative of what was best in the school. She said she understood the danger of

giving such a prize, but had wished to do it this year, especially, though she might not make it a precedent. Of course, as "Granny" went on, the mind of every girl was busy wondering who could be the winner—for, surely the winner of a prize like that must be some one very good—who never got into trouble. It must be Ellen or Florence or Madeleine—you never get into trouble when you're engaged—your thoughts are too busy. As Mrs. Clevelands continued her explanation, thoughts flew to Babs—but then, though Babs was loved by all, she was not "good" enough, for she often got into scrapes—then Letty and Georgie and Gladys and Mabel were thought of as the guessing continued, till "Granny" said ,"I am almost glad her record is not blameless, for then her influence might not have been so great. Therefore, though there are so many deserving honourable mention, I have much pleasure in giving the prize to Barbara Montgomery Fortescue."

The storm of applause that greeted the name showed that Mrs. Clevelands' choice was approved by all, but poor Babs sat stricken. She had been so sure that the winner would be Letty or Mabel or Gladys that she was quite overcome, and then there had passed in quick succession through her mind a train of incidents in which she had been the leader of deeds unlawful. So it was a very flushed, apologetic-looking, but very lovely

Babs who rose and walked up the aisle to receive her prize—which seemed in her state of mind at that time a piece of burning coal. The head usually held so proudly drooped somewhat as she took her seat, amid loud applause, for those bright blue eyes were filled with tears. Letty, overjoyed, leaned forward and whispered,

"Babs, honey, we're all so glad. Why, I reckon you've begun your social service before you knew it!"

That night all was hurry and scurry, and great was the weeping and hugging and kissing. Some of the girls were leaving then, while Georgie and others were going early in the morning. Gladys and Mabel were departing that night, on their journey west, and Barbara and Frances were to travel east together. Poor Constance and other would-be matriculants were obliged to stay till July. Letty had already gone shortly after six o'clock, crying as though her heart would break at the separation from her friends, and from Mabel especially.

Babs came limping down the hall, her own eyes suspiciously red after saying good-bye to Letty, and encountered Gladys looking much the same. On Gladys' enquiries about her limp, she said—

"I'm getting rheumatism. It must be the dampness—so much of it around to-night."

"Babs, you heartless wretch, you needn't talk,

you look as though you'd been helping some yourself. Let's do something—I know—Let's get Mabs and Frances and Georgie and all go in a body and kiss Miss Hargraft good-bye. She doesn't kiss the girls like Dewsy and Miss Spencer and—oh dear—Miss Clevelands! She just shakes hands. Come on, it'll do her good to learn how!"

The other girls, glad to enliven the gloomy time of waiting, eagerly assented, and the five knocked at the door of Miss Hargraft's room, whither she had retired, somewhat disgusted at the tearful state of the pupils, such a lack of reserve being incomprehensible to her. When she bade the girls enter, she was in the midst of packing for her holiday at home in England. On seeing the girls flock in, evidently to say good-bye, she rose and was about to extend her usual firm handshake to each, when, to her confused surprise, the girls ignored the outstretched hand and kissed her heartily, as they said good-bye. Miss Hargraft looked distinctly "fussed" and then pleased. Her visitors forgot their mischief and were glad they had done it, for all had grown fond of her, though her reserve held them aloof.

"You know," said Babs, after they had left Miss Hargraft, "if I had had charge of her bringing up, she would have been awfully nice!"

All the girls laughed at Babs' modesty, and

then, when Miss Dewson and Miss Spencer appeared at the top of the stairs, they made a sudden swoop and carried them protesting but laughing to Babs' dismantled room.

Soon, however, the time for parting came and went amid more tears, more laughter, and more promises to write often—in some cases, every day. Usually those who protested most about their desire to write every day wrote once or not at all, while the ones who promised more moderate correspondence wrote at fairly frequent and regular intervals.

So passed another year of school, and each girl went on her way, some planning to meet again in school, while others, their schooldays over, looked for what the future held in store, wondering, but not too anxious—another year with its ups and downs, its work and play, its hopes and disappointments, its failures and successes, and, woven into the web and woof of each young life, its influence—for ill, a little, perhaps, but most of all for good.

THE END.

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