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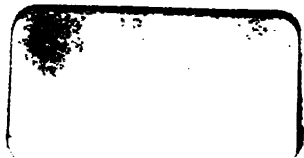
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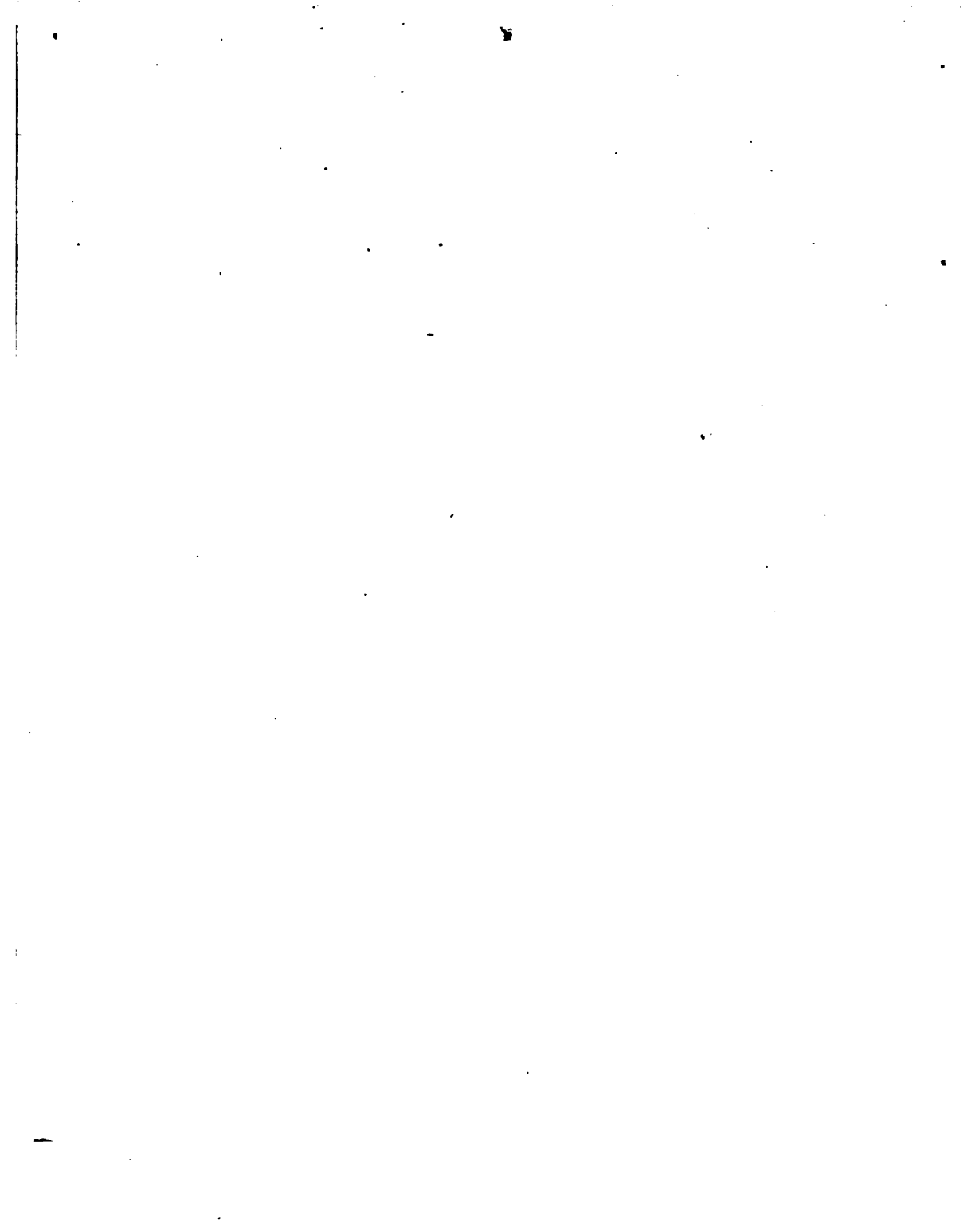


Dora Van Brunt.

From her sister, Minnie,

Sept. 16, 1892.

N.S.



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TRAVERS STOOD UPON THE BOAT EDGE, AND CLUNG TO THE TOP.

AN ADIRONDACK CABIN

A FAMILY STORY

SCENES BY LAKE AND MOUNTAIN, AND IDYLIC
THE HEART OF THE WILDERNESS

BY

SIDNEY

Grew

1945

1946

1947

1948

1949

1950

1951

1952

1953

1954

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1956

1957

1958

1959

AN ADIRONDACK CABIN

A FAMILY STORY

TELLING OF JOURNEYINGS BY LAKE AND MOUNTAIN, AND IDYLIC
DAYS IN THE HEART OF THE WILDERNESS

BY
MARGARET SIDNEY

Author of
Five Little Peppers and How They Grew
Five Little Peppers Midway
What the Seven Did
The Golden West
Who Told It to Me
Etc., Etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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AN ADIRONDACK CABIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE DUKE.

LET me—oh, let me take it just a minute,” begged the little fellow.

“Nonsense! Your little fist couldn’t begin to hold it,” said the big boy. “Here, come for a spin,” and he swung him up to his shoulder and pranced across the room. “There, now, wasn’t that glorious?” setting him down in front of the cabinet. “Take care, Duke; the sword may slip.”

“I’m four years old; let me hold it,” cried the little fellow, standing on his tiptoes to gaze at the sword which the big boy had laid on the top of the cabinet. “Do let me, Travers, take it just once.”

Travers took the sword and sat down, thoughtfully rubbing the blade between his fingers.

“Dear me; doesn’t it need polishing, Duke?”

The little Duke, his cheeks aglow, and his yellow hair tossed off from his face, crowded up to his side.



HE SWUNG HIM UP TO HIS SHOULDER.

Travers drew up the box of sliver polish on the table, and dipping a bit of flannel into the paste, set busily to work.

"Ah, Duke, just think," he said, "Grandfather wore this in many battles." He rested his polishing rag a minute on the hilt, and lovingly regarded the shining edge; "I tell you didn't his men charge with a will when he waved it! And didn't the enemy run!" He lifted the sword suddenly and brandished it high, waving on imaginary soldiers. Duke sprang off on two excited feet, and crowed lustily.

"Let me take it just a minute," he screamed; "just once, Travers, just once."

"Nonsense!" cried Travers, "with your little fist; the idea, Duke! Well, here goes to work again!" letting the sword fall on his lap. "There, don't crowd so. Oh, Biny, have you come at last?"



A small colored child came slowly into the room, a tear or two running down her brown cheek. "Oh, dear!" she begged, "don't make me rub those handles, Mister Travers, don't."

The big boy pointed grimly to another bit of flannel on the table. "Take your rag," he said, "and set to work, Biny."

"Oh, dear!" whined Biny, going over to the table, but not offering to touch the flannel bit; "do let me see what you're doing; just one minute," she added, wheedlingly.

"Well, take one look—there, now you must go—you are a whole hour too late, Biny," glancing at the clock.

The little Duke snuggled up close to his big brother. "I can stay, Biny," he cried, gleefully; "because I don't have to rub handles."

"Oh, dear—dear!" wailed Biny, the few tears becoming now quite a shower. "I can't ever see anything, because I have to work so; dear—dear—dear!"

"May she have one more look?" softly begged the little Duke, getting up on his knees to whisper into Travers' ear. "Do let Biny have just one more look."

"Very well; one more, Biny," said Travers, indulgently. "There, see, child." He raised the sword, and waved it before her admiring eyes.

"Oh—oh!" screamed Biny, smiling through her tears.

"'Twas Grandpapa's," shouted the little Duke, clapping his hands; "and he made the en'my run with it, Biny."

"Oh—oh!" cried Biny again, with her eyes at their widest. "What did they run for?"

"Because they were beaten," cried Travers, with flashing eyes, and a final wave. "There, Biny, fly off to your work, and I



BINY.

must finish mine." And again the sword dropped to Travers' lap.

"Who was the en'my?" asked Biny, dragging the toe of her small shoe back and forth over the carpet, her eyes following every movement of Travers' hand. "And what did they run for?"

"Why, 'twas a fight," said Travers; "one side always has to run, in a fight, child."

"Do they?" said Biny.

"Yes. Now hurry and set to work on those cabinet-handles. Do you hear, Biny?"

"Yes. What was they fighting about?"

"About? It's too long a story to tell you now; my grandfather was in the right, and the enemy was wrong."

"Oh!"

"Grandpapa gave you the sword," cried the little Duke, gleefully, and clasping his hands he crouched on the carpet to see his brother's face. "And perhaps you'll wear it some time in a fight and make folks run. Perhaps you will, Travers."

"Perhaps so," nodded Travers. "Biny Simpson!" he cried, "if you don't go over there and begin to rub those handles, I'll—I'll consign you to Maum Silvy's tender mercies."

"I'll go," decided Biny, at mention of Maum Silvy. And presently the two left behind with the sword, could hear her slow manipulations with the polishing cloth, mingled with bitter complaints.

"Do the top ones first," called over Travers. "That drawer is set up and all ready."

"What top ones?"

"Why, the ones on the top drawer, of course."

"I don't know what you mean," whined Biny.

Travers placed the sword hastily on the table, and strode over to the cabinet.

"Of all the children in this world, Biny, you are"—

"I've got it! I've got it!" screamed a little voice. "Now I'll be grandpapa, and make the en'my run. Hooray!"

"Duke—Duke!" cried Travers, turning in fright, "let me have it—stop, dear."

Duke brandished the sword exultingly, and pranced back and forth at the other end of the room. It was done in an instant. Soldiers before the little Duke have been tripped by a sword; a gleam of the newly-polished edge, two small feet in the air, and he lay quite still.

Biny, her breast heaving with sudden remorse, deserted the cabinet-handles, and taking a wild look at the little white face, across which was a dark red stain and slowly oozing drops of blood, fled from the room. Running on unsteady feet over the stairs, she met Cicely dancing down the long hall, swinging her hat in her hand.

"Miss Cecy," cried Biny, wildly, "Duke's cut to pieces, I guess. And thrusting her frightened face against Cicely's gown—"He's up in Mr. Travers' room." And turning quickly, she ran back, urged on by the quicker footsteps after her.

Travers dropped a handkerchief with which he had been bathing Duke's face, and seizing Cicely's two hands, he drew her over to the big sofa. "See," he cried, looking straight in her eyes; "nothing but a mere scratch."

"Are you sure?" cried Cicely, through white lips, and throwing her arms around the little Duke.

"Yes. Feel badly anywhere, Duke?" he asked.

"Yes," said the little fellow; "dreadfully here," clapping his small hand on the region devoted to cake and jam.

"How does it feel, darling?" cried Cicely, and throwing herself on her knees, by the side of the sofa, she clung to him.

"Why, hungry, of course," said Duke, impatiently. "I want some cake."

"Tell Maum Silvy to bring some up," said Travers. "Run along, Biny, and be quick about it."

Biny, nothing loath at such a commission, hurried off, and after a most harrowing recital of the accident, at last had the satisfaction of following her mother over the stairs, at every step begging, "Give me a piece, Mammy, do."



MAUM SILVY.

Instead, at the top, Maum Silvy turned and bestowed a rap on the little woolly head.

"I haint any strength to discipline you as I ought to," she cried; "I'm so beat out, I couldn't lift a straw. Thar," hurrying into Travers' room; "thar, you leetle honey-bird, so you should have a mite o' Maum Silvy's cake, so you should." And she came to the sofa and put a big piece into Duke's delighted hand, then dropped on her knees. "Bress de Lord, Miss Marion's chile ain't hurt."

Biny's mouth fairly watered at the sight. "I sh'd think you might give me a crumb—just one," she begged; "when I've been so scart, and all."

"Scart!" cried Maum Silvy, turning on her; "I know you were at the bottom of it all."

"I didn't mean to," wailed Biny, with upset nerves, and throwing herself on the floor, she buried her face in her little black hands. "Oh, dear—dear—I didn't mean to!"

"Biny didn't do it," cried Travers.

Duke took his small white teeth out of the delicious cake, and breaking it in two portions, "My Biny shall have this," he cried, holding the piece toward her.

But Biny wailed on, quite brokenhearted, despite all entreaties to get up and be comforted.

"I didn't mean to," she sobbed. "Oh, dear me—I didn't go for to do it—I didn't!"

"We know you didn't," cried Cicely, reassuringly, and leaning over as well as she could for the little Duke's presence in her lap, she patted the poor woolly head. "There, there, Biny, don't cry. We know you love Duke dearly. Of course you didn't do it."

"Of course you didn't," echoed Travers; "now stop your howling, like a good child."

But Biny refused to accept comfort, and Duke immediately deserted his cake, and lent his wails to her outcry.

"Thar—thar," cried Maum Silvy, putting the comforters aside with her ample hand. "I know what de pore chile wants. She wants her own bressed mammy to say she hasn't done it, so she does." And she gathered her up from the floor, with loving, hungry clasp. "And no more she hasn't—no, I don't keer who says it, so!" she cried, waving back and forth, showering kisses on the dark little face, wet with tears, that snuggled with a sigh of delight into her arms. "Thar, she's mother's own honey-bird, so she is," crooned Maum Silvy, over her; "de bestest chile dat ever breeved—so she is."

Biny's small head popped up like a bird out of its nest, and two or three tears trailed off from her stubby little nose; but she was smiling gleefully. "I want my cake, mammy," she said, and put out her hand for the bit that Maum Silvy with a chuckle pressed into it.

"The children can go into the nursery," said Cicely, "and play tea party. Do let Biny, Maum Silvy."

"And give us another piece of cake," said Biny, her mouthful disappearing with great rapidity; "this is dreadful little, Mammy."

"You go along," exclaimed Maum Silvy, with a chuckle, and poking her with a happy forefinger that sent Biny into a fit of laughter in which the others joined, till Travers' "den" resounded jubilantly. "Well, I s'pose I must; only you can't have any more of this cake; 'twould make you both clean down sick. There, hop down, and I'll give you some cookies and raisins."

"Oh—oh!" cried the little Duke, slipping out of Cicely's lap to the floor, to caper around Biny.

"And give them some lumps of white sugar, do, Maum Silvy," begged Cicely.

"And here," cried Travers, going into his closet a moment; "I've some peanuts to contribute, to make the thing go off finely. Now then," coming back with both hands full, "hold your aprons, both of you."

"Here comes Miss Brett," announced Maum Silvy, as the two children holding their filled aprons, rushed off speechless with delight; "tank de Lord, Duke is all right 'fore she gets here."

Cicely and Travers ran to the door to meet a tall, comfortable looking woman with a big bag on her arm.

"Oh, Aunt Sarah!" Cicely seized her, work-bag and all. Travers added, "we're glad enough to see you, aunty."

"Where's Duke?" asked Aunt Sarah, her kindly gray eyes flashing sunshine on them all.

"He was almost hurt," began Cicely.

"But he's all right," finished Travers.

"An' a miss is as good as a mile," added Maum Silvy, with a chuckle. "Bress de Lord for dat!"

"Just hear the two children," cried Cicely, convincingly, and dragging Aunt Sarah out into the hall. "That don't sound as

if anything very serious had happened, does it, Aunt Sarah?" as peals of laughter echoed over the stairs.

"It certainly does not," said Miss Brett; "I'll just step into the nursery and take a peep at him, and get the mending; then, Cicely"—she turned now, one foot on the lower stair—"I want you to go home with me."

"I was just going over to Patty Hitchcock's to write my composition with her," explained Cicely; "but I'd rather go with you, aunty, and I'll stop and tell her I'll be there to-morrow." And Miss Brett went briskly up-stairs.

"Don't walk quite so fast," begged Cecy, when at last the two found themselves on the way, and approaching a large white house with green blinds and a sociable veranda that ran around the three sides, as much as to say, "Here's comfort for everybody!" "I'll run ahead and tell Patty, and overtake you. Oh, there she is!" she exclaimed, at sight of a crop of dark curls evidently bent over a book by the window. And running under it, she cried, "Patty—Patty!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, throwing down the book to put her head out of the window, "you've come; how fine."

"But I haven't come," gasped Cecy; "at least, that is, I can't stay. I must go home with Aunt Sarah, so I'll come over to-morrow."

"That's always the way," cried Patty, dismally. "Oh, dear me!"

Meanwhile Miss Brett was fast disappearing, so Cicely left Patty forlornly begging "do stay," and ran after Aunt Sarah with all her speed.

"We shall have to hurry," observed Miss Brett, as she overtook her; "for I promised Mrs. Page to alter her black silk basque. She's going out to tea, and the poor soul don't go out visiting often, so we must help her off comfortably."

"Let me carry your parcel, Aunty," said Cicely, falling into

step and panting, "Oh, how warm it is! Seems to me your bag is fuller than ever," she added, glancing at the appendage that dangled comfortably at the good friend's side.

"If children will stub out nice stockings," observed Miss Brett, a little smile, like the sunshine over a winter apple, running across her honest face, "why, folks will have to parade the streets with big bags on their arms, for all I know. Somebody must take care of the toes."

"It's too bad," cried Cecy, giving the arm from which sus-



THE DODGE MANSION.

ended the bag, a faithful clasp; "I will not, dear Aunty, wear so many holes in mine this week, you sha'n't have to put your eyes out any more."

Aunt Sarah smiled indulgently, having heard the same statement frequently since taking charge of the mending department at "the Dodges."

This care of the mending department was not the only attention bestowed by the faithful friend upon the children of the Dodge mansion, where for many a long year Miss Brett had

worked at her trade of dressmaking with conscientious service for their mother before them. They had always called her "Aunt Sarah" ever since their little baby feet had pattered over the stairs, and wandered with tyrant wills all through her quaint, old-fashioned home. For despite all entreaties, Miss Brett refused to live any where but with a little widow broken down in the same trade, and with whom, after she had enough earn-



HERE SHE PLANNED, AND THOUGHT AND CONTRIVED.

ings to retire, with her ancient canary, her parrot, and all her household goods, she took rooms in her friend's big old house. Here she planned, and thought, and contrived for them, and kept the trust bestowed on her by the gentle mother when dying, "to look after the little ones." And so now, that Mr. Dodge was off to search after health, and the regaining of

the fortune he had lost through ill health and poor investments, Aunt Sarah became a guardian angel indeed.

She would not consent to move up to the big house, but never a day passed without her presence in it at some period of time between the twenty-four hours. "It's best for old maids to live alone," she said to all of Mr. Dodge's entreaties to domicile her there during his absence. "The children can't get sick without my knowing it, and we are all used to going on as we are." There it ended. But the faithful, lynx-eyed vigilance that never slept at its post, remained. And now the father was to come home in just one month!

Miss Brett and Cicely turned in at a little square garden, up through a box-bordered path, to a flat door-stone, above which an old-fashioned green door with brass knocker, bore the modest sign, "Mrs. Page, Dressmaker and Repairer."

"I'm here, Mrs. Page," announced Miss Brett, putting her head into the first door on the right of the little entry, while Cicely, with the freedom of an old visitor, skipped up the broad, quaint staircase to Aunt Sarah's rooms above; "and I'll be down after the basque in a few minutes."

When she joined her, Cecy was hobnobbing with Poll, who was hanging to her perch, forlorn and silent, because she had been left alone.

"I do think Poll grows cross, don't you, Aunt Sarah?" cried Cicely, throwing her hat on the roomy old sofa. "Oh, it's so nice to get here again!" a remark that never lost its flavor from the fact of its being made on each successive visit.

"Well, may be," assented Miss Brett, replying absently to the question. Then she stopped abruptly and looked at Cicely.

"Don't you want to know what I've brought you home with me for?" she asked.

"Why, to carry back a parcel, perhaps, or—I don't know," said Cecy, with a merry little laugh. "Oh, Poll, you idiot!"

for Poll, under the delusion that her face needed washing, was going through the performance with clumsy solemnity.

Miss Brett came over to her, and putting her firm hands on the young shoulders, turned her around and gazed into the blue eyes. "I've something to tell you," she said, quietly; "I can do it better here than up there," indicating by a nod the Dodge mansion. "Cecily, you are a large girl, fifteen years old, and must take disappointment when it comes, in such a way that you can comfort the others."

Cicely caught her breath, and stood quite still, only conscious that Poll was croaking "Good morning, good morning," thereby stimulating the ancient canary, whose singing days were over, but who still fancied himself the most charming of warblers, to attempt a morning song.

"I had a letter from your father last night," Aunt Sarah was saying. How far off her voice sounded. "He isn't so well, and has concluded not to come home at present."

Cicely sank nervelessly beneath the kind hands, and rushing over to the sofa, threw herself upon it. "He shall come now!" she exclaimed, passionately; "we can't wait any longer."

Poll stopped her salutations abruptly. "Don't cry," she croaked; "hee-hee-hee! Don't cry."

"And that," said Aunt Sarah, firmly, "is just what you must do, child, to show the others that you can wait if the Lord says so. *Can't?* Those four letters never come into a girl's life until she spells them there herself. Remember that, child."

CHAPTER II.

CICELY'S COMPANY.

I'M going to have the Fanshawes to tea to-night, Travers," announced Cicely, with dignity, a few days later.

"Glad to know it," said Travers; "for now I shall cut and run."

"Oh, Travers!" exclaimed Cicely, grasping the top button of his coat in alarm; "you wouldn't do such a thing."

"The idea of my coming in to see those giggling creatures!" exclaimed Travers, in disdain. "Just fancy it."

"Giggling creatures," cried Cicely; "they are very elegant girls; ever so much nicer than your friends. There's Tom Fisher; he looks like a fish, and I'm sure he don't say any more than an oyster."

"Well, he can talk fast enough," cried Travers, hotly. "when girls aren't poking around. They wouldn't know if he did talk sense, so what's the use?"

"I don't poke around," declared Cicely, her head in the air. "You are always teasing me to come in when they are here. I don't care if I never see one of those dreadful boys again."

"And I'm positively sure I don't care for those Fanshawes," declared Travers, snapping his fingers derisively. "Besides, you don't know how to get up a spread, Cicely."

"Indeed, I know the newest, most stylish things," declared Cicely, triumphantly. "The Fanshawes will be very much surprised; you see if they aren't, Travers."

"And everybody else, too, I guess," he muttered. "You'll be

sorry enough," he added aloud, "and wish yourself out of the scrape a thousand times. Take my advice, Ce, and stay out."

"Indeed, I shall not," declared Cicely, with a confident scorn. "I wouldn't for anything, Travers. Besides, I've invited them already."

"Well, be it on your own head, then," exclaimed Travers; "that's all I've to say about it. I wash my hands of the whole thing." And he strode toward the door.

"Why, Travers, I depend on you," cried Cicely, flying after him. "I said you'd be here, and play games with us, and all that."

"You said what you didn't know, then," answered Travers, marching down the hall. "The idea—catch me in such a scrape!" And he skipped up-stairs, two at a time.

"If that isn't," began Cicely, standing quite still where he left her, with a bright spot on either cheek.

"Miss Cecy," said Maum Silvy, putting her turban in the door-way.

"What is it?" asked Cicely, sharply.

"Why, if you are gwine to have comp'ny," said Maum Silvy, deliberately, and allowing the whole of her generous body to follow the turban into the room, "ye'll have to get some o' dem presarve saucers. I ben looking at them, and mos' de whole lot is snicked."

"Is what?" asked Cicely, blankly, feeling sure that snicked saucers would be a calamity she could not sustain.

"Why, snicked, I said," repeated Maum Silvy, loudly; "broke all around de edge, you know, and dey look awful. Oh, your pa wouldn't never let you give comp'ny wid them, not if he was home."

"Well, I suppose that's easily enough fixed," said Cicely, with a sigh of relief; "we'll get some more at the store."

"And anudder t'ing—you know de big glass dish Duke broke

a-clumming up de sideboard?" said Maum Silvy, patting her blue-checked apron uncomfortably.

"Oh, dear, yes!" cried Cicely, in dismay. "I forgot all about that; now what shall we do? I was going to have some of your nice peaches, Maum Silvy, in that."

"You couldn't a had peaches," said Maum Silvy, her features relaxing at the praise of her sweetmeats; "cause, don't you remember, we et de last o' dem last week."

"Were those the very last?" cried Cicely; "why, I thought there were ever so many more. Oh, dear me!"

"I can't spend my days making presarves," said Maum Silvy, sharply, distressed at the disappointment written all over the young face, and vexed that she couldn't lighten it. "And you know you would have dem peaches; I wanted to save dem."

"Why, they were on the table," said Cicely, turning off to the window, "and of course we ate them. I don't care for anything but just those peaches." She drummed with her fingers impatiently on the pane, every little tap seeming an echo to Travers' dismal prophecy.

"Haven't I told you you can't have 'em?" cried Maum Silvy, nervously; "ef a thing's et, ain't it et?"

Cicely, not being able to answer this pleasantly, began again. "Well, now let's see what we have for supper; it must be just as elegant as we can possibly make it," she cried, warming with her subject; "for these girls are rich as they can be, and they have everything perfectly splendid at home."

"How do you know?" interrupted Maum Silvy, coolly. "Ever been thar?"

"Why, no; of course not," said Cicely; "but Patty says so, and" —

"Has she ever been thar?" demanded Maum Silvy, interrupting again.

"No, no," answered Cicely, impatiently; "but then she knows."

"How?" persisted Maum Silvy.

"Why, I don't know, I'm sure," stammered Cicely; "I suppose the Fanshawes told her things."

"Humph!" ejaculated Maum Silvy, rolling her eyes ceilingward, and folding her hands composedly; "I thought so." And then she brought down her eyes to search keenly the two blue ones before her. "Don't ever say you know about folks till you've seen 'em live," punctuating her message with vigorous nods of her turban.

"Well," said Cicely, "it must be an elegant supper, anyway."

"I guess dar aint any Fan-fan-what-dye-call-'ems can get ahead of de Dodges when dey wants to do anything," cried the black woman, in great pride, her eyes shining and her big hand uplifted to emphasize her declaration. "Dar was a time when your pa could a bought dis whole town ef he wanted it, fore he lost his fortin. Remember dat, chile. Money's vulgar," she added, letting the hand fall to her side, and her voice drop to its old tone, "awful vulgar. How folks can t'ink so much of it, I don't see."

"I wish we had a little of it," sighed Cicely; "just a very little more, Maum Silvy."

"Well, may be," said the old woman, shifting her feet uneasily; "may be, but you haven't got it, so it's just as well. Now, what else was you going to say about your comp'ny? I must be getting back to my dinner."

"Oh, nothing," said Cicely, bringing herself back to the matter in hand; "only we must have everything splendid."

"It troubles me about Miss Brett," said Maum Silvy, wrinkling up her forehead; "I can take the 'sponsibility, of course, and do things just as good as she'd do 'em, but I'd druther she was home."

"Why, she said I might have the Fanshawes here," said Cicely, impatiently, "sometime."

"But not to-night," said Maum Silvy, worriedly. "And now she's away to Bedford on that bank business of your pa's. You better put it off till to-morrow, Miss Cecy."

"Haven't I said they're going home to-morrow?" exclaimed Cicely. "Patty told me just half an hour ago. They've had a letter telling them to come, and I should be mortified to death not to have them here." She fastened on the round, black face such a reproachful look, that Maum Silvy at once flew over to her side, convinced.

"Well, I suppose dar isn't any other way," she said, settling her turban with the air of one in society, who knew what was due to the family. "I shouldn't want a Dodge to be unperlite, I'm sure."

"Of course you wouldn't," cried Cicely, delighted at her ally. "Now, then, what will we have next?"

"I'll make you some selad," promised Maum Silvy, who, now that the comp'ny was really a "to-be," was quite in her element. "Yes, chicken selad is about as nice eating as can be, ef anybody knows how to make it."

"Lovely!" exclaimed Cicely, and clasping her hands. "And be sure to put the yellow paste all over the top, and the capers, and the little white egg-rings, and the olives, and all. Be sure, Maum Silvy."

"Oh, I won't forget," said Maum Silvy, importantly; "I'll have it nice enough for anybody's folks, the salary and all."

"And I'm going to make some cocoa-nut cakes," declared Cicely, running to the table-drawer. "Where is the cook-book? I saw one here last week."

"I don't use a cook-book," said Maum Silvy, complacently; "I make things up out o' my head."

"Well, there was one here," insisted Cicely, turning things over with a very impatient hand; "I saw Aunt Sarah looking at it."

"Miss Brett must have took it home, then," declared Maum Silvy.

"Ah!" cried Cicely, suddenly; "here you are, you dear!" And she flourished a "Complete Guide to a Young Housekeeper," its leaves fluttering in Maum Silvy's face.

"I wouldn't make any coke'nut cakes," advised that individual, concisely. "You better let me make the cake."

"No, no," cried Cicely; "I've never had company all by myself before, and I want to make them. You needn't be afraid, Maum Silvy; I've made cake once."

"Shaking up things when you don't care a cent whether dey turns out good or bad, and making 'em when comp'ny's coming and you'd give all your old shoes to have 'em 'spec-table, is two different things. Den dey acts as if de old snake hisself got into 'em," said Maum Silvy, "and dat's de trufe."

"Well, I must make them anyway," confessed Cicely, whirling the leaves of the "Complete Guide," "for—for I told Patty I was going to, and they'll expect them."

"Oh, well, ef you've promised 'em, dat's another t'ing," said Maum Silvy, slowly; "but ef I was you, I wouldn't tell folks again what I was going to give 'em to eat. You feels like coke'nut cakes maybe, to begin with, but I've seen the time when I could hustle anything on the table at the last minute, and been thankful for it."

"Well, I'm"—began Cicely to this.

"Mam-my!" screamed a voice out in the hall, "you dinner's stuck to the pot and burn-n-ed!" And Biny, holding her small, black nose with one hand, and gesticulating wildly with the other, came into view.

Maum Silvy could scarcely have been said to fly, but as fast as her heavy body would allow, she sped to the scene of the disaster, where a rattling of stove-covers and pot-lids, and a commotion generally, proclaimed without the evil odor that now

pervaded the house, that the meat left boiling for dinner had suffered during the consultation over "the comp'ny."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Cicely, rushing to the window to throw it up for a breath of fresh air. "Phew! now that will make her so cross and nervous she can't do anything decently!"

"Well, there's one thing," she reflected, hurrying up-stairs to tie on her little baking-cap; "Duke will look lovely, and do me credit, whatever happens. Jane does dress him so prettily. I'll tell her to be sure and put on the white cambric dress with the lace trimming, and his pale-blue sash, and then with his beautiful hair, he'll be sweet and stylish." And Cicely brought up into a firm knot under her chin the strings of the cap, humming a scrap of a song as she thought of the Fanshawes' admiration over the little beauty of the family.

"Thar ain't no coke'nut, I s'pose you know," snapped out Maum Silvy, at the foot of the back stairs.

"I declare," cried Cicely, the song dying down in her throat; "I forgot all about that."

"Folks most always wants one when dey makes coke'nut cakes," observed Maum Silvy, unpleasantly, looking up at her over the long flight. "Leastways, I never heard of 'em doing without."

"Can't Biny run down to the store?" asked Cicely.

"Biny!" repeated Maum Silvy, scornfully; "Laws, did you ever hear of dat young one being anywhars when you wanted her? I've been screaming to her like everything, but she's a mile away, for all I know."

"Why, she was down there a few minutes ago," said Cicely. "She called you, you know."

"That may be," said Maum Silvy; "but she can't be found now. Give Biny five minutes, and no living mortal could set his thumb on her."

"Well, then," said Cicely, with a sigh, "I shall have to go

myself." And she untied the strings and picked off the little white cap.

"Better send up some more salary," called out Maum Silvy after her, as she was ready to start. "I may not hev enough, an' as long's yer a-goin' ye better git another bunch—oh! an' de lump sugar is all out, an' de milkman forgot to leave an extra quart, so ye better go round to Skinner's an' tell him to bring some, an' don't forget de presarve sassers," she screamed after her, when almost down to the corner.

On the way home Cicely ran aslant of Biny, who was in a blissful state, with some other children, on the edge of a dirty little pond, off the main road.

"You must come home," called Cicely to her. "We may want you. Come this minute!"

"Oh, did ye want me?" cried Biny, in astonishment.

"Yes," cried Cicely, back again. The children all stopped playing, and stared with open mouths. "Do you hear me?" she added, imperatively.

"Yes'm," said Biny, disengaging herself slowly from her charming companions, and coming up to Cicely's side.

"Didn't you know I was going to have company?" asked Cicely, impatiently, and hurrying on with eager footsteps.

"Laws," said Biny, hitching along after, with one eye on the forsaken group; "how'd I know? Nobody don't tell me anything—oh, dear! my toe hurts so. I'm most dead, I am! Oh, dear!"

"If you're very good," said Cicely, coaxingly, "I'll give you some of the most elegant cocoa-nut cakes you ever saw. I'm going to make some."

"Ye are?" said Biny, not appearing as enchanted over the prospect as was expected. "I druther hev some o' dat sweet stuff mammy makes—wot is't now ye call it?"

"I don't know what you mean," said Cicely, as the village

clock struck eleven. "Oh, dear me! I thought it was only ten; do hurry, Biny."

"I can't," grumbled Biny, not altering her gait in the least; "my toe hurts so. Mayn't I set down, Miss Cecy?" she asked, pausing by a big stone by the roadside.



"MAYN'T I SET DOWN, MISS CECY?" SHE ASKED.

"No," said Cicely, firmly; "if I don't keep hold of you now I shan't see anything more of you to-day. Come."

About half-past eleven, she was again dressed in the neat little baking-cap, and watching the hot oven, to whose care the cocoa-nut balls had been consigned.

"Oh, Jane!" she cried, as that individual came through the kitchen with a dust-pan of dirt; "put on Duke's best dress to-night—the one

trimmed with lace, you know—and his nicest blue sash, will you?"

"The best dress?" said Jane, dumping the pan of dirt into the coal-hod. "He can't; it's soiled. If I'd only known it yesterday, I could have done it up."

"Well, I don't care for anything," cried Cicely. "if Duke is

going to look like a fright." And she ran into the pantry, afraid the tears would be seen.

"Oh, I'll fix Duke nicely, Miss Cecy," called Jane, after her. "You needn't be afraid." And she hurried up-stairs into the nursery, where Duke was singing in a loud voice, "I want to be an angel," and brushing up the floor of the closet with her best hair-brush.

"Is dem elegant coke'nuts?" inquired Biny, hanging over the table as Cicely took off from the buttered pan some little black leaden balls, that tumbled heavily on the waiting plate. "Oh, my! I don't want any."

"You unperlite chile," exclaimed Maum Silvy. "They're too good for ye."

"Perhaps some of them will be nice, Maum Silvy," said Cicely, anxiously, with a scarlet face, and running for another pan.

"Den, unless de Fan-Fan-what-d'ye-call-ems is great eaters, one plate'll do," said Maum Silvy, hurrying out of view the unsightly ones. "Now ye jest run up-stairs, honey-bird, and rest a bit, and I'll put dese cakes on dis yere chiny dish"—selecting the best ones from the fresh pan and piling them dexterously.

"Dar, dat looks fine enough for anybody's folks," she said. "Now I'll put 'em up on de pantry top shelf, and dey'll be all ready to set on de table."

And Travers staid away from dinner, going over to Tom Fisher's for that meal, and the little Duke fretted over everything on the table, so that Cicely was glad to escape to more



"I'LL PUT 'EM UP ON DE PANTRY TOP SHELF."

hurried preparations for the evening festivity. At last, after her room was set up, and the flowers arranged, and the hundred and one other things done, she was ready to put on her pretty pink cashmere gown; but forgetting to baste a fresh ruffle in the neck, she had to pull it off. She had just gotten into the gown again, and set the last pin straight, when Biny, in a stiff white apron, and with innumerable freshly-braided wisps adorning her head, rushed in, crying, "Miss Cecy, your comp'ny's come!"

In the meantime, Jane having arrayed Duke in his most available party garments, and curled his long, golden hair, seated him in his little chair, with his patchwork square. "There, now, sit perfectly still and sew it till I come for you." Then she ran down-stairs in response to Maum Silvy's call for help.

Duke dragged his needle through six times, then stretched his active little legs. "I don't want to sew any more, like a girl," he cried, casting the patchwork away in disdain. And getting out of his chair, he stole softly out of the room, and down the stairs, and finding the dining-room door open, walked in and surveyed the supper-table.

"I think I'll take a flower," he decided after a long look, and climbing upon a chair, placed for one of the wonderful Fanshawes, he leaned over her plate, and by grasping the table cloth, could just touch the vase in the center of the festal board. With another lurch, he seized the coveted posy, when over went the vase, scattering the blossoms on all sides, while a stream of water ran the length of the spotless cloth.

"That's too bad," said the little Duke, softly, swaying back into an upright position with his little fist full of blossoms. "Oh, see that bu'ful stuff!"

Down went the flowers from his hand while he reached for the glory of the feast, the salad dish that Maum Silvy but a moment before had set in its place. "I can fix it better!"

he whispered, catching a fork and dragging it across the garished top.

For five minutes the room was very still, then the little Duke got out of "the Fanshawe chair," and carefully closing the door behind him, went out to the charms of the garden.

"And now you must see Duke," Cicely was saying. She had shown the three Fanshawes the pictures in the drawing-room, Papa's cabinet of minerals, and the folio of engravings, and finding them interested in none, was at this time ready for other entertainment. "Duke, Duke dear," she called into the hall.

"Yes, I'm coming," a small voice answered cheerily. The next moment an object appeared, at sight of which, the biggest Fanshawe nearest the door, whose gown was adorned with a quantity of pink ribbon bows in every spot where a bow could be placed, fell back suddenly with no evident desire to be introduced.

"I'm coming," repeated the figure. "Didn't you hear me?"

They not only heard, but saw. His dress was streaked with dirt and hanging limp, his best kid shoes looked like a bone-picker's, while his hair, worsted in its encounter with black-berry vines and currant bushes, was streaming back of him. But his face!

"So this is your little brother?" asked the second Fanshawe, with a disagreeable smile.

"How do you do?" asked Duke, sociably, and extending a dirty little hand.

"Oh!" exclaimed the "pink-bowed" one; "don't let him touch you, Arabella, he'll spoil your dress."

"I don't want to touch her," declared Duke. "I don't like her a single bit."

"I think," said Cicely, faintly, "that tea's ready." Anything to get those three pairs of staring eyes off from the "beauty of the family."

"Yes, 'tis," cried Duke, delightedly, and ambling to the door. "You've got a splendid supper."

Cicely walked proudly down the hall, feeling very grown-up, the Fanshawes following, to meet Maum Silvy bearing the tea-urn, coming in the other door of the dinning-room with Biny crowding after, and just then Jane rushed in asking frantically, "Has any one seen Duke?"

"I tink dey has!" Maum Silvy found her voice first, and pointed a tragical finger at the festive board. "Oh, laws, just see my el'gant selad!"

"Sit down," begged Duke, sociably, tugging at a chair; "I'm hungry."

"Ye might as well set down," said Maum Silvy, grimly, "and eat if you can."

Cicely, in a wild mortification, seated her guests, and tried to hide herself behind the tea-urn.

The second Fanshawe shook out her bracelets, much as one would ring a bell, and looked across the table with a queer little grimace at the oldest sister. It seemed as if all the blood in Cicely's body flew up in her face to her fluffy light hair. While the youngest, a small child of eight, whose aim in life seemed to be to make everybody as uncomfortable as possible, piped out, "There isn't anything nice to eat," and leaned back in her chair and refused each dish that was passed. Seeing which, Maum Silvy and Jane, who were waiting on the little guests, let her alone, so that just before the others had finished their meal, and were ready to depart to the pleasures of the drawing-room, Miss Sarah sat upright, and signified her intention to partake of each delicacy on the board.

About eight o'clock a tall boy rushed into the room of one of his chums, where, as usually happened, four or five other congenial spirits were congregated.

"See here, fellows," was his opening salutation; "I want you,

every soul of you. Get out your ties and brush up a bit; then come on!"

"What's up?" exclaimed one, throwing down his book.

"Well, I'm in a scrape. My sister has a lot of company on her hands—those stuck-up girls who are visiting Patty Hitchcock—had to invite them, you know. Worse yet, Patty has a sore throat and couldn't be there to help out, and the thing has got to go through and be a success. In short," said Travers, pulling out his watch, "I want you boys to come and help. If you don't, why, I'll never shake hands again with the fellow who refuses."

"I'll go," said Tom Fisher, quietly.

"Good for you, Tom!"

"Count us all in," said the others. "Tell us what to do," with as pleasant expressions on their different countenances as if immediate execution were before them.

"You're to tell a story, Tom, in your best style," said Travers. "A song is booked for you, Phil Mason, and the rest of us will fill in wherever we're needed. Now fix up a bit; I'll be back in five minutes."

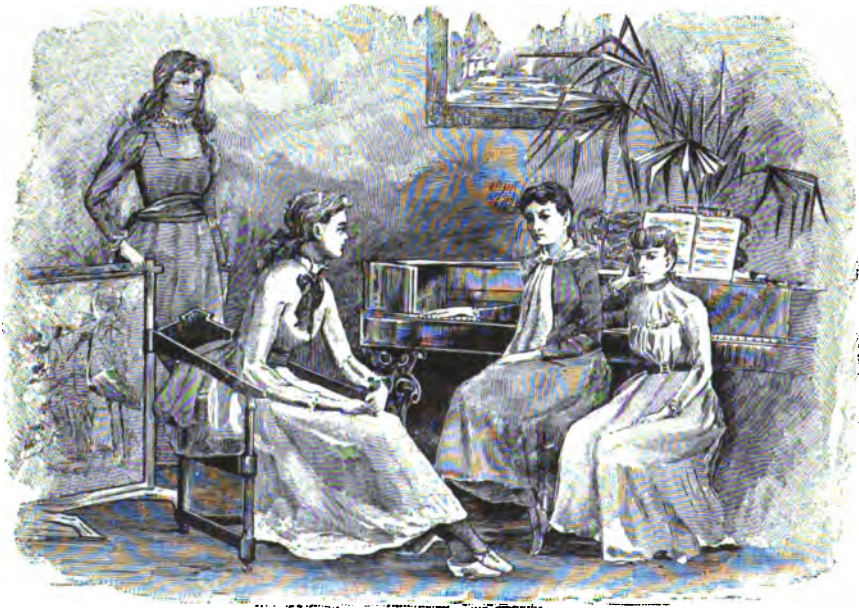
Down the stairs he rushed, and up Main street, to the village store. "I'll do it," he declared to himself; "who cares if Fourth of July is here in a month? Here goes for Cecy!" and without allowing himself to think twice, he hurried in and astonished the fat old store-keeper with a handful of silver bits and pennies, and buying up every motto in that enterprising establishment.

Cicely's tired face had grown very pale. With all her efforts she was at the end of endurance in the matter of polite entertaining, and the Fanshawes were on the point of departing, with the terrible verdict in every line of their faces—"a slow, stupid party!" when Travers' grand entré came. Then they concluded to stay.

"Oh, you dear, magnificent, lovely old Travers!" cried Cicely, her eyes bright as stars two hours later, when he rushed in after seeing the company home. "Oh, I can't thank you!" throwing herself into the long arms awaiting her.

"Don't try," said Travers. "Well, you had an awful pull; but it's all right now, Puss."

"I am so sorry I talked so about your friends, Travers,"



THE FANSHAWES WERE ON THE POINT OF DEPARTING.

she said, humbly, and wiping off a tear on his coat-sleeve. "Why, Tom Fisher is an angel."

"Isn't he?" cried Travers. "Well, I'm not sorry for what I said about your Fanshawes, Ce," he declared.

"Don't call them *my* Fanshawes," begged Cicely, quite disgusted; "I don't care if they are rich, they weren't a bit polite.

They made fun of all the dreadful accidents, and they wouldn't look at pictures, nor do anything but just stare and laugh. Oh, Travers, you can't know what a terrible time I've had!"

"Don't think of it," said Travers, soothingly; "it's over now, like a bad dream. You needn't have any more company in an age, if you don't want it."

"It will be an age before I want any," cried Cicely, with the first merry laugh of that day. "I feel like that old woman Maum Silvy was talking of the other day, who said, 'it's a sight easier to go a visiting than to have company.'"

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRE.

ABOUT eight o'clock of an evening a week after Cicely's memorable supper, the kitchen of the Dodge mansion became, as far as Biny was concerned, Paradise itself. The candles in the big pewter candlesticks were burning brightly, for Maum Silvy could never bring herself to any arrangement that included lamps. "I 'spise 'em," she would always say, whenever the subject was broached. "Dar's something ginteel about a candle, but an ile lamp—la! dat's wicious." So candles always burned in the Dodge kitchen.

Here, drawn close up to the table, sat Biny, a collection of paper dolls spread before her, some bits of bright paper, a box cover full of sundry gay pictures donated by Cicely, and an old box of paints contributed by Travers. Smiles and streaks of paint contended for the possession of her face as the work proceeded, accompanied by much hard breathing and many little grunts of approval as each picture was finished according to her artistic fancy; Muff, the big maltese cat, sitting on one corner of the table, his tale lashed stiffly around his legs, and his unblinking green eyes taking in each movement with solemn earnestness.

Suddenly Maum Silvy laid down the big blue stocking she was knitting and turned around to the clock.

"I declare for't," she exclaimed, "if 'tisin't eight o'clock! Come, Biny, put up your gimcracks, and go to bed."

"Oh, I don't want to," cried Biny, in dismay, just on the

point of putting on a green hat to a gentleman who seemed to consider it the greatest bliss in life to present a bouquet of flowers, of the hugest proportions, to a wasp-waisted lady. "Oh, don't make me, Mammy, please don't," she begged.

"Now, Biny, you onreasonable chile," cried her mother, looking across the table with decision in her eye; "don't you try dat game on me ev'ry night, and don't I tell you de same t'ing? You ought to go, and you knows it, so hurry along," she added, briskly.

"But I'm painting," expostulated Biny, beginning to cry; "and they'd be splendid if I could only finish. Let me set up, Mammy, just one teenty minute more," she begged, wheedlingly.

"Not de shake of a lobster's whisker," declared Maum Silvy, positively; and she glanced up back of the clock, where a small stick reposed in conscious ability to come down at any moment on demand.

"Oh, dear, dear!" whined Biny, following her mother's eye, to meet her old acquaintance; "I wish dar warn't any beds." And she began to slowly pack up her precious belongings. "I don't ever—have—any fun," she sobbed, at each stage of her progress.

"And ef you set up and be an old woman before your time," cried Maum Silvy, "den you won't have any fun either, I reckon; besides, I shan't do my duty by you. You know what Solomon says—'Spare de rod and spile de chile,' and"—

"Who's Solomon?" demanded Biny, to gain time.

"Laws! Don't you know who Solomon was?" cried Maum Silvy, casting aside her knitting to gaze at such ignorance; "why, he was the one who cut the baby in two to save it for its mother—I'm 'shamed of you, Biny, not to know dat."

"What did he cut it in two for?" asked Biny, this time with real interest.

"To give it to its mother, I told you," said Maum Silvy,

impatiently. "There, scrabble up your pictures and start to bed," and she picked up her stocking and began to rattle the needles again.

"What did the mother want the baby in two pieces for?" asked Biny, waiving all reflections on her want of knowledge.

"Why—because—because Solomon give it to her so," replied Maum Silvy. "Ef he give it her she'd have to take it; so dat's all thar is to dat."

"What did he cut it in two with?" asked Biny, fingering a seductive collection of moist bits of paint in an old saucer; "a big slashing knife?"

"Massy, don't ask so many questions," said her mother, nervously; "thar, I've let down a stitch. Do you go to bed this minute, Albino Simpson, or I'll know the reason why."

Biny gathered up her paints with a quicker hand, and Maum Silvy's stitch being recovered, and the rattling of the needles resuming its steady "clack—clack," she began again.

"Didn't it hurt the baby to be cut in two?" she asked.

"Why, yes—no—I s'pose so," answered Maum Silvy. "You go to bed, do you hear?"

"I shouldn't think you'd keer for anything such a man said, who'd cut a baby in two," said Biny, scornfully, from a certain movement on the part of the parent, seeing that no more time was to be wasted.

"Why, Biny Simpson!" exclaimed Maum Silvy, aghast, and letting her work fall again to her lap; "dat's all in de Bible. Don't you dare say a word agin Solomon."

"I don't keer," cried Biny, recklessly; "I don't like him, dat Solomon; I hates him, he wants all de chillern whipped."

"Go to bed!" commanded her mother, with a stamp of her formidable foot on the kitchen floor. "D'ye hear?"

Biny did; and wiping her small, painty hands on her tearful face, at once started.

"Massy!" ejaculated Maum Silvy, at sight of her; "you ain't going to get into bed wid me, looking like dat, I can tell you. Injuns is nothing to it. Run to de sink and give yourself a good wash."

Biny studied her mother to see if she meant it, and finding that it was really expected, went slowly off, grumbling at every step.

"And now don't be long getting into bed," called her mother after her, as she picked her way up the back stairs grasping her treasures tightly; "and say your prayers. I declare," she said to herself, as she fell back on her knitting again, "I wish I could go, too; I feel somehow beat out to-night, and I've got so much to do to-morrer."

But it was not till two hours later that Maum Silvy gathered herself out of her calico-covered rocker, and started to lock up and make things safe for the night.

"Now to-morrer I'll set to on dat soft soap," she soliloquized, going heavily up the stairs; "and I'll clean up de back chamber windys. It's been a good spell since they was touched, and"—but having reached the top, and feeling a little stiff in the joints, she stopped laying out plans for the morrow, and began to put her mind on the quickest way to get to bed.

"I'm t'ankful I've got a good bed," she said to herself, with a look at the comfortable four-poster, with its gay, patched quilt, under which little Biny was fast asleep, forgetful of past sorrows and disappointments. "I declare, we ain't any o' us half thankful enuf for our marcies, and dat's a fac'," she added. "A good bed and a comf'able house, and plenty to eat, we never orter complain. Well, I must start dat soap to-morrer," and she blew out the light, and stepped into bed, where in ten minutes she was sleeping peacefully to the melody of her sonorous breathing.

And presently, all but one in that rambling old country house

went to bed and to sleep in peace with never a shade of anxiety or care; and that one was Muff.

Muff, the sleepy-eyed, who had ever been regarded as existing solely for his own personal comfort, who had been much given to the picking out of the best places, and the securing of all that could possibly fall to his share as spoils, was at this very moment resisting the enticements of a fascinating nibble that he knew meant "mouse," was putting steadily away all the

beguilements of his usual tempting sleep by the kitchen fire—to watch! And there he was, the point of his nose at the crack of the door leading into the dark wood-cellar.



MUFF.

Hark! There is a rustle within that makes him prick up his ears and stare wildly at the crack. He sniffs, and draws in a long breath close to the sill, only to pull his nose out suddenly for a strangling cough. What is that strong smell puffing under the door in his very face? For all the world it smells just as it does when Maum Silvy's fire refuses to burn in the morning;

but he never has found it in the cellar before. He must watch.

The rustling noise comes nearer and nearer. And peering very closely, he sees a red light shooting in and out among the wood, piled high with a generous hand. Muff drops back at that and evidently considers a bit. Wouldn't it be best to raise his voice? "Mee-ow! Mee-ow!"

But nobody comes, although he never remembers calling so

nically. Why not run away, and let things have their course? Instead, he rushed, tail erect and eyes flashing, through the kitchen, the long hall, and over the stairs.

Travers was living over a glorious foot-ball game, played that afternoon with the team from the Hardy School. Something stung his arm. Goodness, how those fellows crowd; and how the blows rain from right and left! Never mind; he would pay them back. "Stand fast, there," he shouts to his men; "give it to them."

Another sharp sting in his arm, and a babel of shouts, at last resolving themselves into "Mee-ow-ow!" close to his ears. He starts up, rubbing his eyes, Muff's claws still clinging to his arm, and Muff's melodious accents still sounding the depths of his consciousness.

"Hey, get off there, you beast!" he cries, crossly, coming down to the ignominious awakening. "Jumping on my bed, are you? Well, can't you do it without tearing a chap's arm off!"

Muff's green eyes glare at him, as he still emits a faithful "Mee-ow!"

"What in the world is the matter with you? Are you going mad?" cried Travers, shaking himself free. "Here, down-stairs with you." He jumps out of bed and goes to the hall. "Muff, Muff, good fellow, go down-stairs," he commands. "Why"—

Back into his room, to throw on his clothes, working now as he never worked in the hottest contest of a ball game—out again. "Fire!" he cries; "wake up!" as he speeds into Cicely's room to rouse her with his thrilling cry, then out to rush into the nursery. Jane, stumbling to her feet and taking in the situation, seizes Duke from his dewy slumber, throws a blanket over him, and obedient to the order of Travers, rushes down the front stairs and out into the night to rouse the neighbors. The back stairway is filled with smoke

by this time: the fire, roaring like a demon for its prey, has full possession of the kitchen and rear of the house, and flames are flashing their way through the library and licking their gloating tongues over the treasures of the household. A fire in a village! Strong hands can battle, hearts are kind and willing, but what can they avail?

Cicely threw on her bath wrapper, and with hair floating from her white cheeks, ran up the attic stairs after Travers. They could hear the sonorous breathing, varied by occasional snorts, that marked Maum Silvy's usual sleep. Now in the moonlight they could see the peaceful face under the broad-frilled nightcap, and snuggled close to her, forgetful of the late Solomonic dispute, was Biny's little dark countenance, smiling in its wanderings through dreamland.

"You wake up the child," cried Travers, hoarsely; "Maum Silvy," he shouted, shaking the fat arm thrown outside the coverlet.

"Biny," called Cicely, close to the small black ear. Biny flew up in the middle of the bed, dug her little knuckles into her eyes—"What you want?" she demanded.

"I can't wake Maum Silvy," groaned Travers.

"Hold Biny, then." Cicely ran over to the corner of the room, seized the large pitcher, which luckily was full, and staggering back, dashed the water over Maum Silvy's face, nightcap and all. She instantly sat erect, coughing and sneezing.

"The house is on fire!" they cried, through white lips; "come, or we shall all be lost!" Cicely grasped Maum Silvy's arm, leading her safely along; she is conscious that Travers is following with little Biny clinging to his neck. Down they work their way through blinding smoke, to the noise of the rushing flames below, to meet the neighbors gathered on the broad lawn before the old home, soon to be but a thing of the past.

The rest is soon told. How, working frantically, the stalwart

villagers toil with every nerve and muscle strained to save the doomed building. But in vain; the dear roof-tree, with its precious treasures of many generations, vanishes like a dream before their eyes.

Miss Brett, summoned by a small boy with the intelligence that "The Dodges, with their house, are burnt up," was soon on the spot.

"There isn't a single thing left," sobbed Cicely, clinging to her with wild fingers of despair.

Aunt Sarah is only conscious, as she clasps them to her faithful heart, that the father's ears can hear—"The children are safe."

"Billings' house has caught!" screamed one of the men. "Look alive there, boys. That will go like tinder."

All eyes turned, horror-stricken, to see that a little cottage at the end of a lane running from the rear of the

"Dodge Mansion," had caught fire, and was in almost an instant, it seemed, sending out long, lurid arms of flame. It was occupied by a laborer, who possessed, like many other poor men, enough of only one thing, and that was children. There were



"BILLINGS' HOUSE HAS CAUGHT."

nine little ones; and now their refuge was in a moment's time the prey of a more cruel enemy than poverty. And before any one awoke to the danger, the rickety old building was enwreathed in flames.

"The children!" screamed the poor mother, rushing in and out among the crowd, and wringing her hands. "There's John, and the twins, and Loisy."

"And Jimmy, and the baby," wailed the oldest girl. "Oh, where are they?"

"They're here—they're here," shouted the father. He was clasping the baby to his breast, and he dropped him into the mother's hungry arms, while a little knot of frightened, screaming children as they had jumped from their beds, followed closely to huddle up to her side.

Her wild eyes ran them all over. "Where's Angeline?" she cried, hoarsely.

"Why, she's here," began the father, also wildly scanning his group of children. "Oh, my God, we've left her behind!"

"I thought—she came with—us," sobbed the frightened children, clinging to their mother.

The father started for the burning building, while the cry ran through the crowd—"A little child is in there!"

"It's no use." A dozen hands seized and dragged Billings back. The flames, as if hungry for their prey, streamed from the poor little old windows, licking the sides of the building with many tongues.

"My child!" cried the man, wild-eyed and fierce. "Let me go!" But the men held him fast.

"You couldn't save her," said one pitying neighbor; "you'd only lose your own life."

A shout, and then another; there was a glad ring to the voices, and a little figure, bearing a heavy burden, staggered among them, and from the burden came the cry—"Pappy!"

Billings sprang to his feet. Up stumbled the figure holding fast the burden, now kicking vigorously and calling shrilly—"Pappy!"

"It's Angeline!" shouted Billings, seizing her. "They're all here now, mother," he cried.

"'Twasn't anything," declared Biny, who found herself immediately besieged on every side. "'Twasn't hot, nor anything. I just clum up over the back porch. Angy was screeching at the window," she answered rapidly, whirling around to reply to the volley of questions that fell upon her ears. "'Twas just as easy as could be. Lemme be!"

"You're a little heroine!" cried one of the neighbors, his eyes glistening.

"Ain't a little herwine, either," said Biny, not liking the sound of the word.

"Her face is all blistered," said a tender-hearted woman, just longing to pet her.

"Ain't blistered," contradicted Biny, very much vexed, and rubbing her cheeks with two smarting little palms. Lemme be, will you? It's all nice," she declared, lifting a countenance whose streaks of paint, not wholly obliterated by her scanty ablutions of the previous evening, looked frightful now in the luried light.

"Poor child, she wants to be let alone," said the neighbors, moving off.

"I ain't a poor child," screamed Biny; "and I'm going home." Then she realized that for all whom she loved there was no more a shelter, and she threw herself on the ground with the bitter cry—"Everyt'ing's burnded up!"

Travers, hearing the story, now in every mouth, rushed up, his face blackened with smoke, hands torn and bleeding, and found her thus.

"Biny," he said, gently, "we are all left to each other. Come,

child," and grasping her in his arms, he carried her to her mother, who had only just missed her.

There they all were, gathered into Deacon Hitchcock's ample house—to all the home-shelter they might know.

Then Travers went to Aunt Sarah's side. "Now, we must send for Uncle Joe," he said.

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE JOE.

A TEL'GRAM, sir." A district messenger boy held out a pale yellow envelope.

Uncle Joe seized it, tore it open, and ran his eye over the contents—

"Eh—what's this?" he cried, wrinkling up his forehead, and reading the message again—

"BUXTON, —.

"Our house was burned down last night. Please come, and tell us what to do.

TRAVERS DODGE."

"Our house burned down!" repeated Uncle Joe, helplessly, and waving his head from side to side; "well, what have I got to do with people's houses burning, pray tell—eh?" And he glared at the messenger so hard that the boy replied, "I don't know, sir, I'm sure."

"What are you answering for, I should like to know?" cried Mr. Joseph Dodge, turning around on him.

"I thought—I thought," stammered the boy, twirling his well-worn cap.

"Never mind what you thought," growled Uncle Joe. "You're to keep quiet; well, now, there must be some mistake—the telegram isn't for me."

"They said at th' office that 'twas," said the boy, doggedly.

“Well, they’re all idiots there, then,” cried Uncle Joe, tempestuously, giving the yellow sheet a whirl. “Oh, stay!” Something familiar in the last word caught his attention—“D-o-d—why, ’pon my word, it’s Dodge.”

With that, he read it all over twice, dismissed the boy, and sat down in his big chair in a collapse at this call from his brother’s children

How well he remembered Farrington’s asking him on the eve of his departure for South America, “If the children need you, Joe, will you go to them?” And how he clapped him heartily on the back, crying out, “Indeed I will; you may depend on me.”

“But I didn’t think,” said Uncle Joe to himself, and rumpling up his shock of gray hair as he leaned his elbow on the arm of his chair, the telegram spread before him, “there would be any call for me. What am I to do with a lot of children on my hands?”

He glared at the telegram a moment or two longer, reading it over several times, to see that the Dodge homestead was really burned down and that he was summoned to Buxton, and then getting out of his chair, he thrust his hands into his pockets, and began to pace up and down the apartment, whistling a tune to help him out of this difficulty.

“Where’s that Miss—Miss—blest if I know what her name is,” he cried, with a sudden pause in the whistling. “What’s she been about to let them take fire in this style, I should like to know,” he added, irritably.

“And what am I expected to do,” he cried at last, going back to the table to pick off the telegram and read it again as if he had never seen it before.

“Well, I’m in for it, of course—next of kin, and I must run down to Buxton—that’s clear as day, and catch the next train, too, which leaves in about—about”—he was now pulling

out his watch, and peering at it; then he fell upon the timetable in the morning paper—"half an hour," he cried. And immediately he was hurrying around the apartment packing his traveling bag. At the end of ten minutes he threw on his hat, locked the door of his bachelor den, and was on his way to the Grand Central Depot, arriving just in time to board the train as it steamed off.

"Who's Uncle Joe?" cried the little Duke, who, arrayed in one of Billy Hitchcock's dresses, was wandering around the next afternoon, looking on life as an enigma beyond his solving; "and what's he coming for, anyway?"

"To get us a place to stay," said Cicely, smoothing down Patty's blue cambric gown; "a nice nest to put us all in somewhere, Duke."

"I don't want a nest," grumbled Duke, in a bad humor; "I want my mats-store."

"Yes," said Cicely, only half hearing. She was revolving in her mind the thousand and one thoughts that would naturally arise to one thrust homeless upon the world.

"My mats-store!" roared Duke, now thoroughly cross, and twitching her sleeve; "I'm going down cellar to make another," starting for the door.

"Duke, this is Mrs. Hitchcock's house," cried Cicely, running after him; "and you mustn't go anywhere in it without asking her."

"I'm going home," announced Duke, suddenly, and bursting into tears; "I don't like it here one bit. Come, Cecy," and he held out his little hand.

"Oh, Duke!" exclaimed Cicely, showering kisses on his dear little yellow head, while the tears rolled fast over her cheeks; "let us go down into the kitchen," she cried suddenly, wiping them off. "Perhaps Jemima will bake you a gingerbread man."

Duke broke away from her and stalked to the door. "I don't

want a gingerbread man." he cried, angrily; "I want my own home."

Cicely rushed after him in despair. "There isn't any home left, Duke. But Uncle Joe is coming; then he will find us the most beautiful place!" She seized the bottom of Billy's gown. "Oh, you can't think how lovely it's to be. Now be a good boy."

"I want to go home." roared Duke.

"I'll ask Mrs. Hitchcock if she'll let us go down and play in her cellar," said Cicely, "if you'll stop screaming. Then you can make your—what is it?"

"Mats-store," said Duke, smiling through his tears; "well, come along," wiping his face with the back of his fat little hand. "I had one in the other cellar." he confided, as they ran down-stairs.

"Where?" asked Cicely, carelessly. "Take care, or you'll fall; you're not used to these stairs."

"Why, in the wood." said the little Duke, with a crow at the remembrance. "Maum Silvy didn't know I took her matses."

"Marmaduke Dodge!" gasped Cicely; then she sat down in the middle of the stairs without another word.

"I tucked them in," said Duke, standing over her and illustrating with a gleeful finger—"the matses you know you light the gas with." He pointed with his small thumb ceilingward, in an impressive manner—"Oh, ever so far in the wood," then dropping his voice to a confidential whisper—"I heard Maum Silvy coming—she didn't see me, for I ran away, and I was going back to get them to play store with—and now I can't," he finished, with an injured expression.

"Oh—oh!" Cicely sat quite still, giving vent to these explosive little exclamations. Patty Hitchcock, running through the long hall, found them thus.

"Oh, here you are!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Cecy, what shall

I do? My duet that I left over to your house yesterday, after we got through playing it, is all burned up—if you only could have saved that.”

“Oh—oh!” still gasped Cicely, with wide eyes.

“Don’t look so,” cried Patty in remorse, and swallowing her own regret. “Pa can give me another, perhaps.”



UNCLE JOE.

Just then the outside door was thrown open and Travers rushed in eagerly, tugging in a big portmanteau, and after him stamped a middle-aged gentleman with iron-gray hair, keen, straightforward eyes, and an air of extreme perplexity over his every movement.

“Uncle Joe,” announced Travers, with a flourish of the portmanteau; “well, I should say. Cicely—on the stairs!”

Cicely, who had intended to be quite elegant and composed on the arrival of the uncle, almost a stranger, now sprang to her feet and mumbled out some sort of a welcome.

“So this is Cicely,” said Uncle Joe, kindly, and shaking her hand cordially. “Goodness me, child, how you have grown! When I last saw you, you were the size of that chap,” pointing to the little Duke. “And these are the rest of you children?”

Well, I'm glad to see you all," he added, running his keen eyes over the group. "And how are you, sir?" extending his hand toward the baby of the family.

The little Duke, thwarted in his plans for the afternoon, was in no mood to receive guests. So he thrust both hands back of Billy's gown, dug the toe of Billy's shoe into the stair carpet and said, "I don't like you."

"Marmaduke!" cried Cicely, precipitating herself upon him. "Why, it's dear Uncle Joe."

"Never mind—never mind," said Uncle Joe, pleasantly; "we'll get on better when we know each other. "Oh, and here's another"—whirling around to catch sight of Patty—"Goodness, I thought there were but three of you."

"Oh, this is Patty Hitchcock," exclaimed Travers.

"Ah!" said Uncle Joe, turning away indifferently.

There might be good people in the world who were not "Dodges," but at this stage of affairs, bent on the contemplation of that family, he didn't care to investigate the matter.

"She's so good!" cried Cicely, in a gust of gratitude, and throwing her arms around her friend. "And her father's so kind to us, and her mother, and"—

"We're staying here," explained Travers. "They took us all in right after the fire."

"They did?" cried Uncle Joe; "I'm very glad to see you, I'm sure," shaking Patty's hand. "Well, now, where's your Miss—Miss"—

"Brett," said Travers, and "Aunt Sarah," said Cicely; "she's in the sitting-room making some clothes for us on Mrs. Hitchcock's machine."

"This way, Uncle Joe," cried Travers, hurrying down the hall to throw wide the sitting-room door—"Aunty, here's Uncle Joe."

At the end of the talk, which lasted well into the evening, Mr. Joseph Dodge, resisting all pleadings of the hospitable dea-

con, walked down the village road to the "Hotel," as the flourishing boarding-house on the main street was termed by courtesy, conversing with himself something in this wise—

"If I haven't got myself into a precious scrape!" Tramp—tramp! "But then, I'm in, so what's the use of talking. A lot of children on my hands, and I never saw a child scarcely, and don't know in the least the nature of the animal." Tramp—tramp—tramp! "Well," and he drew a long breath, "I'm just going to treat them all like reasonable beings, every single one of them, even the little youngster, and they look as if they wouldn't disappoint me. There's one thing that's no small comfort, Farrington has contrived to put over them a pretty sensible woman—that Miss Brett. She's a woman now! Don't stop to argue nor air her opinions, as they all do, but just listens, and when the case is all set out, then gives her opinion, and right well, too. Oh, she'll do to trust the children with." Tramp—tramp—tramp! "Lucky that the Congdons just offered me their cabin all furnished, thinking I'd take a bachelor club up for an Adirondack season, while they're in Europe. "That old Maum Silvy is jolly, and a character, and that little black wild-cat of hers has the right stuff in her. Well, here I am," as he reached his temporary abode. "To think," as he marched up the steps, "that I'm off for the Adirondacks, next week, with my family. Whew!"

In less than twenty-four hours, there wasn't a man, woman or child in all Buxton, who didn't know that the Dodges, who were burned out, were going to the Adirondacks for the summer, with attendant particulars, many largely colored by the fancy of the narrator; "how the Dodge children's uncle, Mr. Joseph Dodge, of New York, an old bachelor, and awful rich, had come on and said that the whole family must go away." And the county newspaper gave two columns and a half to a description of Mr. Joseph Dodge and his plan.

Uncle Joe, so suddenly invested with a family, made all possible speed with the preliminaries, ran back to New York and adjusted his business, which was the care of his real estate and stocks, and in one week they were to start for their new home.



IN LESS THAN TWENTY FOUR HOURS, ALL BURTON KNEW IT.

The Billings family, their companions in misfortune, seemed likely to be forgotten in the excitement attendant upon the departure, and had it not been for Uncle Joe, would have fared sadly.

Miss Brett also found time amid her manifold distractions, to enlist hearts and hands in their behalf, so that all went well with them by the time the Adirondack party was off.

“I thought that Biny would be perfectly delighted,” chattered Cicely, watching Miss Brett in her room packing her trunks. “But she won’t leave Angeline, she says, and cries when I tell her she will have to. Just think, cry at those

splendid Adirondacks!" Cicely's powers of expression gave out at that.

"Biny has the foundation of a fine character," said Aunt Sarah, shaking out her last winter's alpaca. "There, that will do to make over when I get there."

"Biny gives everything nice she gets to eat, to Angeline," said Cicely. "She does, really, Aunty—all her goodies. Jemima gave her some raisins yesterday, and you know she loves them extravagantly; and she just slid them under her apron, and gave the whole bunch to that dirty little creature. She didn't think I saw it, but I did."

"You and I, Cicely," said Miss Brett abruptly, and pausing a moment in her busy operations, "have a piece of work laid out to our hands."

"What is it, Aunty?"

"Why, to help Biny up to what she is capable of being," said Aunt Sarah. "I'm sure I've neglected that child sadly."

"You, Aunt Sarah!" exclaimed Cicely, in amazement. "Why, you've worked yourself almost to death over Biny, to make her good."

"I haven't done what I ought to, Cecy," said Miss Brett, with a sigh. "Well, it's no time for regrets now," she added, hurrying back to her preparations; "but when we get to the wilderness, why, you and I, child, will give up a little more time to Biny. She's worth it."

At this moment Uncle Joe, strolling down Deacon Hitchcock's garden, heard voices within a grape arbor, weather-stained and nearly tumbling to decay.

"Ef you don't do just as I tell you, you can't be my chile, no, not a single bit. I sh'd be so ash-a-m-med." And the voice died away in the depths of distress and mortification. "Thar, now, set up like a lady."

"Yes," said a dull, stolid voice.

"You mustn't ever say yes," corrected Biny, severely; "that isn't the way good children talk—yes, marm, now."

"Yes, marm—now," repeated the dull voice.

"'Tisn't now," cried Biny decidedly, but still very patient. "You mustn't say that."

"Yes, marm—'tisn't now," cried the pupil, with more animation, and a hint of joy at being right at last.

"But 'tis," cried Biny, quickly. "I tell you you mustn't say only just what I say."

"You said it wasn't," cried the tutored one, for the first time venturing an original remark.

"But you are not to say it," cried Biny, in a louder key, though still keeping her equanimity wonderfully; "now go on, what did I tell you?"

"Yes, marm—'tis—'tis," screamed Angeline, in such a brave voice, that Uncle Joe burst into a hearty laugh.

"So this is your adopted child, Biny," he exclaimed, wiping his eyes and stepping within the rickety bower to see a little squatty figure very much resembling an unhappy toad, set up on the broken-down bench that ran around the arbor.

Biny started. "Sir," she exclaimed, staring blankly; "I don't know what that is."

"Why, you've adopted her," explained Uncle Joe, biting the ends of his moustache; "made her your own child, you know; and you are going to take care of her, and all that sort of thing, aren't you?"

"Yes," said Biny, with great animation, and running over to set Angeline straighter.

"Yes, marm," said the figure, without moving a muscle.

"She's learned pretty fast so far," said Joe, smiling down into the little black face. "It's a very solemn thing to bring up a child, Biny. Now, then, let her get down and run home. I want you."

"I must carry you into the house, Ang'line," said Biny, with great dignity; "Mr. Josuf wants me." And without further ado, she picked her off the bench, and staggered out of the arbor.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, stepping out after her to watch the progress made down the path. "This is something fearful. Hold on, Biny." But Maum Silvy, from the kitchen window, had already seen her, and was now bringing her in.

"It's perfectly redick'lous," Maum Silvy was exclaiming, "for you to tote dat gret fat creeter, Albino Simpson; set her down."

"I must carry her," puffed Biny; "she's my 'dopted child."

"'Dopted fiddlesticks!" exclaimed Maum Silvy, with a shrill laugh.

"He said so," persisted Biny, setting Angeline carefully in a chair, and smoothing down her dirty gown.

"Who?" cried her mother.

"Mister Josuf," cried Biny. "Didn't he, Angeline?"

"Yes, marm," said the square mouth, without a particle of expression.

"Oh, I shall die!" exploded Maum Silvy, staggering to the nearest chair; "yes, marm—oh, dear—dear!"

"Well," she said at last, with a long breath, and wiping her face vigorously on her bandanna, "I've no disjections to the 'doption as I knows of, only you ain't going to tote your chile in dat fashion. It'll break the spine of your backbone into splinters."

At this dreadful warning, Biny ran up to her mother in great distress.

"Is it, Mammy," she cried, presenting her back for examination, "all in splinters? Is it—oh, do look; and will the pieces tumble out?"

"Well, I reckon not now," said Maum Silvy, cautiously. "That is," she added solemnly, "ef you set down and rest a spell."

"Then will it come all right?" cried Biny, rushing for a chair; "every speck right, Mammy?"

"Yes, yes," said Maum Silvy; "I make no manner o' doubt 'twill all come right, ef you don't go to kerrying her again."

"I won't carry her a single tote," cried Biny. "How long must I set here, Mammy? Mr. Josuf wants me."

"If Mr. Josuf wants you for anything," said Maum Silvy, quickly, "why, that'll do the spine of your back-bone the best good in the world to fly down and do it for him."

"Won't it hurt it?" asked Biny, with an anxious roll of her big eyes.

"Massy, no—do it the best good in de world! Fly down now."

Biny got most carefully out of her chair, and finding that she did not come to pieces, gave a glad flourish to her small heels and raced through the doorway to Uncle Joe. "Well, Biny," he said, when the two had passed through the Deacon's gateway, "people always buy things for their adopted children, you know. Supposing you and I should go to the store, and get Angeline some nice things."

Biny screamed for joy—"Ang'line wants a bonnet, and"—

"Come on," said Uncle Joe, holding out his hand; "you can tell me the list as we go along."

"She don't want any list," chattered Biny, accepting the invitation, and hopping like a squirrel by his side; "she wants clothes."

"So she does," cried Uncle Joe; "well, here is the store."

The shop-keeper, on perceiving his customer, sprang forward with great alacrity, rubbing his hands.

"Ah—Mr. Dodge—ahem! Walk right in. It's a beautiful day, sir; yes, walk right in. What can I show you to-day, sir?"

"This young friend of mine would be glad to be served," said Uncle Joe.

"It's for my 'dopted chile," said Biny, with a great deal of dignity.

"Adopted child?" repeated the shop-keeper, staring into the small black face on the other side of the counter.

"She's taken a little creature in tow," said Uncle Joe; "one of the Billings family that was burned out."

"The one she saved?" asked the shop-keeper.

"Yes," said Uncle Joe; "and the very best articles you have in your store, if she asks for them, you'll oblige me by bringing them out."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," said the shop-keeper, obsequiously. "Now, then, little girl," he said, with a smile intended to be extremely winning, "tell me, what shall I get you first?"

"She wants a bonnet," said Biny, with a grown-up air, and running her black, beadlike eyes over the shelves; "a nice bonnet. She hasn't any."

"A bonnet!" repeated the shop-keeper, in dismay. "Well, now, that's too bad. I don't believe I've got one in the store. Oh, stay. I'll show you some of the prettiest sun-bonnets you ever set your eyes on."

"I want a bonnet," declared Biny; "a real, truly bonnet with ribbons and a feather."

"Well, this has got strings," said the shop-keeper. "See, now ain't that splendid?" He held out a pink calico sun-bunnet, and shook out the cape with professional grace.

"That isn't a bonnet," said Biny, with withering scorn; "that's only calico."

"It's what little girls wear," said Uncle Joe; "I'd take it if I were you."

"Mister Josuf's" opinion being quite a different thing, the sun-bonnet was accepted, and Biny gave her next order.

"And she wants some shoes—some splendid red ones with white buttons on."

"I don't believe I've got a pair," began the shop-keeper, realizing that here was a customer after "novelties." Suddenly he rushed off and came joyfully back. "Just one—I forgot all about 'em. Ain't they beauties?"

"They haven't any white buttons," said Biny.

"Can't you put on white buttons?" asked Uncle Joe.

"I'll give you some for nothing," said the shop-keeper, bringing out a handful. "There, you can sew those on yourself; that's fine. Now, then, what next?"

"A stick of candy," said Biny, importantly.

"Give her the whole lot," said Uncle Joe; "there are enough children at the Billings house to dispose of them. Now, Biny, what next?"

"A lace veil," said Biny; "one with teenty specks all over it. And then a dress, and it must be yellow."

"I've got red," said the shop-keeper, going over to investigate a large pile of calico dresses; "and blue, and brown, but not a yellow. They ain't worn this year, you know—you better take a red one." proceeding to pull out a bargain.

Biny ran after him. "No, I want a yellow one." she protested, when away went the whole pile of dresses, knocking over a roll of stair-carpeting on its way.

"Look out," said the shop-keeper, as the best bargains met Biny. "That's too bad," he ejaculated, as Uncle Joe picked her up.

"I don't want to buy any more things," said Biny, marching to the door.

"Here, come back," shouted the shop-keeper; "I've got something splendid to show you." But Biny was already out and a good distance up the street, so Uncle Joe laughingly pulled out his purse, paid the bill, and waited for the big bundle to be done up.

"Hold on, Biny," he said, tossing her the package where

she sat on a big stone by the roadside, waiting for him; "it was all an accident—he couldn't help it, child."

"I most know he did it on purpose," said Biny, with flashing eyes. "He used to be awful cross to me when I went on errands—so!"

"Well, get off your stone, and come on," said Uncle Joe, laughing. "You'll leave your child quite well off," he added, "when you start for the Adirondacks, Biny."

A change flashed over the dark little face, and the arm around the big parcel trembled.

"I don't—want—to—go," she began.

"How in the world can you write letters to her, then," cried Uncle Joe; "and I was going to buy you such a nice desk."

"And real ink?" cried Biny, stopping short in the dusty road. "The black nice stuff that big folks write with?"

"Exactly." Uncle Joe smiled down into her eager eyes. "All real ink and a nice desk for Biny Simpson."

"Then I'll go to the Aroncracks," cried Biny, with a flourish of her big bundle. "Let's go home and tell 'em we'll go to-morrow. Aren't the whiz-cars going then?"

"The whiz-cars are," said Uncle Joe, laughing; "but we are not, until next week Thursday. Then if all goes well, we're off."

Meanwhile the boys raced over the stairs. Travers, at the head of the procession, flung open the door of the little hall-chamber Mrs. Hitchcock had given him.

"There!" he exclaimed, with triumph. "Isn't she a beauty, though?"

The "she" was a splendid breech-loading shot-gun lying in state on the table, ready for admiration.

"'Pon honor, Trav," exclaimed Phil Mason, as the boys surrounded the table hungrily, "if you ain't a lucky dog!" as Travers seized the rifle.

"Lucky! I should say so," cried another boy. "Hand it over

a minute, Trav. I'd give all I ever expect to be worth, to go with you."

"Take your paws off, Simons," said Phil, thrusting out an eager brown hand. "Let's just handle that shooter a minute, Trav."

"Easy—easy there," cried Travers, holding the gun close; "you'll all get your turn at it. Now, then, Simons, you spoke first." He laid his treasure carefully in the arms of the first boy. "What do you say to that?"

But Simons was beyond speech, examining the "shooter" rapidly, the rest of the boys crowding him impatiently.

"What is she?" asked one, "a colt—or a Remington?"

"Neither," said Travers, trying to appear calm through it all; "it's a Winchester repeating rifle, and it's just as good as Uncle Joe's, every bit. And he's got a Stevens pocket rifle, too. That is to practice with; that's the best for small game."

Travers brought this all out so easily that the boys looked at him in envy.

"You're a lucky dog!" burst out Phil again, breaking the pause.

"Trav deserves every bit of his good luck," cried Tom Fisher, loyally, with a clap on his friend's back.

"That's so," said Simons, still overhauling the gun.

"I know it," said Phil, "as well as you do. Here, hand that shooter over, will you, Si. You've had it about long enough."

"Yes, time's up, Simons," said Travers, laughing. "Pass her over to Phil."

So Phil eagerly seized the rifle that Simons reluctantly handed him, to be immediately surrounded by the three boys who had not yet examined it for themselves.

"Give us the rest of the show, Trav," said Simons, stretching his long legs and looking about the room.

"Want to see my flies?" asked Travers.

"Yes, indeed. Oh, Jack Sprat!"

This exclamation was wrung out of Simons by the sudden appearance of the fly-book, brilliant with its fancy collection of "scarlet dragons," and "blue-tailed ibies," and all the rest, and the slender, graceful rod that Travers flashed before his eyes. At the lively bustle over this fresh excitement, the three boys forming Phil's coterie around the rifle, immediately deserted him and it, running over, with loud exclamations, to the fisherman's outfit.

"I wish my house would burn down and make me go to the Adirondacks," cried Flem Goodwin, whose round face seemed on the point of bursting with surprise, and he panted out, "I suppose you'll shoot a deer, now, about every day?"

Travers burst into a laugh. "I'll indeed be a lucky dog if I shoot one through the whole season."

"Phoh! With such a thing as that you ought to bring down the game," cried Flem, pointing over to Phil and his prize. This brought the other two, who had not yet held the gun, to the remembrance of that fact, and they left the fishing display, and ran back to clamor for their rights, Flem giving up his turn for a quieter chance.

"Then here's my compass," said Travers, putting on the table a nice one for the pocket; "and Uncle Joe is going to get me a jack-lamp."

"What's a jack-lamp?" asked Phil and Flem together.

"Why, a lantern to stick into your hat when you go deer-hunting by night," said Travers, with sparkling eyes and ill-concealed excitement, as he saw the effect on the boys. "It throws the light on the deer, but you are in the dark as you sit in the boat—then you can get a good pop at the chap."

Flem and Phil held their breath at these enchanting pictures. Suddenly a foot was heard on the stairs.

"Travers—my boy—are you up there?" It was Uncle Joe's

voice. Travers stopped in the middle of a big hunting story, in which he hoped to figure, and dashed to the door.

"Yes—come, do, Uncle Joe," he cried, eagerly. "And the boys are here—they want to see you!"

"So I see," exclaimed Uncle Joe, climbing the stairs, and puffing in. "Well, that is a good climb for me. How d'ye do, boys."

Every boy deserted the fascinating array and came up, Uncle Joe shaking each by the hand. "How I wish I could take you all with us!" he cried, impulsively, looking into their flushed faces and young, eager eyes.

Oh, didn't they echo that wish!

"Perhaps your fathers will come up with you and give you a chance at the woods," he said, kindly, after a pause which no one could break.

"No use in hoping that," groaned Phil Mason; "we're going to Saratoga. Sister Betty has got a lot of new gowns for it. Bother take the place!"

"And we're going to Newport," said Flem. with another groan. "Oh, dear!"

"And I'm not going anywhere," said a third boy, dismally; "that's the worst of all"—an announcement that another one echoed.

Tom Fisher said nothing. Travers glanced quickly at him, then at Uncle Joe. The glance said as clearly as words, "Ask him."

"And where are you going—eh?" asked Uncle Joe, with a keen look under his bushy eyebrows at Tom's face.

Tom turned to the fishing tackle sprawled over the table and pretended not to hear. As the question was repeated, he looked up and said, abruptly, "Oh, I'm to do a bit of teaching, sir."

"A bit of teaching?" roared Uncle Joe; "eh, what is the boy talking about?" turning helplessly to Travers.

"He's going to teach the school at Three Corners this summer, Uncle Joe," said Travers, quietly.

"Teach school? You?" cried Uncle Joe. "Why, you aren't above fifteen. The very idea!"

"I'm just seventeen," said Tom, drawing up his tall figure.

"Eh! Is that so?" cried Uncle Joe. "Well, what of it? A seventeen-year-old boy ought to be in better business than teaching school in the summer vacation."

"I'm very glad of the chance, sir," said Tom Fisher.

"Teaching school in the summer vacation!" repeated Uncle Joe, as if the idea were for the first time brought to his notice. "Eh, who ever heard of such an idea for a—growing young thing? Well, boys, glad to see you—glad to see you all. Didn't know you were occupied, Travers; any other time will do for what I want you for. No, can't stay any longer, thank you. Good-day, all." And Uncle Joe shot out, and down the stairs.

"A growing lad teaching school in the summer!" he exploded, all the way down, and rumpling up his gray hair in perplexity; "it's against all nature—it sha'n't be allowed!"

CHAPTER V.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

WE are going to stay in Saratoga one night," chattered Cicely, to Patty Hitchcock, in a transport.

"Bother the place," growled Travers, in an undertone; "well, one night will soon be over, that's the only comfort."

"And then we stage over to Lake George, and sail up there."

"Where?" asked Patty, in awe.

"Why, I just told you, up Lake George," repeated Cicely; "and then we stage to Lake Champlain, and stop at Westlake."

"Westport," corrected Travers.

"Oh, yes; Westport. Well, and then we stage it through about seven miles"—

"No—nine," said Travers.

"Well, nine, then—to Elizabethtown; and there we stay over night, and stage over to Keene Valley the next day. Our cabin is at Keene Valley, you know," said Cicely, with the air of an old Adirondacker.

"Oh, dear!" cried Patty, smoothing down her pink gingham gown discontentedly; "I never heard anything so perfectly rich and elegant as it all sounds. And you are going to stage it here, and stage it there, and I've got to stay at home, and watch Mr. Green drive his pigs by."

Mr. Green was next neighbor to the deacon, and as Patty brought out her sad plaint, the picture of his customary figure impelling his live stock up the village street, caused Travers and Cicely to burst into a hearty laugh.

"It seems dreadful for me to go off and have a good time," said Cicely, growing sober and remorseful. "Oh, I do wish, Patty, you were going, too."

"But you haven't your house burned over your head," said Travers, after an uncomfortable pause.

Patty's blue eyes roved from wall to wall.

"Oh, dear me, if our things burned up, I should just die!" she gasped.

"No, you wouldn't," said Cicely, hoarsely, and with very white cheeks.

"Yes, I should too, Cicely Dodge; I couldn't stand it."

Cicely turned away abruptly, and swallowed hard. Something seemed to choke her, and she dared not try to speak.

Suddenly two warm arms were thrown around her, and Patty's voice cried close to her ear, "I'm a hateful, horrid thing; but I envied you so. And to think you didn't save a thing, and had to run for your lives. I'm just as glad as I can be you are going to the Adirondacks—and I'll write you loads of letters. And Travers, you must send me a pair of horns from some of the deer you shoot," turning to him with a laugh.

"How many deer do you suppose I shall bring down?" asked Travers, glancing to see if Cicely was all right, before he joined in the laugh.

"Why, you'll shoot them all the while, of course," said Patty, "with that perfectly elegant gun of yours."

Travers threw back his head and shouted, "If I shoot one this season, I'll be lucky," he cried, when he found his voice.

"One a season!" repeated Patty. "Why, Travers Dodge, what's the use of that gun, then?"

"You don't suppose deer walk up to a body and mildly request that their brains be blown out, do you?" cried Travers.

"Cicely," called Aunt Sarah, over the stairs, "you may pack the trunk now."

"Oh, come, Patty!" Cicely's face was bright as ever now. "It will be good fun for you to help," as she sprang toward the door.

"I wish I could pack that trunk," exclaimed Travers, as Patty raced after her. "I have nothing to do; my traps are done up."



THERE WAS THE ANXIOUS WOMAN.

"Fancy a boy packing Aunt Sarah's and my things!" cried Cicely, turning back when half way up stairs. "I guess it would be packing, Patty."

"A boy can pack as good as a girl," shouted Travers after them; "and what's more, he isn't all day doing it, either. Hurry up, girls; we start to-morrow, you know."

And on the morrow, one of the loveliest of June days, in a shower of Buxton's best

wishes and God-speeds, our little party was off.

"Aunty," cried Cicely, after they were fairly on the way. "now as I've never traveled, I'm going to watch other people and see what they do."

"You'll have plenty of amusement," said Miss Brett, quietly,

as the two settled back into their seat, amid the bustle of the speeding train.

Cicely's bright eyes were already fixed on an anxious woman three seats off, who was under the impression that she had lost something. So she kept rummaging her bag, with a helpless air, and confiding her troubles to as many as would hear. Long before she got out, Cicely felt a personal responsibility over her smelling-bottle, her purse, the little presents she was taking to John's children, her hair-brush and her night-cap; each one of these articles being drawn from the bag, and dilated upon. And when her station was shouted out by the brakeman, Cicely thrilled to see her neighbors crowd the things back into the long-suffering bag, while the night-cap was tossed through the window to her where she stood on the platform, surrounded by "John and the children."

"Oh, Aunty," cried Cicely, her cheeks rosy at the dread; "what if she had lost it!"

And then she caught sight of the young man half-way down the car, who felt that he needed two seats, and that, as an American citizen, he should take his rights. Cicely only gave him a passing glance, and forgot her indignation as her glance fell upon an old acquaintance.

"Aunt Sarah!" she exclaimed, putting her brown traveling glove on Miss Brett's arm; "if there isn't that same woman who didn't know where she was going, and asked you about the train."

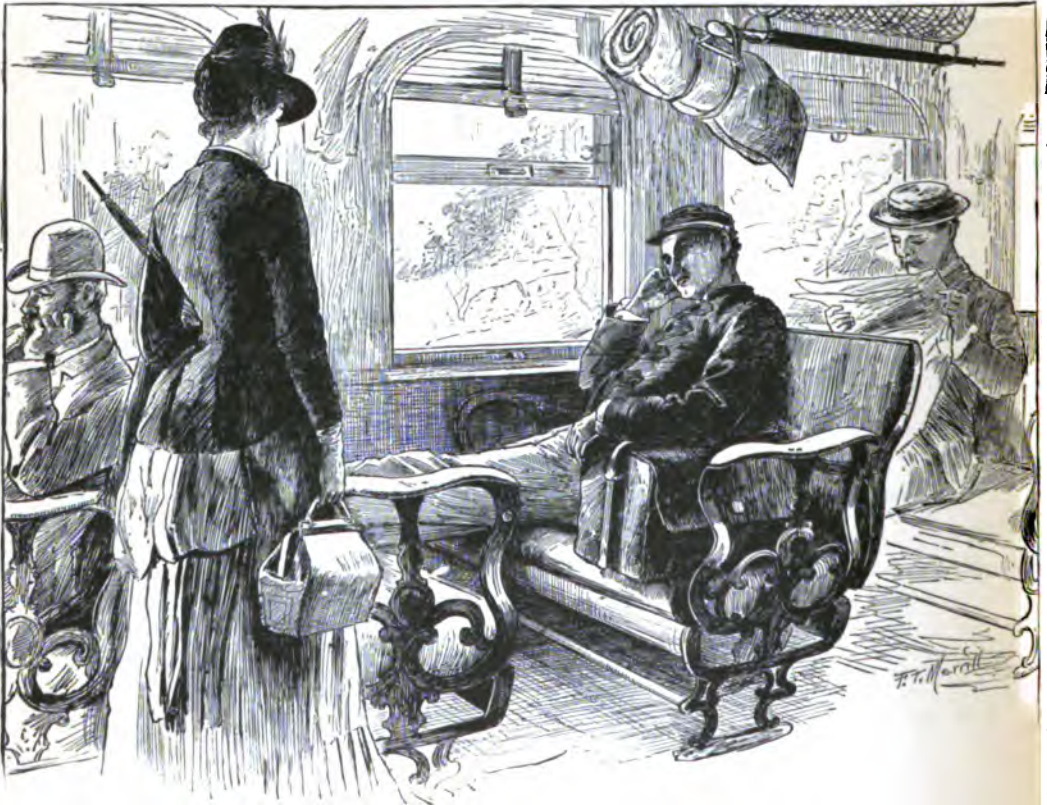
"But that woman asked me about Medfield," said Miss Brett, knocking off an intrusive cinder from the front breadth of her alpaca.

"I can't help it," whispered Cicely; "she is over there across the aisle, talking to that gentleman with gray hair."

Aunt Sarah looked across, and saw her fellow-traveler who had stopped her in the station as they were all hurrying to the cars.

"How far is it to Medfield?" she had asked, her deprecating presence blocking the way. Every thread of her shawl-fringe and the bows on her bonnet appealed for information.

"I do not know," said Miss Brett; "that official there," pointing to one. "will tell you."



THE YOUNG MAN WHO FELT THAT HE NEEDED TWO SEATS.

"Oh!" The uncertain woman with no eye for the railroad functionary, moved off to interrogate another hurrying passenger.

There she was now, asking her seat-mate how long it took to get to Cranberry Hill.

"I thought I'd go to Medfield to-day, but seeing this train standing here, it came to me p'raps I'd better give Medfield up. This goes to Cranberry Hill, don't it?"

"I do not know, Madam." The pompous man, shaking out his newspaper, turned and glared at her. "You must ask the conductor."

The uncertain woman looked out the window and sighed, then leaned forward and talked it all over with a sympathizing woman in the seat in front, who told her twenty different statements as regarded the distance to Cranberry Hill, finally ending by saying, "I don't know, come to think of it, as 'tis Cranberry Hill on this road. I believe it's Cranberry Junction."

Cicely, tired of watching them all, laid her soft cheek against the window casing, and drew a long breath of the pure, sweet air.

"The day is just made for us, isn't it, Aunty?" she exclaimed.



THE WOMAN WHO DIDN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHERE SHE WAS GOING, NOR HOW TO GET THERE.

"Yes, dear," smiled Miss Brett; "it's just the day to begin a new life in."

Uncle Joe, a few seats back, studies them keenly, gives a nod or two, and says to himself—"I sha'n't be sorry for this move."

"Have you heard of the dreadful times they're having up in the Adirondacks lately?" asked a gentleman in the next seat, looking up from his paper.

"No," said Uncle Joe. "What is it—anything special?"

"Oh, no," said the other; "only I notice it more, I suppose, because I've cousins up in that section. Went for their health, you know, and all that sort of thing. But I think there's a good deal of humbuggery about the whole talk, and I guess people will come to the same conclusion before long."

"What's happened?" asked Uncle Joe, carelessly.

"Why, in the first place the weather's bad; dreadfully rainy season up there, it seems, and the people who've gone to get cured, are dying off by the dozens. That is, my cousin wrote there had been a death at the hotel where he stopped, before he went camping out. Then the guides are getting perfectly exorbitant in their charges, uppish and disagreeable, and this"—pointing to the paper he had thrown down on his lap—"says there has just been a dreadful accident on a Saranac Lake steamboat. A lady shot and killed instantly, by the careless firing of a boy who got the fever for hunting which possesses every one who goes there. I wouldn't go near the place."

"All these things might have occurred anywhere else," said Uncle Joe, coolly. "Sickness and death put in an appearance occasionally, and swindling and a careless use of firearms are evils known to other places."

"Oh, well," rejoined the other with a shrug, "of course it don't make any difference to you, as you are not particularly interested in that region, but my cousin"—

"Blandford," called the conductor, putting his head in the doorway; "change cars for Castlebury, Freeland and the North."

"That's my summons," said the stranger, reaching for his bag. "Good day, sir," and he was off.

"Gracious!" said Uncle Joe to himself; "how did I dare to take these children into the woods? If anything should happen to them!"

Travers just then came along and found him in a fine state.

"I tell you what 'tis, Uncle Joe," he said, with sparkling eyes, "you've done about the best thing that ever was thought of, in this Adirondack expedition. What do you think Aunt Sarah has just said?"

"What?" cried Uncle Joe, hungrily, with a glance over at her black bonnet. "Sit down, do, Travers," making room for him.

"Aunt Sarah says it will be the making of us all over, and she never was so thankful for anything in her life, as to have the chance come to us."

"Did she?" cried Uncle Joe, radiantly. "Well, anything else? Tell all she said, every single thing."

"Well, she said Cicely has been very pale, and she is shut up too much for a girl who has grown so fast, and that she hopes everything from the outing for her."

"Well, tell on," said Uncle Joe.

"And it's just the thing for the little beggar," said Travers, with a tender glance at Duke, "though Aunt Sarah didn't call him that. She did say that, for the baby, it would give him the best possible start in life."

"And what about you?" questioned Uncle Joe, with a keen glance at the boy's rapt face. "Eh! Go on and tell me that, sir."

"She said"—and Travers hesitated a moment—"that I needed it more than all the rest. That's Aunty's way of looking at it, you know, Uncle Joe. She's been worrying ever since Papa

went away for me to get a chance to camp out and try wood-life, and something of that sort."

How Aunt Sarah's words glowed in his heart—"You've borne it all nobly, Travers, the loss and privation, and it's been a tough time for you—but you've taken your father's place as well as you could, and I'm very proud of you." How the boy blessed her for saying it, as he folded it away in the silence of his heart.

"Thank goodness!" ejaculated Uncle Joe, fervently, with another long look at the black bonnet, with its running folds of green veil that challenged a cinder to intrude. "We'll all have a jolly time, and come out about right, eh, Travers?"

The engine puffed lazily into the little town where they were to wait for connections with the train for Saratoga.

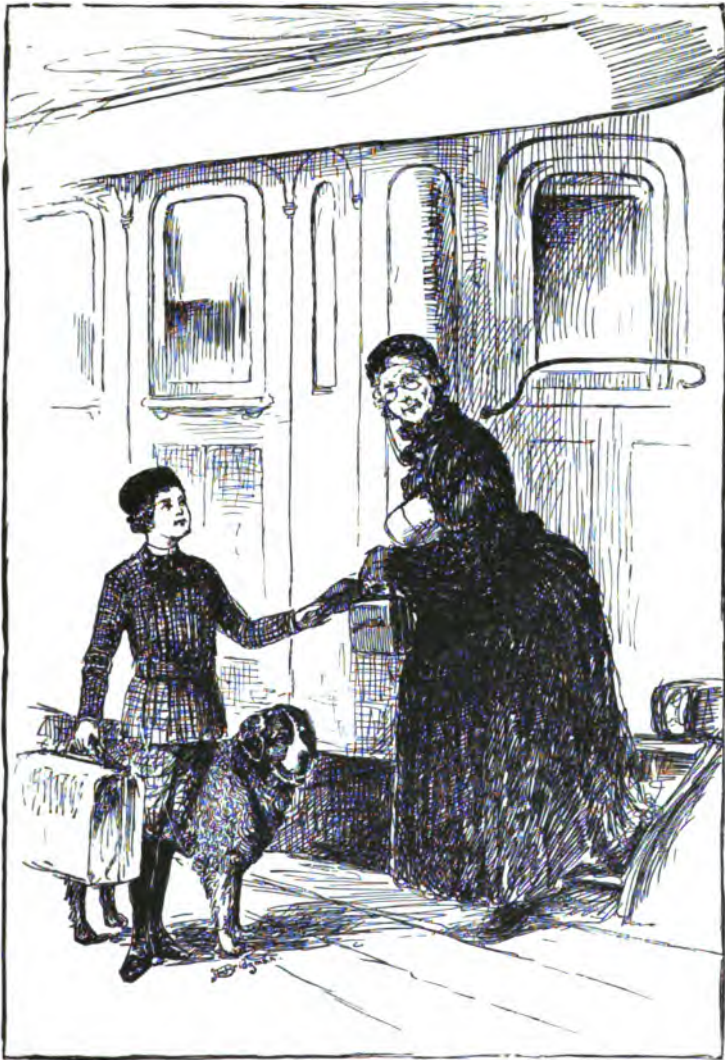
"Come!" cried Uncle Joe, pulling down traveling bags from the racks, and grasping shawls.

Travers flew over and roused Biny who, despite her frantic efforts to keep awake, had at last succumbed, and there she was fast asleep in the corner of the seat.

Jane seized Duke's hand, holding it fast. When she reached the car-steps, she lifted him down, to his great disgust. "There," she said, setting him on the platform, and straightening her hat; "we'll wait here till the others get out."

"I wanted to get out by myself," he roared; "now I'm going alone." And darting off quickly, he ran between two groups of hurrying passengers. Jane rushed after, but could see nothing of him. Then she turned and ran the other way, dashing against people in her frantic haste, looking both sides, and calling, "Duke, Duke!" so that when Miss Brett hurried after them to the platform, they were nowhere to be seen.

Cicely, meanwhile, was trying to help Maum Silvy. Unfortunately, that individual was impresssd with her power of taking care of herself, so she stalked out, forgetting her bundles.



THE LADY WITH THE PHILANTHROPIC GLASSES.

But once on the platform she remembered. "Thar's my band-box," she screamed, rushing back to the train.

"My dear woman!" exclaimed a lady, with philanthropic eye-

glasses, who had preceded her out of the train, now seizing her arm, "the cars are moving."

"And they've got my handbox," cried Maum Silvy, quite wildly, trying to break away from her. "Stop 'em, will you, somebody."

"I have your things, Maum Silvy," cried Cicely, running up, her arms full of packages. "See, everything is safe."

"Ye got the handbox?" cried Maum Silvy, eagerly.

"Yes, yes; do stop. Everybody is looking at us."

"What d'ye s'pose I keer if they are?" cried Maum Silvy, with a disdainful glance for the amused groups on the platform. "Let 'em look. I reckon dat's all dey're good for."

"Is Duke with you?" cried Travers, rushing up with a white face.

"Duke?—no." Down went the handbox and parcels, and Cicely grasped his arm.

"I guess they're all crazy," said a small boy, cheerfully, on the edge of the crowd quickly surrounding them.

"He ran away from Jane," Travers was saying, and then they all rushed off to Aunt Sarah in the waiting-room, who was doing her best to keep Jane from a fit of hysterics.

Uncle Joe, having met an old friend, who buttonholed him on the spot, heard nothing of all this till Travers dashed up with the question, "Oh, Uncle Joe, have you seen Duke?"

"Duke—Duke—bless me, no!" And then the two rushed back to see if the rest of the party had found the little fellow, meeting happy people with laughing children hanging to their hands, or running on before them in glee. Travers shuddered and wrung his hands at the sight.

But the blanched faces of the little group answered their unspoken question as they clung together. Suddenly a small voice close to Miss Brett's elbow cries, "Here she is—here's my Aunt Sarah, and all of them."

Pointing with one hand, in which remained a remnant of peanut candy, Duke dragged along with the other, a motherly



UNCLE JOE MET AN OLD FRIEND.

person with a most uncomfortable expression on her round countenance.

"Be so good as to explain, Madam, where this child has been all this time?" cried Uncle Joe, in the midst of the wild rejoicing over the prodigal.

"Way down there," Duke cried, determined to do the explaining himself. "And we had lots and lots of things to eat. Let's go back and get some more," unclasping his sticky hands from Cicely's new traveling dress, that they had seized in the first transport of the reunion.

The motherly person smoothed her stuff gown with the manner of one who had had trials, but her face broadened into a smile of relief.

"Well, sir, we've been around considerable, him and me—in the eating-room the last place, and glad enough I was to get him there, and out of the baggage-room, and all the while nobody come for him, and I was most distracted."

"Come for him!" repeated Uncle Joe; "we've been here, there and everywhere. Why on earth did you wander off so—couldn't you have staid out on the platform?"

The motherly person regarded him silently a breathing space, then looked over the rest of the party, finally allowing her black eyes to fall on the little Duke. Then she laughed a comfortable, delicious chuckle, that it was impossible to resist. "Well, sir," she said, "I want to ask you, if I may be so bold, did you ever stand still if he wanted to go?" Then she laughed again.

"Heavens and earth!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, whirling around to look at the boy. "No, I suppose not, to tell you the truth, my good woman. And I don't consider you in the least to blame, I really don't."

"I don't think," said the motherly person, looking volumes at Duke, "that you could blame me, sir, if you knew."

"I ran behind all the big boxes in there," cried Duke, joyfully, pointing a small finger at the baggage-room; "and she

couldn't catch me, and the men said bad old words, and it was fun. Let's go do it some more," he cried, affectionately precipitating himself upon his late traveling companion.

"You little rascal!" cried Uncle Joe.

"I'll tie you to Jane's apron-string," threatened Cicely, seizing him.

"I was standing on the platform," said the motherly person, as soon as she could be heard, "when he came stalking up as grand as you please. I asked him wasn't there anybody with him, and he said he could take care of himself. But I kept my eye on him, though I s'posed his people must be close by, when I see him spring into the baggage-room, right in among all the pitching round of the trunks. Then I run after him to make sure he didn't get killed. Well, I finally got him out, promising him something to eat; but once in the refreshment-room—well, there, I couldn't stir him till just this blessed minute."

"If you've any little ones at home," said Uncle Joe, slipping something into her hand, "give them that with the Duke's love."

"The who, sir?" cried the motherly person, quite awed.

"This chap's," said Uncle Joe, pulling the ear of the cause of all the trouble. "His name is Marmaduke, you know, so he is our little Duke."

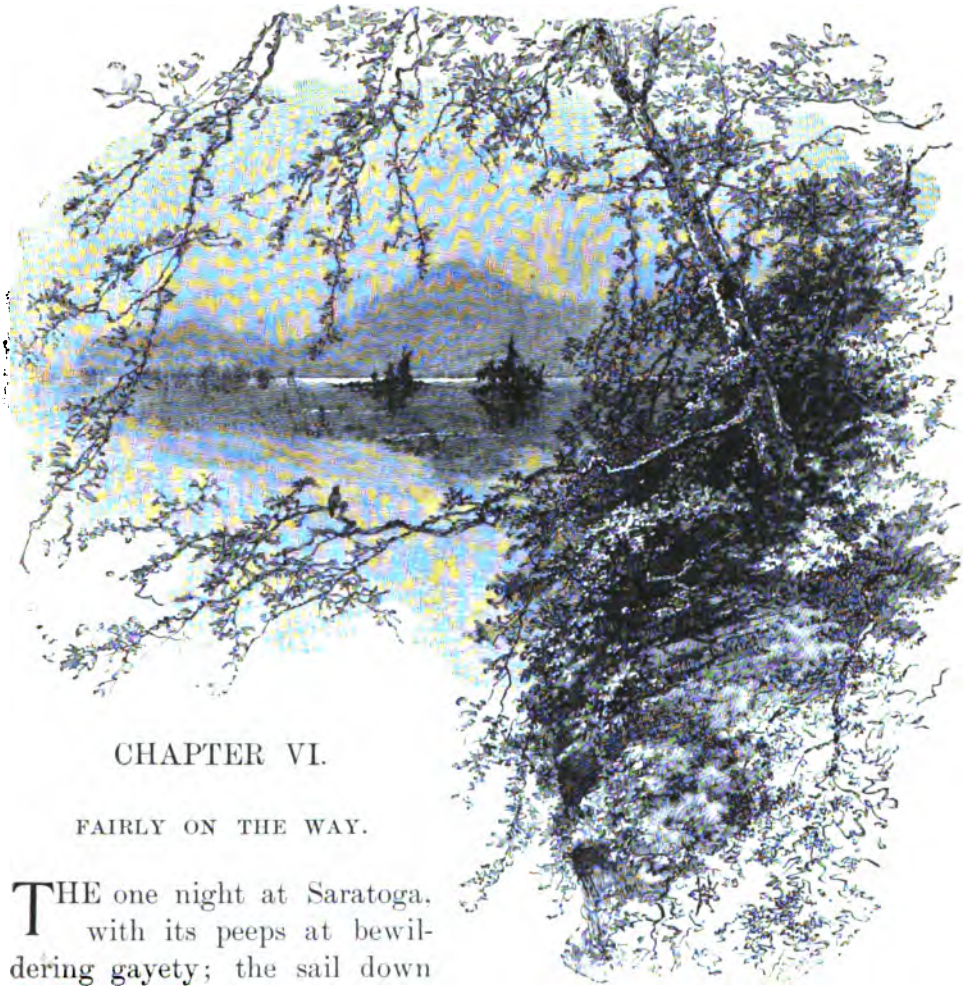
"Oh," said the woman, a shade disappointed; "I didn't know but 'twas a foreign noble boy may be, that had got lost."

"No, Madam, we are Americans," said Uncle Joe, grandly, and standing erect to run his fingers in his vest pockets. "Americans without a single particle of a title, nor any desire to acquire one."

"Yes, sir," said the motherly person; "well, I ain't exactly American, 'cause my father and mother were English, you know. I was born at sea, coming over, so I don't know as I'm anything; but I'm sure I respects the Americans, as I've always

lived amongst em, and I should be glad to see the little lad again."

"And I wish you might," said Uncle Joe, heartily; "for you've done us a service, Madam, we cannot ever forget." With that, he raised his hat to her, and Aunt Sarah took her by the hand, saying her thanks into gratified ears; then Cicely did the same, followed by Travers, and the little Duke planted sticky kisses all over her round face, and mourned because his family tore him away from her. "Do you all hold on to that fellow!" commanded Uncle Joe, "and we'll see if we can get him safely to the hotel. This way, now, and we'll have dinner; you know we wait here two hours, to take the train for Saratoga."



CHAPTER VI.

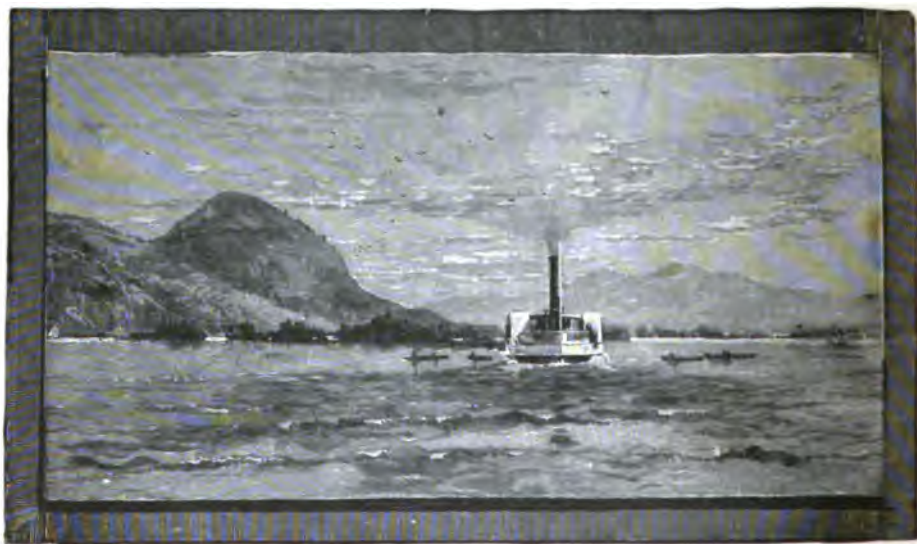
FAIRLY ON THE WAY.

THE one night at Saratoga, with its peeps at bewildering gayety; the sail down Lake George—that dream of delight—and the scarcely lesser pleasure, the sail down Lake Champlain to Westport, midway on its shore—these were passed, and stored away as blissful memories of changeful and exciting beauty. And now our party at Elizabethtown were ready to enter the enchanted valley.

Cicely opened wide the curtains the next morning. “Oh, Aunty,” she cried, “was ever anything so lovely!”

“And yet, this is only the gate of the valley,” said Aunt Sarah, over her shoulder.

“I don’t want to go down to breakfast,” said Cicely, curling up on the broad window-seat. “Do let me sit here and get accustomed to it all; think of eating baked potatoes and oatmeal when there is all this to look at, Aunty.” She waved her hands at the mountain girdle, and drew, in long breaths of the sweet air.



LAKE GEORGE

“You wouldn’t look at views long, without the baked potatoes and oatmeal,” said Aunt Sarah, sententiously. “Take my advice, Cecy, and eat a good breakfast. Then you’ll enjoy your day. Now hurry with your dressing; it is nearly eight o’clock.”

“Oh, dear,” mourned Cicely, getting off the window-seat; “it’s too perfectly lovely to leave, Aunty!” as she began to braid her hair.

"Do you suppose I can ride on a buckboard," she cried presently, "into Keene Valley? I heard the ladies in the parlor last night when Uncle Joe was getting our rooms, say they had splendid ones here. Do you, Aunty?"—flying around in front of the bureau with sparkling eyes.

"I think probably your uncle will let you—though I wouldn't ask him, Cicely, if I were you; he's so kind to think of everything, I'd take things as he plans them."

"So I will," said Cicely, smothering a sigh as she turned slowly back; "for he is the dearest dear, except papa, and you, Aunt Sarah, in all the world. And I'm sure the stage is good enough."

"It is quite good enough," said Miss Brett, with a laugh. "You seemed to have a happy time, driving in from Westport yesterday."

"Well, we couldn't have a buckboard," retorted Cicely; "they were all taken—now, if we can—but never mind, Uncle Joe will know best. I'm not going to tease for things."

"If you begin that way," said Aunt Sarah, affectionately, "you'll make this trip a delight to us all. It's the taking restless, discontented children and young people on a journey that is a risky experiment; and it results in everybody around them wishing a thousand times a day they had been left at home. Cicely, I think it would break my heart to have you develop into such a creature."

"Aunty—aunty, don't look so," begged Cicely, deserting the braid, to fly over and throw her arms around Miss Brett. "I won't tease—oh, I promise you I won't, not once while we are in the Adirondacks."

"I should be ashamed to," said Aunt Sarah, responding to the loving embrace, "in the face of these grand old mountains. Cicely, what good will it do for us to come up here, unless we go home better in mind and soul, as well as body?" She

dropped her gray eyes on the girl's glowing face on her breast. "There, there, child, I won't preach—that's as bad as anything. You are your father's and mother's child, and I can trust you. Now you really must get ready for breakfast." She set a kiss, a caress Miss Brett seldom indulged in, on the young forehead, and gently released her. "Yes, it is eight o'clock"—glancing at her watch.

Cicely went slowly back to the bureau, and did up the braid. "Don't wait for me, Aunty," she said; "I'll come right down."

"Very well," said Miss Brett, going out. "Be sure to lock the door and bring the key."

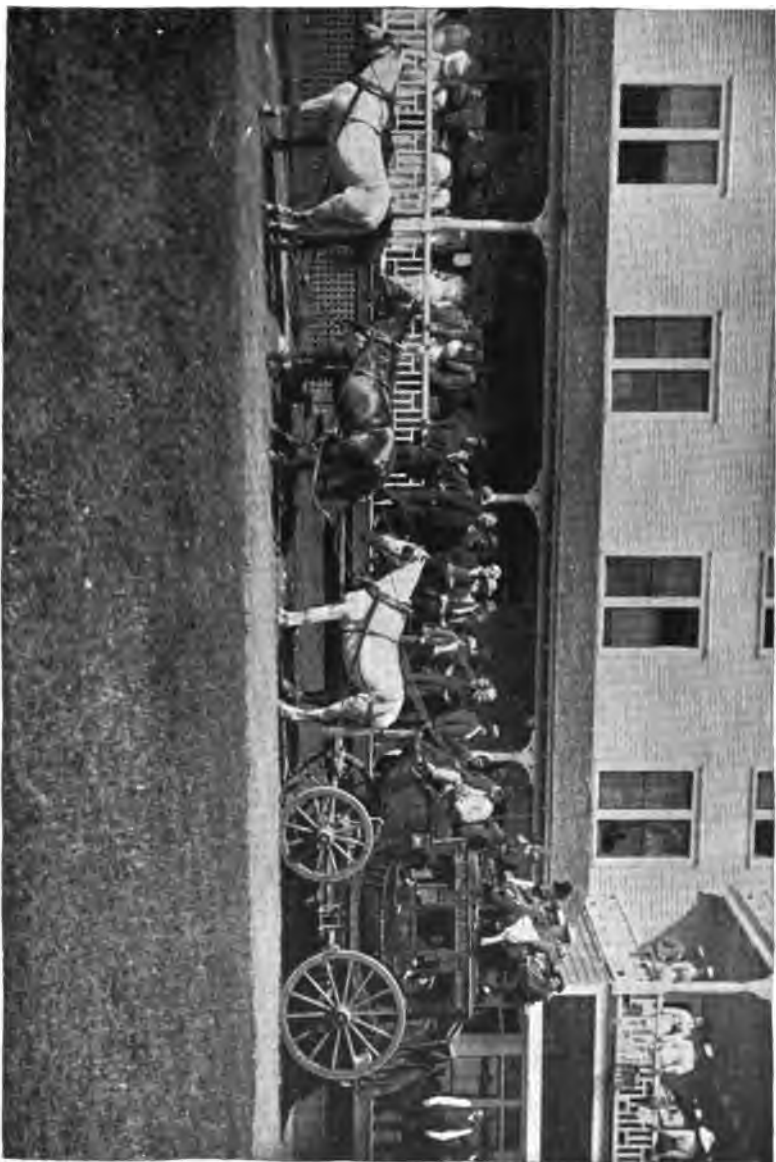
"She trusts me," said Cicely to herself, with a glance at the mountains. "Every time I see one of those peaks, and I can't help seeing them all summer, they will say it to me. Now I never can forget that, but I am going to mark my own special little mark about it."

Unclasping a little locket that hung from a ribbon around her throat, she gazed tenderly at the sweet face, then running over to the table, she caught up the pen and wrote on a bit of paper, "June 15th, 188—. Aunt Sarah says, 'I trust you'—Adirondacks."

"Mamma dear," said Cicely, softly, "I'll shut this up with you; then I never can forget." The little paper was tucked in, the locket closed, and Cicely, in less time than it takes to record it, was hurrying over the stairs to take the chair reserved for her at the breakfast-table.

"Hurry up—hurry up," called Travers, an hour later, leaping up the stairs; "Uncle Joe is ready to start—don't stop to prink, Ce; we're nearly in the wilderness now."

Cicely, at the top of the stairs with a little bag in her hand, cries, "I'm all ready, thank you; have you your neck-tie settled to your satisfaction? What a wonder!" Jane comes out of the room occupied by Duke and herself, leading him



A STAGE-LOAD STARTING FOR LAKE PLACID.

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**ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

by the hand and grumbling, "I wish we could stay in this hotel; it's something like, here." Aunt Sarah takes a last look in the bureau drawers to be sure that nothing is left behind, and at last the party is out on the veranda of the hotel, where the boarders are drawn up in full force to see a stage-load of their number set out for Lake Placid.

At one end of the veranda stood Mr. Moses Higgins, previously engaged by a letter from Uncle Joe, according to the advice of the Congdons. "You're all right," the advice concluded, "if you fall into the hands of that prince of guides—superintendent generally in Keene Valley—Moses Higgins."

So here they were, clustering around Mr. Higgins, who was leisurely shifting his quid from one cheek to the other, and whittling a pine stick, while he held his part in a conversation with Uncle Joe.

"Mr. Moses Higgins," announced Uncle Joe, as his family came up; "and from all accounts, we are lucky to fall into his hands."

Mr. Higgins gave an uneasy roll to the quid, tried to throw away unseen his whittled stick, grabbed at his cap, that had a trick of settling over his ears—"I'm pleased to see ye," he said.

"Now begin and settle us, and our traps," said Uncle Joe, in a business way; "and let us get out of this staring crowd"—*sotto voce*. "Good gracious! I haven't been a family man so long that I can stand a hotel emptied on the piazza."

Mr. Higgins, alert for action, slouched off the steps and out of sight, appearing presently with two men, who proceeded to load the pile of boxes and trunks on the veranda belonging to the Dodge party, into the large wagon brought for that purpose. "They'll do it all right," he said, coming up the steps to point with his thumb over his shoulder at the workers. "And we might as well get in and ride on. They'll foller; my senses,

they have to, there ain't but one road. Now then, Marm, shall I give you a lift to the middle seat?" to Miss Brett. "Well, I say, you get in easy," as Aunt Sarah speedily inducted herself into a large covered mountain wagon. "I guess you," to Uncle Joe, "better take the front seat along with Eliphalet, and those black folks"—dropping his voice—"can sit in behind. And you"—with an eye to Travers—"might sit in here with Marm."

Cicely drew a long breath, and stood quite still. Off back of the mountain wagon, and on the other side of the road, was a two-seated buckboard. The horses fastened to it pranced and shook their heads as if they could tell volumes of the delight at being connected in any way with it. There was no other vehicle in sight save the wagon into which the baggage was being rapidly loaded. Could it be possible?

"Land!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, "I hain't settled such a quiet crowd as you be, I don't know when. They generally squeal and fret, and tease for front seats, and raise a rumpus all round."

"Thank you," said Uncle Joe, up by Eliphalet, and taking off his hat, quite proud of his family.

"Now," said Mr. Higgins, with a glance at the trim figure in its dark-blue traveling dress on the top step, "do you s'pose you'd like to set up along of me on the front seat of the buckboard?"

"Oh!" cried Cicely, in a glow, the color all over her round cheeks; "if I only may!"

"Well, you may," said Mr. Higgins. "There, drive along, Eliph," Biny and her mother being at last settled on the back seat.

"Wait one moment." Cicely hopped down the veranda steps and up the ones belonging to the mountain wagon. "Oh, Aunt Sarah!" she cried, reaching in to grasp that lady's neck, "do

you suppose I looked as if I wanted to go in the buckboard? I tried not to."

"No, dear; it's all right that you should go. Enjoy it—good-by."

Down hopped Cicely. Eliphalet Storer cracked his whip, Uncle Joe took off his hat to two or three gentlemen with whom he had formed an acquaintance the evening before, now standing in the crowd of the hotel people to witness the departure, and the mountain wagon was off.

"Now, then," said Mr. Higgins, leading the horses with the buckboard over to the veranda-steps; "hop in, Miss, and we'll be off, too. You get in with the child on the back-seat," to Jane.

"In there? I can't ride on that swinging thing!" she said, picking up her skirts gingerly.

"Yes, you can; get in, and don't make a fuss," said Mr. Higgins. "Gracious, I wish you'd gone in the other wagon; I'd enough sight druther had the black folks. Get in, can't you?"

Jane, quite angry at the loud preference expressed before all the hotel people, for the colored race, flounced into the vehicle. "He'll fall out," she said, as Mr. Higgins tossed Duke in by her side. "Then who'll be to blame, I should like to know?"

"Why, you will be, I take it," said Mr. Higgins, coolly, stepping on to the buckboard and picking up the reins; "seeing you was hired to take care of that child, hold on to him. Now get along, Buss and Blunderbus—both of you, and show folks some tall stepping!"

For the next few moments, his passengers had all they could do to "hold on," as Mr. Higgins had said. Cicely felt that they were rushing down a wild mountain road, winding and turning, that on either hand gave glimpses of sweet meadows, or rock-bound slopes. Beyond, but ever drawing nearer, were the beautiful mountains blending, as they spun along into inextricable curves of beauty. The sweet air blew in exhilarating

gusts over her face, making her cheeks glow and her eyes to sparkle.

"G-lang!" cried the little Duke from the back seat, and pounding with his heels to further the delightful progress.

"Sit still, will you?" cried Jane, with a twitch, when she could get her voice.

"Can't I have a butboard when I get to the Wron dax," screamed Duke; "say, can't I, Mr. Higs—can't I—can't I?"

"Will you sit still!" cried Jane, angrily. "Mercy! My back's most broken, jerking over these rocks."

"Ain't that speeding?" asked Mr. Higgins, turning to look into the blooming face beside him. "Guess you like it, now?"

"It is perfectly beautiful," sighed Cicely, drawing long breaths of delight; "I never supposed anything could be so lovely!"

"Well, there they be; I thought I should fetch up with 'em pretty quick," said Mr. Higgins, presently, as a turn in the road brought to view the mountain wagon. "Eliphalet generally gives them horses their heads, when I start him first. But land! I always ketch up mighty soon. Sho, now. Buss and Blunderbuss—take it easy."

"Make 'em bounce some more, Mr. Higs, do," begged Duke, springing to his feet, to clap the broad back before him.

"Mercy—don't!" cried Jane; "I'm almost dead now, in this horrid old cart."

"She's so bounced in her mind," observed Mr. Higgins, to Cicely, with his thumb over his shoulder, "that Peridise wouldn't be fit to stick her foot in. That's the trouble with her. Left somebody home, I guess, that she'd a leetle druther had come along. That makes a place look unhandsome. Well, look out now, there's a rough spot in the road ahead a piece."

Jane, too angry to obey the warning of this most impertinent stranger, whom she supposed only a hired man, sat bolt upright. The first thing that she was made aware of was that she was

in a bed of thick black mud, while the buckboard was proceeding without her.

"Sho there," called Mr. Higgins, on looking back. "Now that's too bad"—tossing the reins to Cicely and vaulting over the wheel to run back. "Why didn't you hold on?"

"I'll help her out," cried Duke, rolling out of his side of the buckboard with alacrity.

"Do you stay where you are," commanded Jane, springing up in a fury. "You'll only get into the muss and make me twice the trouble. Look at that nasty mud, now!"

"It's the rain of yesterday," said Mr. Higgins; "I told you about it. Why didn't you hold on?"

Duke, hurrying with all his might, was now picking his way to the scene of disaster, Cicely having her hands full with the delightful care of the horses. "I'm coming," he called, and then a small pair of boot-heels were elevated at an unsightly height, and there was an ominous thud.

"Now then!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, fishing him out unceremoniously—"well, you are a sight."

"And if your old wagon had had sides to it," cried Jane, in a towering passion, stumbling up, "this wouldn't have happened." And she stepped into the buckboard in time to receive the little muddy Duke, handed in by Mr. Higgins. "I'll ask Mr. Dodge not to hire you again."

"Jane—Jane!" reproved Cicely.

"Never mind, let her go it," said Mr. Higgins, resuming his seat and the reins; "most women are better when they let their tongues have it out. G-lang there now, Buss and Blunderbuss, and make up for lost time. Hold on, there, on the back seat, if you don't want to set in the mud again."

"To think," said Jane, who was excessively neat, and twitching off Duke's little straw hat, "of driving up looking like this. It's outrageous!"

"The hotel folks can't see you as we go by, whether you're all mud or not," said Mr. Higgins, looking over his shoulder at her; "and when you get there, the neighbors won't plague you. The cow may stare some. 'cause she was expecting you, but you needn't get scared about your clothes. G-lang!"

"It grows lovelier every minute," cried Cicely, with pink cheeks and eyes a-light.

"This is only the A. B. C.," said Mr. Higgins, coolly; "wait till you fetch up at T. and get to the Flats."

"The what?" cried Cicely, turning an astonished face to him.

"Why, the Flats; that's what the real name of all this place is—and a good enough name it is, too—'cause it just describes it; and I'm proud to say that I'm a Keene Flatter." Here Mr. Higgins squared around and looked at her.

"What did they change the name for?" asked Cicely, all sympathy.

"What fer!" ejaculated Mr. Higgins, impatiently; "well, what they alwus change things for that's good enough as they be—because folks are fools. G-lang!"

"Oh, dear!" sighed the girl, leaning out of her side of the buckboard to compass as much as possible of the beauty through which they were speeding; "I think I like Keene Flats best, too, Mr. Higgins. It sounds good and 'sensible'."

"Of course it does." declared Mr. Higgins; "and prob'ly that's the reason 'twarn't liked; at any rate, some of the summer boarders changed it. And la! ever since it's been Keene Valley folks have come piling in here with their Saratogy trunks, till you have to go streaking off from the road, to get by yourself. G-lang! Why, I can remember when there warn't more'n a handful o' houses on the whole 'Flats'."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Cicely. "How large are 'the Flats'?"

"About five mile or so," said Mr. Higgins, with a comprehensive wave of his brown hand; "the ground must have been



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settled a good spell ago, long about the fust o' creation, when the water came down from the mountains, carrying stuns and gravel to the notch. That's what a minister told me, that I carried into the Valley last year—a real intellectooal chap, and no mistake. And I take it, things was evened up nice now, warn't they?" glancing around in pride.

"Indeed they were!" cried Cicely, with enthusiasm, letting her gaze wander over the lovely mountair-girdled valley. "The people must be so good, living here," she sighed, peering over the smiling plain.

Mr. Higgins gave a sniff. "Souls ain't made looking at trees and mountains and stuns. It's getting up and doing something for other folks, that makes souls. That's my opinion." Then he relapsed into silence, while Buss and Blunderbuss had it all their own way for a few moments.

"That's the Ausable running along there," pointing with the whip-handle to the left; "over behind them maples."

"The what?" asked Cicely.

"The Ausable river. It's got a sandy outlet; that's the reason it's called the Ausable," said Mr. Higgins. "Sho, now, hain't you ever heard of that river?"

"No," said Cicely, very much ashamed that the "Ausable," and the rest of the Adirondack wonders, were as yet unknown, even by name. "You see we didn't expect to come here till a week ago. Our house wás burned up and everything in it, so Uncle Joe thought he'd bring us to spend the summer. I had to come without knowing much about the Adirondacks, only that they were splendid." A little sorrowful droop of her mouth sent reproach to the soul of Mr. Higgins, and he inwardly bestowed upon himself a dozen uncomplimentary names for bringing it there.

"Sho, now," he said, by way of consolation; "one person can't know everything, and that's a fact."

"But we are going to study," cried Cicely, turning a hopeful face toward his bronzed one; "oh, you can't think, Mr. Higgins, how we shall study about things—Travers and I!"

"I'll warrant it," replied Mr. Higgins, with a chuckle. "That's right, go ahead and find out all you can; a little learning is a dangerous thing, I'm told, but there ain't anything said about a great deal."

The usual complement of boarders at "Crawford's" and "Dibble's" sat on their respective piazzas to see the newly arrived spin by.

"They all look happy," said Cicely, with a small wriggle of delight; "but oh, I'm so glad that Uncle Joe is not going to take us to a hotel!"

"Folks like it there fust-rate," said Mr. Higgins, with a nod at the big hostelry—"Tahawus House"; but 'tain't like having your own house, now, when you come to it, I tell you! And your Uncle has got just about the pootiest place there is in all the 'Flats'."

"Oh—oh!" cried Cicely, while the little Duke came in bravely on the chorus; "don't tell me, Mr. Higgins," she begged impulsively, "for I want to be dreadfully surprised."

Mr. Higgins turned and surveyed her intently, a broad, approving smile hovering over his rough features, and allowing the horses to jog comfortably along for the matter of a couple of miles, vouchsafed not another word till—"we're almost there," he announced.

"Almost there!" screamed Jane, in dismay, looking off on either side of the fields that stretched into the forests, clothing the base of the hills. "Why, it's right in the woods. Nobody could live here."

"You didn't s'pose you'd find a wilderness with an opry house into it, did you?" cried Mr. Higgins, bursting into a laugh at her face. "Now, then," with a look at Cicely—and he pointed

his whip-handle to a little cottage at the other end of an open field, and nestling in a thicket of pine, that rose higher and denser till it crowded the slope at no great remove—"that's your cabin, and I say it again, it's one of the pootiest places in the whole 'Flats.'"

Cicely clasped her hands in silent rapture. It seemed as if Mr. Higgins never would turn the horses off from the road and on to the meadow.

"Mercy!" cried Jane, "there isn't even a gate."

"G-lang, now, Buss and Blunderbuss!" Mr. Higgins drew him-



THE CABIN.

self up professionally, tightened his hold on the reins, and cracked his whip. "Eliph's got there, and is unloading his folks. Now here we go up in style. G-lang!"

The buckboard spun over the rough grass with swift precision, and was cleverly flourished up in front of an unpainted, weather-stained cottage, with a roomy veranda running around three sides.

Cicely took a flying leap over the wheel. "Can we really live here?" she cried, clasping her hands, and standing quite still.

Then somebody's arms were thrown around her, and Travers cried, "Cicely Dodge, isn't this about right?"

And then Cicely flew away from him, and over to Aunt Sarah, and in the confusion, was dimly conscious of Maum Silvy's grumblings falling upon her ears.

"What, lib in dis yere shanty!" exclaimed Maum Silvy, in her highest key, and standing aloof. "It's the craziest place I ever see. There ain't no store to run out to handy, and I mos' know there ain't no set tubs. Oh, my soul and body!"

"There's all the river to wash in," cried Cicely, merrily. "Oh, Maum Silvy, I'm so happy!"

"Well, I s'pose I've got to be content where my chil'rens is," said Maum Silvy, swallowing the lump in her throat. "And I might as well go in that there shanty, and make you all a cup of coffee," and not daring to trust herself to look around again, she hurried in-doors to wrestle with worse disappointments than the failure of the set tubs.

But the daughter was in bliss, if the mother was not. For once there seemed to be plenty of space for Biny Simpson, and the realization of it went to her head so that her small figure became a dissolving view as soon as she jumped from the mountain wagon.

"See here," cried Uncle Joe, capturing her on a wild rush for the brook that gurgled its way under the lichen-covered boulders back of the house; "you're not going there now. Come back this moment!"

"There's fishes in it," said Biny, slowly turning around.

"Come back, I say! You'll be lost if you go out of our sight."

"Can't I go anywhere?" asked Biny, beginning to whimper, and dragging her reluctant feet up to Uncle Joe.

"Certainly. Stop your crying now, like a good child. Tomorrow I shall run up a tall flag on the house-top. Then I'll let you go as far as you can see that, and by and by you'll

be a splendid little mountaineer. That's right, Biny, good girls don't tease and fret," as Biny displayed all her little white teeth in an expansive smile. Then Uncle Joe went off to show Miss Brett over the house.

"I'm glad you think it's going to be all right." He looked keenly at the strong face before him, with its clear gray eyes, and firm mouth. "There will be a good many discomforts to put up with, but I think I can give the children back to my brother in prime condition."

Miss Brett said, "I do not doubt it," in a way that satisfied him.

"As to health," pursued Uncle Joe, with immense enthusiasm, "there wasn't a sicklier lot in all New York, than the Congdons." The two were now standing in the cabin's main room, that was "parlor, library and hall." It ran the whole length of the front veranda, and even in its shut-up winter condition, it hinted most cheerily of its possibilities as the center of a happy home. "And after their one season in this very house"—Uncle Joe paused to survey the uncovered rafters and beams as if the daily increase in each Congdon avoirdupois were recorded thereon—"there wasn't a tougher lot in all New York than they were last winter. I used to meet them the stormiest days tramping down town, with rosy cheeks and the brightest eyes. Goodness! They had Adirondacks written all over their faces. 'Twould have been a clear case of flying in the face of Providence—now wouldn't it, if I had let this chance go by?"

"Yes," said Miss Brett, simply.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ADIRONDACK HOME.

OH, what a funny place!" cried Cicely, running over the house, Travers closely following; "there are any quantity of nooks and crannies starting up, when you think you've seen it all. See that place, Travvy."

"That would make a capital den," sighed the boy. "Don't you want it, Ce?"

"No," said Cicely. "because Aunt Sarah has promised to let me have half of her room. I'd much rather be with her than to have all the dens in the world, Travers."

"Then I know Uncle Joe will allow me to have this room," cried Travers, in great satisfaction.

"I know so, too," echoed Cicely, flying about the small room, occasionally ducking as her head ran in danger of a collision from the sloping ceiling. "Only see the queer little corner cupboards, Travvy," throwing wide the door of one as she spoke.

"Those are for my fishing tackle, and for my specimens," announced Travers; "capital, aren't they?" thrusting his head into the other one. "See, I've lots of room; and here's a shelf for my books, and I'll hang my rifle up over there."

"I suppose your clothes will be crowded out," said Cicely, demurely.

"Clothes can go anywhere," observed Travers; "but books and specimens can't."

"And fishing tackle," finished Cicely, with a laugh. "Aunt Sarah will have something to say on the side of the poor clothes."



"A SUDDEN DIP INTO A GROVE."

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"There is one thing about Aunt Sarah—she never scolds," said Travers, with a wise nod. "Look here, Ce"—he was at the one window now—"there's Mount Marcy—see—see!" pointing excitedly through the little opening in the trees.

"Ah, but I'd rather Aunt Sarah should scold, than to see her sorry look," said Cicely, running over to his side. "And don't say 'Marcy,' whatever you do, Travers," she begged; "do call him Tahawus. Isn't he splendid?"

Travers drew in a long breath of delight, and straightened himself. Cicely's heart thrilled. It was so good that a royal time was at last coming to the dear fellow!

"Well, I suppose we must go down, else Aunt Sarah and Uncle Joe will think we are as wild as Biny, and have become lost," she said at last.

"And as Tahawus will wait there for us, I suppose we much better go," said Travers, tearing himself away from the window. "So come on, Ce."

They found Aunt Sarah and Uncle Joe in the main room, "parlor, library and hall," and immediately precipitated themselves upon the two—Travers with a petition for the "den," and Cicely with a dozen and one wild and sweet plans.

"Yes, yes," cried Uncle Joe, heartily; "take the den if you want to, only you must lock the door whenever you go out, for Maum Silvy and Biny have the room opposite, and Biny's little fingers will dearly love your specimens."

"Biny is all right," cried Travers; "after several afflictive dispensations from Maum Silvy, she has learned to let my things alone."

"Has she so?" cried Uncle Joe, well pleased; "then I have one trial less in prospect. Well, now, I believe, Miss Brett, we have everything pretty well planned. The room over this is to be yours and Cicely's, and back of the curtain partition, Jane and Duke will camp out."

"What a sweet dining-room!" cried Cicely, opening the door into it. "Oh, I'm so glad we have a nice place to eat in. Now this door must lead to"—

"Take care!" called Uncle Joe, lustily; "don't open that door, Cicely," as she ran back wonderingly; "there's a perfect cyclone back of it."

"What do you mean?" cried Cicely, with wide eyes, ready for any wonderful developments in their life in the woods.

"He means Maum Silvy," cried Travers, bursting into a laugh. "Don't you hear her raging around her domains? Probably she has discovered that the stove don't work, and that the tin pans are rusty. Only listen!"

"I'll go out and help the poor soul," said Aunt Sarah, with a laugh.

"And I'll literally 'take to the woods' till the storm is over," said Uncle Joe, with another laugh. "Do you two want to go?"

"Don't we?" cried Travers and Cicely together.

"Your room is over the dining-room, isn't it, Uncle Joe?" cried Cicely, looking up at its windows as they went through the pine grove.

"Yes," said Uncle Joe; "I shan't disturb anybody, then, when I want to sit up and read at night."

"Aunt Sarah said she didn't want to take that nice front room," said Cicely.

"Well, she'll have to," said Uncle Joe, quite savagely; "that curtain partition makes a nice little nest for Duke and Jane, so she can have them under her eye. So you see there's no help for it, Cecy. Your aunt has got to submit to being comfortable, for once in her life."

"To think of always being allowed to hop right into this dear flannel dress!" exclaimed Cicely, the next morning, giving her mountain costume a loving little pat before she threw it over her head. "Oh, it's such a comfort!"

"You are to keep yourself just as neat in it," said Aunt Sarah, "as if it was a silk gown. Remember that, Cecy. A mountain suit is for comfort and health, not to save trouble for lazy people."

"Oh, don't be worried, Aunty," said Cicely, setting a pin straight; "the dear old mountains won't spoil all your lessons, never fear."

"They won't spoil you," said Miss Brett, with a glance of pride; "I'm quite sure of that, Cecy," she added, affectionately.

"What makes Duke so cross?" exclaimed Cicely, as a wail smote their ears from the part of the big room curtained off to form the nursery. "I thought he would be just heavenly when he got up here; I'm sure the rest of the family are."

"Poor little thing, he is tired with the journey. When he gets rested, he will be sweet as a June rose."

"There isn't much of a June rose about him now," said Cicely, as another wail arose on the beautiful stillness of all nature about them. "Deary me, Aunty, what can be the matter with him?"

Miss Brett stepped across the room and raised the chintz curtain.

"What's the matter, Duke dear? My, what a face, when I thought you were going to be our good little man!"

There sat Duke in the middle of the bed, in his anger pulling the clothes in every direction, as a sweet revenge for the grievance weighing on his mind.

"I want to go home!" he roared dismally, "and have my own crib. This is a howwid bad old place."

"And that's the truth," said Jane, in a low voice.

"I'm going to put up a pretty mosquito-net to-day, Duke," said Aunt Sarah, briskly; "just like the one over your own little crib. That will be nice, won't it, dear?"

Still the Duke screamed on—"I won't be my own crib—oh, dear! Boo-hoo-hoo!"

"The whole wilderness won't hold us if you are going to scream like that," said Travers, running down from his den. "Duke, if you'll stop, I'll let you see the first bear I shoot."

Duke's whole soul was filled with delight. He immediately tripped out of bed, scorning Jane's assistance, and announced himself ready to take his bath.

"I'm going to have one of the ears, and the whole of the tail, and all five of the legs, and"—

"No, no, no!" remonstrated Biny, crowding in; "you mustn't have the whole. I'm going to have a teenty bit of it."

"I will have the whole," declared the little fellow. "Travers shall give it to me; so there, Biny."

"Then I'll get a bear for myself," declared Biny, magnificently.

"I want to swing a flag from his majesty's top, on the Fourth of July," cried Travers from the lowest step of the veranda that evening, pointing to Tahawus.

"Good gracious me!" cried Uncle Joe, bringing himself up suddenly in the steamer-chair to look at his nephew. "Why, we've only just got here, and now you're going to run me all over the mountains. Remember, I tip the scale somewhere near two hundred and fifty pounds. And Marcy is the highest of the lot."

"Please don't say Marcy, Uncle," begged Cicely, who had jumped up from Travers' side to place herself beseechingly by the steamer-chair; "and do let us go up dear old Tahawus."

"You, too, with designs on my life," cried Uncle Joe, with a merry twinkle in his blue eyes. "What do you say, Miss Brett—shall we give the children their way?"

"The children can do it, I think," said Aunt Sarah.

"Well, then, I suppose you and I ought to be limber enough to try, also." Uncle Joe got out of his chair, stretched himself and began to stalk up and down the broad veranda. "Yes, I certainly have toughened my muscles already"—tramping more

vigorously—"and I'll say yes, Travers, if we can get the guides for that day."

Travers flew off to the green sward below, and gave a war-whoop that would have done credit to an Apache. Cicely ran up to Uncle Joe.

"You're the dearest best, second papa that ever was!" she cried.

"You like it, then?" said Uncle Joe, mightily pleased.

"Like it? Oh, Uncle!"

"And you've put the boy up to it, I suspect," said Uncle Joe; "one of you is bad enough, but two—oh, dear me!"

"Three cheers for Yankee Doodle, Christopher Columbus, old Tahawus and Uncle Joe!" shouted Travers, with a wild dance over the green space. "Come out here, Ce, and whoop it with me!"

Cicely, unable to withstand this delicious invitation, deserted Uncle Joe, and skipped off to celebrate in advance, the coming Fourth of July.

"Did you ever see such an abundance of life?" cried Uncle Joe, coming up to Miss Brett's chair.

She smiled. "Such a difference from last summer."

"Tell me about it." He drew up the steamer-chair to her side, and settled himself comfortably within it.

"You know how brave they have been. poor things, since the father went away?"

"Yes—yes," Uncle Joe nodded, and put up his hand as if the light hurt his eyes.

"When Travers was called back from boarding-school because there wasn't enough money to keep him there?"

"I never knew that," exclaimed Uncle Joe, starting forward. "Why didn't Farrington let me know how affairs were, pray tell?" He glared at Miss Brett as if she were the one to be blamed.

"I suppose your brother did just as you would have done under the same circumstances," she said, quietly.

"Um—maybe," said Uncle Joe, scratching his head. "Well, go on, please."

"The boy took it all without a word, left the friends with whom he was fitting for college, and studied like a brave one at the village High School. I tried to compass the vacation for him, but couldn't manage it." She heaved a sigh.

Uncle Joe turned and looked at her. "I never heard you sigh before," he said, bluntly.

"I feel as if in some way I was to blame," said Miss Brett, with a troubled look in her eyes; "though I tried in every way, he was growing so thin and pale, to manage a vacation for him, yet the chance didn't come."

"Then how in the world were you to blame. pray tell?" questioned Uncle Joe.

"I don't know," said Miss Brett. Yet, woman-like, she added, smiling at the inconsistency, "I always feel so when I think of it."

"I suspect you've slaved for them day in and day out!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, in a gust. "Dear me—and here I am their Uncle, and ought to have known, although I didn't, just how matters stood. To tell you the truth, Miss Brett—it sounds awfully, but I must say it—I forgot that there were children. And when Farrington went to South America, I helped him all I could, but never once thought of the small fry."

Here Uncle Joe looked so convicted of a heinous offence that Miss Brett came out of her morbid condition to bring him to a healthy outlook once more.

"You couldn't know," she said, hastily.

"I went to Europe last summer," said Uncle Joe, remorsefully; "and I might have taken the boy along just as well as not, if I'd only thought. Dear—dear!" He ran his fingers through his gray hair, making it stand up frightfully.

"It's for the best," said Miss Brett, softly. "Just see his splendid condition now," she hastened to add.

"Thanks to you," grunted Uncle Joe.

"And there is Cicely—you wouldn't know the girl," Miss Brett went on. "She's been 'Little Mother' to Duke, making him royally happy through it all. He is the only one who hasn't suffered."

"I tell you what it is, Miss Brett," said Uncle Joe, suddenly; "there's just one thing I want you to do."

"What is it?" asked Aunt Sarah.

"It's just this—to promise me that whatever you can find out those children need, you will tell me of it as soon as you know it yourself."

"I think they will stand in danger of a worse calamity now," she said, with a laugh.

"Whew! What do you mean?" He turned on her savagely.

"Of being spoiled; that would be infinitely worse than any privation they might suffer."

"How in the world is a 'second papa,' as Cicely calls me, to know what to do?" cried Uncle Joe, in real distress. "Of all the problems on earth, a pack of children is the worst."

Miss Brett laughed so long and merrily, that the two celebrators on the greensward ran up on the veranda, with a—"What is it?"

"Travers, come on," said Uncle Joe, hurrying out of his chair; "I'm going over to Moses Higgins' house to see if he can fix us up for that Fourth of July scrape of yours. Want to go, too?"

"How I do wish," said Cicely, as Travers dashed after Uncle Joe, "that somebody would ask me."

"Come on," said Uncle Joe, not looking back as he strode on. And presently "Little Mother" was hanging to his hand in great content, Aunt Sarah smiling happily to see them go.

A long ramble through the sweet-scented "open," then a sudden dip into a grove of water-maples, drooping elms, alder-clumps, entwined with the clambering tough-sinewed grape-vine that wreathed their tops; boulders whose lichen treasures were as so many temptations to draw Cicely's wandering feet and hands, and they were on the river-bank.

And then away from this excitement to more of the thicket and "open." And at last, following Uncle Moses' direction to his home, they are in the inclosure, in the center of which stands the Higgins homestead.

Uncle Moses is out in the unfenced area, at a little remove from the barn and house. He had his coat off, and was engaged in the pleasing occupation of pitching quoits with his son Anthony, and an exceedingly tall young man, immediately introduced as Jefferson Birge, Uncle Moses standing on his tiptoes to clap the long back, in order that the ceremony might be perfect.

"It's a pooty evening, now, ain't it?" asked Mr. Higgins, all being made acquainted, and drawing out his jack-knife and a wad of tobacco from one of his many pockets, he cut off a generous portion and thrust it into his left cheek. Then squinting along the ground, he was happy to espy a bit of pine, which, seizing with alacrity, he was at once prepared for conversation. The other two quoit-pitchers not considering it fine manners to continue their game, awkwardly stood shifting their feet and gazing at the new-comers.

"Let me have a bout, will you?" cried Uncle Joe, his coat off in a twinkling.

"Certin," assented Mr. Higgins senior, casting away his stick. "Now, then, look lively, Tony, he"—indicating Mr. Dodge—"don't play no child's game, I'll be bound."

"Jeff is our best pitcher," added Uncle Moses, with another clap, this time on the long sinewy arm.

"Off with your coat, Travers, my boy," said Uncle Joe, his face in a glow at the thought of a game that carried him back to his boyhood. "Oh, Cicely, now that's too bad; as you're a girl, I don't know what you'll do!" And his face lengthened.

Cicely heaved a sigh. How delightful boy's games were and how exasperating that they must be so improper.

"Couldn't you chaperon me, Uncle?" she asked, eagerly drawing near to the group.

"I—I'm afraid not," said Uncle Joe, ruefully. "Quoits, you know, Cicely, aren't exactly the things for girls to play."

"Of course not!" said Travers, in horrified tones. "Quoits—the idea, Cicely!"

"You can run in the house," said Mr. Higgins, kindly; "there's the last baby to look at. He's a stunner, now I tell you!"

So Cicely, with a lingering look on the quoit-ground, and its combatants, slowly withdrew to the charms of the last Higgins baby, which she found in the hot kitchen playing with a string of empty spools.

"May I take him out on the grass?" she asked Mrs. Higgins, a small, pale-eyed little woman with a perennial smile that never seemed to go down.

"Yes, Miss; I should be glad to have you." Mrs. Higgins was washing up her supper dishes, and now rested her hands on the edge of the dish-pan. "Clemantny and John, go and carry the baby out for her."

"Oh, dear me, don't tell them to!" cried Cicely; "I can manage nicely. Now, baby"—she lifted him, spools and all—"you and I will have a fine time."

"Well, Clemantny and John might as well go," said Mrs. Higgins, pleasantly; "for like enough you'd tell them a story. They'd admire to hear it; they're always teasing me for one—but land! I hain't the time nor the gumption to satisfy 'em."

Clemantny and John now appearing from some mysterious

recess, best known to themselves, Cicely had the satisfaction of hearing their small feet after her, and realizing that she was trapped into the telling of a story.

"Well, come on, children," she said, setting the baby on the grass and herself by it. "Dear me, aren't its toes cunning!" as the youngest Higgins presently raised one set to his mouth.

"Tell us the story—tell us the story!" demanded Clemanthy, assuming the attitude of a Turk, and whipping her scanty pink calico skirt around her bare legs. "Now, what was it?"

"Tell how you met a bear," said John, his stolid face lighting up with interest, as he dumped his fat body on the ground before her.

"Shaw!" exclaimed Clemanthy, in scorn; "she hain't ever met a bear—she's only just come. Now, John Higgins, you just be still; I'm going to set her going."

"Maybe you've seen a wild-cat," John went on, showing a praiseworthy intention of being satisfied with anything belonging to the animal creation—"or a moose—p'raps."

"Ma," cried Clemanthy, suddenly getting up on her feet and running to put her head in the kitchen door; "won't you make John come in? He keeps asking the lady to tell about bears and wild-cats and such, and she hain't ever seen any, and I want her to tell about dolls and how many dresses she's got, and if she plays on the piano, and wears bracelets."

Cicely, who involuntarily straightened up on being called "the lady," cried out, "Come back, Clemanthy; I will tell all you want to know, and then I'll give a bear-story to John." Rash promise!

Clemanthy raced back on happy feet, became a Turk again, and settled the pink gown. "Now begin," she said, remorselessly.

"Ar-goo," said the Higgins baby, taking out his set of pink toes. Then he scabbled all over Cicely's mountain suit, leaving a grimy little trail to show where he had been. Cicely edged off and set him up straight again.

"Ar-goo!" cried baby, with a wild dash for the forbidden place. But Clemanthy, better versed in the method for quieting him, dealt him a resounding thwack on his plump shoulder.

"He'll set straight now, Miss," she said. "Now begin."

"Indeed I shall not," declared Cicely, with flashing eyes; "how could you strike your little brother?"

"It don't hurt him any," said Clemanthy, with wide eyes.

"Cicely," called Uncle Joe, "come here."

"Come on, Cicely," called Travers; "we're talking of our Tahawus trip."

And here she was, tied to this fat baby and two cormorants of children!

"But I shall go, anyway," she said, to herself. "Coming in a minute," she called, jumping to her feet.

"Oh!" ejaculated Clemanthy, laying hold of her mountain skirt with peremptory fingers; "you promised to tell me about your dolls, and whether you played on the piano, and"—

"And then you said, 'I'll give John a bear-story,'" said that individual, with cruel precision.

Cicely twitched away the blue woolen skirt. "Let me go," she cried, impatiently; "of course I didn't mean if Uncle Joe wanted me." With that she stooped to pick up the baby.

"I don't know anything about Uncle Joe," said Clemanthy, stubbornly, finding her feet; "you said you'd tell me about things, all I wanted to know—so there!"

"And me," said John, stolidly; "you said you'd give me a bear-story, and I want it."

"Come on," called Travers, "else we'll begin without you." Then, thinking better, he ran over the field up to her.

"Goodness me!" he cried, at her surroundings; "you have fixed yourself! What a pity it is you can't have your picture taken."

"It's bad enough," cried Cicely, hurrying on with the fat

baby, "to be in such a scrape, without one's brother making fun of one."

"She said she'd tell me a story," said Clemanthy, with moral disapproval, and a convicting finger pointed at Cicely; "and then she didn't."

"She did to me," contributed John, from the ground; "and then she didn't."

"Wait a minute, Cicely," called Travers. But Cicely hurried on, set the baby on the floor in front of the smiling mother, and dangled the spools reassuringly. "I must go, Mrs. Higgins," she said; "but I hope to come over again soon, now I've found the way."

"Do," said Mrs. Higgins, smiling expansively; "I should set by it, I'm sure."

Cicely ran over the flat door-stone, fully intending to dart past the children to freedom by Uncle Joe's side. Instead, she found herself in between them, saying, "I did promise them stories, Travers. Go back and hear the plans; I can't come."

"The little brutes!" cried Travers, between his teeth, at the sight of Cicely's flushed cheeks. "What sort of stories, Ce?"

"Oh, about dolls, and all my clothes," she said, in despair.

"Bosh!" ejaculated Travers; "I'm floored there. I was going to help you a bit."

"And a bear-story, I promised him," said Cicely, brightening. "Oh, Travers, if you only would take that off my hands!" she cried, beseechingly.

"All right—wait a bit." Travers skipped off to Uncle Joe, said something satisfactory in the fewest words, and back again. "Now, then, my fine sir," to John, "you want a bear-story, do you?"

"Yes," said John; "and she said she'd tell it."

"Well, I'm going to tell it for her," said Travers; "that's just the same thing."

"Is it?" asked John, stupidly.

"Pre-cisely; well, here goes. Meantime, shove on, Cecy, your interesting narration, and we'll soon fill up these nuisances. This is a go-as-you-please race."

"Oh, Travers!" cried Cicely, reprovingly, "that's not nice."

"Can't help it," said the boy, recklessly. "The occasion demands it." Thereupon he launched into a thrilling account of such a bear-encounter, that Clemanthy deserted Cicely and her dolls, her piano, dresses and bracelets, to lend eyes and ears to the excitement of the chase.

"And so, my dear young friends," said Travers, winding up, "you see there is no more to tell, for the bear had eaten Peter, and there wasn't anything left but an old almanac he had in his pocket."

"Is that all?" asked Clemanthy, breathlessly.

"Yes, of course. If you'd been eaten up, there wouldn't have been any more, would there?" asked Travers.

"Well, now, you go on," said Clemanthy, turning back to Cicely; "you said your best doll's name was Violet. Well, tell on."

"Indeed she will not," cried Travers, seizing Cicely's arm. "Come on, now, Ce."

"She promised to," cried Clemanthy, with an incipient howl.

"Well, she did; but you'd rather hear the bear-story."

"I was going back soon's you got through."

"Can't help that; you took your choice. Good-by." And the two ran off, pursued by lamentable sounds.

"Dear me!" cried Uncle Joe. "Well, you are here at last, are you? Now, Mr. Higgins"—

"You ought to have 'Old Mountain Phelps' to go up Marcy with," said Uncle Moses, capturing another pine stick. "It's his mountain, as you might say. He 'bushed it out,' and feels as if he owned it."

"Bushed it out?" cried Cicely, "Oh, what do you mean, Mr. Higgins?"

"Why, discovered it; that is, found out how to go up it; and he made a trail all alone. When a man does that to such a mountain as Marcy, you kinder have a respect for him, and keep your fingers off his rights, ye know. Besides, he's good comp'ny, though he don't do any work. Yes, he ought to go along." Uncle Moses emphasized this decision with a series of brisk nods.

"I've heard of him," said Uncle Joe, "but that's all. He's a character, isn't he?"

Mr. Higgins scratched his head and smiled. "Yes, it's as easy to call him that as anything," he answered.



OLD MOUNTAIN PHELPS.

"Jolly—to have Old Mountain Phelps along!" cried Travers, executing a creditable war-dance on the dry grass, in which Cicely joined. "Well, who else?" he asked, bringing up by Uncle Joe's side.

"Why, you, Mr. Higgins," said Uncle Joe; "of course we can't think of anything without you in it."

"Of course not," echoed Cicely, her eyes shining like two stars, as she came

up flushed and panting.

"Well, I calc'late I better go along," said Mr. Higgins, greatly pleased at the cordiality evinced toward him. "And here's Jeff Birge; a better guide never was raised on the Flats, than Jeff."

At this, the tall young man looked off to the hills, pretending not to hear; but his bronze cheek blushed scarlet.

"And my boy ain't bad," said Mr. Higgins senior, squinting at his son. "He began to guide folks through five years ago, so I know I can recommend him."

"A BETTER GUIDE WAS NEVER RAISED ON THE FLATS, THAN JEFF."



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"Yes, indeed!" cried Uncle Joe, heartily; "like father, like son—I hope. Well, do we want any more guides?"

"No," said Mr. Higgins, "you don't; old Phelps for compliment, and for the interest, for he's got an awful tongue in his head, and can reel a string of talk longer'n any living mortal that ever I see, and us three to do the work—that's enough. How many are going in your party?"

"Four," said Uncle Joe. "We three, and a lady who is at home."

"Good climber—is she?" inquired Mr. Higgins.

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Uncle Joe. "Children, is your Aunt Sarah a good climber?"

"I don't know," said Cicely.

"I never saw her climb," said Travers. "We've never been near the mountains, you know, Uncle."

"Well, is she heavy, or one of the thin kind?" asked Mr. Higgins.

"She's rather stout," said Uncle Joe; "just about right, you know."

"Prob'ly have to be pulled up most of the way," said Mr. Higgins, reflectively.

"No, she won't!" cried Uncle Joe, suddenly. "She isn't that kind. If she doesn't get along on her feet better than the rest of us, I miss my guess. Why, you ought to know about her," he added suddenly; "you brought her up in our party."

"The middle-sized woman, who sat in the wagon?" exclaimed Uncle Moses. "She skipped in like a kitten; oh, she's all right. We three guides are enough," he added. "Now what day do you want to go?"

"The Fourth of July," declared Travers. "We want to do something extraordinary on that day, you know."

"And honor the American Eagle, by flying high," said Uncle Joe.

"All right; the Fourth of July it is," cried Mr. Higgins, clapping his big palms together smartly. "You must get some nails driv in your shoes."

"Who'll do it?" asked Uncle Joe.

"Oh, go over to Keene, and take all your shoes to Smith Baker; tell him I sent you to have 'em fixed to go up Marcy. He'll put 'em in good travelin' shape."

"All right," said Uncle Joe; "anything else we must do?"

"No. We put up the grub, ye know. We don't let folks do anything about that. We have to take the woods fare, 'cause we can carry a lot of filling things, in small bulk; salt pork, ye know, for one thing."

Cicely made a wry face. "Oh, Mr. Higgins, I couldn't swallow a bit of pork, I know I couldn't."

"The Adirondacks without salt pork, would be a ship without a sail," declared Uncle Moses. "You wait till you see my fried slices, and then, says I!" He shut one eye, and smacked his lips.

"All right," said Uncle Joe, again. "Well, we must be going, children; it's getting dark, and your aunt might worry about us."

"Good-by," called back Cicely, with a little grimace at thought of the salt pork.

"Three cheers for the American Eagle from Tahawus!" sang back Travers.

CHAPTER VIII.

BINY HAS HER BEAR.

“WHOOPITY la!” sang Biny the next morning, running on wild, delighted little feet through the ravine back of the cabin; “Mister Josuf’s just lovely to let me go down here all alone by myself. It’s as much as a mile, I guess, to the big log. Whoopity la!”

Maum Silvy in the kitchen, the big doors and windows open to all the sweet influences of earth and sky, was crooning, oblivious to Biny’s movements, a string of good revival hymns, her unflinching expression of absolute content.

“I wish I could get on the other side,” said Biny, approaching the “big log,” a fallen monster of the forest, moss-grown and old, lying across the narrowest part of the ravine. Uncle Joe had pronounced this the limit of any ramble indulged in by the children, until further notice. “Oh, dear, dear, it must be awful pretty in there! It won’t do any harm to lean over; he said not ‘step over’.”

So Biny got astride the “big log,” and balancing herself with extreme nicety, achieved as much of the hidden treasures of ferns and moss beyond, as lay in her power.

“It’s most dreadful pretty, I know it is, over there,” she grumbled. “Oh, dear me, I most tumbled over—whew! Well, that wouldn’t be my fault, if I should go over, of course. I declare, I most went over again!”

A thud that proclaimed a heavy body falling into the soft moss, a little scream of delight, and a flourish of small hands and feet in the air.

"Whew—oh, my!" cried Biny; "I did tumble over for sure, didn't I? Well, I couldn't help it. Um—um!" Her bright eyes were glowing with delight as they peered on every side, and she drew a long breath. "Mister Josuf won't blame me, 'cause he said 'not step over,' and I didn't—I fell over. Oh, ain't it pretty here, though! I might as well pick some of those green things for my garden, seeing I'm over." And suiting the action to the thought, she moved off and secured some tempting ferns, at each step seeing some others so much greener and better, that her fingers dropped the first prize to secure the later ones.

"Um—um! I s'pose I might as well be going back," she said, at length; "though tisn't my fault that I fell over. Oh, dear me, it's mean in Mister Josuf not to let me stay," she began to grumble. "Heigho, I'm tired; I've got to rest first." And throwing herself on the moss, she began to examine her treasures, of which her little black fists were full.

"They aren't pretty, after all," she decided, scornfully throwing them one side; "not half as pretty as I could get. I see one now—it's beautiful!" And she sprang to her feet, tossing off the last wilted fern from her warm little fingers. A chipmunk, scared at her approach, darted out from his hiding place, and raced up the opposite bank. To save her life, Biny couldn't help but chase him, and before she knew it, there she was in a beautiful grove, covered with velvet moss, and tall, graceful ferns as much more beautiful than any she had ever seen, as she could imagine. The waving pines were above her head, and underneath her feet all manner of lovely green things growing, that made her wild to have them for "her garden."

Biny danced on merry feet through her lovely grove, peeping now here, now there, back of some gray boulder, to tear off the beautiful lichens growing in undisturbed luxuriance, for the mere delight of reveling in the possession of them, for she threw

them away with elfish chuckles as soon as torn from the rocks. Then she dashed off to "other fields of conquest." Darting in and out among the trees, working her way each moment to a denser grove, she came at last to a thick, black forest, with impenetrable undergrowth—

"Oh, my!" Biny drew a long breath, parting the intervening branches for a view. "Looks awful funny in there, don't it, Biny Simpson? Don't care; seeing I'm here, I'm going in and pretend I'm the princess Miss Cecy was reading about tother day, who got lost." And unable to resist the fascinating thought, she struggled into the thicket, her head held high in the air as if carrying an imaginary crown over those innumerable woolly braids.

"And now the prince is coming for me," cried Biny, in the solitude, and giving her head a toss as well as she could, for the thicket. "Yes, it's about time for him, just right smart!" And she paused, ready to receive her royal guest.

He was coming; but alas, not the prince, coming for Biny, slowly, surely, over the moss-grown logs and brambles. Tramp—tramp—and they met face to face.

Biny, with head thrown back, and mouth parted in a gracious smile, that ran up into the small, bead-like, sparkling eyes, stood quite still, to see, peering out at her through the underbrush—a big, black bear!

For one wild, awful moment she stood, with a chill like death freezing each limb, staring vacantly into the cruel, hungry face.

The bear, not taking his eyes from his victim, also stood still like one who is sure of his prey, to wait her movements.

Biny gave one long, shivering cry for mercy; this seemed to start the surging blood again through her frozen limbs, and she turned to a wild plunge through the thicket.

This was just what his bearship wanted. And trotting after

her at an easy pace, he broke a path for himself, through the forest, gaining on her fearfully with his steady "scrunch—scrunch," over the brambles.

Biny could run and spring like a cat. But such an unequal race would soon have reached its termination, had she not in her blind despair, sent one glance backward, as she wildly plunged around a boulder. The next thing she knew, she was lying at the bottom of the crag, from which she had fallen.

She sent a glance of terror upward. The bear was nowhere in sight, and summoning all her strength, she shot forward, springing with long, wild leaps from stone to stone, till she gained a smoother place beyond, none too soon. The bear, finding that he could drop to the ravine, too, began the descent with alacrity, and Biny could hear the tearing of the bushes as he let his heavy body down the slope:

On she flew, her feet scarcely touching the ground—on and on!

Would the end never come? She had a dim sense of reaching the "big log," of flying over it, and on—on; of remembering that it was the time of day when the little Duke took his nap, of wondering what Maum Silvy was doing, of hoping that "Uncle Josuf" would forgive her when she was all eaten up, as of course she must be, for the bear was gaining on her fearfully, in indignant surprise at being led such a chase, when he had every reason to think the victory so easy; and she could fancy she felt his hot breath on her little black neck, as on she dashed.

A film gathered before her eyes; the trees seemed to dance in mad confusion, as her feet mechanically carried her along; her brain whirled. Could she reach the wood-shed? There was no hope of her getting to the cabin; she knew her strength would not hold out for even those few rods more. One last, wild attempt, and she was safe!

The bear, enraged at his loss, plunged after, and seeing no

signs of life in the enclosure, came panting up to the very door of the wood-shed.

Biny flung herself into the furthest corner, behind a protecting pile of wood. She could run no more, she was too spent to scream. There she huddled, shutting up her eyes and trying to say, "Now I lay me," the only prayer she could think of. She could hear the bear sniffing around, and trampling with his clumsy feet over the wood-shed floor, and she vaguely wondered how long it would be before he would eat her, and after the first bite, if it would hurt so very much. Then she heard a sound as of something tearing, and the bear gave a pleased grunt, and she was sure she heard the working of his jaws. Oh, perhaps after all he had found something else to eat, and would forget her, and a bit revived by this faint hope, she applied her eye to a crack between the loosely piled wood, and saw, oh, joy, that this was a fact. Maum Silvy had hung up some venison sent over by Mr. Higgins that morning, on the rafters, and his bearship, feeling quite sure that his other prize could wait, concluded to take this one on the way.

This respite gave Biny a chance to think of escape. But do her best, with active little brain now made desperate by despair, she could not see a single loophole by which she could evade the cruel clutches of the beast so rapidly finishing his first meal.

"Perhaps he won't be so very hungry when he gets through that," thought poor little Biny, "and will only take one or two bites of me." And she wondered if it would be right to add such a petition to "Now I lay me," on which she was just beginning afresh. But before she had decided this question, she felt sure by the smelling around of the bear, that he had finished his repast, and was now coming for her, and she shut her eyes.

He was drawing quite near; she could hear him fumbling over the wood, to discover the easiest way to reach her; she could now almost feel his breath coming short and quick, as he pushed aside the loose sticks to crowd his fat body within. Yes, he was breaking through with an angry snort, now. Biny wished she had not been naughty, and longed for a kiss from Maum Silvy. She held her breath and waited, when a sudden voice, loud and hearty, broke upon her ear.

"Well, well, well," cried Uncle Joe, in his usual bluff fashion; "is everybody dead here? Not a living soul can I find around the house." He was coming in the wood-shed now, and Biny, wild with terror for him, did what she could never have done for herself. How, she knew not, but there she was in a flash, on the top of the wood-pile.

"Go back—there's a bear in here!" she shrieked, and waving her little black hands. "He'll kill you!" as the bear tried to reverse proceedings and crowd himself out of the small opening he had made for himself.

Uncle Joe, of late years, not accustomed to exercise agility, had one good habit that stood him in stead, now. He made up his mind quickly, and acted on it, and seeing the bear's predicament, he seized the axe, conveniently lying just where the last chopping of kindlings had been, and hurrying over to the wood-pile, he dealt the bear's hind-quarters a rousing blow that made him squeal with pain.

Following this up with another blood-thirsty thwack, he gave him another and then another, till the bear ceased to move. Then Uncle Joe, feeling like a villain, threw down the axe and put up his arms to Biny.

"Come here, child—quick! I'm afraid I've broken his back. I hope I didn't hurt him; I'd so much rather shot him in the face. There, there, don't choke me!" as Biny's wild little arms came around his neck.

"What's up?" cried Travers, meeting the two plunging on their way to the cabin.

"Nothing but a bear in the wood-shed," said Uncle Joe, calmly. "There, there, child, don't scream so; you're safe." For Biny, now that there was no reasonable fear that the bear would ever chase her, or indeed, any one again, was now emitting the most fearful shrieks, that soon brought every one of the family to the spot.

"A bear in the wood-shed!" cried Travers, rushing for his rifle.

"Bring mine along, too," shouted Uncle Joe, tumbling Biny into her mother's arms; "we can spend the rest of the morning shooting at the fellow, to be sure we kill him."

But there was no need for further efforts in that direction. Uncle Joe had done his work well. The bear was really dead, and before long, was rolled out upon the wood-shed floor, to the admiring gaze of a crowd of "Keene Flatters," to whom the news spread like wild-fire.

"I should think the whole Valley had turned out!" exclaimed Aunt Sarah, as the natives hurried up to the scene to view the "b'ar."

"How that girl ever got away this fur to the wood-shed, I don't for my life see," cried Mr. Higgins, as they surrounded the bear. "He could have et her as easy as not."

"'Pears he didn't like dark meat," said another guide, with a drawl.

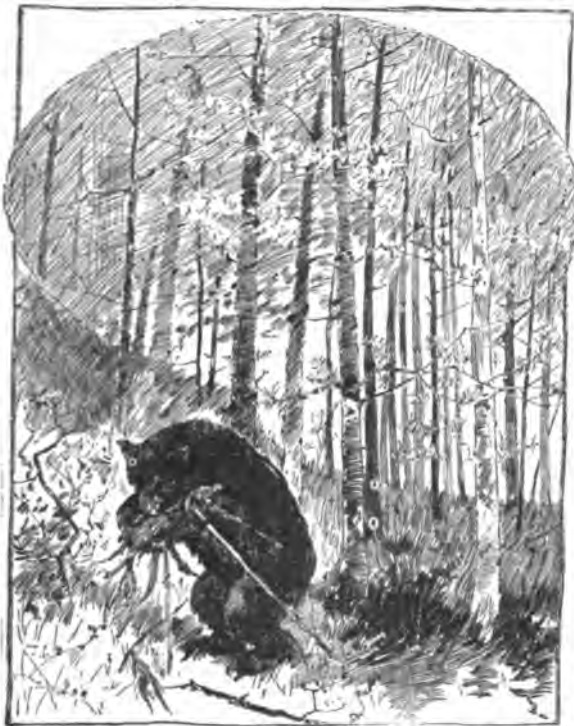
Uncle Joe broke out excitedly, "I tell you, fellows, if I could only have shot him face to face in an open fight, that would have been something like, now, but to chop away at his hind legs when the fellow was stuck fast—bah!"

"I sh'd be contented to kill him in the back," said Mr. Potter, a man who owned a little farm a mile beyond; "that varmint there, I make no manner o' doubt, has et up a good half dozen of my lambs. Yes, sir, I lost six lately!" thrusting out

his brawny arm in its red shirt-sleeve, to shake his fist at the vanquished bear.

Duke went wild over the capture—sitting on the bear, and pointing out the various portions of his anatomy that he wished for himself.

“You may as well take the whole animile,” said one of the men.



BINY'S PRINCE.

“Look here, Duke,” said Uncle Joe; “this bear belongs to Biny.”

“You killed him,” shouted Duke. “Give him to me, Uncle Joe, give him to me! You killed him.”

“But Biny brought him home.”

“Give him to me—give him to me,” cried the little fellow, wildly.

“Biny must have the skin,” said Uncle Joe; “it will make her a pretty rug.”

But Biny shuddered and roared, and shut her eyes, and huddled into a corner, although Mr. Higgins kindly

reminded her—“You can step on the varmint all you want to, then.” Biny shivered on and roared, “I don't want him,” at which Duke screamed gleefully.

And now Aunt Sarah protested that she ought not to leave the cabin to the oversight of Maum Silvy and Jane.

"Something might happen to Duke," she said. "I must confess I'm nervous since the bear episode."

"Nonsense!" cried Uncle Joe. "Lightning doesn't strike twice in the same spot."

"Nor two bears run into one wood-shed," finished Travers.

"Well, Jane might be careless," said Miss Brett, anxiously.

"Never so sure to be careful in her life as just now after this scare," declared Uncle Joe. "I'll warrant she won't stir out of the cabin till we get home."

"Now, Aunty," cried Cicely, with an affectionate little hug, "you know you absolutely long to go up Tahawus. Why, it's the glory of the summer!" The girl drew off and ran to the window to catch another glimpse of his Majesty, serene in the upper air, whether mortals visited him or no.

Aunt Sarah heaved a sigh, then gave a little laugh, and covered it up.

"Well, you are going," said Uncle Joseph, obstinately; "so there! Excuse me, but you are going all the same."

He rumbled up his shock of gray hair till a "fretful porcupine" was nothing to it.

"I believe my brother's family are under my authority now," he said, "and I'm going to make you all obey me. You, ma'am, have stood around long enough at the beck and nod of these youngsters. Now you are going to have your own way."

"But it isn't my own way to go," protested Aunt Sarah, laughing in spite of herself. "I really ought to stay at home."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Uncle Joe, with an uneasy growl. "Bless me! I've an idea!" he exclaimed, jubilantly; "and it's quite an idea, too. Quite an idea, upon my word."

"Goody!" cried Cicely, like a child, and hopping up and down on delighted feet; "Uncle Joe will fix it now, aunty dear." And she ran over to her again. "Everything, you see, will be as fine as possible since Uncle Joe has an idea, and is going to fix it."

"Yes, I am going to fix it," repeated Uncle Joe, quite delighted to find himself the main stay of the family in this dilemma. "I'm going to straighten it all out for you. Get my cap, child." Cicely ran and took down the gray felt cap from its nail behind the door.

"Now, then, I'm off," declared Uncle Joe, cramming it on his head.

"What are you going to do?" ventured Miss Brett, holding her breath for the answer.

"Do? I'm going to transact a little business with the doctor; you know he lives over on the Ledge."



THE COTTAGE ON THE LEDGE.

Yes, they all knew the doctor's cottage, about a mile or so distant on a small plateau, its back to the mountain, while a brawling little brook ran to the larger stream close by. "Well, what of the doctor, Uncle?" asked Travers.

"Mrs. Kingsbury is a capital person, I should say," Uncle Joe went on, quite satisfied at the solution of the difficulty; "and I'm

going to ask her permission to send Jane and the little fellow over there to stay while we are gone. All in the way of business, you know; because if he is not well, there is the doctor, you know." Something in Miss Brett's face not reassuring him, he kept on slowly—"You know there won't anything really happen, and the doctor's house is the best place if it should, you know."

"But she is almost a stranger," said Miss Brett.

"I saw her when I went to ask about that horse yesterday," said Uncle Joe, "and I tell you she is a sensible enough sort of person. And the doctor is a splendid chap; we all know that, after the Congdons' recommendation of him. It's all in the way of business, you know, and we can't begin too soon to make him our family doctor. You are going up Tahawus, ma'am, for I'm off now to see the doctor." With that announcement, he looked so savage, that no one dared to say a word, and he stalked off quite triumphant.

The young people clapped their hands.

"Children!" exclaimed Aunt Sarah, starting from her chair to hurry to the window; "do call him back."

"It's too late—he's out of sight," said Cicely. "Beside, he wouldn't come," added Travers. "You're fairly caught this time, aunty. It's been a beastly shame, you've been tied to us all these years. I see it all now."

"Children—children!" cried Aunt Sarah, turning a distressed face toward them; "please don't say such things. Your Uncle shouldn't"—

But how could she blame him before them?

"It was no privation," she said hastily. "You hurt me now, talking in this way."

"Well, we won't say any more, aunty," said Cicely, affectionately, and hurrying to her; "only we are going to look after you, now. Uncle Joe told me the other day that it was time that I should begin to think of you, who had done so much for me. He said I was a big girl—and so I am," declared Cicely, drawing herself up. "I'm fifteen and a quarter."

"And I'm sixteen and a half," said Travers, with a superior air.

"You feel so very grand at that little difference," cried Cicely. "I'm sure when any one is once fifteen, a few months more don't matter."

"Don't they, though!" exclaimed Travers, gleefully.

"And I shall stay at home rather than that you should not go up Tahawus, aunty," declared Cicely, wisely waiving the argument, and turning her back on Travers.

"No, indeed!" cried Aunt Sarah, hastily; "that would never do. Well, say no more, child; your uncle will do as he thinks best," she added, feeling as if the conspiracy were closing fast around her.

And on that very afternoon, over came the doctor and Mrs. Kingsbury, as pretty a little creature in a gray mountain suit, as one would wish to see. They all fell in love with her before she had stepped out of the buckboard, and when the Duke ran to her and insisted on attaching himself to her company, with a cold shoulder for his own family, they realized that her powers of fascination were not imaginary.

"We have only just come home," said Mrs. Kingsbury, with a smile for every one, but addressing Aunt Sarah, "from a little visit to Lake Placid, or you may be sure we should have invaded your home sooner." And although the words were not much, they somehow felt at once acquainted, and presently the "parlor, library and hall" echoed to merry chat and laughter, the little woman having the seat of honor.

"Come, now, doctor," she cried to the tall, black-bearded man, whose head just cleared the doorway; "confess that we looked, for the two nights we have been at home, with longing upon the smoke curling up from this roof-tree, and wished we knew the 'nice people' that Mr. Higgins told us so volubly about."

The doctor made the confession gladly, then added another tribute from Mr. Higgins' voluminous praise. "Uncle Moses says that you, sir," turning to Uncle Joe, "are square as a brick, and an all-round-sort of man. That's as high as he could go, you may rest assured."

"Much obliged," said Uncle Joe, as the laugh went around.

"Aren't you going to let me have the little fellow?" begged Mrs. Kingsbury, smoothing the Duke's yellow curls as they lay across her lap, he reposing on a hassock at her feet. "Do, dear Miss Brett; it will be such a kindness to me. Think of it, I haven't a single chick in my nest."

Duke raised his head suddenly—"Nor any roosters, nor bid-dies?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes," laughed the doctor's wife. "I've plenty of those pets; but I want a little two-legged fellow that"—

"Did you ever see a four-legged chicken, Lucy?" asked her husband, gravely.

When they came out of the laugh, Duke was as good as engaged to spend the time occupied by the Tahawus climbers, at the doctor's cottage, with Maum Silvy and Biny thrown in; Mrs. Kingsbury protesting she wanted them for amusement, and that it wasn't worth while to keep the Dodge cabin open for just two people.

"And we've actually promised to quarter four of our family upon that woman!" cried Aunt Sarah, lifting her hands in amazement, on their departure. "How ever in the world did we come to do such a thing?"

"Oh, that is Adirondack style," said Uncle Joe, easily; "people are generous as the air up here. But you wouldn't have done it, but for my idea, though," he took pains to chuckle. "Now, then, we're all right for Tahawus."

CHAPTER IX.

"THEY MAY STUDY."

MR. HIGGS is out in do kitchen," said Maum Silvy, putting her turban in the doorway. "And he says if Mister Josuf and Travers will start this aft'noon for Bedee's to meet the others, 'twill jost suit him."

Travers, over in the corner, threw down his book with a howl of delight. "But perhaps we ought not to go. Aunty; something might happen with us away over night."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Aunt Sarah: "what could happen, jay?"

Travers burst into a laugh. "You're always ready to send us out for good times, though you won't take any yourself, aunty, except under protest. However, as I don't believe anything will happen tonight, I'll look up Uncle Joe, and we'll get our riding traps together."

"No do," said Aunt Sarah, with satisfaction.

"I'll go," Mr. Higgs you'll be out dar and see him, den?" asked Mr. Higgs.

"Yes," said Travers, "as soon as I find Uncle Joe. Go along, Mr. Higgs, and get 'em well as the party pack." And he went out.

Mr. Higgs went to the stable and found Uncle Joe. "Come along, Uncle Joe, we're going to start our riding traps."

Uncle Joe looked at Mr. Higgs and said, "I'll go with a pack of traps, but I won't go with you."

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"So do," said Aunt Sarah, with satisfaction.

"I'll tell Mr. Higs you'll be out dar and see him, den?" asked Maum Silvy.

"Yes," said Travers, "as soon as I find Uncle Joe. Go along, Maum Silvy, and tell him we'll be there pretty quick." And he rushed off.

"Oh, dear, I'm sorry you must go to-day," mourned Cicely, as he returned in Uncle Joe's wake; "we were going to start our Adirondack Club, you know, Travvy."

"What's the Adirondack Club?" asked Uncle Joe, with a critical eye on his new fishing rod, which he was now hand-

"WE'LL MEET THE OTHER FELLOWS AT BREDE'S."



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ling gingerly. "Hey—a new shooting society, or a tramp association?"

"Neither," said Travers, with a laugh. "It isn't the feet or the hands this time, Uncle; it's the caput that's going in for exercise."

"The caput!" cried Uncle Joe, who had long ago dropped all his knowledge of Latin on the highway of life, as useless luggage; "what in the world is that?"

"Why, the occiput, perhaps I should have said," explained Travers. "It's the occiput's time now, to be cultivated."

"Worse and worse," cried Uncle Joe. "What do you mean, with your caputs and occiputs, young man, I should be glad to know?"

"It's the occupant of the occiput," said Cicely, merrily, in the interval of packing neatly away a dozen or so of hard-boiled eggs in a basket, "that is to get exercised, Uncle Joe—oh, dear me, I've forgotten the salt." And she ran into the kitchen after it.

"Explain at once, or I drop you out of this fishing expedition," declared Uncle Joe, over to Travers, busy with his fly-book. Then how would you feel to have me do this expedition without you, sir?"

"I rise at once to explain," said Travers, pretending fright, "that the brain is to have a little exercise, and"—

"Indeed you won't," declared Uncle Joe, so sharply that Cicely ran in again without the salt box. "I set my foot down flat at once and for all summer, that I won't have any studying going on here."

"Oh, Uncle, Uncle!"—

"I won't. You needn't ask it. You're both of you all tired out now, with too much studying. It's my business to get you fat and rosy, and I won't even hear this new plan, I tell you now."

"Uncle, Uncle, just hear what it is."

"I don't want to hear it. Study is study, and that's enough. Don't say another word about it. To think of it," he fumed, getting up and casting aside the fishing tackle with a reckless hand. "Monstrous!"

"Mr. Dodge."

Aunt Sarah set down the ham knife with which she was cutting the pink and white slices. "Wouldn't it be better to let the children explain themselves?"

"Ma'am?"

"Wouldn't it be better to let the children explain the matter?" she repeated. It was like a cool mountain breeze meeting a fiery simoon, and the two most interested, suspended all operations to see the result.

"If you only knew," said Miss Brett, in even tones, and with her most convincing smile, "what this plan is, I feel that you would help it forward in every way possible. Oh, I do feel so."

No answer.

"May I tell you further, and say that without this plan being put into operation, you will be defeated in your generous desire to give these children a good summer, and you will take them home only half developed?"

"Ma'am!" said Uncle Joe, helplessly.

"May they tell the plan?" Aunt Sarah fastened those cool gray eyes on his heated face. Travers and Cicely counted the seconds.

"Why, yes, of course; yes, yes, certainly," cried Uncle Joe, breaking the silence suddenly. "Why don't you speak," whirling around to them; "you are not tongue-tied, are you?"

"Make it brief, children," said Aunt Sarah, smilingly; "for we must remember that we are getting ready for a fishing expedition."

"Yes, cut it short," echoed Uncle Joe, gathering up his tackle again. "Whew! Here's a pretty tangle."

"Let me get it out for you, uncle," cried Travers, running over to him, "while we talk."

"Go on with what you want to say," said his uncle, grimly; "I'll get the snarl out myself. It isn't half so bad as the tangle about all this study."

"It's just here, Uncle." Travers, not minding in the least the rebuff, threw himself into a camp-chair opposite the impatient fingers making the last state of the snarl worse than the first. "We don't know anything of the Adirondacks—Cecy and I."

"Who of us does know anything?" growled Uncle Joe, with a twitch on the tackle. "That's what we have come up here for—to find out things for ourselves."

"I don't even know where the places are, we are going to see," confessed the boy.

"All the better; you'll know when you get to 'em."

"I am like a baby set down in the midst of wonderful things," went on Travers, "and told to enjoy myself. Just think, Uncle, and I sixteen years old!"

"And I fifteen," broke in Cicely, impatiently. "Oh, Uncle Joseph Dodge, to be kept down like babies, and not allowed to find out these beautiful things!"

"Hey?" cried Uncle Joe, quite broken down by that "Uncle Joseph Dodge."

"When we might enjoy it all so much more," Cicely cried, "to understand a little about them. We can't know much, but we can learn a little."

"And what are our brains for, I'd like to inquire," cried Travers, "if we are not to exercise them along with our bodies? Must we let them lie fallow a whole summer, and just eat and drink and sleep like animals?"

“Hey?” .

“I’d rather never be fat and rosy,” continued Cicely, sorrowfully. “if I must be a little idiot in the end. Take us home, do, dear uncle, where we can’t see such beautiful things we are not to learn about.”

This was too much. Uncle Joseph cast down the snarl of fishing tackle, and put the two young people unceremoniously aside, to march over to the ham-table.

“They may study,” he said briefly, to Miss Brett; “that is, if you and I watch them.”

“I suppose the best way, then, would be for us to study with them,” she said, quaking inwardly, but with an exterior that was calmness itself.

“Oh, bless me!” Uncle Joe recoiled. “I can’t do anything—count me out. I’m no hand at books.”

“Uncle Joe—Uncle Joe!” Cicely and Travers surrounded him. “You must; else you can’t watch us, to be sure that we are not going too far. Oh, and we can’t thank you enough, you are so good!”

“Mr. Higs is coming,” called Maum Silvy, which had the effect to make each one spring to the neglected preparations for the expedition. The last of the eggs were crammed unceremoniously into the basket, the salt after all, being left out; the ham slices were deftly slipped into their waiting niche; and at last the two fishermen were off, the family going out on the veranda to see the departure in Mr. Higgins’ buckboard, Cicely whispering in Travers’ ear a joyful little “Good-by: just as soon as you come home we’ll begin on the study.”

On the edge of the twilight, after their early supper, the little Duke came slowly up from the cow-pasture, where he had strayed.

“Good-night, Missis Moolly,” he said, bowing politely to the cow: “I’m going to bed.”

THE FISHING EXPEDITION.



"Are you tired, dear?" asked Cicely, on the veranda steps, looking up from her book. "Why, your cheeks are pale, poor little man!"

"Ain't a poor little man," said the Duke, in his present state, with a disrelish for any petting. "Let me go by."

"So he shall," cried the big sister, merrily, and pretending to catch his legs as he went up the steps. "And Cecy will come by and by to kiss you good-night."

"Don't want any good-night," said Duke, stumbling in the doorway in a very bad humor. "Don't want anything," he vociferated.

"You sha'n't have it, then," said Cicely, laughing. "Good-by, old pussy cat with the claws," and she returned to her book. She read till her eyes ached in the fading light; then she went into the "big room" to finish the story by the lamp. Aunt Sarah was out in the kitchen, instructing Maum Silvy in the mysteries concerning a new dish for the morrow's breakfast. So Cicely read on, in no hurry to go up to bed, till her aunt was ready to accompany her.

But as Maum Silvy felt that she knew all that could be said concerning the dish in question, the lesson consumed more time than was expected, so that at last Cicely found herself nodding over her book.

"This won't do," she said with a yawn. "I won't wait for aunty, but will run up to bed by myself."

As she reached the top of the stairs, she intended to go behind the curtain, into Duke's little corner, but reflecting, "I shall wake him up," she went softly to her own side of the big room.

A little moan struck her ear, then another. She laid down the hair-brush with which she was smoothing out her long braids for the night, and listened.

"What!" she was exclaiming in a puzzled way, when the cur-

tain was suddenly thrown back, disclosing Jane's face, from which every vestige of color had fled.

"He's dying!" she gasped; "do come."

Cicely, her long hair floating off from her frightened face, sprang past her to the bed behind the curtain, where her little brother lay in convulsions.

"I've been watching him," wailed Jane, "because he acted so stupid. And sud—suddenly he was taken like this."

Down-stairs fled Cicely. "Aunty," she gasped, trying to break the news as gently as possible; "something is the matter with Duke."

Miss Brett was in the big pantry giving the last directions to Maum Silvy, and just on the point of saying "good-night." She turned suddenly, and with a practiced hand, took the tea-kettle from the stove. "Bring the box of mustard," she said to Maum Silvy, who followed clumsily over the stairs.

Fifteen minutes after, they looked in each other's eyes, those good workers, and knew they could do nothing more to rouse the child from the deep stupor that followed the spasm. Cicely, hanging to the foot of the little bed, was conscious that Aunt Sarah was saying, "One of us must go for Doctor Kingsbury," and that she replied, "Let me, aunty; I'll go."

"My child," exclaimed Miss Brett, in distress; "how can I? Yet I can't leave him, and Maum Silvy"—no need to say that her avoirdupois put her out of the question as a messenger.

"Aunt Sarah," cried Cicely, now quite calm, "I know the way as well as can be; it is moonlight—what can hurt me? Oh, aunty," she cried, wringing her hands, "do let me go."

"Go, and the One who alone can help us, will bring you back safely," said Aunt Sarah. "If I didn't let you go, you might never forgive me."

Cicely, with hair floating from her white face, rushed down the stairs, threw wide the door, and hurried out into the night.

The moon, coming up behind a cloud, threw a fitful gleam over the little path their feet had worn across the grass to the high road. Skimming over this, urged on by despair, she sped over the thoroughfare, striking off at last into the open field, the shortest cut to the plateau up against the mountain-side. Cicely, as she fled along, was conscious that the grand old mountains, weird enough in the moonlight, were witnesses of her misery. It even seemed as if they pitied her, and it comforted her in all the wretchedness suddenly engulfing her, to know that they were there. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem" flashed upon her fear and distress, "so the Lord is round about his people forever."

And all her fear and distress fled; nothing seemed to trouble her. Even the dread that Dr. Kingsbury would not be at home, passed away, and she ran as never before over the rough field. And now she found her way blocked by an obstacle. The trail over this short cut, at this point turned, and ran down a steep rocky slope; the moon, hidden by the tall pines, declining to give any assistance.

"I can't go around the longer way," groaned Cicely. "I must make the best of my way down the cliff, for I'm almost there."

So she carefully felt her way along from one sharp treacherous crag to another, aided by the few gleams of light penetrating the thick trees, when suddenly her foot slipped and she fell to the lowest rock, her whole weight coming with sickening force upon her left arm.

"I won't faint," she declared through set teeth. "Dear little Duke!" as she struggled to her feet.

There was yet a slope to climb, but Cicely now had the moon to help her, as she picked her way along beyond the pine-grove; and as she worked painfully up the declivity, Dr. Kingsbury's little cottage, perched on the spur, stood out, flooded with moonlight.

All was quiet as Cicely stepped through the porch to the door. A window above was thrown open in response to her rap.

"What is it?" asked a pleasant voice. "Why, Hugh, it's Cicely Dodge!" all in the same breath.

"If you please," cried Cicely, lifting her pale face, "I want Dr. Kingsbury; my little brother is" —

"Dying" she could not say. God would not let Duke die. And now there were steps on the stairs, and the door was unbolted and thrown wide, and Cicely was drawn into light and comfort.

"Oh, you poor little thing! How brave you are to come over here alone!" Little Mrs. Kingsbury, her blue eyes alight with tender pity, and her soft hair falling over her dainty wrapper, grasped Cicely's arm, hanging limp by her side.

Cicely winced, but covered it up by begging that the doctor should hurry.

"He's flying into his clothes," said Mrs. Kingsbury. "Here he is," as he came running down the stairs, his medicine-case in his hand.

In less time than it takes to relate it, the horse was slipped into the light little buckboard, Cicely was saying "good-night" to Mrs. Kingsbury, who ran out on the porch in the moonlight, and they were off to save the little Duke.

The doctor said nothing on the journey, which was the "long way" around, to meet the highway, until they neared the Dodge cottage.

"Don't be worried, little girl," he then said, kindly, "I dare say your brother will be laughing and kicking by the time you get home. Well, here we are!" He jumped out, and before she could speak he had lifted her out and set her, half fainting from pain, down on the veranda steps.

Cicely set her teeth together, and followed him to the little Duke's bed. The child lay as she had left him, apparently with-

out stirring. Cicely noted with quick glance Dr. Kingsbury's expression, and felt that he must battle for the little life.

"He has been poisoned," said Doctor Kingsbury; "probably by picking and eating some poisonous berries or leaves. Where has he been this afternoon?"

Jane hysterically declared she didn't know. Then, after circuitous cross-examining, she acknowledged that he "maybe stepped off a little piece while I was busy."

They could hear Aunt Sarah's watch on her big bureau ticking off the moments, while slowly, contesting each inch of the way, the little Duke's attack yielded to the remedies, the small limbs moved naturally now, and the drowsy eyes unclosed. But not a whit of his lynx-eyed diligence did the doctor abate. It was still a question whether more than the Borderland was reached. And so an hour slipped by.

And then Doctor Kingsbury turned from the little bed. "Tell me where you are suffering," he said to Cicely.

"It's my arm," said Cicely, faintly.

Dr. Kingsbury took up the poor arm, and with deft hand as gentle as a woman's, stripped the sleeve from it.

"You broke it coming for me?" he asked, glancing into her eyes.

"Yes," said Cicely; "I fell down the ledge. Don't mind, Aunt Sarah," she said, turning to her; "it isn't much," in consternation at seeing the tears roll down Miss Brett's face.

And then, when the setting was over, and the doctor had gone, Cicely sobbed out all the pent-up emotion of the past hours, on the faithful breast where she had so often carried her childhood's trials.

Now, of course, the Tahawus expedition was out of the question. Duke, to be sure, would be himself in a day or two, as bright as ever, but the broken arm was a different matter. So Mr. Higgins was informed at once of the accident, and the ascent of Tahawus indefinitely postponed.

"But we'll have it yet," declared Uncle Joe, rubbing his hands together in the solitude of his own room. "Oh, yes; we'll have it yet, and she shall go."

And now, from being petted on all sides, praised by everybody till the title of "Little Heroine" began to pall upon her, Cicely awoke one morning not to "find herself famous," but to face the disagreeable fact, that for a few weeks all that remained for her was absolute quiet; a dull, leaden round of "three meals a day and no fun," as Travers expressed it, till the bone had knitted. And to make matters much worse, a steady rain set in, that without let-up, continued for three days.

"Are they washing out Heaven?" cried Duke, in dismay, as the storm showed no sign of abating. And climbing on a chair, he plastered his thin, white little face against the panes.

"It looks like it, I declare," said Travers, by the table where he was putting fishing-tackle in order. "I wish it would clear a bit, so I could run over to Dr. Kingsbury's."

"There's no keeping you at home," said Cicely, a bit fretfully, who, now that the arm was mending fast, had lost the prestige that had been accorded to a fresh heroism; "ever since you knew him, you've been racing over there, when he wasn't here."

"He's a capital fellow," cried Travers, bringing his hand on the table emphatically. "Hallo, there goes a fly!"

"Here's the pill-man," announced Duke from his chair; "now I s'pose he'll make me swallow another one—oh, dear!"

"Is it the doctor?" exclaimed Travers, happily. "I didn't know he was coming this morning. Now, that is the very jolliest go!"

"How can you say such perfectly dreadful words," cried Cicely, from the depths of a big old sofa drawn up in front of the roaring, crackling fire on the hearth, that Uncle Joe insisted upon whenever the weather allowed. Secretly she was as much

pleased at the visit as Travers himself; only jealous little pangs would start up as she saw, day after day, how much Travers thought of the new friend.

"He never has liked anybody half as well as me," she thought; "not even Tom Fisher. But now I'm stiff and poky, and can't fly around any, because of this horrid old arm."

Poor Cicely! She was having a hard time just now. Travers, wholly unsuspecting, had added to the absorbing love for his only sister and best playmate, a respect for her bravery, until Cicely would have cried for joy, could she have known it.

But the boy did not put it all in words, so matters got worse, until this day.

"I'm so glad you've come," cried Travers joyfully, as Dr. Kingsbury dashed in, shaking the rain-drops off in a little shower; "we've been so dull," he continued, the unluckiest speech he could possibly make.

"I've fairly taken you by storm," laughed the doctor, drawing near the fire; "if you'll excuse the threadbare pun. This fire is enough to drive away dullness," he said, with sparkling eyes, watching the merry, heartsome flames leap up.

"We weren't one bit dull," cried Cicely, with red cheeks, and raising her head from the sofa-back. "It was just lovely! Travers used to like it on rainy days," she added, with an unpleasant emphasis on the "used."

To say that everybody stared, would give a mild idea of the effect of this outburst. Aunt Sarah got up and went over quietly to the sofa; but she wasn't quick enough to stop the next words. "And I don't think anybody has a right to steal away a brother, and make him think his sister isn't anything," she cried sharply, with scarlet cheeks.

"Cicely!" commanded Uncle Joseph, in such a tone that Duke scrambled down from his chair, and skipped across the room to gaze as if he had never seen him before.

"Cecy doesn't feel well to-day," said Aunt Sarah, kindly, taking the hot little hand in hers. "She's tried not to complain, but it is a hard day for her."

"Oh, I do feel well," cried Cicely, honestly. What would she have given to recall those dreadful words? And then she burst into tears.

Dr. Kingsbury left the bright, leaping fire, and went over to her side. Travers, too astonished and ashamed to move, watched them silently.

The sobs continued until, what with the rain outside and the dismal state of things within, the world was dreary enough.

"You just go right away!" cried Duke, in a passion, and flying at the doctor, "tooth and nail." "You've made her cry, you bad old man!" he screamed.

"You little"—began Uncle Joe, reaching out one long arm to wreak justice on the culprit. But Cicely was before him.

"Don't you know he saved your life?" she cried, springing up, and seizing him to look down into blue eyes too amazed to cry. "You naughty boy!"

"My dear child," cried Dr. Kingsbury, "you will injure your arm."

"Cicely—Cicely," begged Aunt Sarah.

"Oh, Dr. Kingsbury, can you ever forgive me?" cried Cicely, with choking voice, and dropping Duke's little arm.

"No," he said, smiling down into the crimson face; "I couldn't possibly do that, dear child."

"I know it," said poor Cicely, her head drooping piteously.

"It's all my fault," cried Travers, springing to her to throw his arm around her. "I didn't think you might misunderstand. How could you, Cecy, dear?" He gazed reproachfully down over the brown head, to get a peep at the drooping face.

"I never can forgive you," the doctor was saying, "because, dear child, I was never offended. Did you think," and he drew

brother and sister by a sudden impulse, to him, "that I could ever misunderstand the brave little soul, who showed me on that night what there was in her to command love and respect. Why, Cicely, you and I must always be friends."

Duke now shook himself free from his astonishment, and marched up to Uncle Joe. "She pinched me, she did," he announced, pointing a small finger, trembling with wrath, at Cicely.

"All right," said Uncle Joe, laughing at the infantile anger, which was the only consolation he received. So he stalked over to another member of the family, which happened to be Maum Silvy, enjoying the comfortable fire while she placidly mended on a basketful of stockings. Standing in front of her, he cried, in a small fury, "She pinched me—Cecy did!"

"An' I wish she'd a-pinched you twice," cried Maum Silvy, delighted that she had at last somebody to talk to and ease her mind.

At this, Duke, thinking where two seemed to be so well agreed on the case he must be mistaken as to its being an indignity, smoothed down his ruffled feelings, and sat on the floor to play with his building-blocks.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW ARRIVAL.

WHEN shall we camp out?" Uncle Joe asked the question. Dr. Kingsbury regarded Cicely with a professional air. "I never had a case that behaved so beautifully," touching the broken arm in its sling. "Cicely, I do believe you'll be all right for the woods in three weeks more!"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Travers. "Just think, Ce!"

"You don't say so!" cried Uncle Joe, in a rapture, while Aunt Sarah beamed at them all.

"She'll be as good as new," declared the doctor, emphatically; "now, then, let us make our plans." The group drew up their chairs closer to the fireside. "In the first place," picking up the tongs and pushing a refractory log into the blazing center, "the log cabin is there ready for us, all in picnic order. Didn't my wife and I have a jolly time in it last season!" He threw down the tongs, and turned his glowing face toward the circle.

"How many guides do we want?" cried Uncle Joe, coming to business at once.

"Four, I should think," said Dr. Kingsbury. "Let me see, there are eight of you."

"Are there?" cried Uncle Joe, in a puzzled way. "I always have to count 'em; I'm not quite accustomed to my family yet. Yes, yes, to be sure, there are eight of us." He drew himself up, the calculation made, and looked rich as Cræsus.

"And two of us—yes, four guides to ten people is about the right proportion."



THE WIDOW BERDE'S COTTAGE.

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"Who will they be?" asked Travers.

"Moses Higgins, of course."

"Next," said Uncle Joe, whipping out his note-book.

"Anthony, his son, familiarly known as 'Tony'."

"Of course. Go on—Jefferson Birge, too, I suppose."

"Yes; and Washington Smith."

"Shades of the immortal George!" exclaimed Uncle Joe; "what a combination of names!"

"It's truly American, and a grateful change from John Smith," said Dr. Kingsbury.

"All right; that makes the four."

"Well, you will go from here by buckboards," said the doctor, "up to the Widow Beede's. My wife and I will meet you there, and then, it's a pretty bad road in to the lower pond, so some of you may prefer to stay in the buckboards."

"I shall not," declared Cicely, with sparkling eyes, and longing to swing her broken arm. "I shall walk."

"All right; well, then there is a splendid sail across the Lower Ausable. The lake is a perfect little beauty. I never saw anything like it in my Swiss travels. Old Indian Head looks down on it like a gaunt old sentinel; there's a narrow little pass at his feet, and he looks just as if he had his eye on it to see that no one came through but those who could give the password; then there's Mount Colvin—but I'm getting guide-booky, and besides, you'll see it all for yourself."

"Do go on," cried the group.

"What's the use of spouting? You'll see it all—I shall only spoil it. Oh, there's Rainbow Falls; you better stop while you're at the Lower Pond, and see that. It's only a bit out of the way; then, after crossing the Lower Ausable, there's a carry of a mile."

"A what?" asked Cicely.

"A carry—that is, a trail through the woods, bushed out by the guides.

"Bushed out? That's just what Mr. Higgins said when he told of Old Mountain Phelps making a path up Tahawus," cried Cicely.

"Yes; well, you see if you stay here as long as I have, you'll fall on a good many euphonious 'Keene Flat' expressions," said the doctor, laughing.

"I like them," said Travers, heartily. "They express what they want to say."

"So do I," cried Cicely; "and they are so very funny. Well, do go on and tell the rest, how we get there."

"The end of the carry brings you to the Upper Ausable, and on its banks are several log shanties. We'll have the one belonging to Uncle Moses, of course; it's the best in the lot."

Travers and Cicely clapped their hands. The little Duke pushed away his blocks and brought his small palms together vigorously.

"Where shall we get the boats?" asked Uncle Joe, in the midst of the babel.

"Oh, the boats are kept there—they belong to the guides. And it's best to let them take the eatables, as far as possible."

Aunt Sarah looked up with housewifely astonishment.

"You see, everything must be simplified to give as good nourishing food as possible in a small space," said the doctor; "and a lot of things can't be carried that people would naturally like to take to a picnic. We'll have to eat woods-fare, and delicious you'll find it, too. Salt pork and things like that."

"Ugh!" Cicely's pretty mouth curled again. "Salt pork, Doctor Kingsbury—I never could taste it in all the world!"

"Go ahead and speak to the guides," cried Uncle Joe, recklessly. "I'm in a fever to have 'em engaged." And he got out of his chair to prance up and down the long room. "Goodness me, I feel just like a boy, Dr. Kingsbury! I'm afraid all this excitement has gone to my head."



AT THE END OF THE CARRY.

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"It's a great deal better that you cannot go up Tahawus on the Fourth of July," said Dr. Kingsbury, laughing at him; "for we make the ascent from the camp much easier."

"Hullo—what's that?" cried Uncle Joe.

"Why, it's the best way to go, I say, from the Upper Ausable," repeated Dr. Kingsbury. "So we'll make up a party—send and bring old Mountain Phelps, and scale Tahawus as part of the pleasure of camping out."

This was the last thing needed to restore complete happiness to the group, and brightness to Cicely's face.

And in two days, the storm ceased, and the clouds lifted; with the charm that Mother Nature throws over her pet places, Keene Valley at once became a second Paradise. It was bliss to be alive. Cicely, who had declared that they must sing "America" on the back steps, because they were not up to a front-veranda celebration, now changed her tone, and rollicked in all manner of national airs, the livelier the better.

"Don't sing 'John Brown's body' any more," cried Travers, interrupting a wild burst; "you'll use it all up before we get to North Elba, and we must air it pretty well, then."

"That will be ages from now," cried Cicely, pausing just long enough for the words. "Why, Travers Dodge, we don't have the Lake Placid and Saranac trip till—till"—

"Never mind," cried Travers, "the summer is shooting by like"—then he stopped to think of the poor arm.

"All right," said Cicely; "I'll change to 'Tramp, tramp, tramp.' Travers, let us get the fish-horns and the alpenstocks, and march around the veranda."

So those pleasing instruments—the fish-horns—being procured, of which there were a goodly supply in the cottage, owing to Travers' thoughtfulness, it was next to impossible for any one to read or think enjoyably even within doors. Accordingly, Uncle Joe added himself to the procession, now swelled by

the presence of Duke, Jane and Biny, and a fearful din awoke the slumbering echoes of the mountain-side.

"What's up?" called Mr. 'Bijah Calkins, with the easy familiarity of a "Keene Flatter," and slackening the speed of his buckboard as he approached the cottage.

"We are celebrating," called back Uncle Joe, disentangling his mouth from his horn. Then he put it to his lips again to give an ear-splitting "toot," that seemed to whistle down the entire length of the valley.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Calkins; "I should think so."

Mr. Dodge lowered his horn again. "It's the Fourth of July," he announced, with dignity, coming to the veranda-edge; "and we, as American citizens of good and regular standing, are celebrating."

With that, there was a lively bustle in the back seat of Mr. Calkins' buckboard, where a stout woman sat, in the midst of piles of boxes and bundles of every description. She had a thick, green berege veil over her face, which she immediately thrust well up to her forehead.

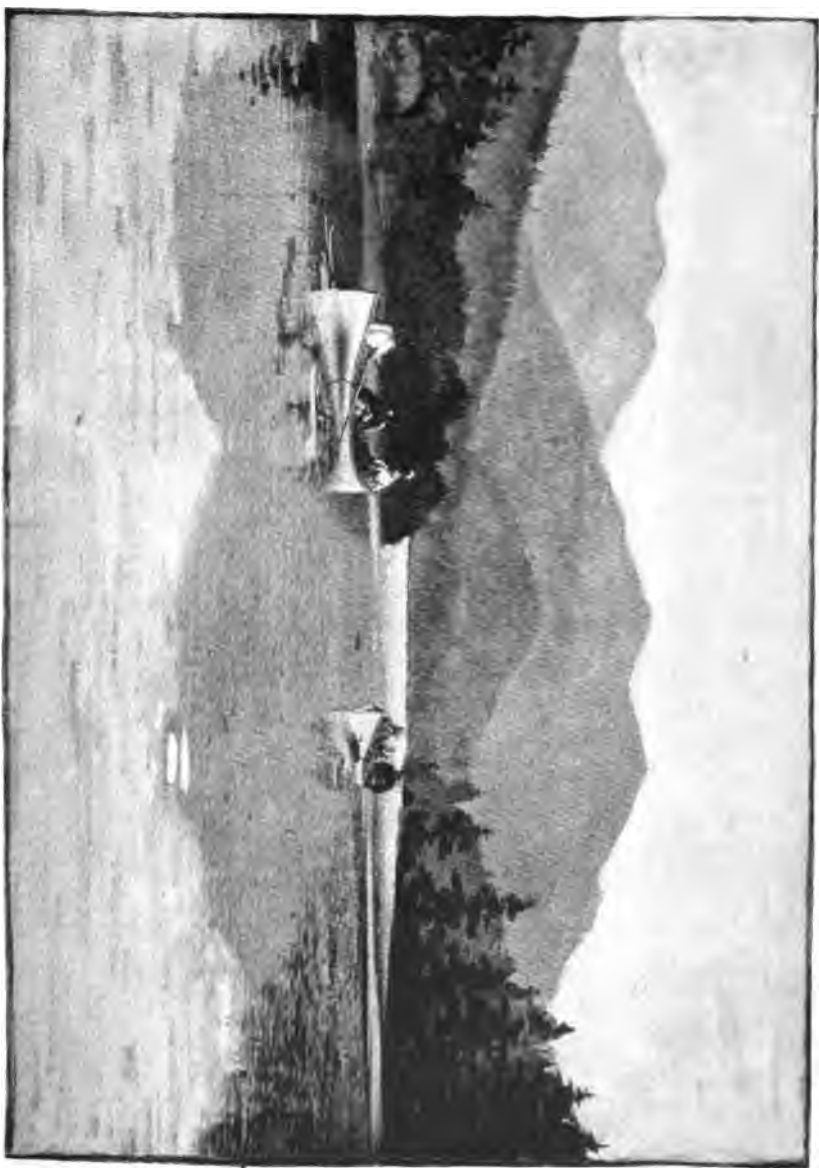
"Tis him—'tis!" she exclaimed. "I should know him in the biggest crowd that ever was. How's the little fellow?" she screamed.

The procession of Fourth-of-July celebrants stared as one, Mr. 'Bijah Calkins whirling around to thus honor his passenger.

"Let me out," said the passenger, struggling to be free from her luggage. "I want to speak to 'em a minute." With that, she got out and hurried over the green-sward.

"There is some mistake," said Uncle Joseph, the green veil dropping toward her chin with her progress.

"No, there ain't. Dear me. I won't wear this thing any longer. Folks told me you had black flies up here to the Adirondacks, but I haven't seen one yet." And she tore off her beauty-saver. "There, now you know me, I guess."



THE UPPER AUSABLE POND.

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Didn't they? The little Duke broke away from Jane, throwing down his horn as he ran. "It's my nice, beautiful woman," he cried, precipitating himself into her arms. "Give me some more candy, do."

"Well, this is a surprise," cried Uncle Joe, extending his hand cordially; "and Fourth of July, too! Well, we'll show you how to celebrate in the woods, Madam."

"Has he been well?" cried the motherly woman, with a world of affection for the little Duke clinging to her stuff gown. And she raised an anxious face.

"Not particularly of late," said Uncle Joseph; "but he's picking up now, all right."

"Give me some candy," begged Duke, feeling for her pocket; "same as you did before."

"Duke!" cried Cicely, from the veranda.

"You small beggar, stop your teasing," cried Travers.

"Cecy broke her arm," cried Duke, eager to communicate the news. "Where is your candy?" in the same breath.

"Doctor won't let you eat it," said Travers. "No, no," as the motherly person produced a handful of white lozenges.

"They're pep'mints," she said; "they won't hurt him—they're wholesome."

"No, no," said Uncle Joe. "Much obliged; but doctor wouldn't like it. Come in, Mrs.—Mrs.—we don't even know your name."

"Mrs. Martha Badger," said the motherly person. "I meant to have introduced myself to you the day we met. But la! there wasn't much time."

"I should think not," laughed Uncle Joe.

"And now to think of meeting here, of all places!" Mrs. Badger rolled her eyes mountainward, and slowly made the circuit.

"The most natural thing in the world, when you come to think of it," said Uncle Joe. "Everybody goes to the Adirondacks, you know, sooner or later."

Mrs. Badger's face began to slowly enwreath itself with smiles. "You do think it's a safe thing, then, don't you?" she asked, quickly.

"What?" asked Uncle Joe.

"Why, to open a boarding-house. I was advised to do it. There's a house I can get, down toward the Ponds. My minister's done all the writing for me, and seems as if I ought to, for my brother's got burnt out, and needs a home, and"—

"So you are going to keep a boarding-house here, Mrs. Badger?" broke in Uncle Joe, interrupting the stream.

"How jolly!" cried Travers, tossing the little Duke up in the air to atone for his disappointment over the sweets.

"Yes," said Mrs. Martha Badger; "I'm going to keep boarders. Seems as if I ought to, for my brother"—

"Yes, yes," said Uncle Joseph. "Well, I don't doubt you'll make a success of the thing; and we'll all come over and get some of your nice meals when you are settled, Mrs. Badger."

"'Tisn't such a terrible venturesome thing as it looks to be," said Mrs. Badger, when she had recovered from the delight into which this plunged her; "for my brother's wife is dreadful smart—has to be, you know, for they've got nine children. That's where I was going when we met, you know, and you give me the present, and asked me if I had any children. No, I haven't; but there was all those nine that I was going to. Well, as I was saying, my brother was burnt out, and"—

"So he's coming to live with you?" interrupted Uncle Joseph, again.

"Yes; it's a providence that I can keep boarders here. And John and his wife can help. So 'twill be Badger and Billings, you know, and"—

"Who?" cried Travers, sharply. "What's your brother's name?"

"Why, John Billings. I was a Billings, you know, before I was married, and"—

"Come on!" roared Mr. 'Bijah Calkins, from the buckboard. "Ain't you done talking yet?"

"Where does he live?"

"Nowhere, now," said Mrs. Badger. "He was burnt out, you know, down in Buxton, in Massachusetts."

And then it was all out; and by the time that Mrs. Martha Badger clambered back to her seat in the Calkins' buckboard, she felt invested with crowds of friends, enough for all human needs.

"It's most as good as being related," she told Mr. Calkins, who drove slowly while she confided the whole story in her own elastic fashion; "to think these folks are the ones who were so good to John. Why, that black child that I thought was a perfect limb o' satan, saved one of John's children right out o' the fire."

"Du tell!" exclaimed Mr. Calkins; "well, I never!" all through the entire recital.

"I tell you, we'd ought to believe that providence gets into everything," said Mrs. Badger, at last, with the most moral air. "Now I'm sure of it, 'cause things are going so exactly to my mind," she added, joyfully.

And Biny, unconscious of her coming bliss, had written her last letter, which Uncle Joe had mailed this very morning.

"Deer, my chile Ang'line. Don't ever ware your stockings to bed, 'cause it musses 'em. Don't ever do it, if you doo, I shal whip you. And you can't eat cake betwene meels til I get home (a superfluous command, as the Billings children only knew cake, to cry for it).

"Oh, wel, Duke got sik, Mis Cecy bruk her arm, and the pill-man takes me and Duke poose-back all the time. That's all.

Respek'fly your 'dopted mudder.

Miss Simpson."

The three weeks, what with their study, and Mrs. Badger's cheery entrée into the Valley, and the numberless journeys over

to her new field of action with various articles toward the furnishing of the boarding-house, and the out-look kept up for the Billings household, and finally the arrival of the same, occupied Cicely so much, that almost before she knew it, the time had slipped by. And now the word was given to "camp out!"

CHAPTER XI.

CAMPING OUT.

THE key was turned in the front door of the Dodge cabin. At last they were on their way to camp!

"But I sha'n't believe it till we 'really and truly' start," cried Cicely, as they hurried on the buckboards. "Supposing anything should happen, Uncle Joe, to keep us home now!" she breathed fearfully.

"Supposings are not the order of this day," said Uncle Joe, marching around jubilantly as master of ceremonies. "Where are you going, Maum Silvy?" as that individual showed signs of leaving the buckboard.

"I want to see if everyt'ing's in the hamper," said Maum Silvy, rolling out heavily to the ground.

"Bother! Of course it is. Didn't you stand over the guides, and make them show you each identical thing?" said Uncle Joe.

"I tink I did; but I done forget. I'm going to see now."

"Everything is all right, Maum Silvy, I know," said Miss Brett, reassuringly.

"Well, I'm going to see, now I'm out, if de tea is there; like enough those men done forgot it," said Maum Silvy, obstinately lifting the lid of the hamper that contained the camp supplies, to dive into its miscellaneous collection.

"Now see here," cried Uncle Joe, unceremoniously; "it's too late to overhaul that now. Jeff,"—to one of the guides—"toss it up, will you."

Thereupon, Jeff, a stalwart six-footer, advancing for that pur-

pose, Maum Silvy withdrew her head, and loudly declaring that she knew the tea was left out, and that they'd all be sorry before night, and enough more of the same sort, she clambered up to her seat again; the hamper, with its shoulder loops for carrying, being "tossed up" on the end of the buckboard.

The rubber bags with carrying loops, filled with blankets, were added to the load; next came Cicely's own little hamper, that Moses Higgins (the head guide, and familiarly called "Uncle Mose") promised to see through safely; then Aunt Sarah's medicine chest.

"For we mustn't depend on Doctor Kingsbury for everything," she had said, laughingly, when describing its contents one day to the doctor's little wife.

"Aunty has everything that can be imagined in that little bag," Cicely had cried; "cold cream, and glycerine, and ammonia, and oh, dear, I don't know what all! Besides, she's made a villainous compound of sweet oil and oil of tar. There won't a solitary black fly have a nip at us."

So now the medicine chest was carefully packed on the buckboard; Uncle Joe put in his rifle, and Travers added his; a bag of extra shoes and underclothing, and another of the odds and ends, usually found necessary at the last moment when people are going to camp out, and the buckboards are off to meet Dr. and Mrs. Kingsbury, and the other two guides with the camp kit.

"South, and tending toward the west," repeats Cicely, as they spin down the winding road. "I know it like a parrot, I've studied the guide-book so much—'lies the road to the Ausable Ponds, shut in between the sharp peak of Colvin and the summit of Resagonia'."

"Just think how near we shall be to the lovely Ausable river, tumbling over its rough bed and sparkling in beautiful waterfalls," she added.



OLD INDIAN HEAD AND THE LOWER AU SABLE POND.

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"Oh, do stop," cried Travers, turning around on the front seat, "all that gush. Who would think you, Cecy, would descend to it?"

"I can't help it," cried Cicely, back again. "I've been living on guide-books for the last three weeks."

"Go on, Cecy, let us have the rest of it," cried Uncle Joe, mischievously.

"Creeping softly under the drooping branches, it finds its way to some sequestered pool, to dash out again with renewed vigor, anon to be lulled by the whispering pines."

"Ugh—r!" exclaimed Travers.

"That's enough," cried Uncle Joe, entirely satisfied, while Mr. Higgins squinted back at his merry party and said, "Bosh. The fellers that write that stuff, do it to order, you know; now they might jest say 'twas pooty, and had plenty o' trout, and land! You'd had the whole."

About half a mile farther, and they came in sight of the Beede House, a good, comfortable hostelry with an ambitious little cupola.

"We are two hundred and seventy-seven feet higher than Keene Flats," announced Mr. Higgins, as they drove up in front of the hostelry. "And here you can't get no hay fever, nor bronchitis, if you want 'em. Well, here's our folks."

"Hi—hi!" called Anthony Higgins and Washington Smith, loping over the ground to meet them, while Dr. Kingsbury sung out—"Hurrah! Glad you've turned up!"

Little Mrs. Kingsbury shook her handkerchief gayly, and bade good-by to her friends she had made on the Beede House veranda, and ran down as fleet of foot as a fifteen-year-old.

"All of you who want to walk, better git off here," said Mr. Higgins; "the rest pile on."

"I shall walk," declared Cicely, flying off the buckboard. Travers was already on the ground.

Suddenly a howl from the other buckboard where Jane and the little Duke were packed in, struck their ears.

"I'm going to walk—I am!" The little Duke's struggles were fearful to witness.

"Duke—Duke!" called Aunt Sarah, from her buckboard.

As well talk to the wind. The air resounded with much good advice to the Duke, while he steadily demanded to be taken out and set on the ground.

"See here," cried Washington Smith, abruptly, and loping up to the scene of the trouble; "I know what the little chap wants. I'll carry you—here goes!"

And before the Duke realized his elevation, there he was enthroned on the broad shoulders, before them all.

Biny, seeing this, slipped quietly out from the seat in front of his discarded one.

"Umph! I'm going to walk," she declared, skipping over the road; "not be toted like a baby."

"Biny Simpson," screamed her mother, "you come right straight back!"

"Oh, let her go," cried Uncle Joe, goodnaturedly; "I'll look after her."

And so at last they are off, the boarders at the Beede House waving them a parting salute, and they are finally on the road leading to the Lower Ausable Pond.

"If we were exiles now, and forced to put ourselves out of civilization, why, all this wouldn't be so invigorating," observed Uncle Joe, looking back, one foot slipping into a convenient mud-hole.

"What a difference choosing it, makes," said Aunt Sarah, from the buckboard. Down went one set of wheels in a rut, that ends her sentence rather shakily.

"Hold on, there!" sang out Mr. Higgins, leading his off horse. "Now, then—'tother side."

And down went the wheels k-thud, immediately followed by the same proceeding impartially observed by the first wheels. In this see-saw fashion a slow quarter of a mile was traversed. Aunt Sarah straightened her mountain hat, and Maum Silvy, with many a "Ham and Japhet!" clutched the buckboard sides.

The road now presented the appearance of a "corduroy," the spaces between the logs laid down to assist travelers, being filled with soft, black mud, the result of heavy rains of the previous week. Into these ruts, the buckboard wheels continued to sink and sag, providing the passengers with much exercise while changing sides to balance the positions assumed by the wheels.

Uncle Joe looked like a man who enjoyed being miserable. "I say, Higgins," he called back, "why don't you have this road mended?"

Mr. Higgins was equal to him. He squinted at the road in question, as if for the first time making its acquaintance. "Oh, well, you see, you folks from the cities wouldn't get any fun out of it, if 'twas easy going," he drawled.

Travers with Cicely, both wild with delight, were far ahead. "Neck and neck," as the boy said; whereat Cicely shook her finger at him, and declared she would allow no slang, even in the woods.

"Hee—up!" shouted Mr. Higgins, leading the steaming horses; "there, we've most got there"—a piece of information he had been giving them at intervals all along.

At last, Travers swung his tennis-cap—"I see water." Then he disappeared from view, Cicely with him, and straggling after, the party came suddenly to the brow of a hill. There below them lay a little lake, a mile in length, but only a few rods broad.

Old Indian Head frowned over its surface, like a sentinel set to watch this liquid highway; Mount Colvin was beyond, lifting his craggy sides from the water; Resagonia off to the west, its base nearly hidden by a wealth of forest-growth.

"Oh—oh!" Everybody forgot tired feet, while some sank down on the hill-side, and others ran to the lake-edge, to take in all the beauty.

"Pooty, ain't it?" drawled Uncle Mose Higgins, reflectively chewing a pine stick.

"Pretty! Oh, Mr. Higgins!" They could get no further, and they lapse into rapt enjoyment, forgetting that Time was master of their movements.

It was only when Cicely came flying up the sandy path, from the edge of the lake to the brow of the hill, that Aunt Sarah roused from her revery.

"He says we may—don't you want to go, Aunty?"

"Where?" asked Miss Brett, dreamily. "Can there be anything worthier than this to feast upon?"

"To Rainbow Falls," said Cicely, beguilingly. "It's only a little way off there," pointing to the north-west; "back in a chasm. Oh, do say 'yes,' aunty."

"Yes," said Miss Brett, mechanically; and seeing that it was expected of her, she rose, and with backward glances at the shimmering water, fell into line "to do" the Falls.

"The brook starts away up in the Gothics," contributed Tony Higgins to her, as they went through the cloven mountain-side.

"Isn't this something like Ausable chasm, on a smaller scale?" asked Travers.

"Yes; some'at," said Tony. "This is small, but it's awful pooty, now, ain't it?"

Indeed it was.

The gray sides shot up a hundred feet or so, the bottom was full of rough boulders, while fluttering over the edge of the precipice, was the Fall, like a coy maiden peeping at her sweet reflection in a mirror below.

How it glanced over the crags, until, separated into gleaming



RAINBOW FALLS.

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strands, it leaped to the bowlders below, there to be reunited in one stream, flowing to the waiting river.

And then, back to the lake-edge, where the remaining guides have been getting the boats ready.

Tony Higgins looked up at the sky. "Shouldn't wonder if we had rain before we can get thar," he said.

"Oh!" cried Cicely, in horror; "it can't rain—it's too lovely." But as Tony was a weather-prophet of no mean reputation, she added respectfully, "If you say so, I suppose it must."

Sure enough. The wind suddenly shifted, a cloud swept over them, and while they were speculating how long before the storm would burst, down came the rain-drops.

"We've got to push on; 'taint going to let up when the wind is in that quarter," said Tony, with the air of an oracle. "Now, says I, for the boats!"

There was, among the array of boats waiting for them, a "dug-out," belonging to Mr. Higgins, and his especial pet.

"Let me go in that," cried Biny, pointing a black finger insinuatingly at it.

"You? Good gracious, I sh'd as soon think of taking an eel," cried Uncle Moses. "Whoever sets in that, has got to set, I tell you."

"I'd set," cried Biny, urging her claims.

"Maybe; so would a boy-constrictor an' a gorilla," replied Mr. Higgins. Then he turned off to Cicely. "Want to ride in her?" he asked, a twinkle in his gray eye as he pointed with his ever-ready thumb to the "dug-out," rolling and dipping with each little movement of the water.

"If I only may!" cried Cicely, with glad eyes, and clasping her hands.

"This is wicked!" exclaimed Uncle Moses, as they pushed out into the stream, and shaking off the rain from his old cap, while he squinted sorrowfully, first at the angry sky, then at

Cicely, where she sat in the end of the "dug-out." "You'll be wet to the skin, and I can't help it, neither."

"It's good fun," cried Cicely, merrily. Her face, with the waterproof hood circling it, showed a very moist set of features, over which the smile ran like the sun breaking through a summer shower. "And I'm so glad I don't wear eye-glasses; they'd be drenching wet."

"Now that's what I call a nice way to take it!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, approvingly; "think of some other way that you'd be miserabler in, and before you get through, you're half satisfied as you be. Well, now, when we get up toward the head o' the Pond, the water 'shoals' so that you can see the shore on Resagony's side; then I'll show you a little bit of meadow."

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Cicely, peering through the rain. "Oh, dear," as the dug-out rolled a bit; "I'm afraid I moved too much."

"No, you didn't," cried Uncle Moses. "I never see anybody set so still, 'specially a young creeter."

"I'm glad of it," cried Cicely, with a merry laugh. "It's quite a feather in my cap to be praised for being quiet. Thank you, Mr. Higgins."

"Well, here we be!" was Mr. Higgins' next remark; "ahead of 'em by a good distance."

Cicely sprang out as the "dug-out" was grounded, and looked about her in the rain. "Isn't it wild?" she cried, in delight.

"You just wait till you get fairly in," said Mr. Higgins; "then it's wild enough. Deer, started in the mountains, often make for the Upper Pond."

"How I do wish I could see a deer," sighed Cicely. "Don't you suppose we will, Mr. Higgins? Travers does want dreadfully to shoot one."

"Everybody is afflicted that way, I reckon," said Mr. Higgins, drily, "that sets foot in the woods. Hullo! Well, are you slow-coaches here?" as the other boats came in sight.



THEY MADE A BRIDGE OF A FALLEN TREE.

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"All file in for the carry!" sang Cicely, in glee, as the party debarked and shook themselves as wet dogs do who hurry into shelter.

"We're a slightly moist procession," laughed Travers. "My goodness, Ce, do look back over the trail!"

In between the thickets of tamarack and cedar, hemlock and white pine, they wound, sometimes making a bridge of a fallen tree, slipping, tumbling headlong, laughing and joking, all to the echo of the pelting rain, till in process of time they all appeared at the Upper Pond.

"Now, then," Mr. Higgins shouted, "jest hop into them boats, and in three shakes of a lamb's tail, we'll have you at the camp!"



THE CAMP.

And wet, but jubilant, they were soon landed, and racing "helter-skelter," as Mr. Higgins said, up the bank, and plunging into a log shanty whose entire front was open to receive them.

A pretty fringe of hemlock depended from the top, shaking out a second fringe of silvery drops. The party threw themselves on the balsam carpet spread by the guides on their visit of preparation to the camp, two days before.

"Oh, I'm so hungry!" wailed the little Duke and Biny, in chorus. "Give me something to eat."

"So am I," cried Cicely. "Oh, dear, everything's eaten up in the lunch-basket, children," beginning to investigate its depths.

"I should think it would be," said Travers; "we've been steadily raiding on it ever since we started."

Meanwhile the guides were building an immense fire in front of the shanty; it soon crackled and blazed, sending showers of sparks up over their heads.

"Grand!" cried Aunt Sarah; "now off with your wet shoes, and on with these." She was untying as she spoke, the bag of dry feet-covering.

Just then, tramp, tramp, came Mr. Higgins' heavy foot-steps over the sodden ground, and suddenly a long, gaunt hand projected into their midst a huge tin pan filled with a smoking delicacy that emitted a most delicious odor.

Cicely sent out a hungry little hand from the back row on the balsam couch. "Do give me a piece—that is, after the others are helped, Mr. Higgins."

"Certin," said Uncle Moses, his blue eyes twinkling under his old cap-brim. And presently Cicely felt as if all sweet morsels were rolled in one under her tongue.

"Do you suppose I could have another piece?" she asked, timidly. "Will there be enough to go around, Uncle Moses?"

"Certin," said Mr. Higgins, again. "Tony'll bring up another lot."

"What can it be," cried Cicely, "that is so perfectly elegant?" the last toothsome crumb slipping down her throat.

"Salt pork," said Mr. Higgins, laconically.

"Salt pork!"

It was impossible to describe Cicely's tone, and they all shouted.

"We couldn't so much as look at salt pork," said Travers; "ah, Cecy?"

"But this is Moses Higgins' salt pork, and we are in the Adirondacks," said Uncle Joe, gallantly going over to Cicely's rescue. "Hand us over another slice, will you. I don't remember being so hungry since I was a boy."

CHAPTER XII.

AROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

I'LL tell you something." Washington Smith, stirring up the blazing fire with a long pole, took a cautious glance around to make sure that Tony had really gone with his father to help forward the culinary operations. Then he said, "Tony's got a vi'lin. It's in his bag."

"Oh—oh!" screamed the young people, Duke coming in with a sleepy little crow.

"Hush. If he knows I've told you, he'll give me fits," said Washington, with another poke at the fire. "Look just as if you hadn't heard nothing about it when I ask him to fetch it."

"Oh, Washington, you're not much like the immortal George," reproved Travers.

"Who's he," asked the guide.

"Why, the father of your country, to be sure," said Travers. "He couldn't tell a lie."

Washington grinned, and rested the end of his pole a minute on the ground. "I never b'lieved that story," he said; "there ain't no boy ever lived, who'd lose such a good chance to tell a lie about that old cherry tree."

About nightfall the rain ceased, and breathing the sweet incense that arose from the earth and every leaf and shrub, after a bountiful supper of fried chicken, slap-jacks and maple syrup, the party sat around the camp-fire, replenished by the younger guides, who, going into the denser wood, hewed down

the small saplings without mercy, dragging them to the fire, to thrust the tops into the blaze, and wave them aloft till the bright sparks sent off countless pyrotechnics above their heads.

"Dear me, what a place for a Fourth of July," sighed Travers, leaping to his feet to follow suit. "Whew, look out for this blazer!"

"It's perfectly lovely!" cried Cicely. "But do let us have the stories; I've thought of them so much, it seems as if I couldn't wait for you to begin."

Uncle Moses shifted one foot over its fellow. "All right," he said.

"Mr. Higgins," said Uncle Joe, leaning back luxuriously on a tree-stump with a broad back fitted to it, "it belongs to you to open the ball."

"I'd rather be excused," said Uncle Mose, dryly. "Jefferson Birge here tells a pooty tough yarn. If you all live through that, then I'll foller on."

"Now, then, Jefferson," said Uncle Joe, with an encouraging clap on that guide's broad back, "push ahead, and sit a little forward so that we can see your face."

"Oh, now, I call that mean, Moses Higgins," said Jefferson.

"Shove on, Jeff, the ladies are waiting," said Mr. Higgins, with an admonitory punch.

"I haven't got any stories," cried Jefferson Birge, in desperation, running his bronzed hands through his thick shock of tow-colored hair. "Jewhitaker, I don't know one!"

"There's that story about the deer," said Mr. Higgins, soberly, with a wink of his blue eye nearest the greater part of the company; "that's the most interesting tale I ever heard in all my life. Give us that."

"Oh, yes, Jeff," cried both of the other guides, uproariously cheered on by the Dodge party; "trot out your deer. Hurry up, now."

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“THERE WAS THAT POND WITH THEM BIG MOUNTAINS ON ONE SIDE.”

"I told you I didn't know as 'twas true," said Jefferson, anxiously.

"He believes in the immortal George, if you don't," whispered Travers, to Washington Birge.

"I heard it up in a lumber shanty, two years ago," Jeff continued, "and maybe 'tisin't so."

"Jeff," said Uncle Moses, deliberately, "we'll take your word for it that it ain't true."

"Oh, no, no," cried Jeff, in distress; "my word ain't good for nothing. Maybe 'tis true."

"Then we'll take your word 'tis," said Mr. Higgins, bringing his hand down emphatically. "Just as you say; it either is or isn't, don't make no difference to us. We're obliging."

"'Tisin't neither," declared Jefferson Birge, smartly.

The peal of laughter afforded him time to think up the "opening" of his now clamorously-called-for story, and at last the unhappy guide began on the "Last charge of the deer."

"'Twas down in the lake region," began Jeff, as if with a thousand-pound weight on his mind. "And"—

"As this is true and not true," interrupted Uncle Moses, with intense solemnity, turning to the group, "you must believe every word of it, sure."

"Two boatmen," went on the narrator, in stolid misery; "that is, I b'lieve they was boatmen, at any rate, men"—

"It is safe to say they were men," said Dr. Kingsbury, *sotto voce*.

"They came to the end of the Lake," went on Jeff, groping for the thread of his story. "Oh, no; let me see, they didn't come—that was it—they staid where they was."

"It might be pleasant to know where the point where they was, was," observed Mr. Higgins, dryly. "If they was hung over the pond, that would be interesting, now."

"They wasn't hung at all!" exclaimed Jefferson, with the

first vivacity he had exhibited. "How could they go out to shoot deer a-hanging over a big pond?" he asked, derisively.

"Sure enough," replied Uncle Moses, as if convinced by such excellent reasoning; "we didn't know as they did go for deer—you hadn't said so."

"Jehoshaphat!" ejaculated Jefferson Birge, snappishly; "what do you s'pose they'd go into a reg'lar deer's runway for, if 'twarn't to shoot deer, hey?"



"A REG'LAR DEER'S RUNWAY."

By this time, Cicely was laughing till she cried, and the rest of the party were scarcely less hysterical. But they held themselves in check enough to hear the fun go on.

"Sure enough!" again exclaimed Mr. Higgins, with a very thoughtful face. "But then, you didn't say where it was, you know."

"For the good gracious!" cried the incensed story-teller, whirling around on his tormentor. "You'd wear a saint to tatters. It's bad enough to try to tell anything without having a pack of questions fired at you every breath. Where did you s'pose it was?"

"I don't know," answered Uncle Moses.

"Where was the deer all this time?"

asked Washington Smith. "I keep a thinkin' about him; ain't it about time to give us a few p'int of his hist'ry?"

"And the boat?" asked Dr. Kingsbury, stretching his long figure luxuriously on a heap of balsams on the ground. "Where did that come from?"

"Don't you all want to know what they had fer breakfast?"

inquired Mr. Birge, derisively, who could be called "slow" no longer. "P'raps I can accommodate ye, although the book didn't mention it."

"No consequence," said Uncle Moses, with a nonchalant air. "Go on, Jeffy; time's most up."

"Now I've begun it, I'm going to finish," announced Jefferson, with dignity, and sitting quite straight.

"Go on, Birge," said Uncle Joe. "You have a right to tell that story in your own way, and I'll see you through it."

"I wish," Jefferson proceeded, "said one man—oh, let me see, where was I? That don't come next. They took their rifles, and rowed silently up to the end o' the pond, and then one man says, 'I wish we could see a deer.'"

"Laudable desire," whispered Travers to Cicely, with a nudge

"Hush," she whispered back. "You'll stop him, Travvy."

"Nonsense!" cried Travers, under his breath. "That's the very way to keep him going. The guides were talking of it this morning. They always have to tease him just as they've been doing now, to start him; get him 'riled,' as they call it, and then nothing can stop him."

"He's talking," cried Cicely; "do stop; we shall lose it."

"And then they didn't say nothing until suddenly they heard a noise."

Here Jefferson Birge projected his lean body forward, his big blue eyes spread their widest, and he jerked his long arms out, to the imminent danger of his near neighbors.

"'Twas jest like a wild animil," he cried, in a stage whisper.

At this, such a shriek arose on the air that Mr. Birge drew back his arms to a position nearer his own body, and stared with the rest of the party.

A small figure on the ground had crouched as close to the fire as it could well get, basking in serene content with itself and all the world.

"Why, Biny, child!" exclaimed Aunt Sarah; "what is the matter?"

"He's going to tell about a b'ar," cried Biny, in an agony of terror; and precipitating herself into Miss Brett's lap, she burrowed, shaking with fright. "Don't let him; make him stop," she implored.

"It's nothing but a pooty little deer I'm going to tell of," declared Jefferson, as soon as he could be heard for the babel. "You know, Biny," he added reassuringly, "what them are, and how pooty they run through the woods."

But at the word "run," Biny, who had begun to wipe away her tears, broke out afresh with heartrending wails.

"I don't want it to run," she screamed; "don't let it run—oh, dear, dear!"

"It sha'n't run," promised Jefferson; "I'll make it walk every single step of the way," he added, most accommodatingly.

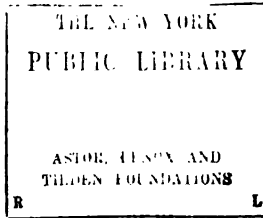
At this, Biny's terror abated, and willing to listen to a tale where the creature was made to walk, she sat back in Miss Brett's arms and quieted down.

"Between you and Biny," observed Mr. Higgins, dryly, "we sha'n't make much progress, it peers to me, through this narrative. P'raps you'll get through before morning, Jeff."

"Oh, where was I?" exclaimed Jefferson, drawing his big hand across his forehead. "Oh, yes; well, there was that pond lyin' so still and handsome, and them big mountains on one side, and not a breath a-stirrin' to make a noise, when the first thing they knew, the most splendid stag shot right across the pond, jest where they was going. His antlers were superb, and they most smelt the venison, jest to look at him. Well, sir, so the men let drive down to meet him, and one raised his rifle to aim between the horns. The boat by this time was tipping pretty strong; what with the other man's excitement, he couldn't carry a very stiddy oar, so the ball went clean up over the creat-



"I'LL GO SOME DAY ALONG BY MYSELF."



ure, and wasted that shot. Well, if you'll believe me, that deer turned and took in the situation at once—how there was two fools in that there boat after him, and the cheapest way for him was to take matters into his own hands, and circumvent 'em. So—now I don't know as this is true," he said, bringing himself up anxiously, and staring into the fire, "so you mustn't say any of you heard it from me, 'cause a good many things is said up here in the Adirondacks, that the woods never heard in their lives, and ain't in the least bit to blame for."

"We won't," promised Uncle Joe, solemnly, "repeat the first word of this extremely interesting tale you are relating."

"No, we won't," they all added, in chorus. "So proceed."

"Well"—the story-teller seized the broken thread of his narrative. "And with a plunge, that creeter just let himself drive over against that boat. There was an awful noise for a moment, and the next moment, before any one could say Jack Robinson, the boat, them three men"—

"You said there was two men," interrupted Mr. Higgins, sternly. "At this late day, we can't have you changing 'em."

"Oh, well—two, then," said the discomfited story-teller. "So I did, well, I've been so harried by you, that I can't tell one from a dozen. Well, the two riz up with the boat, and when they come down, they was slightly separated, and the guns being in one place, and the oars and other fixin's being in another, made it a little awkward for a spell. When they found out that they were not in t'other world either of 'em, they begun to look around for the deer, when he warn't nowheres to be found. And that's the hull on't. And I wish"—here Mr. Birge brought his hand on the broad back of Mr. Higgins with a backwoods clap, "that I'd been whipped in a threshing machine before I told this fellow I ever read this story."

When the cheers for "Jeff Birge" died down they all cried, "Now a story from Uncle Mose!"

"I'm in fer it, I s'pose," said that individual, slowly, giving a hitch to his corduroys. "And seeing I'm in, why, I won't tire ye all out, like some people I could mention, a-hanging back." He shot a sly look from his little keen eyes, over at his predecessor in the story-telling business.

"Resent it, man," cried Uncle Joe. "We'll stand by you, Birge."

"I'm that beat out," declared Jefferson, leaning back against a tree-trunk, and stretching his long legs to the fire, "that I couldn't sass back if he said my grandfather run fer office and couldn't get in."

"Then," observed Mr. Higgins, "as there is no one to take offence at the spirit of my remarks, I'll step in and shove along. I guess I'll tell my big fish story. I hain't aired that for more'n a year."

The guides groaned, and settled themselves resignedly, Birge slipping down from the support of the friendly tree to stretch out at full length on the wet moss.

"These fellows here," declared Uncle Moses, with a sweep of his broad thumb toward the other guides, "don't know the least thing about fishing."

"Don't we, though?" cried Washington Smith, looking out from the brim of his slouched hat with a sudden gleam of his black eyes.

"Well, now about that air fish," said Uncle Moses, deliberately, and bringing down a forefinger into his other palm. "I want you to know it's all true I'm telling you. As it happened to me I ought to know."

Washington Smith rolled up incredulous eyes, and even Tony snickered, and then pretended he didn't.

"That old fish," drawled Jefferson, from his recumbent position. "Jonah's whale ain't nothin' to it, now I tell you!"

"I heard such big stories that there warn't no truth in," said

Mr. Higgins, morally, "'bout the fishin' up John's Brook, thet says I, I'll go up some day along by myself, and try my luck. Then I can tell a yarn folks can depend on."

Here Tony snickered again, and then jumped up and furiously poked the fire with his pole.

"So when there warn't much doing, and the work at the saw-mill was well along, and 'twas a dull time for guides—I took a day off, and set forth. I had to give it out that I was goin' away on business, else there'd been a pack of other fellers streaking it after me. You can't do anythin' on the Flats," said Uncle Moses, complainingly, "without the whole crowd knowing it," and he tipped a sly look at the other guides. "Well, I had it all my own way, caught trout pretty plenty—little fellers—as I went along. But I didn't care for them, and the most of them I threw back into the brook to meditate on their foolishness. It was a big chap I was after."

"And didn't get," put in Washington Smith.

"Hold your tongue, there," cried Uncle Moses, in pretended indignation; but his eyes were twinkling under his old cap. Cicely crept up to him in intense excitement.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Higgins, addressing himself to Uncle Joe; "the fish kept a growing bigger and bigger as I followed the stream."

"A good many of them weighed a pound, I s'pose," drawled Jefferson.

"They did," said Mr. Higgins. "You, sir," still talking to Uncle Joe, "can understand me. These men here," waving his brawny hand at the guides, "are chuck full o' jealousy, and never can bear this story of my big fish."

"P'raps we could a stood it better if we'd seen the fish," said Washington Smith.

Tony snickered again, and this time did not try to cover it up.

"Well, all of a sudden, I heard a splashing; it seemed to

come from a dark pool behind two rocks. They came out this way." Uncle Moses illustrated by spreading his arms and bringing his finger-tips together. "Now right in the bottom of this V, as you might call it, up by my fingers, the water run in, and lay there cool and still-like, and black as pitch. Well, when I heard that splash, I knew what was up and I gets up on one of the rocks, and I says to myself, 'Mose Higgins, before you go home, you'll bag that critter.' Well—Uncle Moses dropped his arms and fell back into his easy position again—"to make a long story short, I let fly my line."

"What did you bait it with?" questioned Travers, in great excitement.

"Oh, jest an angleworm; those fellers like 'em best. Sweet as nuts. Well, that worm lay and wriggled on the water, looking as nateral as life, and pretty soon I saw the pool stir; 'twarn't much, but I know somethin' about fish, and I could tell there was one coming. So I held on, and didn't draw a breath."

At this Travers held his breath also, his eyes gleaming for the dénouement. Uncle Joe was scarcely less stirred up, while even Miss Brett shared the general excitement.

"I've heard this remarkable story before," whispered little Mrs. Kingsbury to her. "So the doctor and I are able to wait for the end."

"And in a minute, he holding on at one end and I at the other, the fellow gave a twitch, and if you'll believe me, the first thing I knew, I was in that pool, and he was a-sitting on my rock!"

"Oh—oh!" Cries of incredulous derision greeted Uncle Moses' ears, but he maintained his usual serenity.

"Well, he was a big one, I tell you," he cried, as soon as he could speak. "From end to end that trout was a yard long, and speckled; well, there, Joseph's coat of many colors warn't

nothin' to the spots that feller exhibited. They like to took my breath away."

"I sh'd think 'twould," muttered Tony; "tellin' such a yarn."

"Antony Higgins!" exclaimed Uncle Moses, sternly, turning on him, "the son who respects not his father's gray hairs will — will have to play on his vi'lin before long."

"Ah—good for you, Uncle Moses!" cried Travers. And the guides shouted and clapped their hands.

"'A prophet is not without honor,'" quoted Mr. Higgins; "'save in his own country.' Now, Mr. Dodge, these 'Keene Flatters' never will b'lieve this story of mine, but I feel that you will."

"You may count on me," promised Uncle Joe, solemnly.

"Well, when I got tired of staying in that pool," resumed Uncle Moses, stretching his long legs, "I says, 'excuse me, sir, but that rock is mine,' and I reversed ends of my fishing-rod, and hit him a thwack on his insulting eye, but he only winked his other one at me and slid out of sight, and I saw him no more, as the water closed over him."

"Is that the end?" cried a chorus of voices.

"End? What more would you have?" roared Uncle Moses. "You couldn't expect me to keep up that amusement a slipping back and forth into the pool for that sassy fish to take my rock, could you?"

"See here, chaps!" cried Uncle Joe, turning to the other guides. "What shall we do with this fellow? Is there anything too bad for him?"

"Let Tony play on his vi'lin," said Uncle Moses; "that will be punishment enough."

And before Tony knew how, the vi'lin was drawn out of the bag, and he was surrounded by a musical crowd who dinned into his ears cries of, "A tune, Tony; give us a tune," till he was nearly deaf with the noise.

"Come on, Cecy, let's dance," cried Travers, seizing her arm and drawing her out into a well-trodden space before the fire.

Biny rubbed her sleepy eyes, rolled over once, and was on her feet. "Some one dance with me," she begged.

"I will, Biny," cried Uncle Joe, gallantly; "there, now, here we go!"

The squeaking of the vi'lin resounded to the merry dance, as one after another found their feet, until Miss Brett and the doctor's wife were left alone.

"Do you think it would be noticed," asked Aunt Sarah, slowly, "if you and I tried a few steps? I used to dance 'Virginia Reel' when I was a girl; we might go by ourselves back of those trees."

Little Mrs. Kingsbury burst into a merry laugh, and clapped her hands. "I was longing to dance, but I didn't want to leave you alone. Come!"

And the last seat by the glowing fire was vacant.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN CAMP.

OH, aunty, we are like herrings in a box," cried Cicely, with a merry laugh, poking up her head to gaze long at the row of sleepers stretched on the balsam bed. There was Maum Silvy tucked into one corner, Biny snuggled close to her, in blissful dreams of the morrow; then Jane, and little Duke, rosy in slumber; then came Aunt Sarah, Cicely next, and in the other corner, the doctor's wife.

"I declare," cried Cicely, counting the row, "if we aren't seven! What a pity Wordsworth couldn't see us!"

"The idea of lying awake to quote Wordsworth!" came in sleepy accents from the doctor's wife. "How can you resist this balsam, Cicely?"

Cicely smothered another laugh, pulling up fragrant bits of the balsam-pillow to her face. "Oh, it's all so funny!" she gasped again.

"It's deliciously sleepy," droned little Mrs. Kingsbury, going off again to slumberland.

Outside, at their feet, the bright fire was crackling and leaping, sending up brilliant sparks into the quiet night. Beyond was the dense shade of the forest, only the nearer branches outlined in the fire-light.

It was impossible to sleep in such surroundings, and Cicely sat straight and wound her young arms around her knees and watched the camp-fire, and the lurid dancing light it cast on the thick wood beyond.

Rustle—rustle; crack—crack! Listen, it surely is some wild beast advancing out of that dense forest yonder! Now the leaping flames die down suddenly, while the girl strains her gaze beyond. Yes; she can see two cruel eyes, she is quite sure, staring at her from behind that tree. Wild beasts are afraid of fire, this she knows, and quick as a flash she springs out of the log-cabin, seizes a glowing brand, and rushing forward, waves it wildly with a “Shoo!” to meet Travers stealing up to replenish the fire.

“Hush! Oh, my goodness, Ce!” exclaimed the boy, seizing her arm, causing the brand to execute a series of sky-rockety curves. “What in the world are you doing?” he cried, convulsed with laughter.

“And what in the world are you doing?” demanded Cicely, wishing it had been a bear.

“Washington Smith was to fix the fire, but he’s sleeping like a log,” said Travers, smothering an incipient shout. “Oh, dear me!”—and he turned into the bushes to laugh softly—“how you did advance on me, Ce!”

“Do be still,” begged Cicely, plucking his sleeve. “You’ll have them all awake. Well, why couldn’t you come up like a reasonable being, and not crackle through the bushes like a”—

“Bear,” finished Travers, slyly. “Oh, because I was afraid I’d wake you up. Hee, hee, hee—if you could have seen your eyes, Ce.”

“If you could have seen your own,” retorted his sister, tossing the brand back again in the glowing heart of the fire.

“Well, now, hop into the cabin and go to sleep,” said Travers, turning to administer a few pokes to the fire where the logs were smouldering; “else you’ll be sleepy as a cat to-morrow. And you and I will keep our own counsel, and not tell on each other about this scrape.”

“Oh, I’m not going back there,” cried Cicely, without a glance

at the recumbent figures stretched on the balsam floor of the cabin. "I'm going to stay out and finish the night here." And she threw her arms over her head restfully and drew long breaths of delight.

"Indeed you will not," declared Travers, quickly, meanwhile hauling up fresh wood, which he placed carefully on the fire; "that's the sure way to make you sick. We might as well pack up our traps and go home to-morrow. Cicely Dodge, I never thought this of you!"

"Oh, I'll go back," cried Cicely, quite overwhelmed; and going slowly around the big fire, she crawled into the waiting nest next to Aunt Sarah. "Good-night, Travers, I'm in," she said, in a loud whisper.

"See that you stay there, then," whispered Travers back again. And throwing on a few more sticks, he waited till the fire came up satisfactorily, then stole down the hill to the "wigwam." as the tent was called where the guides and Uncle Joe and the doctor were still sleeping.

And, half an hour after, Washington Smith, slouching over the hill, took a good look all around the fire—

"Beats me—that's an all-fired good blaze to last like that. Don't want a thing done to it." And he scratched his tow-head and slouched back to the "wigwam" again.

"Ce!" Some one shook her arm, then pinched her rosy ear. "Come, you lazy little thing, you!"

"Let me be," said Cicely, sleepily, burrowing deeper into the fragrant balsam.

"Come!" Travers gave the arm in the flannel jacket, another shake. "Everybody's through breakfast. Uncle Mose has saved some slap-jacks for you."

"What!" cried Cicely, flying up straight and rubbing her eyes.

"Yes; and you can't go up the lake with us if you don't

hurry. Come, fly out of this." Travers backed out of the cabin on all fours as he was, and regained his feet.

"I declare," cried Cicely, tumbling out also; "I didn't think I'd been asleep but ten minutes. Oh, it was perfectly lovely in there, Travers Dodge," she cried, with dewy eyes and a glance of affection at the cabin-bed.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed Travers, as he rushed down the hill to tell Uncle Moses that Cicely was really coming. "Well, you'll have to go down to the edge of the lake to wash yourself, Ce," he shouted back to her.



"THERE WAS A LITTLE POOL
RIPPLING AT HER FEET."

So Cicely, wondering where everybody was, took a clean towel and her own little traveling toilet case, and ran on delighted feet down the pine slope to the lake, where there was a little pool rippling at her feet.

"Oh—oh!" she cried, getting down on her knees to dash the water over her face, and wishing she could hop in all over. "Isn't this perfectly elegant? If the girls in Buxton could only see me!"

"Cicely!" came ringing through the wood. So Cicely sprang to her feet. "Yes; I'm coming," she called, and hurrying over the rest of her ablutions, she ran up the hill, rubbing her face with the towel till it was like a rose. And in three minutes, down the hill flashed Cicely to the breakfast-room. Here she sat down at the end of a long board set across two tree-stumps.

"Hey!" called Uncle Mose, with a merry twinkle under his old felt cap. "Ye slept well. didn't ye?"

"Splendid," cried Cicely, with blooming cheeks. "And now I'm so hungry, Mr. Higgins!"

"Thought likely ye'd be," said Mr. Higgins, in great satisfaction; "so I saved ye o' bit." And slouching off, he brought up his pail of pancake batter and proceeded to make some breakfast cakes.

"Oh, now I can see you do that," cried Cicely, in glee. "You call them flap-jacks, don't you, Uncle Moses?"

"Yes, an' slap-jacks," said Mr. Higgins. "There, now, that spider's hot, so here she goes." And dumping in a spoonful of the batter, he struck a professional attitude, cake-turner in hand, and viewed the mass critically.



TONY GETTING THE BOATS READY.

"There, now, look out, for here she goes!" he shouted, presently. And following the words, something whizzed up over Cicely's head.

"Oh, dear! It's gone up into the tree," cried Cicely. "Now I've lost my breakfast."

Uncle Moses laughed long and loud, slapping the knee of his corduroy. "Look down into the spider," he cried.

Down came Cicely's gaze. There in the center of that necessary cooking implement lay a beautifully browned cake, that made her mouth water just to look at it.

"Hop into your seat. These fellers ain't fit to eat when they're a mite cold; there's the maple serrup in that pail. There, now," as Cicely pronounced herself ready, and extended her birch-bark plate hungrily. "Now I'll bake you another."

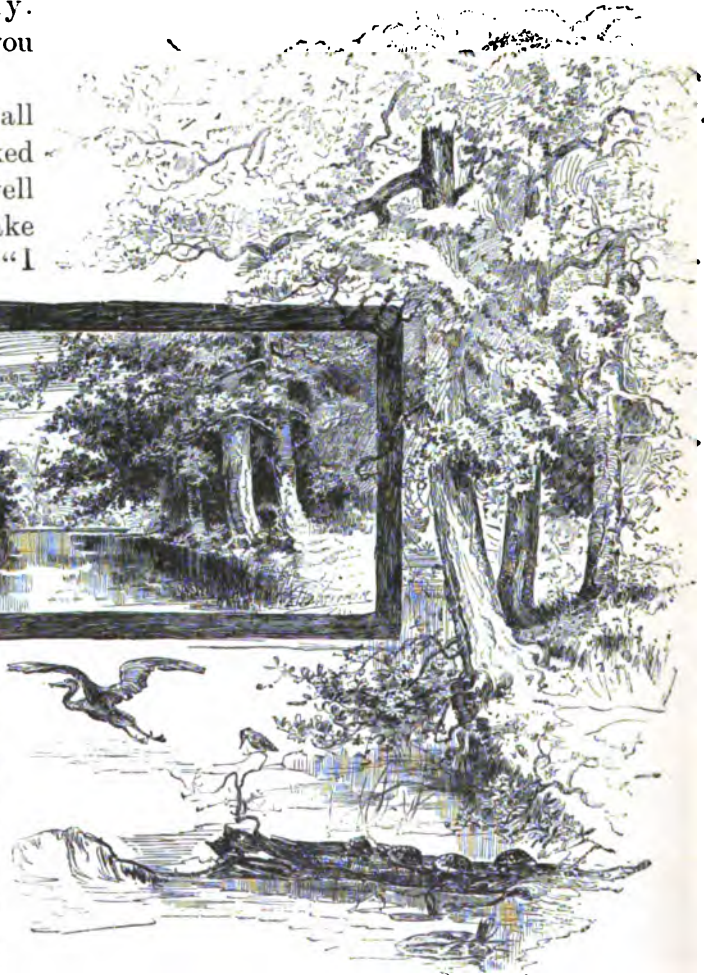
"Where are all the people?" asked Cicely, when well at work on cake number two. "I



haven't seen anybody but Travers this morning. And now he's run off."

"Your ant wouldn't have you waked up," said Mr. Hig-

gins, deftly slipping another spoonful of batter into the spider: "like a sensible woman, she said you were going to sleep as long



IN AMONG THE ISLANDS.

as you wanted to. And then Mr. Dodge took 'em all off to walk, and Travers is fixing the fishing tackle. We're going fishing up the lake in among the islands this morning. Tony's getting the boats ready."

Cicely gave a little wriggle of delight, and she would have exclaimed, had the mouthful of cake and syrup allowed it.

"I cannot eat another bit, Mr. Higgins," she said, mournfully, at last, as the cakes came sliding on her plate thick and fast.

"Sho, now, can't ye?" cried Uncle Moses; "just one, maybe?" insinuatingly. "Here's a perfec' beauty."

Cicely leaned back on her wooden bench. "Not another one," she cried, merrily. "They were perfectly lovely, but I can't possibly eat any more. Where's Travers?"

"Down in the 'wigwam'," said Uncle Moses, beginning to wash up the dishes. So Cicely ran off, and in less time than it takes to write it, was busy with Travers fixing up the fishing poles, her pole being all ready and leaning up against a tree awaiting this idyllic morning.

There were two boat-loads, and they were soon off. Cicely receiving her first rowing lesson from Mr. Higgins while Uncle Joe rapidly unfolded a plan for going up Tahawus; a plan that necessitated much shouting back and forth with the occupants of the other boat, in which Dr. Kingsbury was handling the oars dexterously.

And, indeed, for the next few days they talked the Tahawus trip steadily all through the delights of the camp.

It was decided that the Tahawus party should start the day before Dr. Kingsbury, left in charge of the remainder of the family, should "break camp." And that, when Mount Marcy should have been accomplished, they should all meet at Beede's; and to carry out this arrangement, that Jefferson Birge should go back to the valley, and bring out old Mountain Phelps and some fresh provisions.

"And bring our mail," cried Cicely, hoping for a budget from the girls.

"Yes, don't forget the mail," cried Uncle Joe, with a thought for a certain letter that might arrive that very day.

So, after a good dinner of fried fish and eggs, Jeff stuffed a paper parcel of bread and cheese and a few doughnuts into his pockets, and shouting, "Look out for old Mountain Phelps and me to-morrow night," he was off.

That night, around the camp-fire, they talked long and delightfully of the trip before them.

"You see we go over Bartlett," said Dr. Kingsbury; "that's the cosiest way."

"Goody—goody!" cried Cicely, like a child.



YOU CAN TAKE IN THE GOTHICS.

"Bartlett is a pooty climb, now I tell you!" broke in Uncle Moses, with a short laugh.

"Indeed it is!" exclaimed the doctor's wife.

"And Marcy looks pooty, I tell you, from it," added Mr. Higgins, reflectively, squinting up one eye as if he saw the monarch of the wilderness in the heart of the glowing fire. "Then when you're tired of lookin' at him, why, you can rest your eyes an' take in the Basin, an' the Gothics, an' all the rest of the fellers."

"Well, then where do we go?" asked Travers, breathlessly.

AN IDYLLIC MORNING.



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ASTOR, LENOX AND
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"Well, after we are well over Bartlett," said the doctor, "we strike into Marcy Brook."

"And that will be too lovely for anything!" began Cicely, again, and clasping her hands.

"We keep to the west, going through the Gorge—Panther Gorge, you know."

"Jolly!" cried Travers. Aunt Sarah turned around to little Mrs. Kingsbury. "Are you sure you don't want to go again?" she asked.

"Sure as I can be," cried the doctor's wife. "Honest and true. Once is enough for me, I can assure you."

"Then if you are really and truly sure, as the children say," replied Miss Brett, slowly, "I will leave Duke and the other three in your care. But if you change your mind, why, promise me you'll let me know."

"I promise you if I change my mind, I will let you know," said the little woman. "There's my hand on that, Miss Brett." And she thrust a plump little palm within Aunt Sarah's fingers.

"Supposing old Mountain Phelps shouldn't come," said Cicely, in a dismal tone.

"Ugh! No such supposings allowed here!" exclaimed Travers. "Why, he's got to come. He was all but engaged before we left, and Jeff was to go back if we wanted him."

"Catch the old man losing such a chance to air his yarns," drawled Washington Smith, stretching his long limbs before the fire.

"Did you know," asked Mr. Higgins, suddenly, "that in a time of flood a boat can be pushed clean over the shore into the Boreas marshes? That is, they say so."

"I'm so glad to know they say so," replied the doctor, demurely; "for now we're bound to believe you, Uncle Moses."

"Well, any way, those marshes air the head of the Hudson river," said Mr. Higgins. "That's the solemn truth, now."

“And the biggest branch of the Ausable, too,” said Cicely, brightly.

“Sho, now!” cried Uncle Moses, in surprised admiration. “An’ you’ve learned that! Why, you were the little Miss that felt bad when I brought you up, ’cause you didn’t know nothin’. Sho, now!”

“Cicely has used her eyes to some advantage, Uncle Moses, since that time,” said Miss Brett, happily.

Uncle Joe coughed, and looked the other way.

“Well, now climbing Tahawus!” he exclaimed abruptly; “let’s see, after we get through Panther Gorge, what then?”

“Well, then we strike the John’s Brook trail, you know—the one that runs down into the valley,” said the doctor. “And after that, we shall do some tall climbing, eh, Uncle Mose?”

“I reckon,” said that guide, sententiously.

“Well, now, Cicely, you tell us all about Tahawus—how it looks, and so forth, and so forth,” said little Mrs. Kingsbury, with a gentle pat on the young girl’s shoulder.

“Let some one else,” said Cicely, drawing back.

“Cicely dear,” said Aunt Sarah, “I would do as Mrs. Kingsbury asks you,” with a reassuring smile.

“Well, if Travers will help me,” said Cicely, reluctantly.

“All right,” said the boy. “Shove on, Ce.”

“Well, in the first place it is called Tahawus because it means ‘cloud-splitter’,” began Cicely; “and it is level on the top for about five rods.”

“No, six,” said Travers.

“There, Travers can tell it much better than I,” said Cicely. “He remembers things splendidly.”

“Oh, only a few old dates and figures,” said Travers, shying a pine stick at the fire. “Cecy has all the other things at her tongue’s end, and she makes you see the places without going there.”

"Go on, Cicely," said the doctor, laughing; "after that compliment you can get along."

"It is level for six rods," began Cicely; "that is, north and south. And how many, Travers, on the east and west?"

"Fifteen," answered the boy, promptly.

"Yes, fifteen," said Cicely. Then she drew a long breath and began—"Oh, and some of the highest solid rock in the State of New York is up there. Well, Tahawus has a great ridge from north-east to south-west. It is all bare from the top to a thousand feet down, and clear way down on the north-west side. On the west side it is just a lovely mountain pasture, like those Swiss views you showed me," turning to Mrs. Kingsbury.

"What is growing there?" asked Aunt Sarah.

"Why, Alpine grasses, and plants and shrubs, and it is just lovely and cosy as if there might be cunning little Swiss chalets tucked away in the crevices.

"How's the south side?" asked the doctor.

"That just bristles with balsam," said Cicely. "It is awfully steep and long; why, it slopes away a little over a mile in about how many feet, Travers—to the foot of Panther Gorge?"

"Two thousand feet to the mile," said Travers, without waiting to draw breath.

"Yes, that is it; two thousand feet," said Cicely, with flushed cheeks. "Oh, dear me, I never can remember figures."

"You've got hold of everything else," grunted Mr. Higgins.

"Now that you know that figures are your weak point, Cicely," said Aunt Sarah, gently, "why, you'll look out for it."

"Yes, aunty." Cicely nodded at her, then dashed on. "Oh, let me see, where was I?"

"On the top of Tahawus," said Travers.

"Well, I've got to get down," laughed Cicely. "Oh, Travers, you come and help me."

"Stay where you are," said the doctor. "We want to ask you a few questions."

"Have there been any avalanches?" asked little Mrs. Kingsbury.

"Dear me, yes," said Cicely; "that is, on the south side—oh, lots and lots of them."

"Whew!" whistled Travers. "I thought that was an interdicted word." Cicely blushed rosier than ever.

"Well, how is the east side?" queried Aunt Sarah.

"The east side is the worst of all," said Cicely, recovering her spirits. "It's all broken cobbles and ravines, and finally it seems to jump up and leap right over, oh, ever and ever so many feet into Panther Gorge. The north side tumbles down to the head of the Opalescent valley, and that has great precipices and gulches, too. You can see Mount Colden from there. The Adirondack trail goes up this side. And the whole mountain has queer stunted little balsams on it. And popping up their heads, are a quantity of ridgy mountains, just as if they were saying 'present,' while Tahawus called the roll."

"What an idea!" laughed Travers.

"Jehoshaphat, that ain't bad!" exclaimed Mr. Higgins, enthusiastically, while the others clapped their hands.

"And over the tips of these"—

"Schoolboy mountains, saying 'Present,'" interrupted Travers—

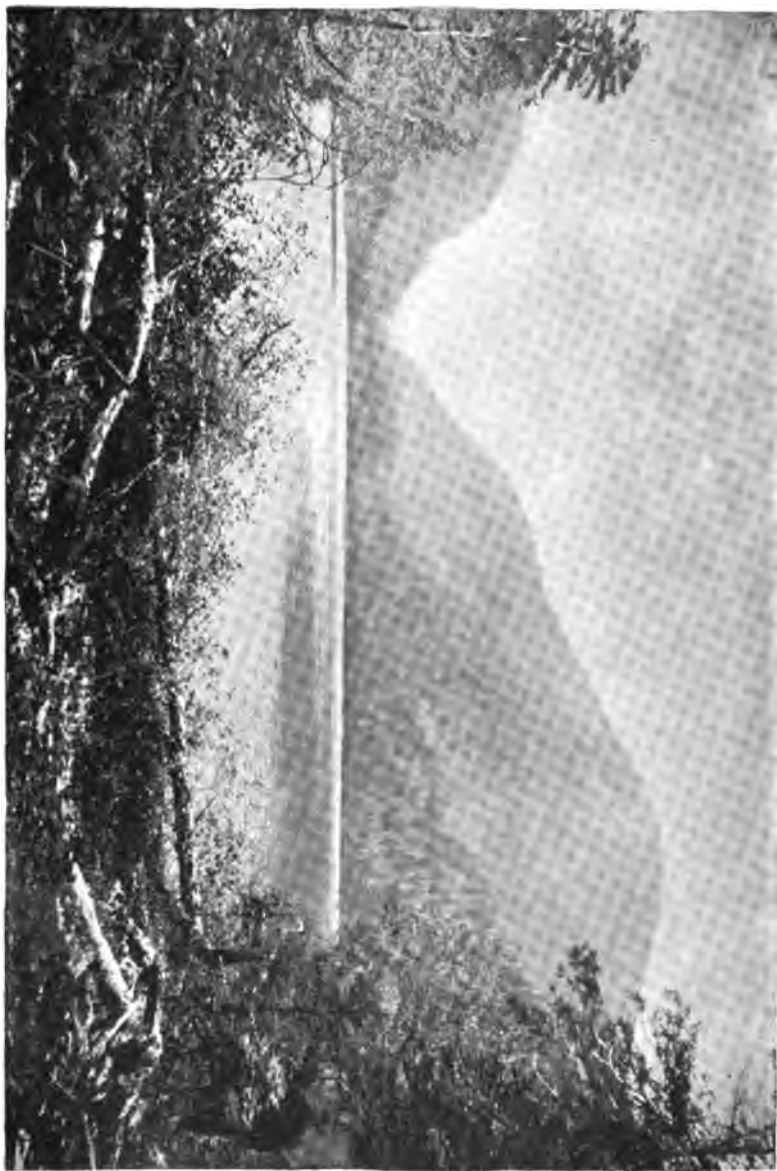
"You can see North Elba, Lake Placid, and Whiteface. And away far off, some other wildernesses called the St. Regis, and Chateaugay," finished Cicely, with a wry face at Travers for interrupting.

"I tell you what Ce is perfectly splendid about," announced Travers. "She fires off a string of names at one. I never saw her equal. Begin, do, and call the roll," nodding at her.

Cicely laughed, and picking up a handful of pine needles—"I'll fire these at you, instead," she retorted.

Travers ducked his head while the shower fell on him.

MOUNT GOLDEN.







“Go on, Cicely,” said the doctor, getting into an easy position. “I couldn’t tell half of them, I’m sure, although I’ve been up Tahawus twice, and studied the locality scores of times.”

Uncle Joe involuntarily straightened himself, while an expression of pride settled over



DOWN THE DEEP VALLEY WHERE JOHN'S BROOK RUNS.

his face. Then he remembered, and tried to look as if he hadn't heard a word of praise for his small niece.

So Cicely began again. "I couldn't tell them all," she said with a laugh, "because one can see almost everything in the world, it seems to me, from the top of Tahawus."

"Go on till we sing out 'enough,'" advised Travers, rolling over on his back on the grass, and meditatively chewing one of the pine needles bestrewing him.

"Well, you see, of course, Table Top Mountain," said Cicely, slowly, "then Slide Mountain, and Hurricane Mountain. Oh, and the valley through which John's Brook runs; then there is Broad Lake, and clear off in the distance is Burlington. Then comes the Gothics, and the Giant, and Hopkin's Peak, and way off is Camel's Hump, and the least little bit of a view of the White Mountains. Oh, dear me! Well, on the east you see Haystack, Sawteeth Mountain, Colvin, the Dial, and, and—turning a little further, is Boreas, Nippletop, Mount Dix; then turning more yet is Bartlett, Upper Ausable Pond, Elk Lake, Clear Pond and"—

"Great Cæsar!" muttered Uncle Joe.

Travers indulged himself in an immense hand-clapping as he rolled on the grass.

"Hold up!" cried the doctor, at him. "Now, then, Cicely, I think you can be heard if this fellow will stop."

"Well," said Cicely, drawing a long breath, while Aunt Sarah sat very straight, and gazed proudly at her; "you see down the deep valley of Marcy Brook, you know, ever so far, then you catch a sight of Blue Ridge, and lots and lots—I mean ever so many—hills and mountains around Schroon Lake and Lake George. Oh, Black Mountain is one of the biggest, you know. Then there is—turning toward the south—Moose Mountain, and further yet, there is Skylight—I remember that, for the name is so pretty."

"I should think she remembered 'em all. Gosh—but she hain't left out a durned one!" ejaculated Mr. Higgins, under his breath.

"Go on," said Travers, raising himself to his elbow. "Perhaps we shall have strength to hear you through."

"There's Cheney Cobble," said Cicely, hurrying on. "I remember that, for the name is so funny, and the North River Mountain; then comes Blue Mountain, Raquette Lake, and the John Brown Tract; then there is Lake Sanford and Lake Delia. And I was glad to study about that one, for I think some of these lovely places might be named for women and girls."

"So you are a woman's righter," cried Dr. Kingsbury, in pretended indignation. "Cicely, I least suspected you of it. Can't you be sweet and domestic, without wanting your name blazoned high? Dear, dear, dear!" groaned the doctor.

"Delia is a great deal prettier name than most of the others," laughed Cicely. "Just think of calling a lake, Perkins. Oh, that is horrid!"

"That's so," assented Uncle Moses. "Dely is something like, now."

"And when we know that Perkins is the high-pond source of the Hudson River, it's too bad it hasn't some lovely Indian name," mourned Cicely.

"Go on," said Travers. "Girls always do gush so," he added.

Dr. Kingsbury leaned over and bestowed a shake on the recumbent figure.

"That's the penalty you pay for your tongue," said the doctor, laughing.

"What a shame," cried Travers, with a sigh, "to be so crushed when I am thirsting for information!"

"Then we see Mount Adams," said Cicely. "Oh, dear, I'm almost through; I know you're so glad."

"Indeed we are not!" roared Uncle Joe. "Ahem—I mean,

as long as you have begun, why, you best finish, Cicely. What next, my dear?"

"Then there are the Upper Adirondack Iron Works," said the girl, obediently.

"And a more deserted, God-forsaken place, you never saw," interpolated Dr. Kingsbury.

"Nothing is more forlorn," said his little wife, with a shiver at the remembrance, "than the ruins of a place that has once been a busy center. A wilderness is brilliant in contrast."

"Don't the members of the Adirondack Club have a house there?" asked Uncle Joe.

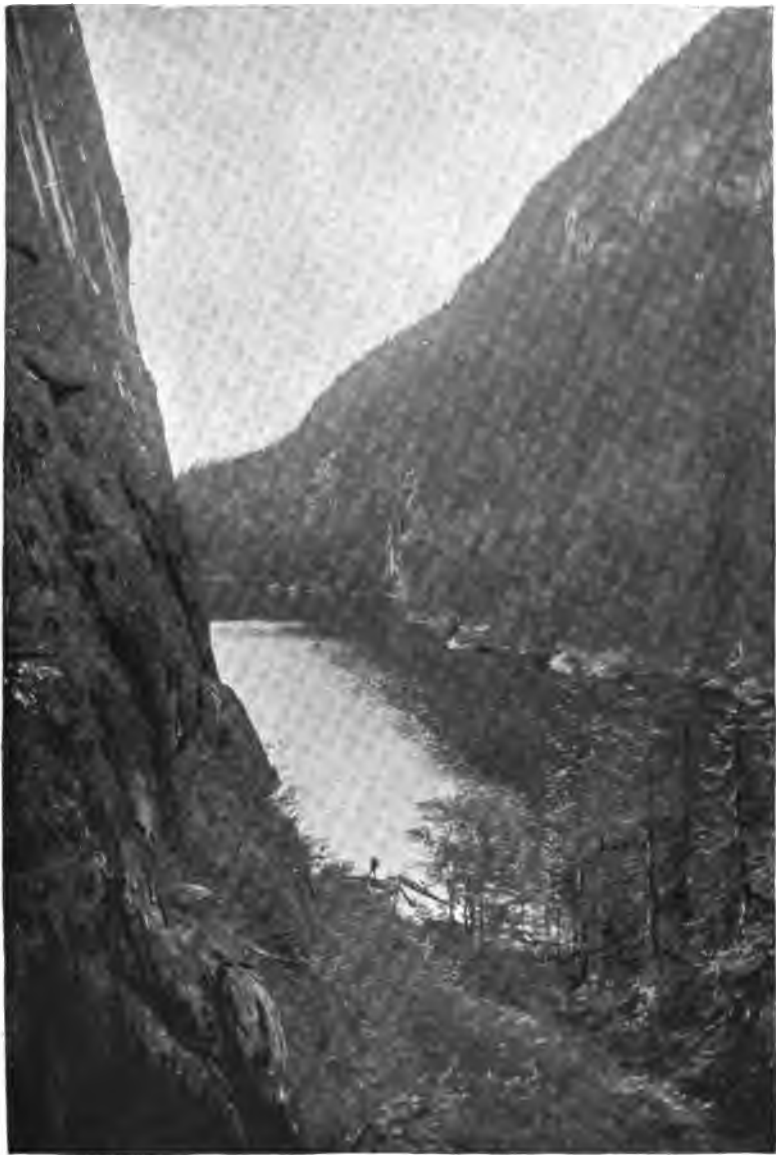
"Yes; it is a big house; in the prosperous times it was used as a boarding house," answered the doctor. "The club has fixed it up, and they occupy it in the summer. They have done good service," he added, "in protecting and stocking the territory with fish and game. The village is beautifully placed, and sometime artists will make much of it. The lovely Avalanche Lake is only about eight miles off. But I am taking Cicely's place, and not furnishing a very good substitute, either."

"I am very glad you have my place," said Cicely, happily, and putting her hand over his big palm. "Please, dear doctor, tell us the story of Calamity Pond."

"Yes, do," cried the others. So the doctor threw one foot over the other, his favorite conversational attitude.

"It was in 1826," he began; "three men, a Mr. Henderson, a McMartin, and a McIntyre had some iron works in North Elba. One day an Indian showed them a remarkably fine specimen of ore, saying, 'Me find all same—water go over dam.'"

They paid the Indian in the characteristically generous American fashion, and tramping to the place, guided by him, they found there was plenty of 'all same.' The lands were purchased, forges set, and work begun. Now, Mr. Henderson always had a dread of using fire-arms, so his pistol was carried in his pack



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by the guide on their tramps. The guide laid down the pack one day, and Mr. Henderson, under the impression that it had fallen, picked it up and threw it on a rock. A sharp report followed, the hammer of the pistol having struck the rock. Mr. Henderson exclaimed, 'I'm shot,' and fell to the ground. Cheney, the hunter, was in the party, and on his return, he told a most touching story of the affair. The worst of it was, the poor little fellow, Henderson's son, was with them. And they had a terrible time trying to comfort him. There was a monument erected where Henderson fell, and the place was christened Calamity Pond."

"It makes me think of the Lizzie Bourne monument on Mt. Washington," said Mrs. Kingsbury, with a little wriggle of disapproval. "I don't think such things ought to be set up in the face of one's pleasures. It took away all my comfort, and made me chilly all the while I was at the Summit House."

"It was cold, anyway," observed her husband, in a matter-of-fact way. "You don't get a Sirocco usually, on the top of Mt. Washington."

"Well, I was much colder than I should have been," insisted Mrs. Kingsbury, "for thinking of that poor girl. There ought to be a law against setting up monuments in such places."

"The average traveler enjoys it all a great deal better, for such things thrown in, no extra charge," said the doctor, carelessly. "They are part of the show, and give just that melancholly tinge to the picture, that a rushing, wealthy, beefy tourist revels in."

"Well, as I am neither of those three travelers," said the little woman, with another shiver, "I don't like it, and I'm always going to look the other way when I see one of those monuments sticking up."

"I notice you read Lizzie Bourne's most carefully, and looked back at it two or three times from the cars," said the doctor.

“Well, of course I wanted to see what it said, but I’m not going to look at another,” said Mrs. Kingsbury, inconsequently.

Her husband laughed long and loud till they all joined.

“Cicely, help me to punish this creature,” cried his little wife.

“I will,” cried Cicely, merrily; “lets cover him over with pine branches,” running over to a heap discarded by the guides in making their fire. “He is so very dreadful, he deserves it.”

“He’s so ridiculously long and big,” cried the little woman, with an affectionate glance at her husband’s recumbent figure before the fire, “he’ll make a tremendous Babe in the Wood. Look out!” she sang, and a pine branch whizzed through the air.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOM FISHER.

HAOW d'ye dew?"

It was impossible to tell what the voice was like. Travers' description, perhaps, answered as well as another. "The squeaking of a rusty gate-hinge," the boy cried, at a safe distance from the person criticised.

But when one looked at the face, why, there was Old Mountain Phelps without a doubt. There he stood, back of Jeff, a little, thin, wiry man, with a complacent face, round and peaceful as a baby's. A shock of yellow hair, never teased by a comb, enhaloed his countenance, and met another wonderful and undisturbed growth of tawny beard. He had small, twinkling, light-blue eyes, that looked out observantly on the world with philosophic meditation, and a pair of lips, thin and curved, and closely set together as if they held the secrets of the universe.

"I'm pleased to see ye," he squeaked and drawled in response to Uncle Joe's hearty welcome and that of the others. And quite satisfied with the attention, he suffered himself to be led to the seat of honor, a big rustic chair in front of the glowing fire. Here he drew a long breath, and bestowed a look of extreme gentleness on them all.

"Are you ready to go up Tahawus to-morrow?" asked Uncle Joe.

"Hey? Oh, go up Marcy?" squeaked Old Mountain Phelps. "Yes, I be. Certin; that's what I come fer. Most folks wants Old Mountain Phelps along," he added, complacently.

"Indeed they wouldn't think of going up without you," cried the doctor.

"Certin—certin," assented Old Mountain Phelps, much gratified; "well, naow, that's nateral, seein' I'm the man that first blazed a way up there." And he folded his wiry hands, that successfully repelled all the advances of pure water and soap, and indulgently surveyed the group from the heights of Fame.

"We go over Bartlett, ye know," presently he squeaked out; "then we strike a trail kerrying us five miles, an' there we be, on Marcy."

"We mustn't show that we know anything about the route, or what we see when we get there," whispered the doctor, under cover of fixing the fire, to Travers. "Old Mountain Phelps wants to tell it all as fresh information. So look out."

So for the next half hour, the old man wandered on in minute particulars as to each step of the journey they were to take on the morrow, with particulars of many other famous places that they couldn't possibly touch, and the return trip as well, till the air was eloquent with Opalescent Valley, Lake Colden, Avalanche Lake, and a dozen more fascinating names. "I tell you she's a preety creeter, now, that Avalanche Lake is!" The old man's eye beamed with a lover's ardor, as he spread his thin little hands to the blaze. "She sets high among the mountains, and 'taint likely but what she was made by the slides coming down, and then the woods growing up and shutting her in. There she sets, and smiles away. She's a little bit of a thing, but she's awful pretty. Ye see we go cver Bartlett Mountain to Marcy Brook, then we streak it off to the west through Panther Gorge."

"Tell us some of your nice times in Panther Gorge, do, Mr. Phelps," begged Cicely, interrupting the stream.

"Hey? Oh, well, I've hed a consider'ble number of 'em," said the old man. "I guess I've been through that Gorge nigh about

a hundred times. Well, ye know there's a precipice on the Marcy side; it follers on a mile to the head of the Gorge, and it has Castle Column at its head."

"Oh, isn't that lovely!" exclaimed Cicely. "Shall we see it?"

"Certin," said Old Mountain Phelps. "Why, that's what ye are goin' up there fer, ain't it, to see the things?"

"I believe it is," said Uncle Joe.

"Well, I've been up there in the Gorge," slowly resumed the old man, "after a rainy season, when I've seen a gret sheet of water, six feet or more broad, a-pourin' over that there precipice, down a thousand feet to the bottom. Fact.

"Now Marcy Brook is a kinder reasonable sort of place," went on the old man, in that half conversational tone, and half soliloquy that characterized all his talk. "I expect things was somewhat shook up around there in the beginnin', and 'tain't always easy to get along, but it's nice to look at. Want to hear about the bear I saw there once?"

Didn't they? They all settled themselves in delight, and the old man, with a very impressive manner, raised his tone an octave, and began—"Ye see I was a-comin' along down, where there was somethin' of a slope, an' bein' busy observin' nature pretty clusly as I like to do in the woods, my attention warn't pinte to him, till in the all-firedest thicket where it didn't seem as if nothin' could get through, the trail was so thin, there he sot a-waitin' fer me, right in front of my feet."

Every listener drew a long breath, and hung upon the squeaking recital.

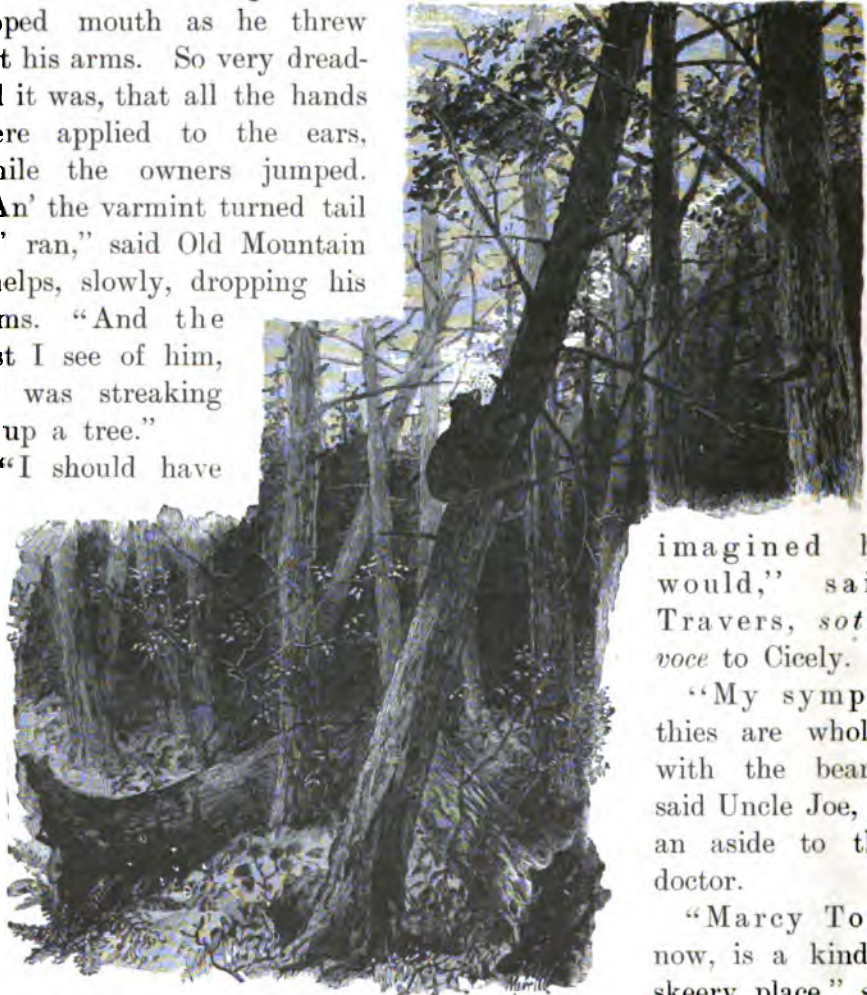
"What did you do?" Cicely was the first to cry.

"Well, I hadn't much time to think of anythin' smart," said the old man, modestly; "my rifle, ye see, I'd laid down to break some of the confounded bushes so's I could get through, an' the varmint I knew wouldn't be perlite enough fer me to

step back and fetch it, so I up with my arms, and flapped 'em out like a turkey-buzzard, and says, 'Hi—ee!'"

It was impossible to describe the sound that now came from Old Mountain Phelps' thin-lipped mouth as he threw out his arms. So very dreadful it was, that all the hands were applied to the ears, while the owners jumped. "An' the varmint turned tail an' ran," said Old Mountain Phelps, slowly, dropping his arms. "And the last I see of him, he was streaking it up a tree."

"I should have



THE BEAR STREAKING IT UP A TREE.

imagined he would," said Travers, *sotto voce* to Cicely.

"My sympathies are wholly with the bear," said Uncle Joe, in an aside to the doctor.

"Marcy Top, now, is a kinder skeery place," so-liloquized the old

man. "I was once up there in a thunder-storm about midnight;

I tell you things shook fer a spell. An' it was awful. Oh, I've seen him in every kind of a light, an' I hain't never had but three times when I could say fairly 'twas any kind of a view. Fact."

"That don't help our enthusiasm for doing the job to-morrow, Mr. Phelps," said Uncle Joe.

The old man regarded him with an indulgent smile. "Folks don't climb Marcy for what they see from the top," he observed, drily. "It's 'cause he's the biggest mountain, an' they'd worry all-fired bad after they got home if they didn't climb him."

Uncle Joe now slipped off behind the bushes, and fumbled over his pile of letters that Jeff had brought him, till he reached one addressed in a bold, straightforward hand, and postmarked 'Buxton.'

"Good! That's the one for me!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, in satisfaction. "The others can wait." And he tore it open.

"How can I thank you, my dear Mr. Dodge," he read, "for all your goodness. I don't know how to. But I think the best way is to show it in something beside words. I have arranged as you wish, that the school at Three Corners is taken off my hands, which was no trouble, as ever so many were wanting the position. And I will accept with a most grateful heart, your generous check for expenses, and the offer of this splendid trip, under the conditions that if I keep my health by it, and can earn the money, I shall sometime pay it back."

"Indeed he won't!" fumed Uncle Joe. "Catch me saddling the boy with a debt. Well, well, all the same, it's the right thing in him to feel it so."

"I will start Tuesday, as you suggest, and follow the route you marked out, and present myself in due time at Keene Valley. As you wish me to keep it all a secret, I cannot send any messages to Travers. I am, my dear sir,

Very respectfully yours,

THOMAS P. FISHER."

Uncle Joe thrust the letter into his pocket, just in time.

"What are you doing, Uncle Joe?" cried Travers, rushing back of the fire suddenly.



TRAVERS GAZED INTO THE DIM FOREST.

"To think we leave here to-morrow!" cried Travers, abruptly, and leaning against a tree to gaze beyond the firelight into the dim forest.

"Reading my mail," said Uncle Joe, with a guilty air, and falling to on a huge business document. "I thought you were deep in Old Mountain Phelps' narrations."

"Oh, I missed you," said the boy. "Beside—oh, uncle, why is Old Mountain Phelps like Tennyson's Brook?"

"Like Tennyson's Brook?" repeated Uncle Joe, scratching his head. "I shouldn't ever connect the idea of water with him. "Well, why is he, pray tell?"

"Because he'll 'go on forever,'" said Travers.

"Oh, now, you make yourself scarce," commanded Uncle Joe. "That effort of yours is atrocious."

"Sorry, eh?" asked Uncle Joe, looking up from his letter.

"Yes; I can't help but be. "We've had such a gay lark. That is, Uncle Joe, it would be perfect if I could get Tom Fisher out of my mind."

"I thought you always wanted to keep Tom Fisher in your mind," said Uncle Joe, drily.

"Uncle Joe, you know what I mean; he's working himself to death at that old school, and I'm up here enjoying myself, and doing nothing. I positively feel wicked to have a good time." Travers drew a long breath, and darted away from his tree, to peer into Uncle Joe's face.

"See here, Travers, you're old enough to know right from wrong, I should say," cried Uncle Joe, facing him.

"I think I'm a good-sized infant," said Travers, drawing up his long figure.

"Well, now, your father has left you in my care. You understand you belong to me now," cried Uncle Joe, proudly. "Now, it's your duty to take this Adirondack business as a special dose."

"Dose!" cried the boy.

"And see if you can't grow strong on it. I want to hand you over to your other father, when he comes home, tough and big as—as"—Uncle Joe looked around for a simile.

"That pine tree," suggested Travers, pointing to a veteran of the forest.

"Yes; and just as able to stand all knocks and buffetings of fortune as that sturdy old fellow is to take the storms he has weathered; for you've got to do a good work in the world, my boy. Bless me!" cried Uncle Joe, waxing eloquent, "why, you must carry the Dodge name up so we can't hardly see it." And Uncle Joe stood on his tiptoes, and waved his hands excitedly.

The next moment Travers was helping him out of a thicket

of scrub-oak, and fumbling around for the eye-glasses that had sprung from their proper resting place on Uncle Joe's nose.

"To think the first duty should be to pull a relative out of the ditch," cried Uncle Joe, when he had regained a perpendicular. "Can't you find those glasses? Now, I am up a tree! Goodness me—in the wilderness without a glass to my eye!"

"Here they are," cried Travers, his fingers clutching something delightedly. "Oh, dear me," tossing off a stick. "Well, don't worry, Uncle; I'll soon have the creatures."

"In the wilderness without a glass to my eye," mourned Uncle Joe, prancing back and forth over the pine-needles, and crackling through the bushes. "I might as well be dead at once."

"What's the matter? What is the matter?" cried all the voices as the entire party, with the exception of Old Mountain Phelps, deserted the fire, and gathered around Mr. Dodge, who, succeeding beautifully in getting in Travers' way, was still crying, "Just think, not a glass to my eye!"

"Take care, you may step on them," warned Travers, down on his knees fumbling over the thick undergrowth.

"What is the matter?" cried the group. "Do tell us, what is the matter?"

"I've lost my plaguey eye-glasses," announced Uncle Joe, tragically waving his hand toward the undergrowth, "down in that rank stuff. Now says I, how am I ever going up Mount Marcy, I'd like to know?"

A dreadful silence seized the whole party; then came a chorus of "oh—oh, too bad," "dear me!" and the like. And Cicely dropped to her knees, and the doctor and his wife, and Miss Brett bent over and peered closely into the bushes. And the guides got on all fours, and a systematic searching was begun for the lost treasure.

"Did they have a string on them?" asked Dr. Kingsbury, after a little of this sort of thing.

"No," said Uncle Joe, shamefacedly. "It broke; caught in a bush this afternoon. I was going to put another on. Now I guess I won't have a chance."

So they all redoubled their efforts, Uncle Joe by this time nearly frantic.

"We might as well look for a needle in a haystack," breathed little Mrs. Kingsbury to Cicely, as she stared with the brightest of eyes on either hand.

"I'm awfully sorry," at last said the doctor, pausing in his investigations, and looking up at Uncle Joe; "but I'm afraid, Mr. Dodge, that we can't find them. It's only another case of the total depravity of inanimate things, you know."

"Oh, we must look further," cried Cicely, impetuously breaking off twigs, and pulling up roots.

Miss Brett gave a quick look up at Uncle Joe, rubbed her eyes, and stared again.

"Mr. Dodge, what is that hanging to your beard?" she cried.

"Hey?" cried Uncle Joe, throwing up both hands to twitch his gray whiskers, and bring off a pair of eye-glasses, that had caught by their little hook. "Oh, bless my buttons!" holding them up.

"You said they were gone," cried Travers, sitting up on the ground amid the peals of laughter at their expense. "I didn't look at you, Uncle Joe."

"I knew they flew from my nose," retorted Uncle Joe. "And as I am not accustomed to carry my eye-glasses in my whiskers, why, of course I didn't look there for them. Well, have you people finished laughing? I think it is very silly to be excited about such a little thing. Dear me, I'm not quite as bad as Mr. Lear.

"There was an old man with a beard,
Who said, 'It is just as I feared,

Two Owls and a Hen, four Larks and a Wren
Have all built their nests in my beard."

"Good-by." The little Duke, hoisted on the doctor's broad shoulders, the next morning, waved his hands patronizingly to the Mt. Tahawus party.

"You can stay as long as you want to," he said; "me and the doctor can get along without you."

Miss Brett went back for a last charge to the doctor's wife.

"Come on," sang out Uncle Joe; "that fellow's all right; my sympathies are with the doctor and Mrs. Kingsbury. Now, Biny, promise me again, 'certain-true-black-and-blue-hope-I-may-die-if-I-don't-keep-it, that you'll be good."

Biny lifted her little black face, and made the promise with due solemnity.

"Well, come on," cried Travers. "Guide Phelps says we must be off if we are going."

With many a backward look, Aunt Sarah allowed herself to be led off. Maum Silvy shouted out, "Good luck to ye all," and little Mrs. Kingsbury waved her handkerchief. The little Duke sang out again on his highest key, "Good-by."

And the "Tahawusites" disappeared.

A tall boy, with strongly-marked face, and bright, blue eyes with a kindly expression in their depths, was riding down the Keene Valley road on Mr. 'Bijah Calkins' buckboard, and listening to the steady flow of Mr. Calkins' gossip

"An' so," said that individual, turning around with the doubled-up reins in his tough right hand, "ye see, I sum it all up when I say ther hain't no sech folks come to the Flats, not sence I live here, anyway, an' that's thirty years come next September."

"I can believe it," said the tall boy, his blue eyes glistening. "Well, now, as I am here about a day earlier than I expected

to be, and you say that they haven't returned from the Ausable camp yet, why, I'll just push on. Can't I find a place to stay somewhere near Mr. Dodge's house?"

"We better stop there an' see if anythin' has brought 'em home sudden," said Mr. Calkins, cautiously; "'cause folks has a way of droppin' down kinder sudden like at the Adirondacks. It's only a piece further. And then if we can't get in, why, I'll take you down to Beede's. That's a prime place to put up at."

"All right," said the tall boy.

So Mr. Calkins' mare jogged on. And presently the sun shining on the roof of Uncle Joe's cabin, disclosed it nestling in its grove of pines with the background of hills.

"There she sets," announced Mr. Calkins, pointing with his whip-handle; "as pooty a house, now, as there is in all the Flats. I'm bust if I don't wish it b'longed to Mr. Dodge. Them Congdons, now, they was"—

The tall boy, not caring to remain for a dissertation on the Congdons' characteristics, leaped over the wheel, and ran lightly over the greensward to the broad piazza. All was still; except for the lowing of the cow in the pasture, who thought maybe the farmer who attended to her needs had arrived, there was no sign or sound of life, and after trying the various doors and peering into the windows, the visitor hurried back, saying, "No use; all shut up. Now, then, please take me down to Beede's."

The next day the boarders at the Beede hostelry were drawn up in piazza array in time to see a tired-out, jubilant party "come in" from doing Mt. Marcy.

"It's that man from New York, volunteered one boarder, putting up her eye-glass, and whispering to her next neighbor. "He's brought his brother's children up here, and they say he don't care how much he spends on them."

The next neighbor craned her neck, as did all the others, while the tall boy, the newest boarder, kept in check as well as he could, an ill-concealed impatience.

As the party swept into view around the house, he gave it up as a bad job, and rushing past the groups, precipitated himself down the steps, and up to the side of the first buckboard. There was a howl of greeting from the front seat and another boy tumbled over the wheel, threw his arms around the tall figure, gasping, "Tom Fisher, where did you come from?"

CHAPTER XV.

A NOON-DAY CALL.

THEY celebrated Tom Fisher's arrival by a picnic at Chapel Pond, for which Mrs. Martha Badger furnished all the eatables; and Biny had then the exquisite delight of mothering her "dopted chile," and doling out her fruit-cake.

And after that there were all sorts of gay excursions by day, tramping over Hopkins Peak, fishing up John's Brook, drives and horse-back rides innumerable, and straw-rides in farmers' wagons by moon-light.

Each week the young people grew stronger and browner, so that Uncle Joe became positively hilarious.

He would inveigle them by turns, every few days, into the wood-shed to ascertain their weight on the scales, bought in Keene for that purpose, delightedly putting down the increase on the sheet of fools-cap tacked on the wall overhead, and giving the young shoulders pats of approval.

The lines in Aunt Sarah's face which had been rather deep, filled out, and a supreme satisfaction hovered nowadays around the gentle mouth. The kitchen, moreover, was a source of deep content, from which issued good revival hymns of the most joyous character. So Uncle Joe tramped, and drove, and fished, and took life easily in the hammock on the broad veranda with a perennial smile adorning his features.

"Mister, do you want a dorg?" asked a voice suddenly, one day, when he was dozing in the hammock.

"Hey—what?" cried Uncle Joe, the book he had read till

he fell asleep, now slipping to the veranda floor with his waking start. "Bless me! What did you say?" peering around the hammock-edge.

"Do you want a dorg?" with a crescendo on the last word that left no doubt as to the nature of the animal mentioned.

"A dog? No; that is—well, it depends on what sort of a beast you have there," said Uncle Joe, whose experiences in trying to purchase a family dog had not been of the happiest.

"I've got the best dorg you ever see," said the visitor, a boy of about a dozen years, and tugging at a stout rope, he brought unwillingly into view a dirty yellow and white cur, who glared at Uncle Joe, and showed all his teeth.

"Oh, bless my soul!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, pulling his feet into the hammock; "the fellow'll bite; I don't want any such dog. Take him away."

"He don't bite," said the boy, with another tug at the rope. "He only shows his teeth for fun."

"Well, it's a kind of fun I don't like," said Uncle Joe, retreating still further into the hammock. "Take him away. Goodness me! I've children here in my care, and I'm not going to have them eaten up by a dog. Take him away, I say, boy!"

Instead of obeying, the boy began to pat the dog's head, saying, "He's as gentle as a kitten, Pompey is," and slipping the rope over the creature's head.

"Julius Cæsar!" cried Uncle Joseph, bounding out of the hammock as the stubby tail of the mongrel disappeared in the doorway in a flash; "that dog's gone in the house, catch him, catch him!"

"That's too bad," said the boy. "Shall I go after him?"

"Shall you go after him?" roared Uncle Joe, irately, while making good time in that direction himself. "Yes, you young rascal; and be quick about it, too!"



FISHING UP JOHN'S BROOK.

"Do you want me to go all over the house?" asked the boy, slowly, and standing on one set of bare toes.

"Yes—yes!" fumed Mr. Dodge. "Hurry up; goodness me, the children will be eaten alive!"

"I don't know the way," said the boy.

For answer, Uncle Joe seized the two ragged shoulders, and propelled their owner effectively if not gracefully forward.

"There, do you see that door? Well, go in, and then follow your nose, and catch the beast. Hurry up, now, or I'll know the reason why." Then he hurried around the house, to the kitchen department, where he heard Miss Brett's voice.

By the time that the two were pretty well assured that the little Duke, with Biny and Jane were probably playing in the ravine, as they could not be found in the house, Uncle Joe bethought him to make a more exhaustive search for the boy and the mongrel.

"Strange where the scamp disappeared," he mused, mounting the stairs to Travers' den. "No?" throwing wide the door, and looking in. "Where in"—a subdued murmur of voices struck his ear. It seemed to come from Maum Silvy's room just opposite, and Uncle Joe sprang across the narrow entry and turned the knob with hasty fingers.

There sat the little Duke on the floor, his face crimsoning with suppressed merriment, and his laughing brown eyes brimming over with fun. Biny crouched next to him, stuffing the hem of her gown into her mouth, while before them stood, on his hind legs, Pompey, the mongrel, in the midst of the performance of some astonishing antics, the boy sitting by his side urging him on by whispered orders.

"Oh, my goodness me!" exclaimed Uncle Joe. The children whirled around in a flash.

"Did you want me?" asked the boy, turning quickly, his hand dropping to his side.

"Did I want you?" roared Uncle Joe at him, and plunging into the room. "Yes; and I want a stick now, most of all, to lay about your shoulders, young man. Now march with your old pup. Oh, my goodness, what a risk to run! Duke, are you sure the cur didn't bite you?" bending anxiously over the little fellow.

"Oh—oh!" cried Duke, in sudden distress; "don't let him take away that sweet, dear little dog, Uncle Joe. He sha'n't! I love him!" With that, Duke sprang to his feet, threw his arms around the dog's neck, and planted a kiss on the shining black nose.

"Oh, gracious me!" cried Uncle Joe, in disgust; "stop, it, Duke. How can you? Make him come away, you!" to the boy.

"I can't," said the boy, helplessly. "He seems to have took a fancy to him."

"Duke—Duke, I say, come away from that dog!" commanded Uncle Joe, advancing upon the two, while Biny, who had burst into tears at the prospect of the dog's departure, now screamed with delight. "Do you obey me, and leave that dog," and he picked at the little fellow's sleeve. At this, the yellow and white dog displayed such a generous exhibit of teeth, that Uncle Joe, in mortal terror at the child's peril, fell back, and ran out to the stair-railing to call, "Miss Brett, for heaven's sake, come up here!"

Aunt Sarah, with the bottle of camphor in her hand, ran quickly over the stairs. "I want him—I want him!" roared Duke, the moment she appeared. "Oh, don't take him away; he's my own dear, sweet little dog," and again he kissed him on the nose.

Aunt Sarah shuddered, but she had the presence of mind to set the camphor bottle on the table and to say, "Do you really want to keep him?" going up to Duke.

"Yes, I do," said the little fellow, relinquishing his hold of

the mongrel. "He knows such splendid tricks, Aunt Sarah," he cried, joyfully. "Make him do some more funny things." Duke now ran over to the boy standing humbly by.

"Wait a minute," said Aunt Sarah; "I want to see your dog first. Come here, good fellow." She sat down and held out her hand, then patted her gown.

The dog looked at her slowly, then trotted over to her, laid his head in her lap, and turned his great eyes up at her.

"You good fellow," said Aunt Sarah, caressingly, and smoothing his yellow head, whereat the dog began to wave his stubby tail violently.

"He's awful gentle," said the boy, taking a step out of his retirement; "just as gentle as a kitten, Pompey is."

"May I have him? May I have him?" cried Duke, precipitating himself down by Aunt Sarah's chair.

"We'll see, dear," said Aunt Sarah, gently rubbing the shaggy ears. Then she looked up to Uncle Joe, standing aghast in the doorway. "I should keep him," she said.

"Oh, my goodness!" exploded Mr. Dodge.

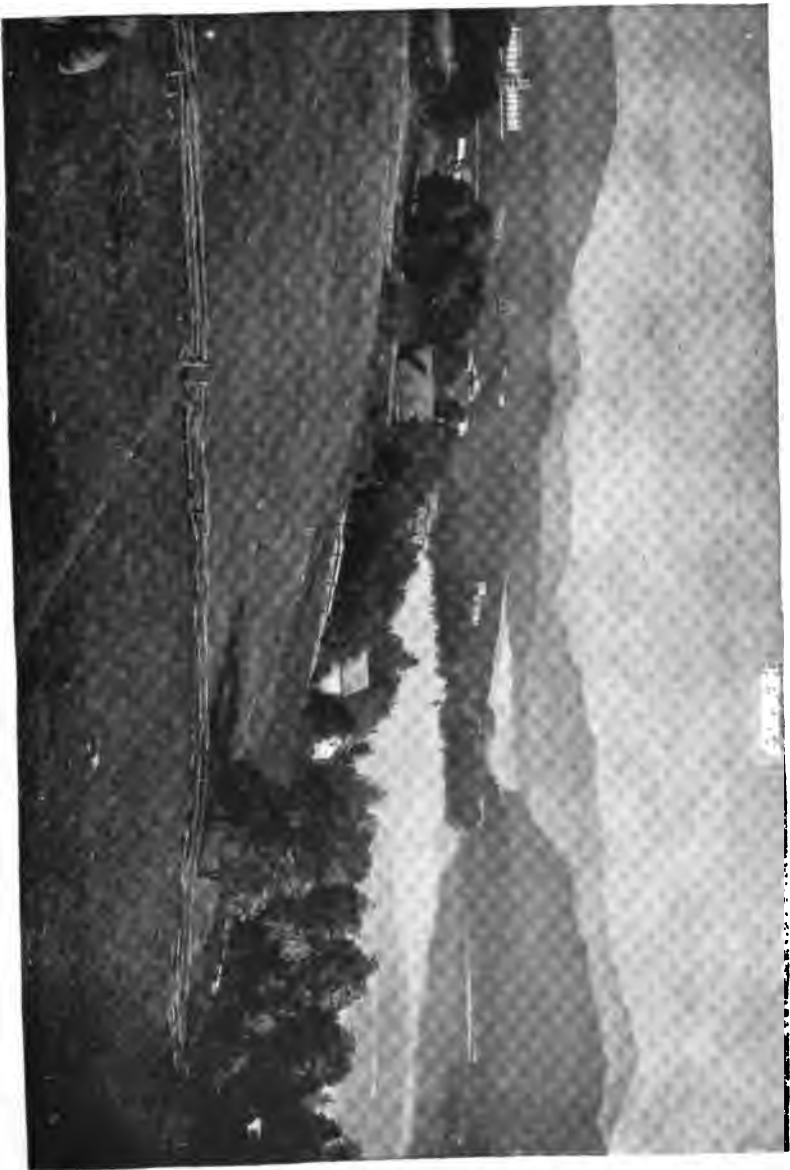
Duke deserted Aunt Sarah, and rushed up to Uncle Joe. "She thinks she'd keep him," he declared, with shining eyes.

And so Pompey became part of the household life.

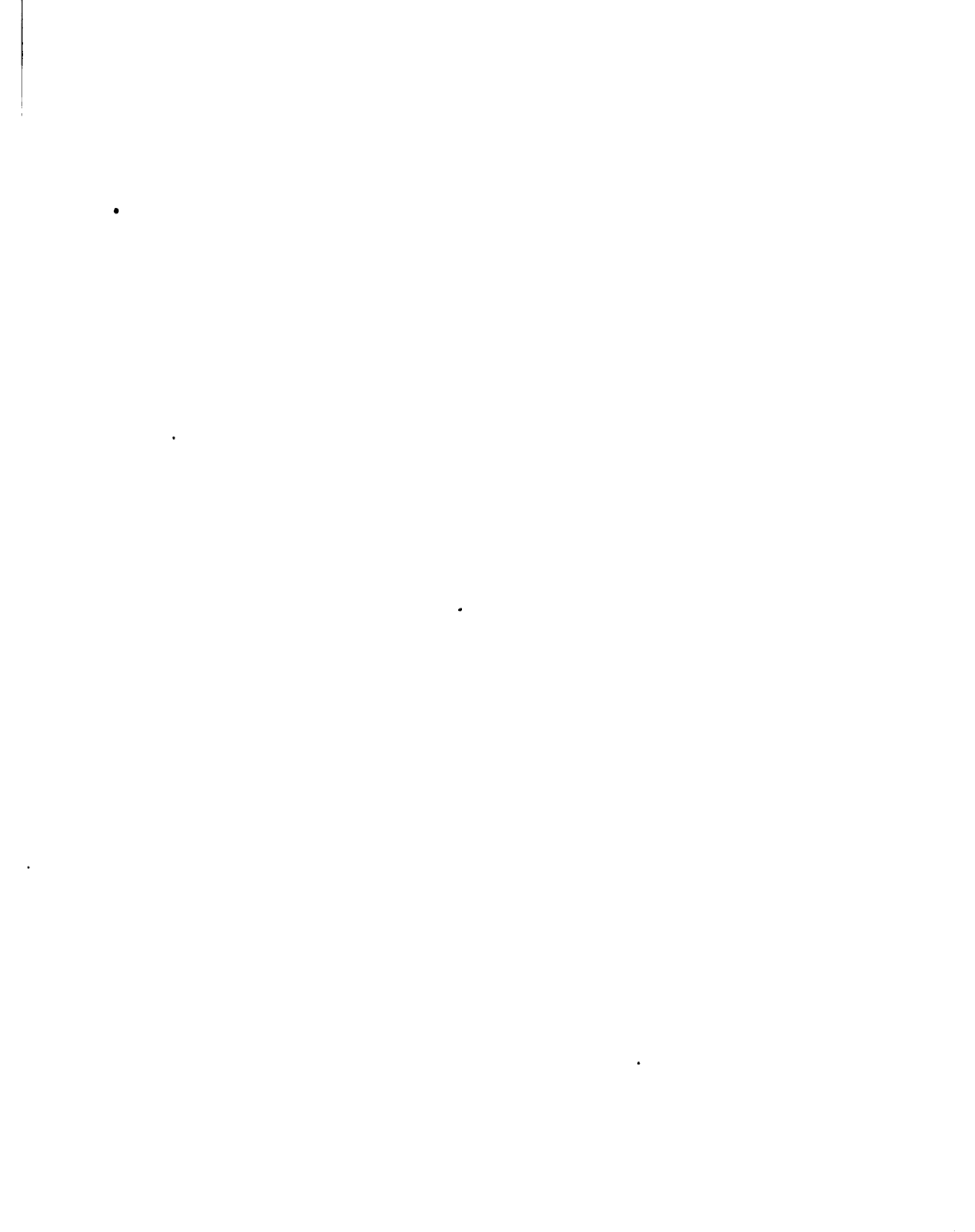
"And now, of course, as soon as we've got a family dog, we want to go jog-trotting again," observed Uncle Joe, at dinner



POMPEY.



MIRROR LAKE AND LAKE PLACID.



the next day. "Another cup of coffee, please," to Miss Brett. "We'll give him to the doctor to keep. I hope the fellow'll run away while we're gone."

"Who? The doctor?" asked Travers, mischievously.

"Doctor! Who's talking of the doctor?" cried Uncle Joe. "I said I hoped that old yellow abomination would run away while we're gone."

"It don't look much like it now," remarked Tom Fisher, quietly, looking up from his plate. "Pompey acts as if he owned the whole place."

"Well, isn't it time that we were off to Lake Placid, Mirror Lake and John Brown's grave, and all those places?" proposed Uncle Joe.

"I do believe it is," said Travers, solemnly. Tom Fisher's blue eyes gleamed.

Cicely softly clapped her hands under the table.

"And then come the Saranacs; we'll stop at Bartlett's and Saranac Inn, of course."

A wild chorus interrupted. "Children, children, your uncle has not finished," cried Miss Brett, before order could be restored.

"Then we'll push on up to St. Regis Lake, and give Paul Smith a call, and on up to Loon Lake, and so forth and so forth. Oh, while we're at Paul Smith's we three," with a nod over to the two boys, "will have a hunting bout."

Then Mr. Dodge pushed back his chair and regarded them all.

"Like it?"

It was really worse than a menagerie, the chorus of sounds that greeted him. Out of the babel came at last, "When—when?"

"Oh, any time when your aunt is ready. How do you like it, Tom? These crazy young things of mine make such a noise, I lost your voice."

Tom Fisher drew a long breath. "It's too magnificent to talk about, sir," he found voice to say.

"All right, then we won't talk about it," said Uncle Joe, laughing. "We'll just go ahead and get ready."

"Massy sakes!" cried Biny, flying in from grubbing in the plot of ground she called her "garden"; "there's comp'ny come—a hull lot o' rich starin' folks. Oh, my!"

Maum Silvy's face was now framed in the doorway back of her daughter. "Ye go along, Biny," she cried. "Ye're alwas skylarkin' in with a pack o' lies. Run out this minute to your pokin' in the dirt. Start!"

Biny dodged back again, and Maum Silvy ambled to the veranda-edge to see that she obeyed. But in a minute they could hear her rolling heavily back.

"For shore!" she exclaimed, putting her turban into the cheery little dining-room that it seemed to fill at once, "Biny's done tole de trufe for once. Dere is comp'ny, and dey wants to see Mr. Josuf Dodge."

"They're all gettin' out an' comin' in," squealed Biny, running back again on excited feet. "Oh, my, I guess dey're goin' to stay to dinner."

"Comp'ny to dinner, is it?" screamed Maum Silvy, excitedly. "Well, I guess dey won't get it in dis yere house. De idee o' folks philanderin' round when dey orter be about dere business. How's anybody stuck down in a corner o' de woods, to git up a dinner in a minute, I sh'd like to know, fer seeh folks."

"Hush," said Miss Brett, in a low voice, as they all rose from the table to follow Uncle Joe into the "parlor, library and hall" to welcome the guests. "Maum Silvy, you can make more coffee, and send in some cake."

"Dat ain't no dinner," grumbled Maum Silvy, who dearly loved to be fine. And because she couldn't figure as a first-class cook

with unlimited resources before these smart birds of fashion, she grew crosser every minute.

Just then Uncle Joe came in abruptly. "Well, Maum Silvy," he cried, briskly, "some New York friends of mine have come, and you must get up a bite of something nice to eat."

"Something nice to eat," repeated Maum Silvy, on her highest key, that could penetrate easily a modern house with thick walls, to say nothing of the thin partition between themselves and their guests. "An' wher'd I git it, I sh'd like to know, in dis ole ramshackle place?"

"For goodness sake!" exploded Uncle Joe, quite unhinged, "stop your tongue, can't you." as he saw further demonstrations on the part of the one he would have given much to propitiate at this moment.

"Dere ain't anythin' in dis house," screamed Maum Silvy, "but ham, an' salt pork, an'" —

Uncle Joe fled the kitchen to meet Mr. and Mrs. Harold Martin Livingston, Mr. Harold Martin Livingston, Jr., and Miss Maud Livingston preparing to depart.

He plunged recklessly into all sorts of enthusiasms over the views, and was at his most gracious high-tide of polite hospitality, to no purpose. The Livingstons would not even stay for coffee, although Miss Brett had some steaming cup-fuls, and a dainty basket of cake started around the room.

The mountain wagon received them, in the most approved of traveling costumes, and after ceremonious good-bys, and prolonged stares all over Aunt Sarah, the children, and everything within the range of their eye-glasses and lorgnettes, they whirled off on their homeward drive back to Elizabethtown.

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Livingston, when they were a safe distance from the house, and shifting her dainty parasol over to the other side, while she gave Maud a comprehensive look; "if ever I saw an astonishing thing, I've witnessed it to-day!

To think of Joseph Dodge taking up such a freak. I can't conceive it!"

"And, mamma," said Maud, with a pretty grimace, as she glanced back, her violet eyes full of disdain, "did you see those children? Especially that youngest—what's his name—Duke, such a great, coarse-looking child! Why, I never saw anything like it; I could have laughed aloud."

"Oh, that's one of his hobbies—health, you know," said Mrs. Livingston, carelessly drawing her wrap closer over her showy traveling suit. "Joseph Dodge is terribly particular about some things, Maud; but when he gets a new idea, he will carry it out in spite of all reason. He has taken up these children, always a risky thing for an old bachelor to do, and if I mistake not they will be too many for him. At all events, I don't like the looks of that old maid there. She's got some design, you may depend, other than the care of those children."

"On Joseph Dodge, do you mean, Frances?" asked her husband, who, together with Livingston, Jr., occupied the seat with the driver of the mountain wagon; and he glanced back with a sly smile.

"There will be trouble there, you may depend," said Mrs. Livingston, decidedly. She was a commanding-looking woman, with an unpleasant frown between her eyebrows, as if having her own way through life had not been the best thing for her. Her husband contented himself with a sarcastic smile as he looked at her, while she went on. "A woman of her age never gets caught in any such undertaking as the care and responsibility that that Miss Brett has assumed, without some pretty definite plan of her own."

CHAPTER XVI.

LAKE PLACID AND NORTH ELBA.

NOW, then, begin, Cecy.”

“What?”

“Well, give us ‘Have you been in Indian Pass?’ or any of them; I don’t care which one.”

“Oh, Travy, Aunt Sarah will say it will scare the natives! Wait till we get further on.”

“We’ve such a lot of melodies to air,” said Travers. “Well, drive on another mile. Then we’ll have a sing that will charm the wood-birds, and melt the heart of a savage.”

Tom Fisher groaned. “Better wait till we get to Edmond’s Ponds, I’d say.”

“Cecy will have to gush so over those natural beauties that there’ll be no time for a musicale thrown in.”

“Of the two, I think I should prefer Cecy’s gush,” observed Uncle Joe, drily. “Your voice, Travers, is something like the leader’s in a band of frogs on a strike.”

“Uncle!” cried Travers, whirling around on him.

“Thank you, sir,” cried Tom, also turning on Mr. Dodge. “I’ve been wanting to describe this fellow’s voice, and didn’t know how.”

“I think I have slandered the frog,” said Uncle Joe, thoughtfully; “and it troubles me.”

“I must sing ‘Indian Pass’ after that,” cried Travers, “by way of acknowledging the compliment, and then I’ll favor you with the rest of the collection. Hem”—and he threw out sonorously—

Have you been in Indian Pass?

No? No?

Then don a tennis-suit, and go it there afoot,
Heigho—Heigho!"

"Can't you out-roar him?" cried Uncle Joe to Tom and Cicely on the seat in front.

"Think not." Tom shook his head wisely. "You don't know him, Mr. Dodge."

"I'll try, then." Uncle Joseph threw back his gray head, and roared—"Jo-ohn Bro-own's body," in a way that fairly thrilled through the vitals of the entire party.

"It's a jolly old trot through Indian Pass," Travers was singing steadily. "My senses, Uncle!" flying around and forgetting to close his mouth.

"Bo-ody's mo-o-uldering in the gr-a-ave, Jo-o-hn," roared Uncle Joe, with unabated courage.

"I'll give right up," cried his nephew. "I can't make any show at all against you," as the whole mountainside seemed to tremble with the vast echo.

"Honest?" Mr. Dodge stopped a moment to speak the word.

"Yes, indeed; beaten all to death," said Travers. "It's enough to make John Brown get up out of his grave to hear you."

"I should think he'd go further in, myself," said Uncle Joe, relapsing into his ordinary traveling position.

"Like the man who got into a hole, and pulled the hole in after him," laughed Cicely. "Oh, look—look!" she exclaimed, at a sudden turn in the road.

"Where?" cried several voices. "And what is it?" asked Aunt Sarah.

"Oh, don't you see them?" cried Cicely, craning her neck, and pointing backward as the buckboard spun along; "those three little boys sitting down on the grass, with their backs to the road. There, now, look. Oh, aren't they funny!"

"I thought they were rocks, they sat so still," said Travers. "So they are interesting infants."



MY THREE BOYS.

"I want to get out and play with them," howled Duke, wildly kicking his small legs.

"What do you suppose they're doing?" cried Cicely, with a last glance.

Mr. Higgins snapped his whip. "Like enough watching woodchuck's holes—can't say."

"Well, we were going to sing the whole collection," mourned Travers, with a crushed air, going back to his interrupted melodies; "our spread-eagle sky-rockety ditty composed on the extreme tip of Tahawus."

"We could stand it up there," said Uncle Joe; "but after one has heard it steadily through fourteen days and nights, it's time to inquire if you don't know another tune."

"Now—now, Uncle!" Cicely began this time. "We're going to copy the whole collection in a book to give to papa when he comes home. Fancy—'Words and music composed by Travers and Cicely Dodge,' on the title page. Won't it read fine?"

"Better than it will sound," said Uncle Joe.

"It's hard to have to urge your claims to genius upon your own family, Trav," observed Tom.

"Such is fame," laughed Aunt Sarah.

"Well, whom have we here?" asked Uncle Joe, suddenly.

An old farmer standing by his hay-rick confronted them with a—"Seen anythin' of my boys—hey?"

"No," said Mr. Higgins, pulling up sharply, and forgetting the three immovable urchins back in the field.

"Oh, yes, we have, Mr. Higgins," began Cicely. "Don't you know?"

"Well, Cinthy Ann's scared nigh a'most to death about 'em.

I just come from the house," pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to a shanty which they now saw a little distance ahead. "We've only jest settled here, and them little chaps hain't never strayed so fur."



"I TELL YOU, THEM CHAPS HAIN'T NEVER STRAYED
AWAY BEFORE."

"Oh, we know where they are!" cried Cicely, in a glow, and leaning out of the buck-board. "Just back in" — the farmer's stolid face lighted up as much as it was capable of doing, but he didn't ask where. "I tell you," he interrupted, pointing impressively with the forefinger of his left hand, "them little chaps hain't never strayed away before; they are like their ma — she sots jest where she sots — an' they are about of a size."

"Oh, do hurry and go back there."

Cicely pointed down the road they had come. "It's about half a mile, isn't it." turning to Uncle Moses, "where we saw them?"

"Just about," said Mr. Higgins, with a nod. "Your boys, stranger," pointing with his whip handle, "was back there about half a mile or so, settin' in the grass; I sh'd think they was watchin' a woodchuck's hole."

"All right," said the farmer, giving a hitch to his pantaloons tucked into his boots; "they'll sot till I get there, mos' likely. They take after their ma, an' she sots pretty stiddy. Travel lively your way?" to Mr. Higgins.

"Rather so," said that personage. "And we ought to be stirring, if we want to get where we're going. Good-day."

"Oh, dear, I hope he'll find his boys," breathed Cicely, looking after him. "Suppose they should have wandered off."

"Those urchins looked like pretty good fixtures," said Tom Fisher, reassuringly.

"I should think they took after their pa, also," remarked Travers, with a backward glance; "there he stands stock still in the road, looking after us."

"Ain't them beauties, now?" demanded Mr. Higgins, as they drew up at last at Edmond's Ponds. "They're set so pooty between Pitchoff and Long Pond Mountains. You see, this was one piece o' water," he explained, "years ago, but them brooks and streams brought down a mess o' stuff and divided it. And I'm kinder glad on't," he added, reflectively, as if nature and her laws should be sustained at all hazards, "'cause folks always likes to get their money's wuth, and they chirk up when I tell 'em it's two ponds inste'd o' one."

In due time, out across the "Plains of Abraham," the party drew up at the Cascade House for dinner.

"I haven't become used to traveling without Biny," said Uncle Joe, when the buckboard was resumed after dinner. "I'm not ashamed to tell you all that I miss the child, dreadfully."

"And Maum Silvy, with her 'Ham and Japhet', was so enlivening," said Tom Fisher.

"Dear me, how much we think of people when we haven't them with us," mourned Cicely. "Now I wish I hadn't tried good mammy's soul by being late to dinner so much at the old Buxton home."

"Maum Silvy is as good as gold, and true as steel, if she has a nimble tongue," observed Uncle Joe. "But I love Biny."

"Did you see Biny when Uncle Joe gave Pompey into her care this morning the last thing?" cried Travers. "Her face was fairly radiant. Now she has two 'dopted chiles."

"Biny is bound to be matron of an orphan asylum, I expect," said Uncle Joe.

"Poor Angeline!" exclaimed Travers. "I pity that sweet infant. Now that Biny actually lives at Mrs. Badger's, she'll be worse than a private detective over that Billings young one."

"Maum Silvy certainly looked taller by two inches," observed Aunt Sarah, "since Mrs. Badger engaged her as head cook while we are away."

"She said she hated to part with us, but that it wasn't best for 'Mr. Josuf to tote me and Biny all around to the hotels.' And she'd have a chance to get her hand in again at fine cooking, and she thought she ought to stay with them for company, and ever so much more."

"Won't she boss over Mrs. Badger, though!" remarked Uncle Joe. "It's Maum Silvy's hour of triumph now."

"I don't know," said Miss Brett, with a wise shake of the head. "I consider Mrs. Martha Badger well calculated to take care of herself."

"You do, eh? Well, it takes a woman to know a woman. So I suppose it's so. Want to go to John Brown's grave to-morrow, all of you?"

"Yes, indeed," cried all the voices.

"Well, I'll engage the buckboard to-night," said Uncle Joe.

"I suppose they have good ones over at Lake Placid?" to Mr. Higgins.

"Fust-rate," answered Uncle Moses, slapping his dusty boot with the doubled-up ends of the reins. "You can take your pick there."

"Very well; then after supper I'll see to it."

"How shall we ever do without you, Mr. Higgins?" mourned Cicely, with a sad little droop to the laughing mouth.

Uncle Moses gave an uneasy grunt. "P'raps you won't be gone so long as you think, now. Them Saranacs and Racquette and Paul Smiths ain't nigh as good as Keene Flats. I reckon you'll be homesick pretty soon."

"I don't doubt we shall, Mr. Higgins," said Aunt Sarah.

Uncle Moses brightened up. "But you see I must give my family a chance to see it all," said Mr. Dodge, with an air of apology for turning his back for an instant from "the Flats."

"Certin—certin," said Uncle Moses. "Well, come back as soon's you can, and settle down to home."

When they arrived at Lake Placid and Mirror Lake, Uncle Joseph found that many other luxuries of life, with the three-seated buckboard, were ready for his ordering. So he settled his party at one of the large hotels, and prepared at once to enjoy himself. The next morning, according to agreement, they were whirling along, bound for North Elba and John Brown's grave. when Cicely suddenly broke the pause that fell after they had all "brushed up" their knowledge of the civil war, and the John Brown episodes leading up to it, and looked around—"I think it was lovely in the dear old man to stop on his way to be hung, and kiss that little colored baby."

"It was one of the most pathetic things in all history, it seems to me," said Miss Brett.

"Hulloa!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, presently. "What have we here?"

They had struck suddenly upon a little lane, where a sign announced, "John Brown Farm. Refreshments if desired." The finger on the board pointed heavenward.

"Here we go!" cried the driver, whipping his horses into the lane, down through a belt of woods, then into "the open." And presently the buckboard drew up before the huge rock that marks the resting place of the "Old man of Ossawatomie."

They all got out silently and walked into the little enclosure surrounded by a neat fence, while Uncle Joe marched up to the door of the farm-house near by to ask for the removal of the box put on to protect the headstone from being chipped to pieces by the relic-hunter.

"He wanted to be buried here, didn't he, aunty?" asked Cicely, in a low tone.

"Yes'm," answered a voice back of her. And turning suddenly, she saw a small boy digging his bare toes into the scanty grass, and staring at them all. "It tells all about it on the back of the pictures. Ma's got 'em in the house. Folks buys 'em."

A long, gaunt woman now approached with Uncle Joe, bearing in one hand a key, and in her apron, gathered up like a bag in the other, a quantity of stereoscopic views of the grave and the big rock, the house, and "the open" in which it stood.

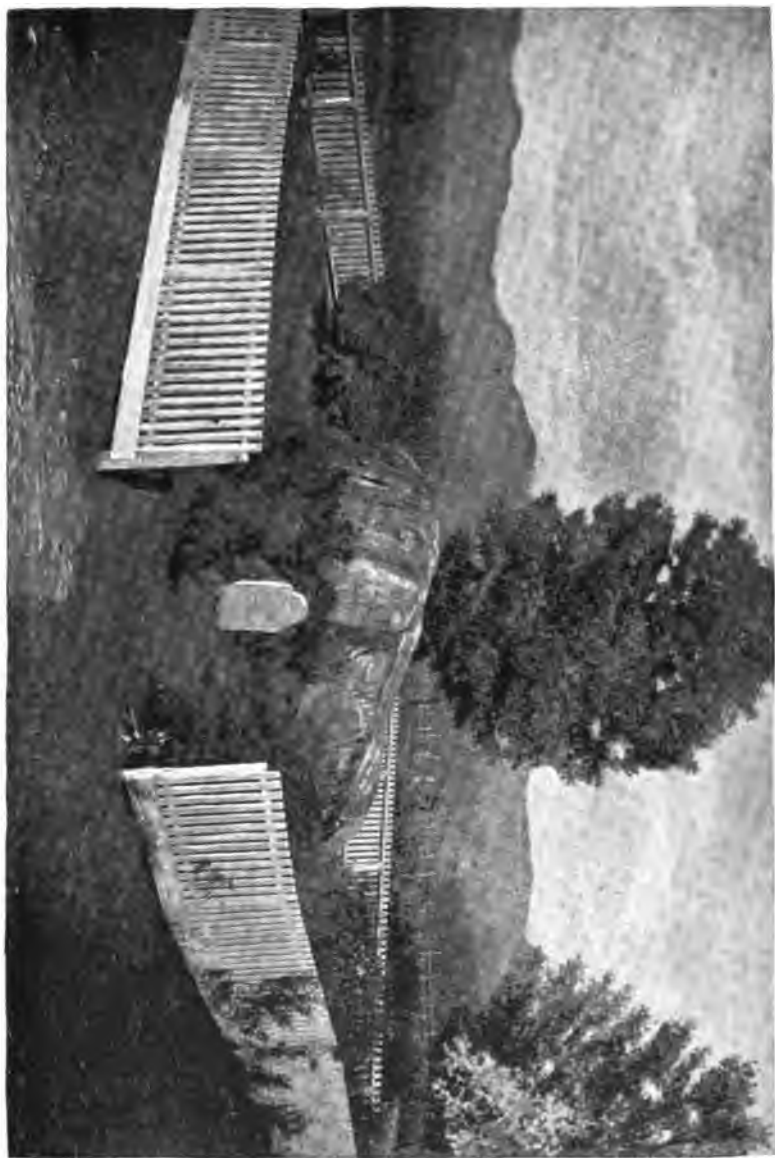
Before she unlocked the box covering the headstone, she made a jerky bow to Miss Brett as evidently the head of the party. "Mornin', marm; they're fifty cents for a pair of 'em."

"For goodness sake!" cried Uncle Joe, "unlock that stone, and then dicker over the pictures. We'll buy them, of course."

"We have maple sugar, too," said the woman, carefully setting the stereoscopic views on the grass, and proceeding to uncover the object of their visit. "Johnny," in a loud whisper, after this was done, "run up to the house and bring the biggest pan out; they'll like enough buy more here."

"Capt'n John Brown, who died at New York. Septr ye 3,

JOHN BROWN'S GRAVE AT NORTH ELBA.



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1776, in the forty-second year of his age," read Travers aloud, from the upper half of the stone. "Who was he?" to the woman.

"He was John Brown's father," she said, glibly.

"Why, he can't be," said Travers; "this man died in 1776, and John Brown wasn't born till 1800. John Brown," reading the lower inscription, "Born May 9, 1800, was executed at Charleston, Va., Dec. 2, 1859."

"Well, I don't care; he was his father, anyway," cried the woman, obstinately; "an' I guess I know, when I live in the house. Oh, here's Johnny and the maple sugar."

"Take your pan back into the house, young man," roared Uncle Joe, at the unfortunate youth. "And you, my good woman, may gather up those"—pointing to the pictures on the grass—"and when we get through looking around, we'll purchase the things."

"Oh, I can't go," she said, folding her hands with the air of a martyr. "I've got to see that you don't crack off none of the stun."

"See that we don't crack off none of the stun?" roared Uncle Joe, in a bewildered way.

"I suppose people do trouble them in that way," said Miss Brett, soothingly; "relic-hunters, you know, who wouldn't mind breaking off a bit."

"Good gracious!" cried Mr. Dodge, "what do you take us for, I'd like to know? We are not that sort of folks who'd lay a finger on that," pointing to the headstone.

"But she doesn't know it, you see, Uncle," whispered Travers; "although we do look 'childlike and bland'."

"Of course—of course," he muttered, cooling down. "Well, I don't blame you, my good woman. So watch away all you want to. Now, then, children, see the inscription on the rock? John Brown, 1859."

Cicely was already up on the summit of the rock with Tom Fisher. And the little Duke was scrambling and kicking at the base, and imploring to be lifted up.

"Here, you little beggar," cried Travers, rushing up and giving him a stout pull. "Now, then, Duke, you are on John Brown's big rock. Remember that, so you can tell of it when you are an old man."

"Who's John Brown?" demanded Duke, prancing unevenly over the summit, while Miss Brett called from the ground, "Look out for that child; he'll fall."

"Why, don't you know? John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave, but his soul is marching on."

"Is his soul under here?" asked the child, gravely, sitting down on a point of the rock, and tapping the stone with his small boot-heel.

"Why, no; of course not," said Travers, gazing off at the distant mountain peaks and trying to bring back all the history of those troublous times in which the old hero figured.

"Where is his soul, then?" asked Duke.

"Why, marching on, I told you," answered Travers, absently.

"What is a soul?" asked the little fellow, after a pause.

"Why, it's—it's the part you think with. And no, not exactly that, that's mind; but it's the part you love with—no, not that, either, that's heart; well, it's something made up of the two, I can't tell you any better than that."

"Have I got a soul?" asked Duke, suddenly.

"Yes, of course; everybody has. So look at things, and stop asking so many questions."

"And has mine got legs, and will it march off some time?" cried the child, in alarm. "It sha'n't," planting his dusty shoes firmly on the rock. "I'll say 'stay home, soul.' I will!"

"Oh, dear me, what's the use of trying to tell an infant like you, anything?" cried Travers. "Here, hold your arms, Aunt

Sarah," he shouted. "This chap's driving me mad with questions. I'll toss him down."

"I don't want to go down," screamed Duke, wildly, and hugging the rock; "and I won't ask a single other question if you'll let me stay, I truly won't, brother Travers."

"See that you don't, then," said Travers, with a laugh.

All the way home, when they were not occupied in throwing out the maple sugar (for Mr. Dodge had bought out the entire stock of the enterprising proprietor) to the children in the sparsely settled houses their buckboard passed, they talked up the Mount Whiteface and Wilmington Pass trip.

"Suppose we rest a bit first," suggested Aunt Sarah, wisely.

"Good advice," said Uncle Joe.

"And it's perfectly lovely at Lake Placid," cried Cicely, radiantly. "And I think the hotel is just lovely," she finished.

"I wish somebody would invent another word for a girl to express her delight with," said Travers. "That 'lovely' is about tired out."

"There are just as many different ways of expressing the word as there are girls," said Tom Fisher. "So what's the odds if they do say it?"

Cicely shot him a grateful look, with a pang for the day in which she called him an oyster.

CHAPTER XVII.

WILMINGTON NOTCH.

MRS. MARTHA BADGER was telling it all over to a "Keene Flat" lady who had dropped in to call.

"Come right in," said Mrs. Badger, sociably. "I'm just takin' my afternoon rest, an' my cup o' tea. You know I don't wait to take supper with the boarders. Land! How could I? I have to cook my griddle cakes then, and they do eat just awful, they set so on 'em."

"I thought that black woman that Mr. Dodge left here did all your cooking," said the "Keene Flat" lady, sitting down to the table with its clean cloth and shining tea-pot, while Mrs. Martha brought another cup.

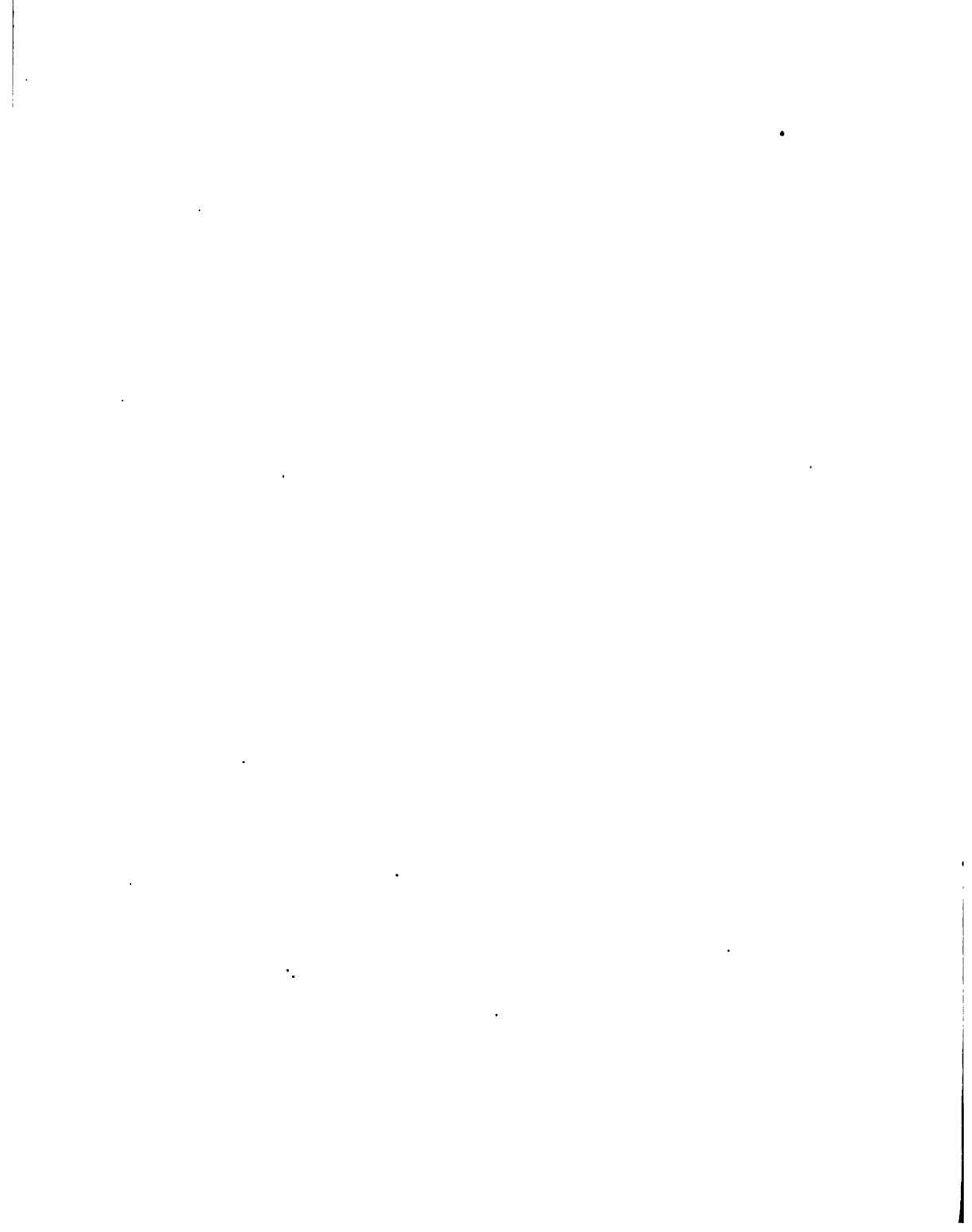
"Land, no!" cried Mrs. Badger, putting in a spoonful of sugar. "How do you like your tea, Mis Cressy?"

"Well, pretty strong," said Mrs. Cressy, with a pleased sniff of the steaming beverage.

"Silvy—I can't never call her Maum—is a good creature as ever lived, and she's a sight o' help. I was tickled to death to git her just now, the house is so full," said Mrs. Badger. "There's your tea, Mis Cressy; now if 'tisn't agreeable, I hope you'll tell me so, but"—taking a long draught from her own comforting cup—"then she don't know how to do my nice cooking, and I shouldn't never think of intrusting to her those supper griddles—never in all the world! Why, Mis Cressy, you must understand I've got splendid folks boardin' with me. Why, they're ministers, some of 'em. Is your tea agreeable?"



MRS. MARTHA BADGER WAS TELLING IT ALL TO A KEENE FLAT LADY.



Mrs. Cressy took the cup from her mouth while an expansive smile drew her features up, and the flowers in her bonnet trembled as she executed her best company bow. "It's patik'ler," she said, smacking her lips.

"I'm glad. 'Tisn't as good as I commonly make," said Mrs. Badger. "Well, as I was saying, Silvy thinks she can do everything in creation better'n any body else living; now that's the only thing unpleasant about Silvy. I don't see how Miss Brett stands it with her."

"They say," remarked Mrs. Cressy, slowly, "that Miss Brett's got lots o' patience; must have, with them children. And now there's another boy they've took in. I sh'd think they'd want to send one of them off, instid o' taking any more, for my part."

"Miss Brett is an angel of light," said Mrs. Martha Badger, distinctly; "and if she wasn't so plump as a patridge, I sh'd be afraid she'd die. But I ain't a-going to set and hear you saying anything against those children, Mis Cressy, 'specially the little fellow."

"I hain't said anything against them, I'm sure," cried Mrs. Cressy. "Why, they're splendid for children; but I ain't partial to young ones, anyway, Mis Badger, and I ain't going to pertend I be."

"They're like as if they were my own," said Mrs. Badger. "And I declare I'm lonesomer'n nothing, to think they're off a-traveling, and won't be running in here every little while." And she gave a sniff—"and to think I can't see Duke for a good spell." Here she picked up the corner of her white apron and wiped her eyes. Mrs. Cressy, not understanding how this could possibly be an affliction, sipped away at her tea in the greatest enjoyment. Presently she said—

"Ain't you most dead with that little nigger under foot, here?"

"What!" cried Mrs. Martha, lowering her apron to bring to view her snapping black eyes. "Do you mean Biny?"

"Why, yes; of course."

"P'raps you don't know that Biny Simpson saved one of my brother John's children right out o' their burning house, when everybody else was too scart to death to do anything. What do you think o' that, Mis Cressy?"

"Well, I couldn't stand her under foot, anyway," said Mrs. Cressy, drawing herself up in an elegant way.

"And if they'll let me; I ain't ever going to part with Biny," said Mrs. Badger with great decision; "but la! 'Twould raise the biggest sort of a rumpus to even speak the first word. If her mother'd let her go, why, there's all the Dodge family to hold on to her, and he, mister himself, told me just before he started, he loved that child."

"What, loved Biny Simpson?" screamed Mrs. Cressy, startled out of her elegance.

"Yes; and why shouldn't he? He's a sensible man, and knows that Biny Simpson's got a soul. And that ain't found in every one you meet a-traveling, I tell you, Mis Cressy."

"Well, I never did!" cried Mrs. Cressy, sinking back in her chair.

"Now I tell you what I'm going to do," said Mrs. Martha, decidedly. "I'm going to take my brother John's family next winter just as soon as I find out where the Dodges are going to locate themselves; I don't suppose the children's father will ever go back to Buxton and build, that's my private opinion publicly confessed, from all I can gather, and I'm going to locate in the same town, and open a boarding-house. I like to live and breathe the same air with such folks."

"Don't he live in New York?" asked Mrs. Cressy, with considerable awe for Mr. Dodge, and his place of residence.

"Well, yes; but what of it? Can't I live in New York, too, pray tell? I s'pose there's boarding-houses wanted there, same's as in other places. I hain't never been there, but I'm going to try it, if they all go there, as sure's I'm alive."

* * * * *

"Won't the party be too large?" asked Miss Brett, with true New England reserve.

"Not at all," cried Uncle Joe, heartily, prancing up and down the little private parlor of the hotel at Lake Placid. "It's the way to take the Adirondacks—go it in crowds; beside, the children have been quiet all summer so far, and it's time for them to see a little life."

Miss Brett's gray eyes widened a bit, but she said nothing.

"They are all nice people," said Uncle Joseph, in a democratic



"THERE ARE TWO CHAPS I LIKE FIRST-RATE."

fashion. "And they all want to go up Whiteface, at least most of them do; at any rate, the whole crowd wants to drive to Wilmington. Oh, it's all right, Miss Brett."

"Uncle Joe—Uncle Joe," cried Cicely, flying in with cheeks like roses, "Miss Clementine Mix wants to go to Wilmington to-morrow."

Aunt Sarah, being a woman, got all ready to say—"There, you see," but thinking better of it, shut her lips tightly.

"All right," said Uncle Joe, cordially.

"And can she take her two nieces? Please say yes, Uncle Joe. We've just been playing tennis, and they want to go."

"Why, yes, indeed; if you want them along, I'm sure I don't care."

Cicely flew off on a pair of delighted feet.

"It's just as easy to take a dozen people on a trip like that, as one," began Mr. Dodge.

"Aren't there but twelve going?" asked Aunt Sarah.

"Oh, well, maybe one or two more. Oh, that you, Travers?"

"Uncle," said Travers, bounding in, "there are two chaps here in the hotel I like first-rate; got no nonsense about them, and they know about everything of the Adirondacks."

"Then they know a good deal," said Uncle Joe, drily.

"Well, they've been here a good many times, and they say the drive over to Wilmington is about the best thing except the tramp over Whiteface, of anything round here."

"So I supposed. That's the reason I'm going to take you all over there."

"Well, may they go with us to-morrow?"

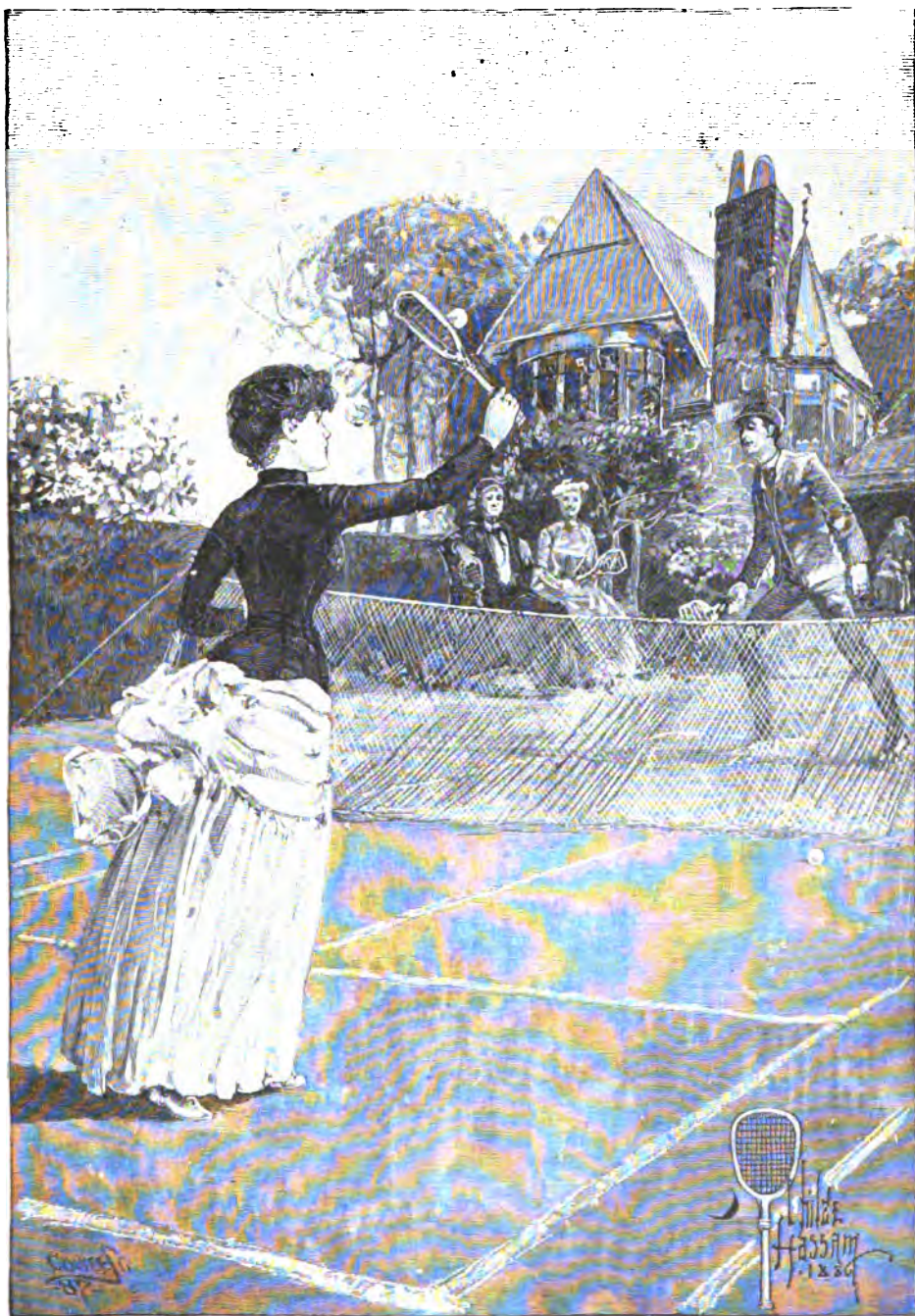
"Why, yes, to be sure; glad to have them," said Mr. Dodge, in his heartiest fashion.

"And their father and mother?"

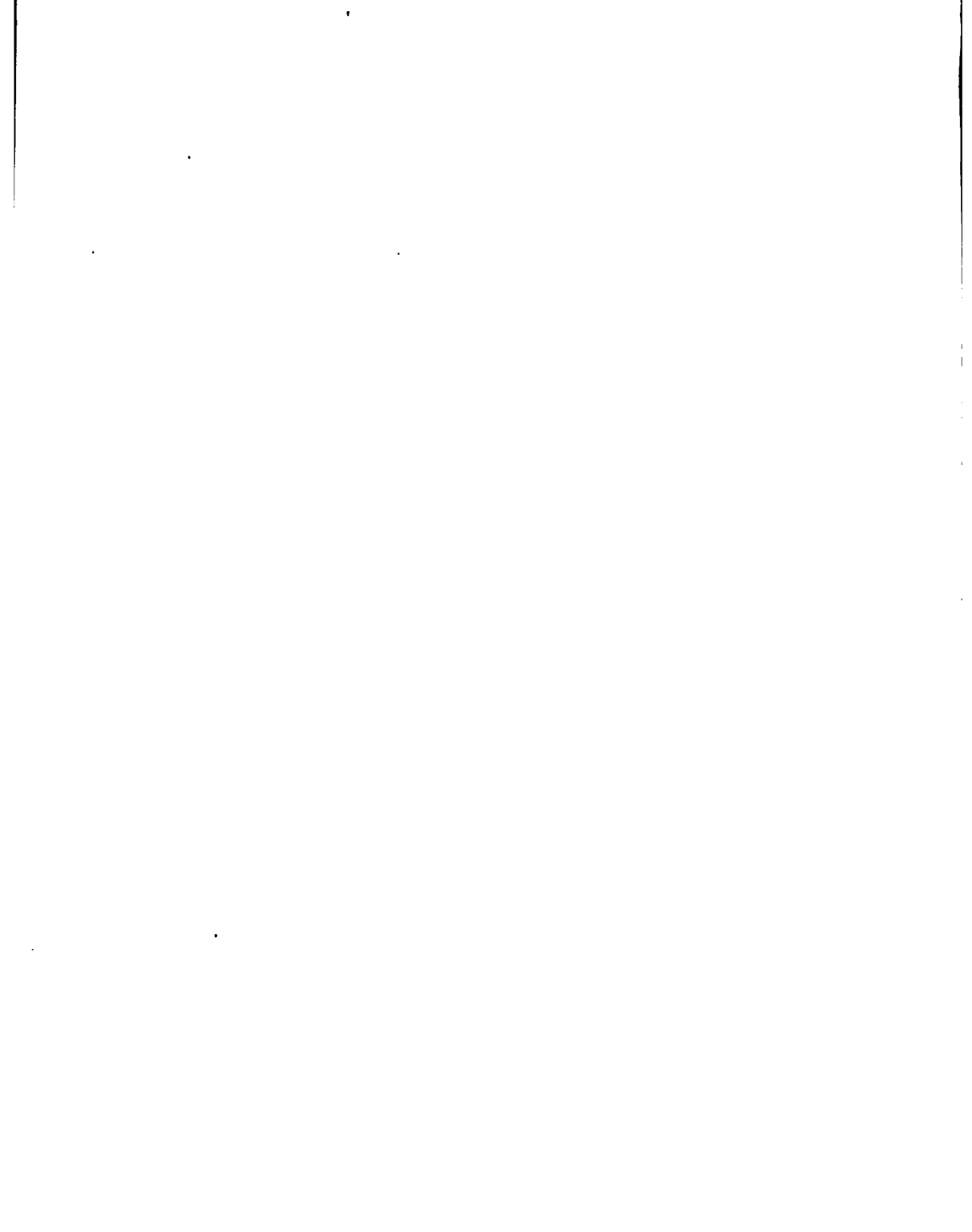
"Yes—yes. And their sisters and cousins and aunts. Might as well do the thing up wholesale"—to Miss Brett as Travers ran out into the hall, and leaped over the stairs to his new friend's room.

When Mr. Joseph Dodge assembled his forces after early breakfast the next morning on the veranda, nearly all the guests at the hotel were dressed ready for the expedition, and came trooping up around him with noisy delight.

"It's so sweet of you!" cried Miss Clementine Mix, hurrying up and casting bewitching glances under her big straw hat with



"WE'VE JUST BEEN PLAYING TENNIS."



its floating tags of blue veiling, "to let us go, dear Mr. Dodge."

"I took the liberty to bring my two daughters," said a stout dowager, in a particularly ugly mountain suit that did away with her last remaining charms. "Emily and Sarah, do assure Mr. Dodge that you won't make him the least trouble," pushing two smaller editions of herself into the foreground.

"Mr. Dodge—Mr. Dodge—its lovely in you! Thank you, Mr. Dodge"—the air was full of it from feminine voices, while the men who were going, looked on nonchalantly, and blessed their stars they weren't in Mr. Dodge's boots.

"My gracious!" cried Uncle Joseph at sight of them all, and frantically pulling his gray beard. "Oh, yes, I'm glad you're going—hum, hum!" Then he suddenly rushed off the veranda. In about five minutes he plunged up to Miss Brett's side in a quiet corner. "I'm in a scrape—got every buckboard in the place, and mountain wagon, and look at that gang!" He spread his hands helplessly.

Miss Brett didn't even smile. "Don't worry," she said; "there must be some way out of it."

"Heaven only knows what," he said, gloomily.

"Let me think a minute." He looked at her anxiously.

"Can't you get a hay-cart? Some farmer around here must have one."

"Well, what then?" Uncle Joe cried, feverishly.

"I'll ask Mrs. Springer, the housekeeper, you know, to let us take all the pine-cushions, and"—

"That's about it!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, clapping his hands together smartly and seizing the idea; "you've saved me!"

When the hay-cart came around, gay with pine-cushions with their red and yellow coverings, all the guests wanted to ride in it, and a genteel scuffle now ensued between them till Uncle Joe summarily ended it, by getting on his buckboard and driv-

ing off; when they all tumbled into their respective places, and fell into line for Wilmington fifteen miles away.

After the drive along the bank of the Ausable, and taking in the Flume, and Big Falls, and the many other beautiful and shifting scenes of "the Pass," the party were to dine in Wilmington, as many as chose staying over night to make the ascent of Whiteface on the following day, the remainder returning to Lake Placid for a late supper.

"I've sent word over in advance for all the horses they've got to go up the mountain on, but how they'll get this army up, I don't know—and I don't care," said Mr. Dodge, radiantly, to Aunt Sarah. "I sha'n't ever despair after this, now that that old hay-rigging turned up."

Hildegarde Mix stood discontentedly viewing the horse assigned to her when the Whiteface party got off from the buckboards that had brought them two miles from Wilmington. The rest of the journey must be taken on horseback, or on foot.

"I can't go on him—I'm afraid to; beside, he's stiff and horrid."

"Get on, Hilda," said her sister, ashamed of the attention the words brought, and giving her a gentle push to facilitate matters.

"But he's pokey and horrid," pouted Hilda, who prided herself on her appearance on horseback. "He's the very worst one in the lot," she added, too vexed to control herself.

"Do get on," cried Miss Mix. "Don't you see everybody's looking at you. How can you, Hilda! I wish Aunt Clementine had left you at home."

"You may have my horse," cried Cicely, pulling up beside Hildegarde, and throwing the reins over the neck of the gray pony she rode. "I'll take yours, Miss Hildegarde."

Tom Fisher was the only one of the Dodge party who saw it all, and he hurried up to say—"No, no, Cicely," for he knew Uncle Joe had chosen "Little Gray" for his niece.

"Oh, you don't want to give that horse up," said Hildegarde, in astonishment. "Why, he's the very best horse of the whole, and this is a horrid, pokey old beast."

"Never mind." Cicely slipped to the ground with a merry laugh, as Tom came up. "I'm sure he's good enough," running around to pat the long nose the horse immediately presented to her hand. He yawned with pleasure, lifting his heavy head, and staring at her out of two dull eyes that could see little pleasure in the proposed expedition.

"I wouldn't, Cicely," began Tom Fisher in a low voice, as he gained her side.

"Oh, Tom, it doesn't matter," said Cicely, rubbing the gaunt neck. "I daresay this one will go up the mountain just as well. Won't you, you poor old fellow?" with another pat.

"But she isn't worth it," Tom began to say, with a glance over at the lithe figure springing into Cicely's discarded saddle.

"She rides well," said Cicely, "and I don't, Tom," with a little laugh; "so it won't make any difference what sort of a horse I have, and I like this poor old thing; he's a dear. Help me up, will you?" putting her brown driving glove into the boy's hand.

Tom helped her up on to the gaunt beast, and tried to look cheerful over it, but he scored a long, black mark in his mind against Miss Hildegarde Mix, who was now prancing "Little Gray" up and down among the company, and showering smiles and bright chatter impartially. She knew she looked her best, and she rode up to Uncle Joseph's side confidently.

"It's so perfectly kind of you, Mr. Dodge," she began, radiantly, "to take us all up Whiteface."

"Yes, yes," said Uncle Joe, carelessly. "Well, now, Miss Mix, I've been thanked almost to death. Suppose we stop talking about it."

"You are so good and generous," she cried, impulsively.

Mr. Dodge put up an impatient hand. "Spare me, I beg."

"Will you look at my stirrup?" asked Miss Hildegarde, sweetly, and changing the subject to put out a pretty foot. "Can it be lengthened, do you think?"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Dodge, with no thought for the foot, nor the question. "Here, Mike," to one of the stable-men, "the young lady's stirrup needs attention." Then he touched his cap, and rode off to start the procession.

Hildegarde bit her lip with ill-concealed vexation. Her sister knew she was saying—"Horrid old boor," as well as if she had spoken the words.

Two miles up the bridle-path, just before they came to "Look-out Point," Hildegarde, who seemed to have been created for the express purpose of making a disturbance, looked back, and seeing that Mr. Dodge had gotten off from his horse to join the party of walkers, she declared that she couldn't and wouldn't ride that horse any further. He was nearly killing her, and she was going to get off and walk.

"Well, I should be ashamed," cried Miss Mix, under cover of the voices that shouted out various bits of advice as to the management of "Little Gray," "after making that good little Cicely Dodge give him up to you! Hilda Mix, I wish you were home."

Hildegarde, caring little for Miss Mix's opinions, protested to the sympathizers who now drew near, that the horse was utterly unmanageable, and that she was tired of riding, anyway, and that she should go the rest of the way on foot. And jumping lightly to the ground, she deserted "Little Gray," to the great delight of another lady, who called out—"Oh, now I will take him! I am very tired."

"Excuse me," said Tom Fisher, coming up at this juncture, and touching his cap; "but as Miss Cicely Dodge gave up this horse," laying his hand on "Little Gray's" bridle, "to oblige Miss Mix, it is but fair that she should have it back again now."

"Excuse me," said the lady; "I didn't know that Miss Dodge did give him up," with a surprised glance at the vanishing Hildegarde. "Certainly she ought to have it now."

"Oh, I don't really care," cried Cicely, in distress, and blushing very hard, "to have him. Really I don't, Tom. Do make her understand, please. I'd much rather she would take 'Little Gray,' she does look so tired."

So Tom rode up to the side of the lady, who really did look ill, and finally made her understand that it was Cicely's wish to see her comfortably placed on "Little Gray." So the exchange was made; the lady dismounted from the back of her animal, and settled herself with a sigh of satisfaction on the pony.

"You're a good little thing," she said, coming up alongside of Cicely on her gaunt brown charger. "My side has ached ever since we started, and I can't walk—or I should have gotten off long ago."

"I'd much rather you'd have 'Little Gray,'" said Cicely, with another blush, and pulling up her heavy beast, who showed sudden indications of being coltish by trying to prance over the cobble-stones in a way that was shocking to behold.

Just then, a young man, fresh with the latest London traveling suit, and a mountain daisy in his button-hole, came hurrying up on foot and spoke to the ladies, touching his cap and looking at Cicely.

"Why, mother—what's this? Got another horse? I'm very glad, for you needed it badly enough." Then he said to the bright-faced young girl, with his hand on his cap—"Allow me to thank you, for my mother really was not able to undertake this expedition; what it would have done to her, mounted as she was, I do not know."

Cicely turned a frank pair of eyes upon him, and said cheerily—"Oh, really, I don't mind going on this one."

"Don't you so?" said the young man with a critical look all

over the slab-sided creature. "Well, now it's very good of you to say so, for he's not the finest specimen of horse-flesh one might see."

"I suppose we do look funny," laughed Cicely, trying to hold in her charger, who by this time had gotten his blood up to eclipse all the younger horses in the file; "but you know I don't ride—only once in a while, at least, for we haven't any horses of our own," she added, simply.

"Geoffrey," called the lady from "Little Gray's" back, "do you hold that young lady's bridle for her. Her horse doesn't look safe to me."

Tom Fisher sprang forward, but the young man had laid his dark glove on Cicely's bridle. "Allow me," he said; "at least, over this rough place." And Tom stopped as if struck a sudden blow, feeling as if he could throttle this stranger, with his London suit, and his button-hole posy.

Cicely looked around. Uncle Joe was far back among the walkers, and Travers seemed to be fixing a lady's saddle that must have turned; she looked appealingly at Tom, but in some unaccountable fashion, he had stopped his horse short in the bridle path. "Oh, I don't think you need to trouble about it," she said, the color rising to her pretty light hair.

"It's no trouble in the least," said the young man; "sometimes these mountain cobs become a little unmanageable. Beside, if you will allow me I should be very grateful to you, as you were so kind to my mother."

"Just look at that Cicely Dodge flirting away with that new man who joined us at the Wilmington hotel," cried Hildegarde, who, finding it impossible to reach Uncle Joe's side, now ran up to her sister. "Who is he, any way—do you know, Catharine?" she asked.

"No, I don't," said Miss Mix, with a venomous little smile; "only somebody said he was a millionaire, and he looks struck with her."

"I don't believe it," cried Hildegard; "he can't be a millionaire; that horrid old woman he's with is his mother, and she's a perfect dowdy, Catharine."

"Well, he isn't," said Catharine, glad of vengeance for the reproach cast upon the Mix name by her sister. "And I'm glad he's found out what a sweet little thing Cicely Dodge is."

"The idea! That fifteen-year-old chit!" cried Hildegard, in a passion, not allayed by finding that her boots were too tight for mountain climbing. "And how she does act over that old gray horse of hers, offering it all round for everybody to ride on. I suppose she made his mother take it."

"Offering it?" repeated Miss Mix. "Well, if I ever, Hilda!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

OLD WHITEFACE.

AT "Lookout Point," half way up the mountain, Travers rushed up to Tom Fisher.

"Who is that with Cicely?" he demanded. "I thought you were with her."

"The path wasn't broad enough for three," said Tom, a bit sarcastically.

"Well, who is the chap; don't you know?"

"He joined the party at the Wilmington Hotel, that's all I know," said Tom, leaning over and pretending to examine his stirrup. "Cicely let his mother have the gray pony. The lady seemed ill."

Travers made a movement of impatience. "I wish Cicely would keep her own horse, and not make herself so conspicuous." Then he was angry at himself for speaking disapproval of his loyal comrade.

"The lady seemed very ill" — Tom Fisher made haste to conciliate Travers — "and Cicely couldn't really help this dude's leading her horse; his mother told him to."

"Why didn't you do it?" cried Travers, in astonishment.

Tom roused himself from his gloom, and his face turned red. "What chance had I, I should like to know?"

But Travers was already on the way over to Cicely.

"Much obliged to you for leading my sister's horse," he said, stiffly, to Geoffrey, who regarded him with surprise; "but I can take care of her now."

Geoffrey's mother looked back gratefully, and beckoned Travers to her side. He had nothing for it but to go.

"I cannot tell you how much indebted I am to your sister for giving me this horse," she said, her pale face lighting.

"It was nothing, I'm sure," he said shortly; and touching his cap, he wheeled off.

Cicely looked up in surprise at his face when he came back. Geoffrey dropped the bridle in his hand, bowed to her and went off. At this, Hildegarde Mix ran up quite radiant

"You sly little kitten, you," she cried, with a girlish laugh. "Why, Cicely Dodge, where did you learn to flirt?"

Travers turned on her in a perfect fury. "My sister, I would have you to know, Miss Mix, leaves flirting to girls of your age."

Hildegarde flushed a deep pink, turned her head angrily and disappeared.

"Oh, Travy, Travy!" cried Cicely, putting her hand on her brother's, twitching at the bridle; and she leaned over to conceal the tears coming into her eyes.

"Travers!" Tom Fisher burst upon them, and turned his horse to cleverly conceal as much as possible the group from curious eyes. "I've told you it couldn't be helped. Don't feel so." Tom was very pale now, and his hands trembled at sight of Cicely's distress.

"If you had staid with her as I thought you were going to, this needn't have happened," cried Travers, to Tom; "but now to think of that Mix creature's insult."

Cicely raised her face, flushed and wet with tears, but her eyes shone. "I do not care for such words," she said, with a superb air. "Let go my bridle, Travers; I won't allow you to help me till you feel better." With that, she put aside his hand, and drove off to join the main party.

"She'll break her neck on that old cob," said Travers, sharply, looking after the erratic pace of her horse.

Tom Fisher now flamed up. "Why did you speak to her so?" he cried. "Haven't I told you she couldn't help it? I shall go after her." With that he whipped up his horse, but Cicely had safely joined Aunt Sarah's side, so he fell back to Travers again, with whom the gloomiest of conversations was sustained until the place where the party was to lunch, a little less than a mile from the summit, was reached. Here it was necessary that the two should conceal all traces of any unpleasantness, and respond to the demands usually put forth at such a time for a boy's help. It was "Mr. Travers" (to distinguish him from Mr. Dodge), and "Mr. Fisher, won't you just help us with this fire; it won't burn?" And, "Oh, will you two boil the coffee?" And, "Will you just fix this lemonade?"

"Why don't that dude go to work?" cried Tom Fisher, malignantly, while the two were in some such picnic employment. "It wouldn't agree with his London suit, I suppose," looking down at his own rough clothes.

Travers stopped manipulating a refractory lemon, to glance up quickly into the disdainful face, and a light gleamed in his eye.

"Tom," said he, "I'm sorry I hurt you, too, as well as Cecy. Beg pardon, old fellow." He cast down his lemon that rolled away in the dirt.

"My paw is rather in a mess, but I want you to shake it," extending it.

Tom glanced up from a similar employment, met his eye, and metaphorically speaking, fell on his neck. But although it was all made up with his best boy friend, it wasn't with Cecy, and this fact weighed heavily on Travers' mind.

There was a little shanty on the open space where the party had paused, and here some of the ladies wanted to set out the luncheon; but the majority overruled them, and the motley array of eatables was spread on the ground, to the delectation of the insects who contested the feast.

Hildegarde Mix seized one of the wooden plates of sandwiches and tripped off from the group of ladies arranging the impromptu luncheon table.

"See here, Hilda," cried Miss Mix, "we're not ready to pass things yet."

But Hildegarde made straight for a distant pile of rocks. Here, perched in nonchalant enjoyment of the shifting scene, was Geoffrey.

"Will you have a sandwich?" asked the girl, and extending her wooden plate.

"Allow me to pass them for you," he said, springing down from the rock.

"Oh, no; this is the part that falls to our lot," said the girl, with a pretty *moue* and a martyred air. "We girls always expect to do this at picnics. Won't you have one?"

"Thank you." Geoffrey took one. "But I insist on being made useful. I volunteered my services to the ladies about making the fire, but they disdained them, and those two," pointing to Travers and Tom, "are the lucky ones. So I came up on my rock to sulk over it."

The girl laughed, glanced involuntarily at his fine costume, then she said, "If you'd had a flannel suit on, you'd have fared better."

"Perhaps so," said Geoffrey, ruefully looking over his clothes; "but I wore what I had. I'm only just over from England, and I brought my mother directly up here—she's very far from well."

His face fell, and he glanced away as he spoke. Hildegarde hastened to say softly, with a sympathetic ring to her voice for the "perfect dowdy"—"Oh, what a pity; she looks so lovely!"

He turned back to her quietly. "You speak truly; she is lovely." Then changed the subject to some little remark about the trip.

"What a funny party we are!" laughed the girl, evincing no desire to finish her duty of passing the sandwiches—"take us all in all."

"We have some very good elements, I think," said Geoffrey.

"Now that old Mr. Dodge, well, he's very funny, I think," said Hildegarde. Then she gave a laugh, musical enough, and shrugged her pretty shoulders.

"He is very nice, in my opinion." The young man spoke abruptly, and the hand holding the sandwich trembled as if it would be glad to toss it into the bushes, and possibly something else with it.

Hildegarde ran her taper finger, on which blazed a large solitaire, lightly over the rim of the wooden plate.

"Yes, indeed; he is well enough," she said, carelessly. "I didn't mean anything against him. But he and all his family are so queer; Aunt Clementine wouldn't have come up White-face in their party, but there won't be any other chance, she was quite certain, while we stay."

"Indeed!" said Geoffrey, elevating his dark eyebrows.

"And as papa couldn't come with us, he has such lots of business, beside being a director on the B. & Q. railroad—he owns about half of it, I guess," with a little superior laugh—"why, of course we are rather dependent for our good times upon the gentlemen we meet."

This not requiring an answer, Geoffrey remained silent, thoughtfully smoothing his moustache, until Hildegarde, looking at him intently, he again said, "Indeed!"

"We live in New York," said Hildegarde, sweetly; "and Mr. Dodge does. And from something I heard him say yesterday, I fancy he intends to have his niece and nephew with him a great deal. But I sha'n't notice her there, if we do meet, for I don't like her ways. She is only fifteen, and she flirts with every one she sees."

"Will you excuse me?" said Geoffrey, suddenly. "My mother is resting in the log-house"—pointing to the shanty—"and I was to go to her soon. Good morning, Miss"—inquiringly.

"Mix," said Hildegarde, promptly.

"He didn't tell me his name," said the girl, left alone; "which was very rude. But now, as he knows mine, he can speak to me any time."

Geoffrey, behind the log-house, tossed the sandwich as if it burnt his fingers, far into the bushes, before he went to find his mother, but when she came out leaning on his arm, it was impossible to detect anything but the utmost complacency on his face. And it was a very jovial lunch-party that ate and made merry, like children.

"Get ready to be awe-struck when we reach the top," said Uncle Joe, in the pause after a gust of merriment, and reaching out for another sandwich.

"Nothing else would excuse our appetites," said Aunt Sarah, lightly.

Hildegarde Mix gave a shrug, and whispered to her sister—"I do think that woman takes a good deal upon herself. She's only the Dodge's housekeeper, after all. I've found that out."

"How?" asked Miss Mix, under her breath.

"Oh, I asked Jane, the nurse-girl, and she told me all about it. And she used to be a dressmaker. Think of that, Catherine Mix!"

"Horrors!" exclaimed Miss Mix, with a shiver.

"And I think Aunt Clementine ought not to have brought us up in their party," Hildegarde went on. "And I guess some one else has a new idea of 'em all, too."

"Who, Hilda?" asked her sister, with great interest.

"Hush," said Hildegarde, with a pointed glance at a youth who insisted on admiring her very much, and had now joined the group, throwing himself on the ground at their feet. "I

can't tell you here; but you look out, and you'll see that I know how to manage affairs." She gave a little laugh, another shrug, and began to talk with her next neighbor on the other side.

Up on the summit, thanks to the strength given them by the luncheon, they were all prepared, if not to be "awe-struck," at least to be appreciative of the fact that they were on the tip of Whiteface.



"HUSH! I CAN'T TELL YOU HERE."

The view certainly could not be found fault with; and looking down into the deep basin from which Whiteface raised his head, they could see the ridge over which they had toiled.

"I declare, I can't bear to see where we have come up!" cried Aunt Clementine Mix, all the while peering closely

over the edge of her rock to which she clung. "Dear me, it makes me quite faint to think of it! Do you really suppose, Mr. Dodge," she cried, "that we have come up there?" pointing down the ridge.

"I'm quite sure we have," said Mr. Dodge, with a laugh. "and for my part, I'm ready to believe it, madam."

"'Tain't nothing to what it'll be going down," observed one of the guides, placidly.

“Ugh—oh dear me!” cried Aunt Clementine, with a girlish little cry, and joined by a chorus of feminine shrieks; “we never can do it in all this world—never!”

Cicely took Miss Brett’s hand and drew her off to a quiet spot, but had scarcely seated her on a rock, when Uncle Joseph called Aunt Sarah away to look at the view from a different point. So the girl was left to enjoy it alone.

Far down in the valley, ponds and rivers interlaced each other.

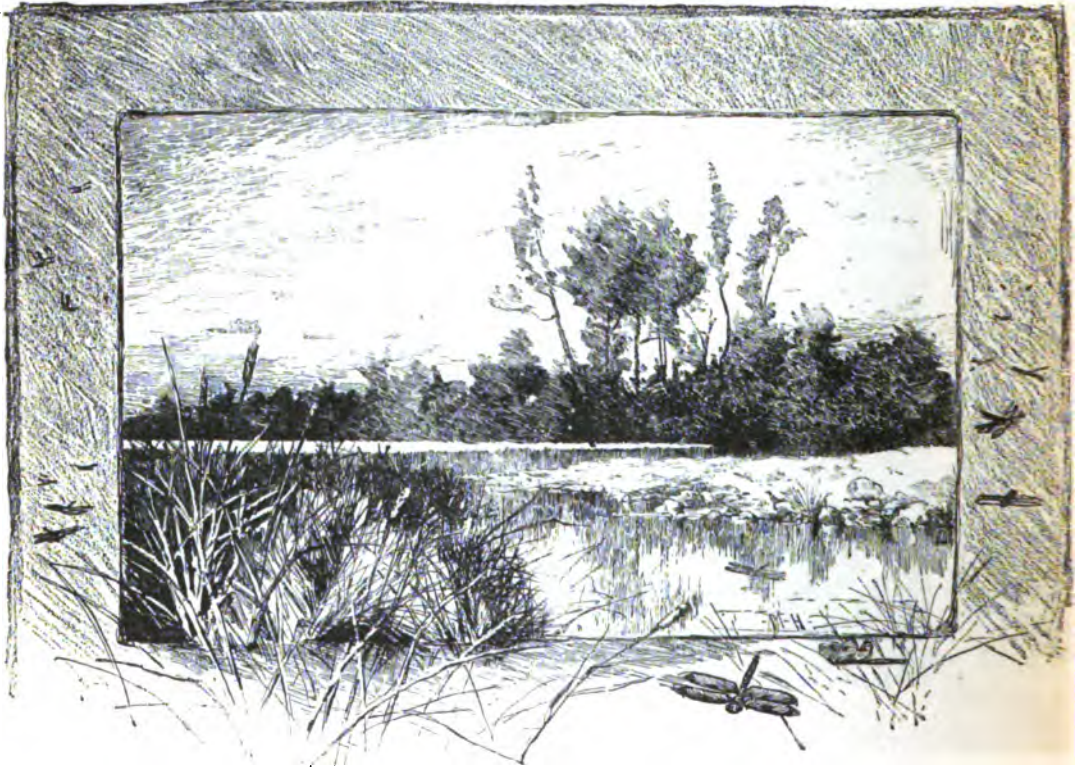


FAR DOWN IN THE VALLEY.

There was Lake Placid in the foreground, the Saranacs and Big Tupper further removed, while far off as the eye could reach, was the misty blue of the Canadas pierced by the shining thread of the St. Lawrence.

Cicely sat on her rock and enjoyed it all, although her breast still heaved with the morning’s wrong, and her trouble with her “better self.” as she always called Travers, was still not

made up. Presently she was conscious of a little rustling noise, and tired, too, of the sweeping gaze she had been indulging in, she dropped her eyes to the restful quiet of the rocks just a little below her. At this moment she heard a faint cry—



PONDS AND RIVERS INTERLACED EACH OTHER.

“Oh!” and she was looking down into Hildegard Mix’s blanched face.

“Help me—my foot slipped. I wanted to get that mountain flower. I can’t hold on.” Hildegard sent out sharp little inco-

herent cries, as she huddled away from the precipice on which she was standing.

"I'll bring help in an instant," cried Cicely, leaning over, reassuringly. "Hold on tightly to the rock, don't be afraid. I'll be back directly."

"I shall die," screamed Hildegarde, shrilly, "if you leave me alone!" as Cicely was springing off. "Don't leave me; I shall fall into that black gulf!"

Cicely stopped. "I'll call them, I won't go, Miss Mix; don't be afraid," and she sent out a shout, clear and high—"Uncle Jo—seph! Tra—vers! Tom!" But they were all away on the further side of the summit, and the wind seemed to delight in tossing the echoes of her young voice down the mountain-side into the dark basin below.

"I'm falling," cried the wild voice over the terrible edge, "and you won't save me!" Back sprang Cicely. A mist swam before her eyes; she had been angry at this girl, now in peril—she didn't know but what she was angry still—she surely couldn't tell; all the more, she must take the risk.

"I'll try," she said, with a face as white as Hildegarde's own. And getting down on her knees, on her rock, she wound one arm around a friendly projection. "Can't you give me your hand?" she said, holding out her own right one.

"No, I can't," said Hildegarde, reaching up her slender hand, whose blazing jewels now could not help her. "You know I can't, and you are only doing it to mock me," and back fell her arm to her shivering side.

Cicely leaned further over, clinging to the rock till her fingers bled; but with all her straining to accomplish the distance, the waiting hand could not touch hers.

There was a little ledge below her. It ran in a zigzag fashion, to meet a huge boulder, that kept any one standing on the ledge, from the precipice and sure destruction. Cicely meas-

ured it with her eye. There was standing room on it, for two, if the two could only keep cool and work their way slowly along to the rocks above. Cicely drew her breath hard. For one instant, "Where did you learn to flirt, Cicely Dodge?" pierced her with a keener thrust than when the words left Hildegard's red lips, and Traver's face, cold and hard toward her, as he hurled his fierce reply to the girl who now begged for help, was the only thing she could see. The next instant and she was down on the ledge, and was steadily pulling up the terrified creature, and saying—"If you are not careful we shall both go over together."

When they stood on the upper rock, safe at last, Cicely sank in a weak little heap upon it. Hildegard shook out her skirts, and sobbed out, "I suppose I look just awful! Look at that, I've torn my dress," with a frown for the side-long rent. "Cicely Dodge, why don't you say something?"

No answer from the girl lying prone on the sheltering rock trying to shut out sight and sound of the late peril.

"I suppose you'll tell this all over the party," said Hildegard, in discontent, "and make me a laughing stock for getting into such a scrape."

Cicely sprang to her feet. "I may be only fifteen years old, but I am neither a flirt nor mean enough to do the other thing you say, Miss Mix," and with her head high in the air, and with blazing eyes, she passed Hildegard, leaving her in sole possession of the rock, and hysterically crying out to herself her delight that Cicely wouldn't tell, after all.

And through that night, when Cicely tossed restlessly on her bed, living it all over again, and Aunt Sarah came in from the adjoining room to see what it was that kept the girl who usually had the slumber of babyhood, so wide awake, still she did not tell, but said, "Oh, I'm fussy, Aunty dear; never mind me, don't come in again."

And Aunt Sarah, in duty bound, said to Mr. Dodge the next morning, "I think Cicely must rest for to-day," giving her reasons for the opinion.

And Uncle Joseph said several things against these great caravansaries where one met all sorts of parties, and the caravans of excursionists who wouldn't let one enjoy things in a quiet way, never supposing that he hadn't entertained that opinion from the first. And Travers came into Cicely's room, and when the delightful "make-up" of the unpleasantness was all over, he begged to stay with her that morning instead of joining the party rowing on the lake. But Cicely drove him off to meet the others; whose numbers were increased by the presence of "Geoffrey," who, with his mother and two or three more of the boarders at the Wilmington Hotel, had come over to Lake Placid with Uncle Joe's returning company.

"Yes, go," said Miss Brett, when Travers came back once more, to see if Cicely would not relent. "She must sleep, Travy dear, and she won't, unless you take yourself off."

CHAPTER XIX.

A TANGLE OF PLANS.

A GENTLE tap at the door.

"Is your niece ill?" asked a low voice as Miss Brett's face appeared in answer to the summons.

"Cicely is only tired, I think," said Aunt Sarah; "yesterday's jaunt was a bit too much for her." Still the visitor lingered. "May I come in?" Miss Brett opened the door still wider, and a lady considerably over middle height, gray-haired, but with a young, sweet face, entered softly.

"I am Mrs. Carll," she said, quietly; "I believe we do not need any introduction, since we were in the party yesterday." Cicely turned on her pillow in the next room at that, to hear the following words: "It troubles me more than I can express, to think that I let that dear child give me her horse. I feel sure that it made her ill."

"No—no!" cried Cicely, sitting straight in her bed with shining eyes. "Please tell her, Aunt Sarah, that that has nothing to do with it. It—it was something else," then she stopped short.

"May I go in and see her?" asked Mrs. Carll, gently.

"Yes," said Aunt Sarah, with a smile.

So Mrs. Carll went into Cicely's little bedroom, laid her hand on the hot forehead, and heard the girl say over and over again that she really enjoyed the big awkward horse, and that she wouldn't have had "Little Gray" for anything; and then, at last, she almost said again—"It was something else that

made me ill," when she stopped herself in time, and Mrs. Carll began presently on another subject, that soon branched off on what she did in the way of mountain climbing when but a slip of a girl as old as Cicely, her father took her to spend a summer in Switzerland, and before long, Cicely was listening with all her eyes and ears, and the dinner-bell rang, and a boatload of the lake party ran up on the veranda and tapped upon her window.

"Aren't you coming out to dinner, Miss Dodge?" cried a girl's voice. "Do; it's been awfully lonely without you this morning!"

"I declare!" Mrs. Carll drew out her dainty watch. "One o'clock—where has the time flown? I must fly, too, for Geoffrey will be anxious about me. Good-by, dear." She leaned over the bed and pressed a kiss on the hot little cheek.

"Did you have a pleasant time?" she was soon saying to her tall son, who met her at their parlor door, and tossed his hat into a further corner as soon as he was well within the room.

"Execrable!" he said, concisely. "Why, mother, where have you been?" And then the story of her morning was told, ending with—"You may depend, Geoff dear, that that sweet little thing has been hurt by somebody—in her feelings, I mean."

The little Duke was happy in Abby Hollingsworth's pretty room. Abby's mother came every summer to Lake Placid, thereby making it possible to keep home furnishings and draperies up, in great contrast to the ordinary boarding-house interiors. And the two children were engaged in the pleasing occupation of blowing soap-bubbles, and rioting in the bliss of solitude, Jane having "stepped out a minute" to speak to her bosom friend, made in the few days spent at the Lake Placid Hotel.

"I don't want to blow soap-bubbles any more," said Abby, casting down the pipe. "Let's do something quite uncommon, now Jane's out."

"Let's—let's," echoed the little Duke, in glee.

"Let's lock the door for one thing," said Abby, thinking busily. "Then we'll find out something else."

"Let's—let's," again echoed the little Duke, flying after Abby to listen to the delightful click that proclaimed Jane fastened out.



THE LITTLE DUKE WAS BLOWING SOAP-BUBBLES WITH ABBY HOLLINGSWORTH.

"Now that's done," said Abby, with great relief. "I do so hate Jane!" she added, placidly.

"So do I." said the little Duke, serenely.

"Now what next? We must use the time good," said Abby, in a business way. "Hush, here she comes."

"Children," said Jane at the door, in a subdued voice, afraid to let it be known that she had first deserted them, "open the door this moment." And she softly rapped with her fingertips.

"Hush—hush!" said Abby, with a warning pinch on Duke's little fat arm.

Duke clapped his hand to his mouth, not to let the laugh ripple over.

"Children," implored Jane; then they heard her say—"They must have gone to Miss Brett's room." And she hurried down the hall.

"Oh, now that's perfectly el'gunt!" exclaimed Abby, with joy, and seizing Duke's hand. "Come on, she'll be back pretty soon. Let's hide."

"Let's," echoed the little Duke, scampering after her on naughty feet.

"We'll get in here," said Abby, skurrying up to a big wardrobe in the corner of the apartment. "Take care," as the little fellow plunged in. "You mustn't muss my mamma's dresses, 'cause they cost so much, and I heard my papa tell her he couldn't afford them, anyway."

Duke looked up at the tangle of silks and laces and white stuffs, and crouched lower yet on the wardrobe floor.

"There now, sit still," said Abby, getting into the wardrobe after him. "Oh, hush—hush! She's at the door," in a tremor of delight.

"She can't get in," said the small Duke, stoutly, his red lips puckering up in defiance.

"Yes, she can. She can get a pass-key at the office," said Abby, wisely.

"What's a pass-key?" asked Duke.

"Oh, another key that lets chambermaids, and clerks, and housekeepers in," said Abby.

"Are they all coming after us?" asked Duke, tucking up his feet further into the corner, and huddling away from the door.

"No," said Abby; "but Jane'll get their key. That's the reason I hid. When she does get 'in, I'll make her hunt good for us."

The little Duke sprang up in a flash, and clutching the wardrobe door by a convenient projection, brought it to with a snap.

"Oh!" shrieked Abby, but too late.

"Now she can't get us," cried Duke, in great satisfaction, and hopping up and down.

"We're locked in—we're locked in!" cried Abby, wildly, getting up to her feet as well as she could for the cramped quarters, to pound on the wardrobe door, and scream, "Jane—Jane—come, co—ome!" while Jane was busily engaged in shouting on her side of the bed-room door, "Children, let me in this minute!"

Mrs. Hollingsworth's white dresses, silken stuffs and laces were wet with the tears, as at last, worn out with the struggling to be heard, the children sank down on the floor of the wardrobe and wailed bitterly.

"If you'd let the door alone, 'twouldn't have happened; 'twas a sp—ri—ing lock," panted Abby.

"You said 'let's,' and I wanted to do thi—i—ings, too," sobbed Duke.

Mrs. Hollingsworth, returning with the Lake party from the morning excursion on the little steamer around the islands, stopping at Castle Rustico, determined to wear her white crêpe dress that evening, since Mrs. Greene just dropped the bit of intelligence that the Livingstons were coming to the Lake Placid Hotel in the afternoon stage from Elizabethtown.

Mrs. Harold Livingston was also an habitu  of the hotel; and Mrs. Hollingsworth felt her soul thrill with the satisfaction

born of that wardrobe-full of new gowns. She sat erect, shaded her face by a lower droop of the big red parasol—more careful than ever not to get sun-burned—and longed for home, and dinner, and a good rest, before the evening campaign should open.

When the dinner-bell rang out its insistent clang through the corridors and on the verandas, bringing hungry excursionists laughing and trooping to the dinner-hall, Miss Brett followed Mrs. Carll's departure, by a patient out-look for the little Duke and Jane.

Cicely sat up in bed, propped by pillows.

"I'll get up and dress, aunty; I'm well enough," she said.

"Indeed you won't, dear!" said Aunt Sarah, decidedly. "I'll find Duke and Jane, I dare say, on the veranda; then I'll send in your dinner."

The neat little waitress who brought in Cicely's tray, having received explicit instructions not to mention the little Duke in any way, or even to look frightened, Cicely ate her dinner with a relish, never guessing the scene in Mrs. Hollingsworth's room, when the two children came slowly out of the swoon in which Abby's mother found them on her wardrobe floor.

So that Mrs. Hollingsworth, after all, lost her beauty-sleep, and the coach coming in from Elizabethtown much earlier than was expected, she received her last summer's friends in a wrought-up state as to her nerves, in her own room over a cup of tea; that is, Miss Maud came in, Mrs. Livingston declining to see any one, but taking to her own apartment, quite upset by the long drive.

"It's quite refreshing to get to your apartment, Mrs. Hollingsworth," drawled Maud, sinking into a chair by the tea-table. "Thank you, I will have a cup of tea; well, is any one here whom it is worth one's while to know?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Hollingsworth. "there is, out of the general

mixture of the hotel crowd, one family that is decidedly above the average."

"Indeed!" Miss Maud's interest was one remove from being languid. "Who is it, pray?"

"Mr. Joseph Dodge, of New York, and his family."



MRS. HOLLINGSWORTH RECEIVES A SHOCK.

Miss Maud gave a little scream. "Horrors! Are they here? Now what will mamma do?"

"What do you know about them?" asked Mrs. Hollingsworth, forgetting her society composure and speaking hurriedly.

"Oh, everything," said Miss Livingston; "to think that they are here!"

"But do tell me, I am almost dying with curiosity," cried Mrs. Hollingsworth.

"The most dreadful thing," cried Miss Maud. "Fancy it, and he used to be such a friend of ours. He has actually brought those children's housekeeper—Mr. Dodge's, you know—up here, and is palming her off on every one as a lady; why, she used to be a dressmaker!"

Mrs. Hollingsworth had set down her cup and was leaning forward to get every syllable of the recital. She now received such a shock that she could only repeat faintly, her eyes fixed on the young lady's face,—“A dressmaker!”

"Yes," said Maud, indignantly; "and those children call her Aunt Sarah. Well, mamma won't notice her, I know, although he was one of our nicest friends. Oh, dear, it will quite spoil our stay here!"

When Mrs. Hollingsworth recovered enough to say anything, she declared, "Of course I shall take Abby away at once from associating with that youngest child. Just fancy, and I've been quite polite to that Miss—Miss"—she pretended to cast about in her mind for the name of her former hotel acquaintance, and shivered again as she remembered certain conversations cordially sustained on her part.

"Brett," contributed Miss Maud with polite venom; "well, you must shake her off now, for it is all as I tell you."

And that evening on the veranda, all the others having gone on a driving party, Cicely sat reading, Aunt Sarah allowing her to join the young people at supper, on condition of a quiet hour before bedtime. The Livingston family came and staid themselves near in a little group to rest, after the fatigue of the day, and it would have been the most natural thing in the world to have kindly drawn the young girl into their midst with pleasant chat. Instead, all the entertainment she received was the privilege of absorbing the smoke of Mr. Harold Living-

ston's cigar, which the wind, blowing her way, presently became so intolerable, that she gave up her quiet nook to the gossip they could now enjoy without restraint.

And the next day Abby Hollingsworth was violently wrenched



THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY CAME AND STATIONED THEMSELVES NEAR.

away from her little playmate, under pretence of being too ill for sports, and taken out on the lake by Mrs. Livingston, Miss Maud and her brother, where she was put through a course of

severe questioning as to each detail of the Dodge plans—so far as she had acquired them.

“Harold,” exclaimed Miss Livingston, when Abby’s gaze was on a bird’s nest in the overhanging foliage of the little island



“NO, NO, HAROLD, I’LL TELL YOUR FATHER TO INQUIRE.”

they were passing, “I really think you must find out from Mr. Dodge how long he is going to stay here. This *enfant terrible* really has nothing to tell.”

“Mrs. Livingston leaned forward. “No, no, Harold, you are

not to be mixed up with them in any way. I'll tell your father to inquire. And at once, as soon as we get home."

But they were saved the trouble of ascertaining Mr. Joseph Dodge's plans, for on their return from the boating trip, he met them on the path before the hotel, with an open letter in his hand.

"So sorry, Mrs. Livingston, that we must go just as you've all come. But I've received a letter from Dr. Kingsbury, our Keene Valley good friend, who is to join us at Paul Smith's, that he'll meet us there to-morrow. So we go right off."

"So sorry," said Mrs. Livingston, in a polite murmur, echoed by Miss Maud, while Mr. Livingston, Jr., pulled his moustache and looked his regret; "but we'll meet again, probably, before the season is over."

"I didn't expect to go this week," said Uncle Joe, cordially; "but the doctor can't take this trip any other time, so it must be. But as you say, I hope we'll meet again."

"How long shall you be at Paul Smith's?" asked Miss Maud, quite innocently, and as a matter of no special interest.

"Oh, that's only our meeting place," said Uncle Joe, hastily, and beginning to read his letter again, forgetting to state that he should leave the feminine portion of the family at that famous hostelry while the fishing and hunting excursion was in progress. "Oh, that is,"—but the Livingstons, with a—"We'll see you before you go," had moved off, wild to communicate the good news to Mrs. Hollingsworth and her set.

Cicely ran down the hall with a pretty ginger jar the house-keeper had given her, filled with wild flowers, to tell Mrs. Carll of the sudden change in the plans, and to say good-by.

"I thought you might like this," she said, holding out the jar. "Auntie thinks it looks so pretty hanging up."

"My dear child!" Mrs. Carll got out of her chair, and took the young girl's hand "Going? Why, I thought you were to stay here some time."

Cicely still held the jar timidly. "Yes, Uncle Joe has just received a letter from dear Doctor Kingsbury, who is to meet us."

"Where, may I ask?" cried Mrs. Carll, with a warm pressure on the small palm, still forgetting the jar.

"At Paul Smith's," said Cicely, wishing she hadn't brought the jar, and now only longing to get it home again.

"You've brought me this lovely jar of wild flowers!" exclaimed Mrs. Carll, suddenly, and taking it. "Oh, how sweet of you, dear. I was just wishing I had something to put my ferns and blossoms into."

"I'm glad you like it," said Cicely, with a happy little flush. "Good-by, Mrs. Carll."

For answer, she was taken in a pair of kind, motherly arms, while a kiss was pressed on her young lips. "Cicely, dear, I hope we shall meet again. I want to always know you."

And Cicely ran back, quite radiant, to help Aunt Sarah with the packing so suddenly thrust upon her. And then they had to summon Travers, out on the lake practising a superb stroke with the oars, using that most effectual instrument, the fish-horn, to call the boy back from his delightful cruise among the islands.



"YOU'VE BROUGHT ME THIS LOVELY
JAR OF WILD FLOWERS."

Hildegarde Mix clapped her hands for very glee when the news came of the sudden departure.

"Now, Cattie," she cried to her sister, "I'm in luck! Not that any impression has really been made on the Carlls. Still, it's best to get these odious Dodges out of the way. Now all I've got to fear, is that Maud Livingston."

And Geoffrey Carll and his mother were saying in their own quiet little parlor—"Just the thing; we'll stay here two days longer, then for Paul Smith's."



TRAVERS' CRUISE AMONG THE ISLANDS.

CHAPTER XX.

ST. REGIS LAKE.

PAUL SMITH'S isn't the least like what I thought it was," cried Cicely, that first night, peering into the hotel parlor, on the way out from dinner.

"Why not?" cried Travers. "I think it's very like my idea." He gave a small skip, and was guilty of snapping his fingers. "Best hunting and fishing ground in the world!" he declared. "Eh, Tom?"

"Oh, I know!" cried Cicely; "but it's so funny. One minute you meet people all dressed up, and with ever so many diamonds on, and the next you come upon"—

"Corduroy and flannel shirts," finished Travers. "Oh, the place is prime—fairly swarms with guides. There's one now, sitting on that post. He looks like a capital fellow. I'll interview him." So Travers deserted to find conversation elsewhere, and Tom paced slowly up and down by Cicely's side.

"I haven't told you yet how badly I feel over that Whiteface matter," began the boy, blundering along dreadfully, his gaze fixed on Travers' receding figure.

"Oh, Tom, yes you did!" cried Cicely, impulsively. "I'm sure it wasn't your fault to begin with. And if it had been, why, you made it all right afterward."

"No, I didn't," said Tom, bluntly. "I only mixed up matters worse. You can't know how I feel. I'm no end sorry I acted so like a donkey."

Cicely stopped and looked full at him. "Why, Tom," she said, putting out her hand. "I couldn't keep any grudges against you. You are Travers' best friend."



"THERE'S ONE NOW, SITTING ON THAT POST."

I just hate all these rich people!"

Tom, who had looked suddenly radiant, now felt his face drop into its old gloom, and he said, in a cold, hard way, "I ought not to have come, Cicely, and that's a fact. I'm a pensioner; what right have I among all these gay, rich people?" Then he knew that he was more a donkey than ever, and he turned away, half prepared to flee.

The tears sprang to Cicely's eyes. "Tom—Tom," she cried "oh, how can you! I think it is fairly wicked to feel so."

"I suppose so," said the boy, without looking around.

"Why, Tom, I think more of you," cried the girl, "than of any one out of our family. You come next, Tom—you do, truly," she added.

"You can't," said Tom, recklessly, "after I've let you see how I feel. Cicely, He whirled back into place

and showed her such a defiant, flashing face, that she stared up into it, wondering if she had ever called it Tom Fisher's.

"Oh, no, you don't mean that!" she exclaimed, quite aghast.

"Yes, I do; and you ought to know it," repeated Tom, savagely. "You don't understand—you can't, Cicely. You've had trials, and you've borne them beautifully"—he was quite gentle now—"but you've been spared the worst side of poverty." He was getting fierce again, and Cicely made a little imploring movement.

"And I thought I'd conquered all such things"—Tom drew a long breath—"being among the rich boys at home—Travers was such a man in bearing his loss of money—but up here, it's all coming back, and the other day on Whiteface, I'd just like to have pitched into that London swell. There, now, you have the whole truth, and you'll hate me, Cicely." He folded his arms and looked steadily at her.

"Oh, Tom, I'm so very glad you told me," cried Cicely, in a glad young voice. "Do you know what I really, really wished all the time the London swell, as you call him, was holding my bridle? He was very nice and kind, Tom, but I did so want you. And now I'll tell you the truth, too; I thought it was rather funny, Tom, for you to leave me so, and Travers seemed to desert me, and I hadn't anybody for just a little while." Her lip quivered, and a tear or two came into her eyes.

A smile flashed over Tom's face, that lighted up the honest eyes and made the plain features almost handsome.

"And please never do it again," said Cicely; "and never, never get these dreadful feelings against people who have money; promise me, Tom." She put out her hand again.

"I'll promise you, Cicely," said Tom, his brown hand flying out to meet hers, and the smile still on his face.

"Lem'nade?" said a voice next to them.

"No," said Cicely, looking down into the face of an enterprising colored boy whose torn hat-brim gave full play to the whites of his eyes; "we don't want any."



"LEM'NADE — APPULS — WANT SOME?"

of his eyes; "we don't want any."

"Appuls?" said the boy, without moving a muscle; "dese yere is early ones — want some?"

"No," said Cicely.

"Four for a quarter," said the boy, with immovable face and figure; "want some?"

"No, no," said Tom; "didn't you hear the young lady say she didn't want any?"

"Lem'nade?" said the young gentleman of African descent; "two glasses for a quarter — want some?"

Just then a noise as if some one were picking a banjo, struck upon their ears. "Oh, there's Stonewall Jackson!" they heard a merry group cry, and hurrying around to where the music seemed

to proceed. they saw another colored boy leaning against the side

of the house, with his hat pushed back from his noble brow, and a rose between his teeth.

"Hulloa—Stonewall!" cried one or two gentlemen.

"Stonewall's come!
Stonewall's come!"
screamed the children,
hurrying up.

"Stonewall Jackson" preserved his nonchalant position, picking away without so much as a smile to acknowledge his popularity.

"Hurry up, Stonewall, give us a tune," said one of the gentlemen, throwing him a dime. Stonewall got away from the wall long enough to pick up the coin, which he slid into one of his many pockets, then resumed the picking again.

"He won't play, you know, until Old Tennessee has sold out his stock," explained one of the ladies.

"Old Tennessee? Where is he?"

"Around the other side; and he's got a full stock to-night."



STONEWALL JACKSON WAS PICKING AWAY.

"Somebody go and buy him out," laughed another gentleman, holding out a dollar bill that one of the boys immediately seized. Thereupon the crowd increased to see the fun when the other partner should appear.

The little Duke rushed over the parlor floor to a small girl who had thrown down her book, to regard the antics of a kitten on the top of her big chair.

"Come," he said, holding out his hand, "they're going to play and dance, and I like you."

The little girl brought down her gaze in astonishment to take him in.

"Come, hurry!" said Duke, impatiently; "they'll go."

"What is your name?" asked the small girl, getting slowly out of her chair and laying the book in the seat.

"Why, Duke Dodge."

"Duke Dodge—oh, isn't that a funny name?" she laughed, and stood quite still.

"No, 'tisin't," said Duke, seeing nothing to laugh at. "What's yours?"

"Arabella Orme."

"Ho—ho, that's awfully queer! Well, come, don't you know they'll go?" and he shook his little hand impatiently.

Arabella's fingers closed over his, and quite consoled for Abby's absence, Duke rushed out to the enchanted scene with his new friend, to be seized by Mrs. Kingsbury and the doctor, just arrived.

One day was allowed for resting; the second, Uncle Joe, the doctor, Travers and Tom, with the guides, were off "into the wilderness."

The plan was for the party to be out a week or more hunting and fishing, and then to return to Paul Smith's, get a little fun there out of the excursions to be made from the hotel, and then with Aunt Sarah, Cicely and the little Duke, to take the "Round Trip."



"COME, I LIKE YOU!"

Jane had deserted, and had been left over at Lake Placid. Miss Maud Livingston, thinking she would make a better maid than the one she was employing, had discharged her own and offered the little Duke's nurse sufficient compensation to make it seem her duty to leave the Dodge family.

"I'm going to be nurse-girl," Cicely had cried, gaily, at this new development in affairs.

"And I'm glad Jane has gone forever," declared the little Duke, "for she always 'posed me, and I hope she won't be in heaven when I'm there, either."

Uncle Joe put into Tom's hand just before starting, a leathern case. "Open it, my boy, and see how you like it."

Tom did, and the two boys fell upon the contents—a rifle, the exact counterpart of Travers'.

"How could you!" cried Tom, under his breath, "after all you have done for me, Mr. Dodge!"

"Oh, I think you are worth it," replied that gentleman, easily; "there, clap it in its case, Tom, you'll have time enough to examine it by and by—come on, boys."

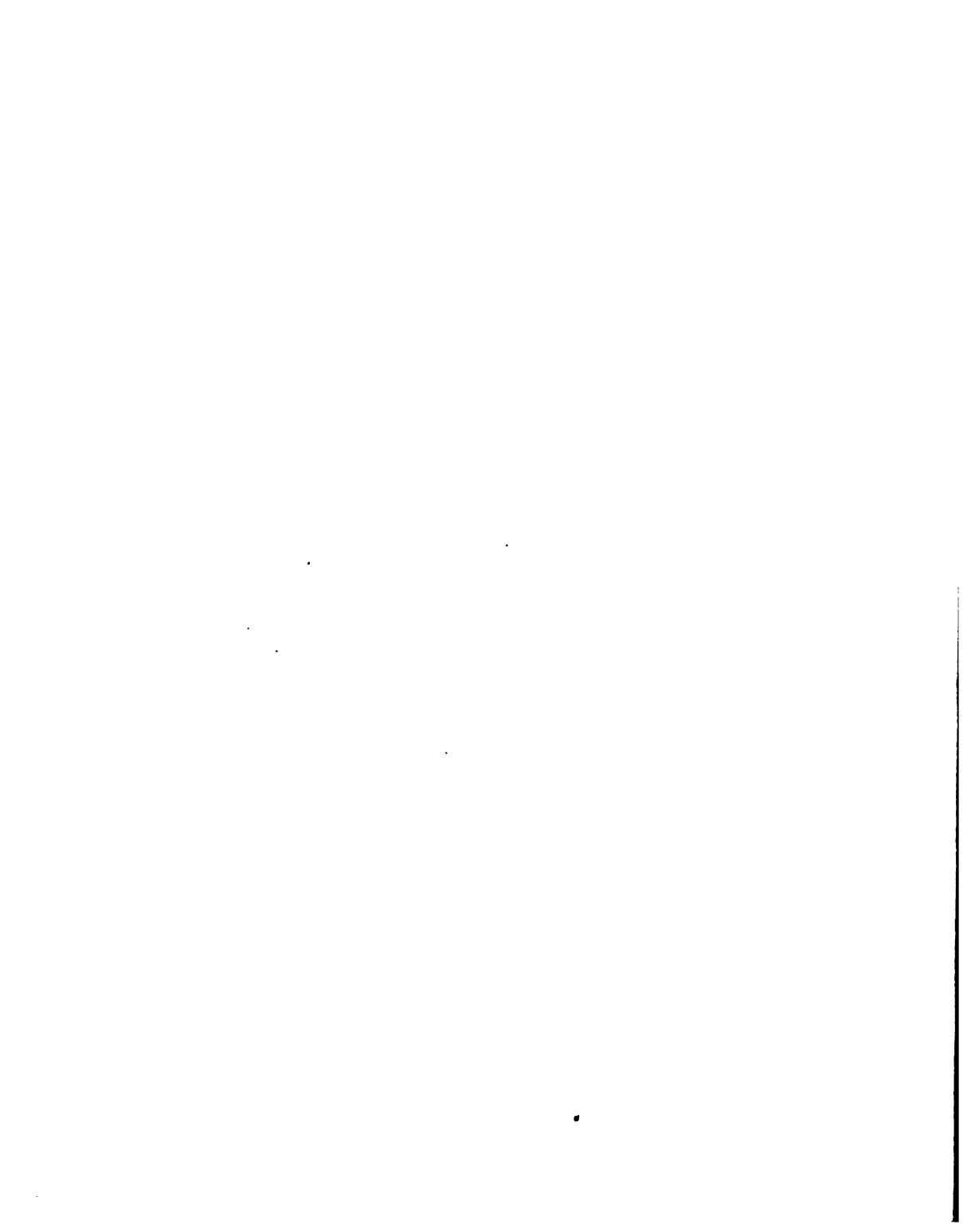
"I knew he sent to New York for it," Travers confessed, with glistening eyes, to Tom, who after his first outburst, had been knocked speechless. "And hard enough work I had to keep still about it, too!"

The first night out they improvised a log shanty, for those who liked shelter; while the rest rolled in their blankets, and studied astronomy in the patches of sky over their heads all such times between fighting the mosquitoes and gnats, that they could utilize; talked and jested, laughed and told stories, and made the best of things generally.

But the next day they settled down to work, having come somewhere near the stamping ground of the deer. That is what the two guides who had taken them in charge, confided for a good consideration from Uncle Joseph, who privately whis-

“ LEADING TO THE LAKE WHERE HE HOPES TO ELUDE THE DOGS. ”





pered to them—"See here, now, these boys want to shoot a deer apiece. I don't care much about it" (Mr. Dodge had surrounded himself with every known weapon by which experienced hunters went to the north woods for just such little game), "but I want them to be pleased. So look your liveliest, now, and scare up the animals, and you shall be well paid."

Accordingly, by the help of the best trained dogs to be had, the guides were all that day engaged in "scaring up" the deer, which proved after all, to be a doe. But the story, as it afterward leaked out, was this. The hounds had been sent into the deepest parts of the forest to start the deer. This the old hunters always call "driving him out of his cover." They scale mountains, and race through valleys and gorges, penetrate into nature's darkest fastnesses, seeking, finding, losing the trail of the flying prey, all the while baying and yelping till the woods and the mountainside resounds with the discordant clamor. If the deer starts in the established way, he will finally get into one of his run-ways, which is the path made for him, and known to him alone, leading to the lake where he hopes to elude the dogs who are following his scent.



THE STAMPING GROUND OF THE DEER.

"If he'll only come our way," breathed Travers to Tom. The two boys were stationed by one of these run-ways, each with his rifle cocked and ready. Uncle Joe and one of the guides were within sight, with gleaming eyes, and their rifles ready for action, sitting in a boat on the lake, Uncle Joseph debating whether or no he better not take his pistol in his left hand. The doctor and the other guide were off somewhere near the

dogs, whose sharp barking grew more and more excited, and terribly near.

"I tell you, boys," Jim Haskett, the chief guide, had said as he stationed them in their watching place. "if you can shoot one o' them air critters on the dead run, you'll cover yourself with glory. I vum, you can brag the rest of your life!"

Which made Tom and Travers declare to themselves that they'd do that very thing!

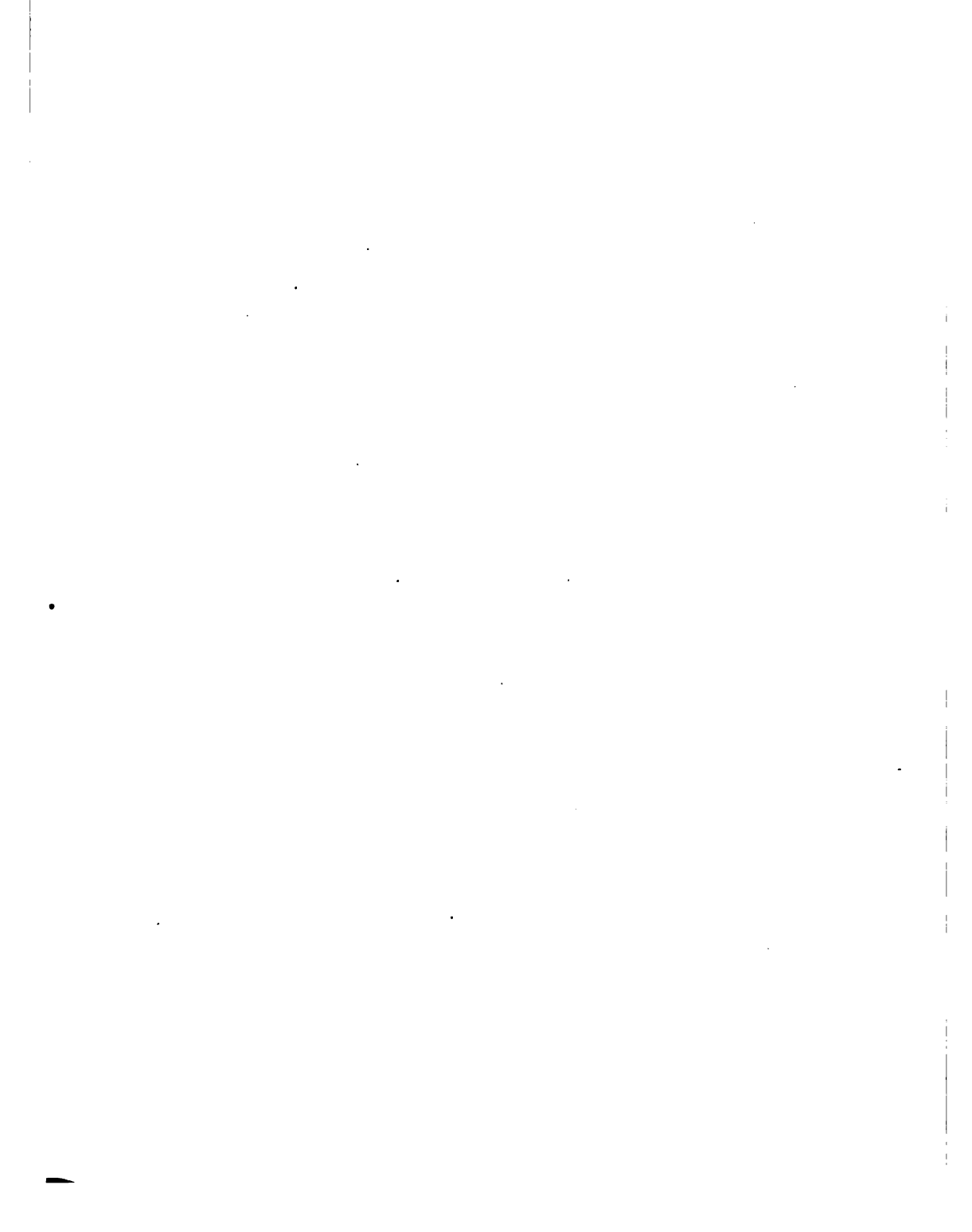
The short, sharp yelps grew nearer and nearer. Tom and Travers thrilled so that their rifles trembled. They did not dare to look at each other, for they were placed, Tom first, by the path of the runway, cleverly concealed by a thicket, Travers next, about a dozen yards away, so that if one boy missed fire as the creature bounded by, the other might secure the prize.

They could almost hear the light, springing steps of the frightened deer as he tore his way through the forest, coming toward them, and to his death. Every nerve was tense and the blood receded from cheek and lip, so strong was the excitement controlling them. And for a moment, Tom, level-headed fellow as he was, thought he should drop to the ground and give it up. The next, he was conscious that out of the opening between the trees and down through the narrow avenue, was coming a most beautiful animal. He could only see, it was leaping so fast on its slender legs, that it was graceful beyond anything he had ever imagined; on it came in long, flying leaps. Almost there, to the friendly stream that should wash off the treacherous scent that had nearly given him over to the dogs! On—on! In a flash the light flanks and round body came into view as Tom, with bated breath, but now with steady nerve, took aim. What! The ears laid back in agony, the dark, wide, imploring eye, the nostril wide, as the panting creature came within range!

"On my soul, I can't shoot a doe!" cried Tom, and sank back into the bushes, white as a sheet.

• • • • •
WAS COMING A MOST BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL.





"Ping—bing!" went Travers' rifle a little past the frightened creature.

"Ping—bing!" went two other shots from the boat on the lake. The boys rushed out, Travers screaming at Tom, "what was the matter with your gun?" as they ran down to the shore.

There was the doe swimming for dear life, the boat in full chase, Uncle Joe's rifle strangely silent.

"I hope she'll get away," groaned Tom.

Travers was hopping up and down the bank in the greatest excitement, calling out, "Give her the butt, Uncle," and "Oh, what a muff you are, Tom!"—quite gone with excitement.

Round and round the lake went the brave little doe, the boat in hot pursuit, the dogs gnashing their teeth as they tumbled up to the edge of the lake. Here was an obstacle they could not get over. How they did "long to be in at the death." It was hard enough, they seemed to be saying to each other, to be obliged to drive game into the very rifle-mouths of stupid men.

"Hah!" Travers gave a shout to answer the one in the boat, that told it was all over. One more pretty, graceful denizen of the Adirondack forests had run its last race. Tom turned on his heel and stared into the bushes.

"I knocked her on the head with the paddle," announced the guide as the victorious slayers rowed up; "see, she's a beauty;" tugging into view the limp form of the doe.

CHAPTER XXI.

HUNTING OF THE DEER.

TR AVERS looked into his friend's face. "You let her go!" he almost shrieked.

"On my soul, I couldn't help it, Travers," gasped Tom; but his head drooped, and he hurried away, feeling his manhood just so much farther off by this little episode.

"No one shall ever know it," said Travers, between his teeth. Then the group of excited men closed around the boat, hauling in the prize.

Tom, back in the thicket with the hot blood all over his face, had, notwithstanding his frantic efforts to keep it out, only a thought for the wildwood home so cruelly smitten when the doe should fail to return to her little ones.

"If this is hunting, I'll never do it!" he cried at last, with a movement to cast aside the precious rifle. "Out-and-out sport I'll have, when I can kill my deer like a man. But to shoot a doe! Faugh!"

He turned off with disgust, then took two or three steps to come back and peer through the thicket at the hunters. Uncle Joe was talking excitedly.

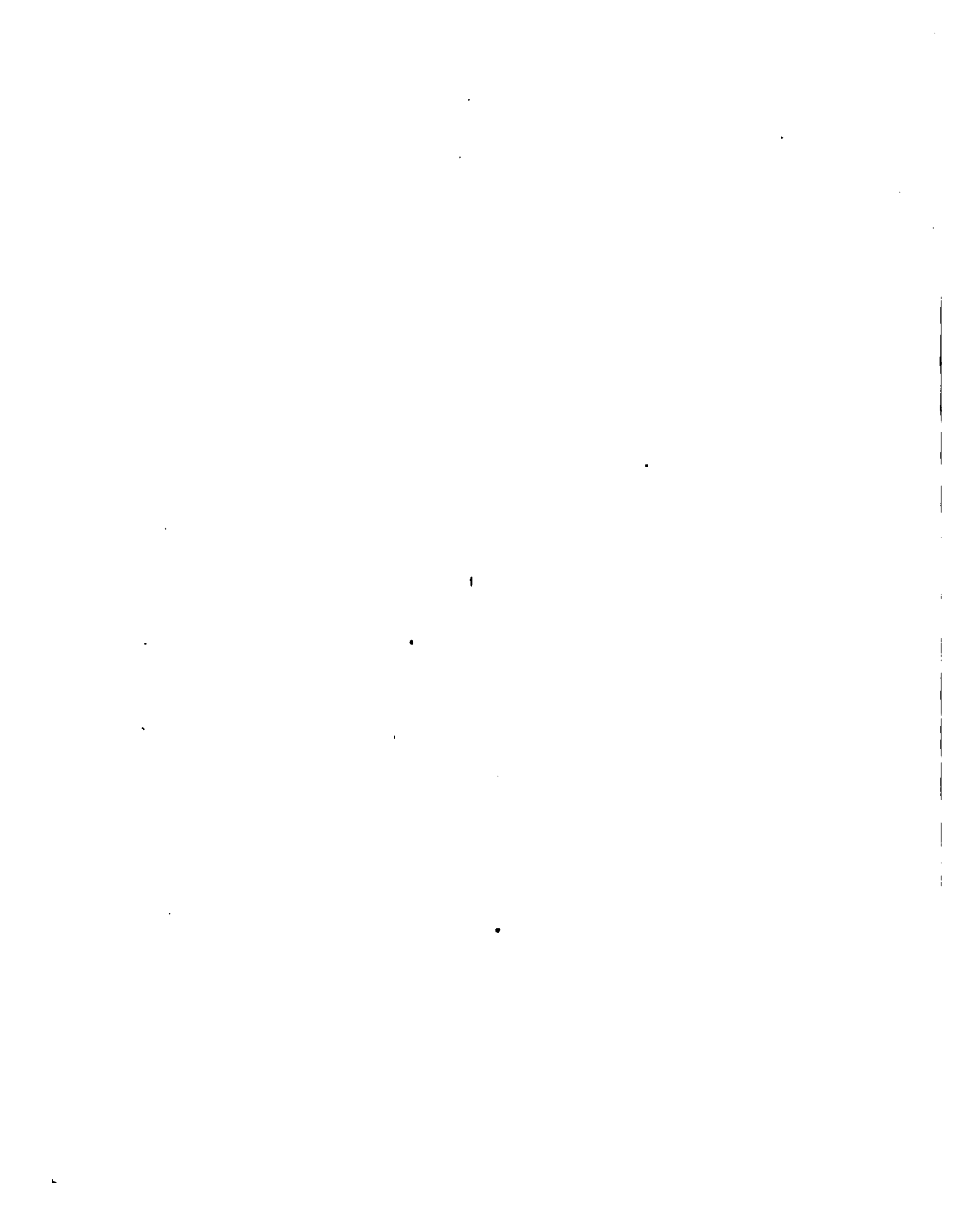
"See here, I didn't hire you fellows," gesticulating to the guides, "to stir up such sport as that," pointing to the pretty creature, lying prone along the shore. "We came out to shoot deer."

"Good—good!" applauded Tom, softly, back in the bushes.

"We're lucky to hound anything," said one of the guides,



THE WILDWOOD HOME.



in some resentment. "Good fellow," patting the foremost dog. "Well, she is a beauty, ain't she?" with another glance for the prize.

"Take her away, I can't bear to see her," said Mr. Dodge, turning off on his heel.

Travers bounded off from them all, whistled softly, and on Tom's returning the signal, broke into the latter's covert. "There are two of you, now, for Uncle Joe's with you," he announced, briefly. "For my part, I suppose I'm a cruel wretch, but I couldn't think of anything but good aim, when she shot by. Hate me, Tom, but that's the solemn truth."

"That's all right," said Tom, longing to bring back the glow to the face he loved so well. "You didn't think of it, so you ought to try to make a good shot. But it stung me, and I had to let her go." Meantime he registered deep in his heart of hearts, this vow—"I'll take home a pair of antlers that I bring down myself, to Cicely!"

That afternoon, after a glorious chase over hill and brake, in the mountain fastnesses best known to the two "picked guides" of Paul Smith's retinue, the hounds got the scent of a deer, and pricking up their ears, they were off, leaving it for such as chose to follow.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, "my wind is gone. I'm used up." He leaned dismally against a tree, and surveyed them all.

Travers, panting with young, hot blood all ready for an exciting chase, said brokenly, "I'll stay with you, Uncle," then looked across at Tom. Here was a fellow, now, who apparently did not relish the chase. He might keep tired Mr. Dodge company. But Tom was silent, his fingers nervously twitching at his rifle-stock.

"There sha'n't a soul stay with me," declared Uncle Joe, grimly. "Off with you. I'll lie down here," throwing himself

on the ground, where he rolled and grunted at his own sweet will.

Tom came up slowly, set his rifle against a tree, and said, without looking at Travers, "I'm no shot; so I'd best be here, sir."

"Off with you!" commanded Uncle Joe, savagely.

"Hurry up, durn it, and go!" screamed one of the guides. "I've got to stay back with him. How'd you ever know the way out, pray tell?"

With that, he bestowed such a clap on Tom's long back, as would have felled him at any other time but on an Adirondack hunt, and Tom, with Travers at his heels, was presently with the doctor and the other guide, racing for dear life after the yelping dogs.

On they went for more than an hour. The "run" seemed to be almost straight ahead, though the guide assured them they were traveling in a circle (as people will do when lost in the woods), through a thicket of cedar and tamarack that would have opposed impenetrable difficulties to any one not within hearing of the triumphant baying of the flying hounds. Then the short, sharp yelps of victory ceased. The guide said something not reportable for society ears, and added, "They have lost the trail."

Presently a clear yelp smote the air. Every pair of feet sprang off with fresh impetus, turning sharply to follow the "run" over a high cliff.

"He ain't takin' to water unless he doubles again," panted the guide, hurrying them on. "Now, then, run fer that there hill, if you ever run, boys!"

And they did, only to find on scaling it, that the wary animal had, with the instinct of a hunted creature, doubled on his track, and again given the dogs the slip. Baffled and disappointed, they all but one, stood still, their long ears flapping over their

ashamed faces, and their lolling tongues hanging from the foam-streaked mouths.

The guide again indulged himself in his own chosen vernacular. Tom could have screamed his dismay; Travers gave a yell, he was so disappointed, while Dr. Kingsbury turned pale to the lips, and said, "We must give it up, then, I suppose."

Suddenly like a bugle-call, the hound who had kept doggedly sniffing the cliff-edge, yelped sharply, lifted his head, yelped again to call his fellows, and dashed wildly down the precipice.

"The varmint's on his run to the lake!" fairly screeched the guide. Travers, taken aback by these abrupt demands upon his attention, caught his foot in the loosely shifting stones, and fell headlong, to pick himself up slowly, and hurry on in the chase. On rushed the doctor; the guide and Tom being so far in advance that they were lost sight of altogether.

It was now a neck-and-neck race with these two. On, over slanting precipices of sheeny, treacherous stones, interspersed with a low undergrowth of bushes. Tom's long legs fairly flew; at last he knew, although he was not conscious of motion, that he gained on the guide, that he was close beside him—hah! he was past. On, on; the baying of the dogs now grew suddenly nearer, he was conscious that he had almost reached them, so sharp was the metallic ring to their exultant clamor. They must be just beyond that tangle at the base of the cliff. A moment, and he would see the flying, panting form of the pursued deer. Then, as suddenly as before, the yelping ceased, and in an instant, back came the troop of dismayed hounds, to stand still in his very path.

Tom actually wrung his hands. He had almost touched those antlers he was bringing in his mind to Cicely, and with no thought of defeat, he dashed on, cleared a sudden marsh with a wild jump—how, he hardly knew—then ran blindly on.

It couldn't have taken more than a moment when he came

by an abrupt turn, into full view of an exquisite little mountain lake. It shot upon his vision so abruptly, that for the first glance he doubted if he saw it. There it lay, however, waiting for a second and a longer look, the surface rippling away from the dark-green shadowy inlets in the foreground. Tom was so near the sloping bank that he could see the swarms of dragonflies flitting over the water, darting hither and yon in great confusion, and unable to keep from admiring, even in his sore disappointment, all the beauty thus suddenly confronting him; he was just about to throw himself on the carpet of moss by a tree overshadowing the lake, when he chanced to glance around the huge trunk—there stood in the attitude of alarm, his fore-



AS FINE A DEER AS ONE WOULD ASK TO MEET.

feet in the water among the lily-pads, his delicate nose thrown back in the air, as fine a deer as one would ask to meet.

Tom saw nothing but the antlers. With his whole soul in his eyes and his two hands, he knelt on his right knee, raised his rifle and sighted the deer. "Ping—bing!" rang the shots. Tom stared wildly, saw the graceful creature leap forward a step for life and freedom, waver and drop, his beautiful body crushing the lily-pads as he fell.

That night, they all sat around the camp fire. There hung Tom's deer, and the doe that nobody seemed to claim, from a stake set in the crotches of two trees.

"That's the first deer I ever heard of a boy's killin' round about here," said the guide, with a ring of discontent in his voice.

“THERE HUNG TOM’S DEER AND THE DOE.”





"Oh, I'm not a boy," said Tom Fisher, and he spoke truly, looking back over his hard, drudging life; "why, I'm seventeen, and when I go back home, thanks to him," pointing to Mr. Dodge, "I'll be fitted to do a man's work."

"Heaven forbid it for another year," grunted Uncle Joseph, fervently.

"It was the best thing on earth," cried Travers, excitedly, "that you brought him down, Tom; next to accomplishing it myself, I'd rather you'd do it."

"Thanks," said Tom, with a laugh, and a pair of shining eyes. He couldn't quite get back to his ordinary calmness even yet.

"I'll have to buy all my antlers," said Uncle Joe, with a grim smile. "My senses! I never supposed deer hunting was so very—well, elusive, to state it mildly; why, my legs won't be done aching for a week, I know."

The guide shouted, and spoke up, while he chewed a cud of checkerberry leaves to vary his usual comforter of spruce gum—"You'll be as spry as a cricket, to-morrow—we're goin' fishin'."

"I'll see you in Ballyhak," roared Uncle Joseph at him, "before I start from this camp; why, man alive, I'm going to sleep all day to-morrow."

But he didn't. As the guide had said, he was "as spry as a cricket, an' as peart as a hornet" on the morrow, and was shouting to them all to "Hurry up," with the zest of a ten-year-old. Life in the forest meant to Mr. Dodge, limbering of a good many muscles, and the awakening of numberless old delights. He almost imagined that his grey beard had tumbled off, to leave behind the fresh, smooth face of a boy, and he wondered and drew deep breaths of thankfulness, and said, "I'll be new all over, and may be, make more of life for this."

CHAPTER XXII.

HOTEL LIFE.

ONE morning a group of three young ladies took possession of Cicely, and Arabella Orme, who, being cousin to one of them, was admitted into this most secret of conclaves.

"Now, Miss Dodge," Louise Borthnick had said, the evening before in the hotel parlor, "we want you and your voice to-morrow morning. You positively must," she added, with pretty imperativeness, "help us out on the musicale."

"But I don't sing," cried Cicely, blushing very hard.

"Nonsense! You've the voice of a lark, and the best of it is, you don't know it," retorted Miss Borthnick; "I've not listened to your singing to that little brother of yours, for nothing. Why, Miss Dodge, I've been eavesdropper to that extent that I'm positively ashamed of myself, hanging around on the veranda, outside your window, nights when you put him to sleep."

"You see I'm nurse-girl," said Cicely, laughing, and recovering her composure since it was explained how the young ladies had discovered her voice; "and he likes to hear me sing, but nobody else ever said anything about it."

"Then they never had any discernment," said the young lady, coolly. "You have really the throat of a wild bird, and it's positively enchanting to think of getting such a prize."

"I don't know as I can come," said Cicely, simply; "for I don't want Aunt Sarah to take care of Duke." She didn't think it necessary to inform the young ladies how matters were in



CICELY LISTENED FOR THE MOST PART.

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regard to Jane's unfaithfulness; so although they had taken a great fancy to the bright-faced young girl, these butterflies of fashion couldn't help but show a disappointment socially in her and her family; still there was her wonderful voice and the pleasure of exhibiting the untrained, artless country girl.

"Oh, you positively must!" added another, with a merry little laugh. "Think, Miss Dodge; and it's for the benefit of the church."

"Oh, I want to be in it!" cried Cicely, impulsively and clasping her hands; "only Aunt Sarah"—

"I shall interview your Aunt Sarah," cried Louise Borthnick, springing off.

"Oh, pray stop!" cried Cicely, in distress; but the other young ladies seized her laughingly.

"Hurry up, Louise," they cried, as Miss Borthnick disappeared, to come back triumphantly. She had interviewed Miss Brett, who had said "yes" on condition that the musicale was to be as planned—a simple affair in the afternoon in the hotel parlor.

"There—there!" cried Miss Louise, quite flushed with success; "to-morrow morning, Little Bird, remember!"

And there to-morrow morning was Cicely, listening for the most part, her hand over the back of the chair, until such times as the pretty director, Miss Louise, of course, should indicate her part. Then the young girl sat erect, and throwing back her head, she sang, regardless of the astonished and envious admiration of her little audience, until—

"Bravo!" exclaimed Miss Borthnick, clapping her hands; "sing like that, Miss Dodge, and you'll captivate the dollars out of all pockets. Dear me! I'm almost sure of those new hymn-books now."

So Cicely, with new hymn-books for the church in view, sang clearer and sweeter than ever, making the rehearsal a splendid success.

That night, Louise Borthnick went down to the ball-room radiant with the brilliant prospects of the musicale under her direction. Pausing a moment at the threshold, she took a glance at the gay throng.

“Not a new face—stay!” She gave a sudden start, then con-



PAUSING A MOMENT AT THE THRESHOLD.

trolling herself as one must who is much in society, she said softly, “It is Geoffrey Carl!” then floated into the long ball-room, serene as ever.

Ten minutes after, he had sought her, exchanged brief congratulations that they, these old friends, had met, explained how

his mother didn't find the air to agree with her at Lake Placid, then subsided into the interchange of small talk.

"I've found the sweetest little thing you can imagine, Mr. Carll," cried Miss Borthnick, suddenly. They had drawn away from the dancers to a quiet nook, "to go over old times," she had said.

"Ah!" he looked only half interested, and began to finger her bouquet, as if discovering her floral beauties were all his aim in life.

"So fresh and unspoiled! You can't think how lovely it is to see her in such a place as this!"

He glanced around the ball-room. "Oh, I don't mean here!" she cried. "Why, she's a little thing—yet such a voice! And I found her all myself." She beat her white-gloved hands exultantly now.

"Yes?" said Geoffrey Carll. He was beginning to find himself a trifle bored. "Shall we dance?" he said. "There's a waltz just beginning."

"Oh, not yet." Even to waltz with him wasn't quite as nice as to have the tête-à-tête, so far off from any chance intruder. Plenty of time for dancing afterward. "Let me tell my story. You always indulged me in the old days, Mr. Carll."

"So I will now," he said, laughingly, and folding his arms with resignation.

"Well, you see, I'm to have a musicale Saturday afternoon in the parlor. The hymn-books in the church, just back in the grove, are in a frightful state, Mr. Carll. You wouldn't believe it, but they are, and we're going to buy them some more."

"Oh, yes, I would believe it," said the young man. "I never was in a summer hotel that just that very destitution in the church near by, didn't occur. I myself, in my humble capacity of ticket-buyer, have helped out in such little operations at least twenty-nine times."

"You ought to be glad you're not asked to sing, or to get

up a musicale for the benefit of the church," said the girl, with a martyred air, and playing with her fan.

"Indeed I'm not!" retorted Geoffrey. "I should be charmed to sing. All I want is the capacity."

"One person can't expect to have everything," observed the young lady, lightly; "now you might possibly be envied for your ability to buy tickets to any extent. I'm ashamed to find you so mercenary as to even know you'd been victimized twenty-nine times."

Geoffrey bore her taunts with immovable countenance. "It's a mercy you ladies can get up benefits for churches," he said; "else hotel life might drag."

"Indeed it doesn't drag in the least," retorted Miss Borthnick, "there are such nice men here this season."

"Glad of it," said the young man, calmly.

"Well, to go back to my little wild-rose," cried Miss Louise, suddenly. "You may laugh all you want to, but you'll say she's captivating, when you see Cicely."

"Who?" Mr. Carll was guilty of starting; then he sat back again, and said, "Ah, yes—well, I suppose so," quite indifferently.

Louise's quick eye noted it all, but she concluded it better not to express surprise, and finding in some way that it wasn't quite so pleasant to praise her young protégée as before, suddenly bethought herself that it was time to begin dancing.

"As you say, that waltz is too tempting," she said, rising and beating time with her foot to the music.

"Ah, yes!" Mr. Carll got off from his seat. "But you've not finished that interesting account of your musicale; let's have that first."

"Oh, that can wait," said Miss Borthnick, carelessly. "This heavenly music will soon be over. Come," and they were in the mazes of the waltz, from which he emerged only to find all chance for quiet conversation gone for that night.

The next morning Aunt Clementine Mix, with her two nieces, all three filled to the brim with the latest Lake Placid hotel gossip, arrived at Paul Smith's.

Cicely was running down the long hall with a bright face, and snatches of the part she was to sing, almost overflowing her lips.

"Oh, Miss Dodge, is that you?" cried a voice suddenly; and a door opening opposite her, she heard some one say, "Come in, won't you."

Cicely walked in, to find Miss Louise Borthnick in the daintiest of white dressing sacks, her hair floating just as she had sprung from the lounge, leaving her novel behind her. Her face was quite flushed, and it deepened in color as she said hurriedly, "Do you know that perhaps—don't you think—that is, we were talking of it, perhaps it wasn't quite right for me to urge you as I did the other day to sing, you know."

"Oh, I'm glad you did!" cried Cicely, happily, "as long as Aunt Sarah says she doesn't want me." She was so wholly unconscious, that the song came to her lips again, begging for utterance.

Miss Borthnick groaned within herself, then began again. "But you see I did urge you dreadfully, and I'm always sorry when I do that, it's so awfully impolite, you know; so if you don't mind, why, I won't make you sing, don't you know."

Cicely understood now.

"You don't want me to sing, Miss Borthnick," she said, slowly.

"Oh, of course!" cried the young lady, a little frightened, "if you want to; that is, we didn't suppose you cared, as we had to urge you, you know. Dear me, it is an awful bore, and I wish I could get out of it." She sighed and looked martyred at once.

The young girl bowed and went slowly out of the room.

"I'm well paid for taking up with people about whom I don't know the least thing," cried Miss Borthnick, alone. Heavens! I shiver now to think what a risk I ran; if Miss Mix hadn't come to tell me about these Dodges, and this girl, I should actually have thrust her and her voice right under Geoffrey Carll's nose. She's a little thing, I know, but in three years she'll be able to hold her own against any one."

Miss Brett had to be told all this, and why Cicely failed to take part in the musicale.

"Very well, dear," said Aunt Sarah, quietly, a little white line settling around her mouth; "it is all for the best; I do not doubt." She took Cicely's hot little hands and set a quick kiss on the quivering mouth. There was so much passion in it, that Cicely, startled out of her disappointment, stared at her. "Never mind, aunty," she said; "and don't let us tell Uncle Joe when he comes."

"We must tell your uncle everything that concerns you children," said Aunt Sarah, firmly; "but there, dear, never mind now, I've engaged a boat, and the man will be ready in a quarter of an hour. Duke and you and I will have a sail. Mrs. Kingsbury says she doesn't wish for anything; that she is going to sleep."

"I'll dress Duke," cried Cicely.

"No, dear; fly into another dress," said Aunt Sarah, gaily. Then she disappeared into her own room and shut the door; so Cicely had to run away.

But before Miss Brett called Duke away from the corner, where he was absorbed in some pleasing occupation best known to himself, she walked up and down over the floor, dismayed to find the hot, angry blood surging through her as it had not done for years.

"And I thought I was a Christian.—dear me, that I should feel so; yet, that blessed child!"

"What's the matter?" asked Duke, getting up from the floor and a medley of things. "Does your tooth ache, Aunt Sarah?" and he put himself at her side.

"No, child—there, never mind," as Duke essayed to look for himself.

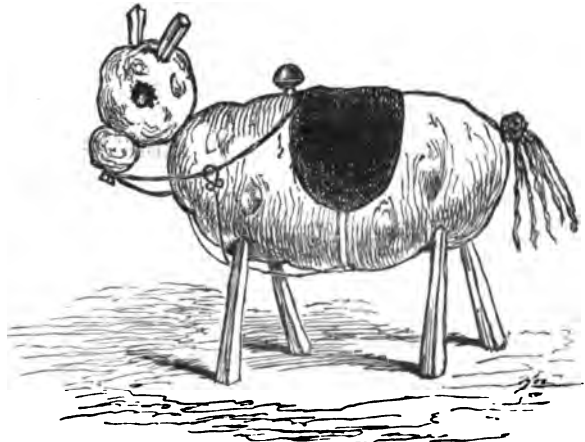
"Uncle Joseph takes out his teeth and lays 'em on the bureau," said Duke, sociably. "I saw him one day, and then he said, 'oh!' and told me to look out of the window; but I didn't; I'd rather see the teeth"—

"There—there, Duke, don't chatter," said Aunt Sarah, longing for five minutes to have it out with herself.

"I'll show you what I made, if you'll stop walking up and down," promised the little fellow. So he ran back to his work-corner, and presently brought an object which he held up triumphantly for inspection.

"Mercy!" ejaculated Miss Brett.

"It's a horse," squealed Duke, in great excitement; "and I made him all myself, and he's got a saddle on him and I'm going to pretend there's a boy coming out to ride him, and when I get tired of him, I'm going to take him all to pieces, and the nice black man down stairs said he'd bake him, 'cause he's all potatoes, you know. Hi—hi!" and Duke danced around the room with his embryo steed, until Aunt Sarah heard in despair a knock on the door, and, "De guide is waitin', Miss."



"IT'S A HORSE."

"Duke, if you don't put down your horse, and stand still to be dressed, we must give up our sail," she said at last.

"I'd much rather stay home," said Duke, careering on. "I want to make a monkey, next; I got some more potatoes."

"This is sufficiently like a monkey, I think, to answer," said Miss Brett, holding fast to one arm while she proceeded to unfasten his blouse.

"Oh, don't take it off," roared Duke. "I don't want to go."

"Then I must stay at home," said Aunt Sarah, quietly; "but that isn't the worst, Cicely will have to give it up, and she ought to go."

"May I make my things in the boat?" asked Duke, with a view to a compromise. "I can carry the potatoes and the sticks, and—and"—he was going to rush off to collect them, but she held him fast.

"Dear me, no; but I tell you"—with sudden inspiration, as a bright thought struck her. "You set your horse up here," picking the beloved animal out of Duke's hand to place him on the mantel, "and when I get home. I'll make you any animal you choose."

"She's going to make me anything I want," confided Duke, to some one beyond her. Miss Brett, bending over the boy to accomplish some refractory buttons, turned suddenly.

"I rapped, and the door being open, I ventured to come in." It was Mrs. Carll.

"Look at my horse," screamed Duke, prancing, and pointing to the mantel.

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Carll, with a smile for it. "I wish you would let me help you dress him, Miss Brett, while you get your bonnet on. I heard them say your boat was ready, and I came to ask if I couldn't assist you. Do let me; I fairly long to get hold of that child, he reminds me so of my Geoffrey when he was a little boy."

"I've got to go," confided Duke, whirling around to announce the fact; "'cause Cicely ought to go, and she's"—indicating Aunt Sarah—"going to make me another when I get home, for being a good boy. I'm going to choose an el'phant."

"Is Miss Cicely sick?" asked Mrs. Carll, in concern.

"No," said Miss Brett, at last releasing Duke, his toilet being complete; "but I thought she ought to have the exercise." For one long moment in which she could hear her heart beat tumultuously, a wild thought of telling the cruel thing that had been done, swept through Aunt Sarah's mind. Then the habit of years came back, and asserted itself. "I am glad that Miss Cicely is well," said Mrs. Carll, "for I should feel very badly if any harm came to my little friend." Then she brightened up. "I have received a letter to-day, saying that my brother's two daughters are on the way here with their governess; they are about your niece's age. I do trust, Miss Brett," she added, "that you will allow her to be friendly with them; nothing could gratify me more."

And Geoffrey Carll, beyond a pleasant bow and smile, and an occasional word with "little Miss Dodge," gave no sign that all was not harmonious in his mind. The musicale came off, and he bought tickets generously for the thirtieth time for the benefit of the church hymn-books. Everybody praised it, and Miss Louise Borthnick was in the seventh heaven of bliss.

And on the morrow, the hunting and fishing party was to come in.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“AND NOW WE ARE THIRTEEN!”

WELL—well—well!” Geoffrey Carll rushed off from the piazza coterie in which Miss Borthnick was the bright particular center, and literally threw himself upon Dr. Kingsbury in the midst of the babel over the return of the hunting party; “to think of seeing you here!”

“Hulloa!” cried the doctor, whirling around to stare at him out of a pair of very black eyes. “Well,” said Carll, “if it isn’t you! That’s good luck, now,” stepping back.

The gap they made was soon filled up in the circle revolving around the hero of the hour, who appeared to be a tall lad with sunburnt face and keen blue eyes, now trying to escape observation from the crowd determined to see the boy who shot the deer. But they insisted on making him famous, till Tom’s very soul writhed within him.

“Oh, what beautiful antlers!” exclaimed Mrs. Carll, over Cicely’s happy shoulder.

Doris and Martha, her brother’s two motherless daughters, were quite wild with a pretty delight over their friend’s good fortune, and the gay enthusiasm increasing, the piazza people, except the Borthnick coterie, including the two young ladies of the Mix family, dropped fancy work and cards to hasten to the scene, where Tom was petted and fussed over and praised, until, if he had been less furious over it, his head would have been in danger of being turned. Socially it was a great thing for him. There was Mrs. Carll, whom no one now failed, despite

her plain exterior and unassuming manners, to recognize as the leader in wealth and position, of the place, taking every conceivable pains to identify herself with the fortunes of this family, so mixed in its quality, and thus so hard to keep down to the second grade of guests at the hotel.

"Oh, Mr. Dodge," she exclaimed, "I am so glad to see you again! Yes, we came over here from the Lake Placid Hotel more to be with your family, I must confess, than from any other reason." This was said in a gentle, high-bred tone; yet distinctly enunciated, so that no one in the circle could fail to hear the words. "I have enjoyed it so much—although we have missed you and the boys; but Miss Brett and I"—here she passed her slender hand within Aunt Sarah's arm—"have been company for each other. And now I've some young people in my family, too, so I shall be as proud as you," she added, laughingly. "Here, Doris and Martha, come and be introduced to Mr. Dodge."

Uncle Joe took the young hands into his strong palm, and looked down into their faces with a kindly glance that won their hearts. "I'm glad to see you, girls," was all he said, but they voted him "just splendid!" and a person quite worth one's while to please.

And in two days, the ascent of Mt. Regis having been made in the meantime by the Dodge party, now swelled by the addition of Mrs. Carll's family, the hotel center was shaken by the announcement that the "trip around the Saranacs and Racquette Lakes," was to be taken by all these persons, who seemed suddenly to have grown inseparable.

"Dr. Kingsbury pulled me through Roman fever," said young Carll to Miss Borthnick, the evening before the start. "You can imagine how awfully glad I was to meet him when I haven't seen him since he bade me good-by in Rome, five years ago. I'm lucky to be taken into their party."

"Lucky!" With all her control, Miss Borthnick's pretty lips could not refrain from curling in disdain.

"Decidedly lucky," repeated Mr. Carll, coolly. "Well, I trust you'll have a jolly season—I know you will; Fetlow and a crowd of Harvard graduates are coming next week, so a letter

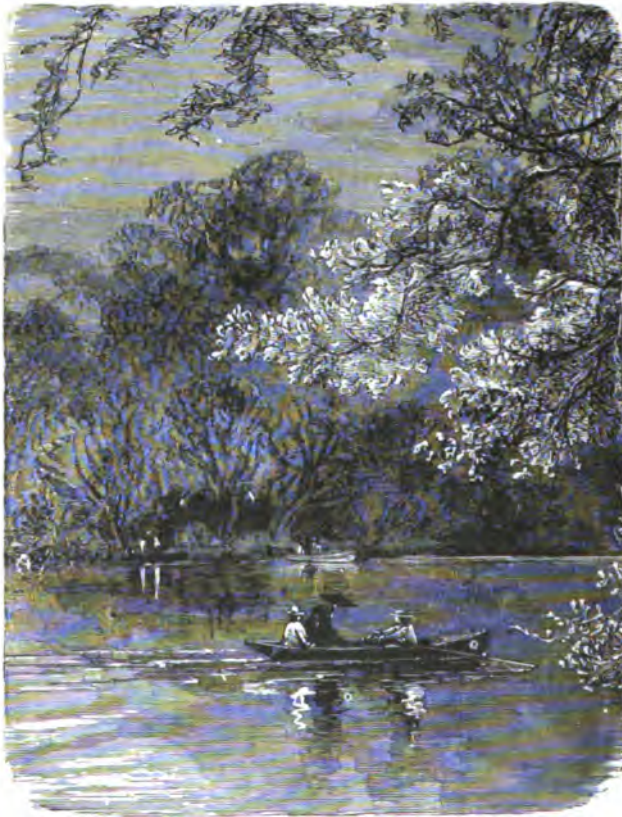
I had to-day said. Oh, I must go and bid Miss Mix good-bye."

"Mr. Carll." Louise Borthnick made a frantic effort to stay him.

"For old times sake," she began.

"Oh, don't get sentimental!" said Geoffrey, lightly. "You and I will meet often; I hate good-bys," and with a laugh and a merry nod, he was off.

Miss Borthnick rushed up to her room, closed and locked the door, and burst into a torrent of tears.



CROSSING LOWER ST. REGIS.

And now the Dodge party, numbering thirteen ("supposed to be unlucky," said Mr. Dodge; "but I don't believe a word of it"), were off on "The Lake Trip," and this is the way they took it.

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Crossing Lower St. Regis Lake by boat, Spitfire Pond and Upper St. Regis, then over a carry called St. Germain, they took boats and sailed up Big Clear Pond. At the end of that boatride they found good carriages, that conveyed them all to the Prospect House, where the rooms they had telegraphed for, were awaiting them.

"The Prospect House is at the head of Saranac Lake, you know," said the doctor, when fairly under way; "Now I don't know how long Mr. Dodge intends to stay there—he's captain of this party."

"Oh, as long as you like!" said Uncle Joseph, turning his sunburned face on them in a jolly fashion. "I can stay anywhere in the Adirondacks and not feel injured; and we'll drop in at Saranac Inn, too—no pun intended, you know."

"Then we go on a little steamer, through to Bartlett's, don't we?" asked Travers, who knew perfectly well the route chosen, as he had studied it up with the young people.

"Travers," observed Geoffrey Carll, who had progressed so fast in intimate relations with all the party, as to leave off some conventionalities of speech, "it's a decidedly comfortable thing to have you along—I'm ashamed to ask questions. Fact is; I don't know anything about this Adirondack business; it's all wilderness and a confusion of things"—

"We didn't, either," said Travers, "till Cicely proposed to study up."

"Oh, Travvy!" cried Cicely, looking up from Stoddard's guide-book, where she was pointing out to Doris and Martha the route. Then she added, "Indeed, Mr. Carll, he was the very one to speak of it first!"

"Go ahead," said Travers; "that's the way she always fights with me."

"Yes," said the doctor, answering Traver's question. "And there we are at Bartlett's."

"And there we'll stay as long as you all want to," interpolated Uncle Joseph.

"Then we can go to the top of Ampersand Mountain," broke in little Mrs. Kingsbury, who had recovered her good spirits with returning strength, and now was as light-hearted as ever, "and see the lovely Ampersand Lake, where the 'Philosopher's Camp' used to be."

"Oh, I don't know anything about that," cried Mrs. Carll; "do you, Miss Roberts?" appealing to the governess.



"OH, TRAVVY!" CRIED CICELY.

"No, indeed," said Miss Roberts, with a little laugh.

"Why, Agassiz and Holmes and Lowell used to go up there," said the doctor's little wife; "that was enough to make somebody dub it 'the Philosopher's Camp.' It's a lovely place, everybody says."

"How convenient that 'everybody' is!" cried the doctor. "What should we do without it!"



"AND DOWN TO BIG WOLF POND."



"Of course we can see the 'Drowned Lands'?" cried Travers, anxiously.

"Certainly," said Uncle Joe, indulgently.

"As Moses Higgins observes," contributed the doctor, "'Them drowned lands are not pooty, but they are awful interestin'.' Indeed you ought to see them."

"When we leave Bartlett's," said Uncle Joe, "we shall have to toss pennies which of two routes to take."

"How dreadful!" cried little Mrs. Kingsbury. "Well, I'm sure I don't care where we go," with a long restful sigh of content. "It is so lovely to be getting well again!"

"Your patience is rewarded," said Aunt Sarah, with a smile for her. "All those dull days when you kept your room at Paul Smith's, are a lesson to me."

Dr. Kingsbury shot a glance full of affection over at his wife. "I oughtn't to have left you, dear," he said, remorsefully.

"Nonsense, husband!" cried the little woman, gaily. "It was nothing but a sick headache, and how were you to know it was coming on?"

"Still, I ought not to have gone," said the doctor, again.

"I'll tell you what we might do," said Mr. Dodge, reflectively. "We could try Tupper Lake first. It is too good to be missed, they say; and at the head of the lake, why, there's Bog River tumbling in over the Falls—a capital place, I'm told, for trout."

The men in the party emitted a shout of approval. "I want to try my hand with a rod and reel!" exclaimed Geoffrey Carll. "So far, I haven't done anything to distinguish myself in this trip."

"All right," said Uncle Joe; "we'll go, after we leave Bartlett's, up to the end of Upper Saranac Lake, and through Sweeney's Carry to the Racquette River, and then run down the river on the little steamer to Tupper Lake."

"That's named after a guide who discovered it, isn't it?" asked Miss Roberts.

"Yes; and it's one of the prettiest streams in the whole wilderness," said Uncle Joe, glibly, as if he had begun the Adirondack outing on a six month's course of preparatory study. "As I said before, the Bog River tumbles into it, and there we'll fish, making headquarters at the hotel at the end of the lake. There are quantities of fine things to see around there. For instance, you can go down the Racquette River to some falls called Piecefield Falls, I believe, and to Big Wolf Pond."

Cicely stopped pointing out the route on the guide-book map, and stared at Uncle Joe in amazement at this flood of information. But he went on unconcernedly—"Of course you have to switch off from the river a bit into Racquette Pond, then go through Wolf Brook into Little Wolf Pond."

"How deliciously it all sounds!" whispered Doris Stanton to Cicely.

"Then you have a short carry into Big Wolf Pond," went on Uncle Joe, steadily.

"Of course you let us go to Little Tupper Lake, Uncle?" said Travers, insinuatingly.

"Yes, to be sure, to be sure," said Uncle Joe, heartily. "And then from Little Tupper Lake, why, we can cut across some small ponds and carries in the way, and in process of time, get on to Long Lake. After that, we'll decide where to go."

"Lem me have de baby, I'll put him to sleep," begged Maum Silvy that very afternoon to one of Mrs. Martha Badger's boarders. "I miss my little fellow so!" and she drew her apron over her eyes. "I'll take good keer o' him. I know you lub him like a duck does a June-bug. Thar, honey-bird," as the young mother, tired with the fretting over refractory teeth in the poor little mouth, yielded him up to the strong arms, "you

"LEM' ME TAKE DE BABY," BEGOED NAUM SLETT.



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and me will have a nice time out in de back porch, an' I'll sing yer to sleep, honey."

The little fellow stopped crying, and put up his arms to cuddle up against Maum Silvy's neck as she carried him out, and seated herself in a low, broad rocker.

"Now," she said, with a sigh of delight, "you jest shet dem pretty eyes o' yours, an' de pain will go, honey, an' mammy will sing you about de turkey an' de buzzard."

A turkey went out strayin' in de fiel' one day,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!
An' he los' his way, an' he nebber come home,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!

An' a buzzard he crep' on de en' o' his toes,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!
An' he picked dat turkey clean out'n his cloe's,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!

So all yer darkies, keep out'n ob sin,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!
Or de debbil he'll pick yer cleaner'n him,
Hallelujah—oh, my Lor'!

A turkey went out strayin' in de fiel' one day,
Etc., etc.

Again and again Maum Silvy crooned it till the lids over the blue eyes dropped slowly, and the little figure sank drowsily into the good lap. Still Maum Silvy sang on.

"I'll take him now," said the young mother, coming out to the porch; "you must be very tired."

"No, I ain't a bit," protested Maum Silvy, nungrily. "He may wake up; ye better let me keep him a spell longer. Land! I hain't hed a baby in my arms in so long; an' I miss my little Duke, you can't tell how I misses him!"

“Maum Silvy,” said Mrs. Badger’s boarder, pausing by the side of the rocker, and looking from her sleeping boy to the dark face under the turban, “when I go home, will you let me have Biny? She plays so prettily with Reginald, and I can educate her to be a little nurse-girl, I feel quite sure; I’ll do well by her if you will let her come with me.”

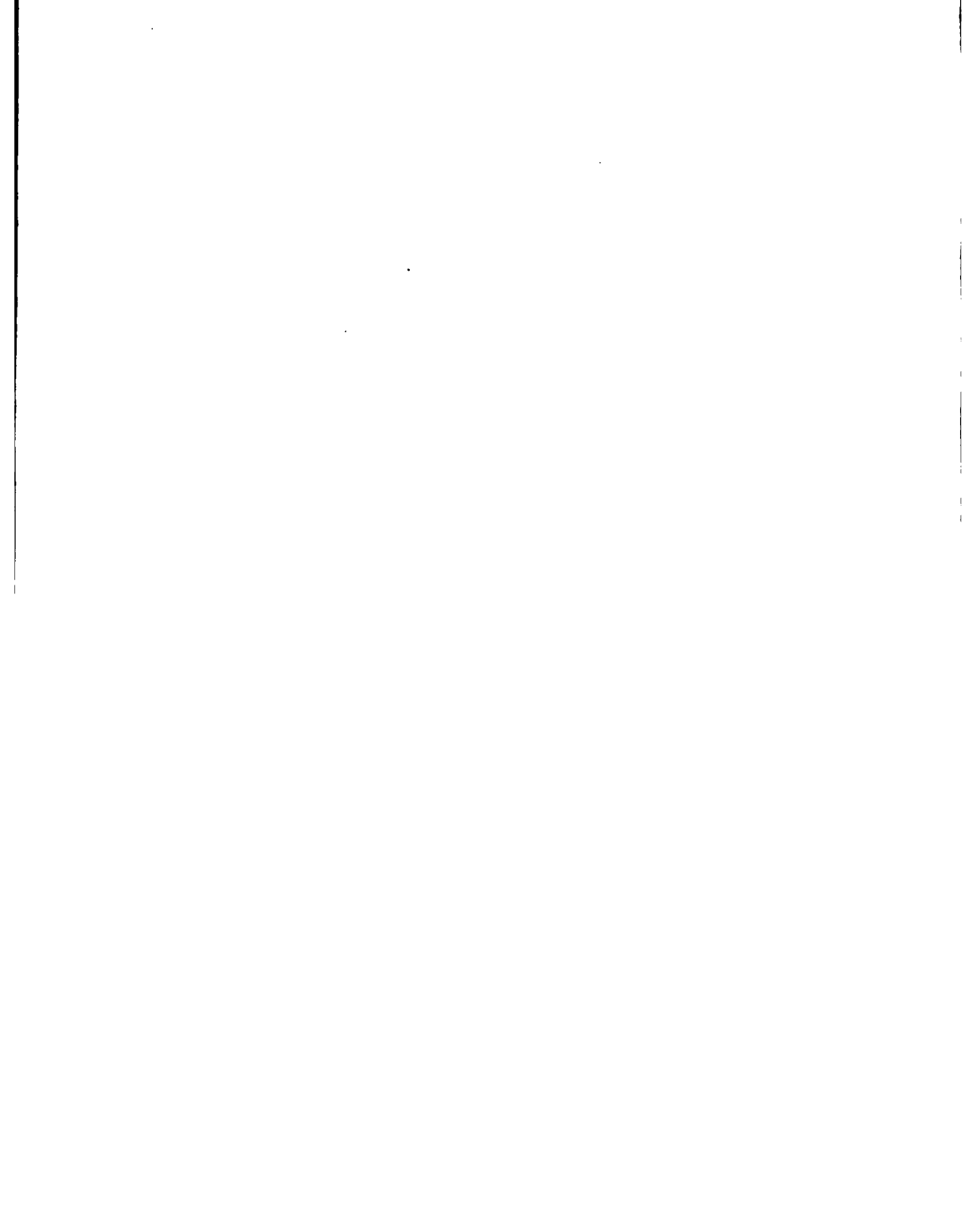
“Lor’ bless you, Mis Hav’meyer,” cried Maum Silvy, with dignity, “dat Biny o’ mine is wanted on all sides; she’s engaged deep, I tell you!”

“Is that so?” said the boarder, with regret.

“Yes’m. Now Mis Badger wants her dretful bad, an’ ’s determined to get her; but Mister Josuf, says he to me when he was a-leavin’, ‘Maum Silvy, I shall always look out for Biny,’ an’ wotever Mister Josuf wants, why, he’s boun’ ter get; an’ Mis Kings’bry she said she did wish she could have Biny lib’ with her, so you see how ’tis—thar, he’s a stirrin’, you better go in de house; ef he sees you, maybe he’ll holler. ‘A turkey went strayin’ in de fiel’ one day’—

LONG LAKE AND THE SAGAMORE.





CHAPTER XXIV.

AROUND THE LAKES.

TWO weeks had slipped by; weeks of enchantment in which the heavens and the earth had done their best to make "our thirteen" happy. They had prospected and jaunted according to Uncle Joe's plan; taking it all in so slowly that they were now only just arriving at Long Lake, where at the Sagamore, four miles from the head of the lake, they rested to mark out a fresh route.

"It's almost as narrow as a river," said Aunt Sarah, the next day, when the party were out boating on its clear surface.

"It's only a mile wide at its broadest," said Uncle Joe, resting on his oars a minute to reply; "and that's just at the outlet."

"It takes in the waters of the Racquette River at its head, and empties them up to the same river at its foot, I believe, doesn't it?" he added, to the doctor.

"I believe so," said the doctor, dreamily. "Oh, let us give up all this array of facts and statistics; I'm not equal to the strain."

"You've no young people," said Mr. Dodge, in disdain, "hounding you on; so of course your brain gets rusty." Then he turned a cold shoulder to the medical man and began to enjoy guide-book lore with Miss Brett.

"Long Lake Village used to be called 'Gougeville,'" he volunteered at last. "Pretty name, now, isn't it? I agree with Cicely that the Indian nomenclature should be preserved at all hazards."

Aunt Sarah smiled, with a bright glance for the young girl and Tom, lazily paddling a little distance off in a boat that held just two.

"Having a good time, Cecy?" she called, as their boat came alongside.

"Lovely, aunty! There's an island on the lake, Tom says, called Dome Island, and it's a better one than the Dome Island in Lake George."

"Fancy it!" cried Uncle Joe, in derision.

"Mount Seward looks splendidly, doesn't he?" said Tom. "I don't know how high he is?" appealing to Cicely; but Uncle Joe was ahead of her.

"Four thousand, three hundred and forty-eight feet," he said, promptly.

"You must have a guide-book concealed somewhere," broke in the doctor, with a sleepy drawl; "no one can possibly take in the beauty of this scenery restfully, amid such fearful tornados of information"—

"I never saw such a fellow to sleep and to read," said Uncle Joe, after the laugh at his expense had subsided, "as this doctor of ours. I'll tell that story against you now, to pay you up."

"I'm going to sleep again then," said Dr. Kingsbury, relapsing into his end of the boat.

"You say you never heard it, Tom?"

"No, sir," said Tom, with a laugh.

"Well, I went over to the Kingsbury cottage once, by appointment, mind you, at eight o'clock sharp, made by the doctor himself. I didn't know him then, and I thought he was rather a decent sort of a fellow," with a sly glance at the big figure. "Hem! well, I hurried some; a man can't get through breakfast and have a three-quarter mile tramp, and most of it climbing—for the doctor had the unkindness to stick his house on the top



DOCTOR KINGSBURY READ ON AND ON.

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of that ledge—and get there much before eight o'clock; I tell you! Well, when I got there, pretty well used up, this chap"—touching the medical man with his foot—"wasn't anywhere to be seen. He'd been at breakfast, his wife said, but after that she didn't know where he went to. Then she recollected hearing him say something about going to see Moses Higgins, and he went off. She didn't know anything about the appointment; if she had, I'll warrant he wouldn't have gotten away. It takes a woman to keep a man in order," said Uncle Joe, reflectively.

"Well—so of course I had to streak it pretty lively over to Moses Higgins' house, and you know it's no child's walk from the doctor's, and when I got there, all blown and tired, I tell you, it was as still as the grave. If I'd known as much as I do now, I should have mistrusted how it was, but then I was only nonplused and beaten, and I looked in quite hopelessly. There sat this fellow," with a clap on the doctor's broad shoulder, "in front of a roaring fire, his hat on the floor, and his nose in a book."

"You see Moses wasn't at home," said Dr. Kingsbury, raising his head to regard them all.

"No; and you weren't, either. I found that out," said Uncle Joe, drily.

The next morning Mr. Dodge was returning from a walk with Miss Brett and Mrs. Carll, who, not finding herself equal to a longer tramp, had left the rest of the party, Uncle Joe and Aunt Sarah protesting that they, too, would much prefer returning to the hotel. Suddenly, in the middle of the plank walk appeared "Aurelia Ann," a functionary much appreciated at the hotel among the children, as she lived near by in a cabin, where her mother took in washing, and that it was their great delight to visit.

"He wants you," said Aurelia Ann, stopping in front of Uncle Joe.

"Who?" cried Mr. Dodge.

"That genle'man as came with you," said Aurelia Ann. "He asked did I see you come this way, an' I said yes, an' I'd fetch you; so I will." Then she turned and clattered off over the plank walk again.

"She must mean Geoffrey," said Mrs. Carll, turning pale. "Oh, I hope nothing has happened!"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Uncle Joe; "for here he comes now," as young Carll sauntered down the walk, a packet of letters in his hand.

"Mother," he said, though he included in his smile, the others, "Mrs. Harris has sent for us to come over and stay two or three days at their camp on the Racquette, with special invitation to the rest of our party." He bowed to Uncle Joe and Miss Brett as he spoke. "The messenger is at the hotel; we can go, of course?"

"I should be delighted!" said Mrs. Carll, her pale face lighting. "And I do trust, my dear Miss Brett, and you, Mr. Dodge, will accompany us with your family."

"Dear me," began Uncle Joe, "much as we think of you, Mrs. Carll, and your son, we can't saddle eight additional people upon you, to take to your friends. No, no, you must go without us."

"Then we shall not go," declared Mrs. Carll, quietly.

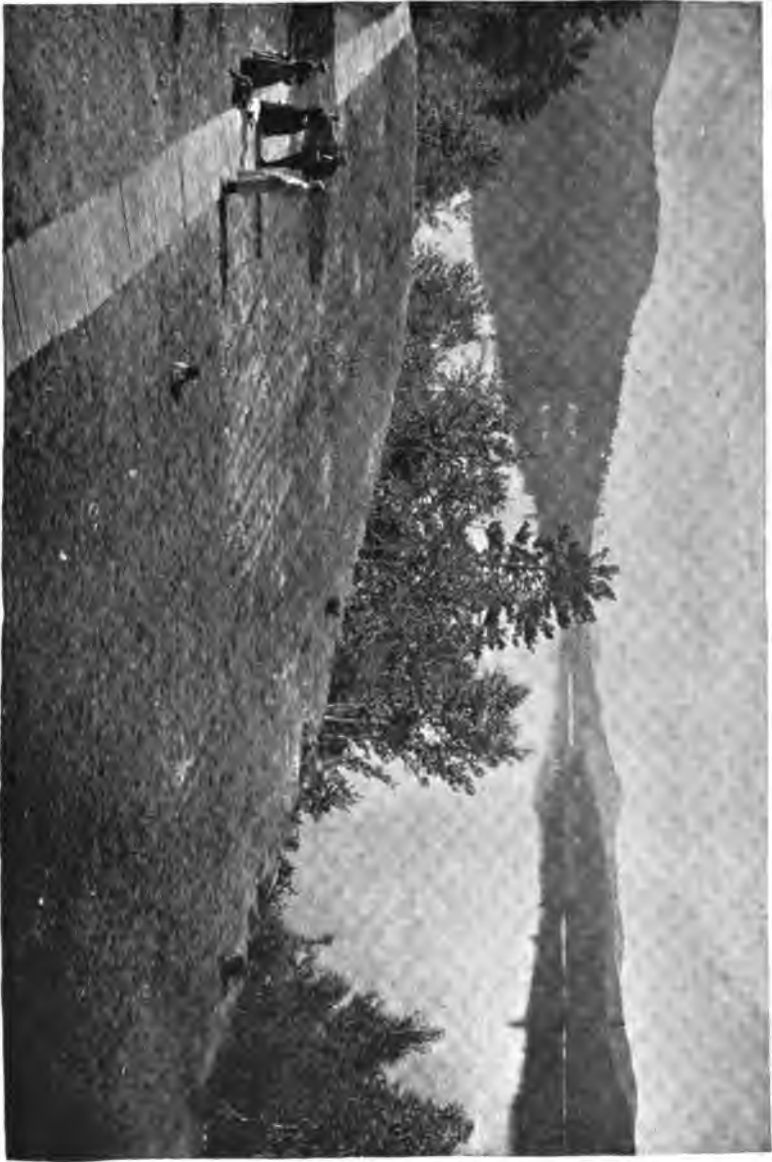
"You don't know Mrs. Harris," cried Geoffrey, hastily. "She is the most whole-souled woman in the world, and she means what she says when she is giving an invitation."

"That may be; but there's a limit to all things," said Uncle Joseph, shortly. "Eight people to tow along. Fancy it!"

Mrs. Carll here looked so distressed that Miss Brett hastened to say, gently—"We should so love to go."

"Why don't you, then?" said Mrs. Carll. "I really do wish it."

“HE WANTS YOU,” SAID AURELLA ANN, STOPPING IN FRONT OF CYCLE JOE.



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"If we might!" Aunt Sarah turned as wistful a face as Cicely could have carried, and looked at Uncle Joe, who began to feel himself softening.

"Well, perhaps some of us," he relented—

"No, no; I stipulate for all," said Geoffrey, firmly. "This party isn't dividable."

"I believe you have me there," laughed Mr. Dodge. "Well, all of them. Since I've given in at all, I'll do the job handsomely."

Then a consultation of ways and means followed; when the walking party came in, it was to find, to their astonishment, that they were all committed to a promise to spend two days, at least, at the delightful camp on the Racquette belonging to the Carlls' New York friend, Mrs. Harris, well known for her elegant hospitality.

The following day they set forth for this most ideal of excursions, sailing past the charming Buttermilk Falls, and in and out among little islands, having beautiful scenery for the most part of the journey.

"Somebody called Buttermilk Falls, 'Murray's Phantom Falls,'" said Martha Stanton. "Are they, Mr. Dodge?"

"Don't ask me," he cried. "And if I were you, I wouldn't put that question to one of the guides here. They are furious over his story about shooting those falls in a boat."

"The water looks just as if it had been churned," remarked Doris.

"That's the reason they named it so, I suppose," said cousin Geoffrey.

Then after a little experience in a "carry," the party emerged on the shore of Forked Lake, a lovely body of water about five miles long.

Here the young people broke forth again. "Look at that point!"

"Oh, see that one!" "Aren't they pretty!" "There's another."

as they sailed by the series of little bays with slender tongues of land covered with green forests, running in between. "Dear, dear! I wish I'd counted them." And presently they drew up at the Forked Lake House on the south shore, where they were to stop for dinner.

After that meal was over, the party took up their journey once more over the liquid highway, turning in good time into Racquette Lake. And now began a scene of shifting picturesqueness, keeping all eyes well occupied, and giving Cicely and her little red note-book, steady occupation.

"I notice the march of civilization more here than in any other section of the Adirondacks," said Mrs. Carll, as they rounded one of the sixteen or seventeen islands. "When I was here in 1872, there was almost unbroken solitude—now just look." She pointed off to Osprey Island. "That's where old Alva Dunning used to live in hermit-like seclusion."

"It don't look much like a hermitage now," said Geoffrey, as they sailed by the handsome summer place, teeming with life. "Oh, well, it's the last fad, you know, to attack nature in her strongholds, and subdue her. There's a place that's more swell yet," pointing to another island.

"Why did they call that one back there, Osprey Island?" asked Doris, after a little pause.

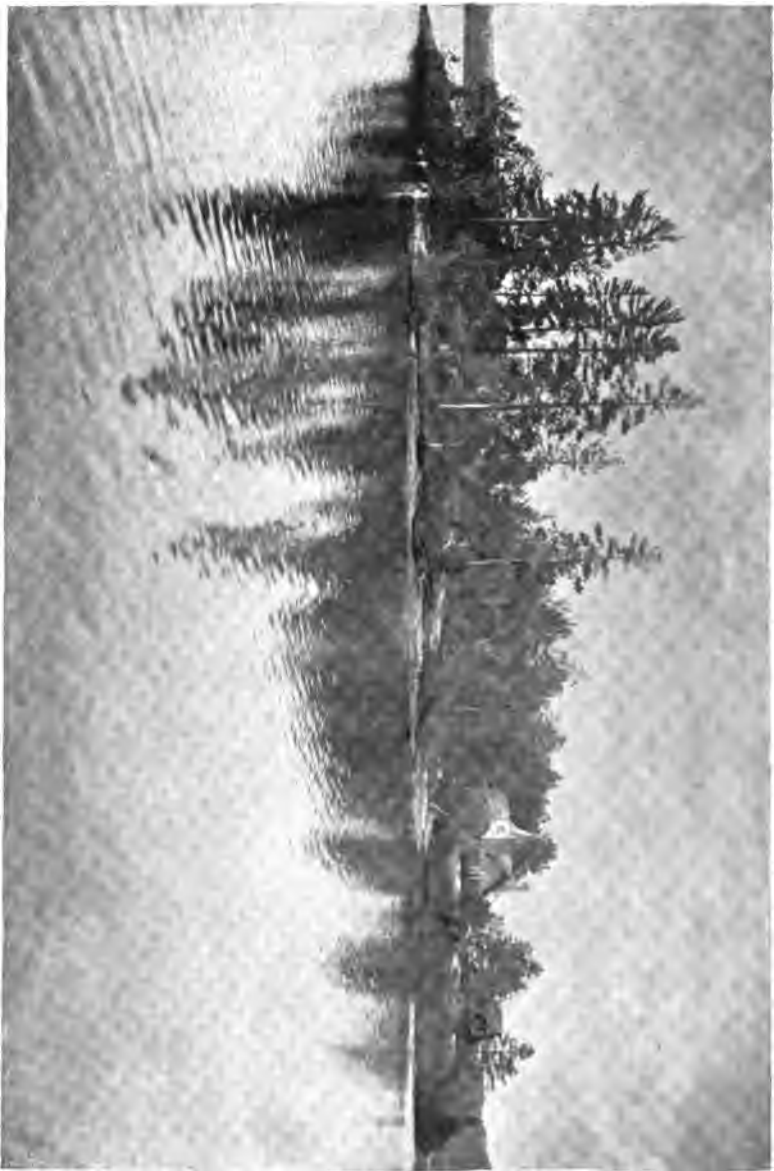
"Because a pair of ospreys had a nest in one of those huge pines, and year after year they persisted in staying," said Uncle Joe, "and raising the little birds."

"I should have thought they would have been shot," said Doris.

"Oh, the noble deer got the bullets—eh, Tom?" said Uncle Joe, who never lost a chance to bring the crack shot into notice.

"St. Hubert's Isle is quite pretty. I believe," said Tom. hastily.

ST. HUBERT'S ISLE.



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"Yes; they have a little Episcopal Church there. Think of going to services in a boat! It must be quite gay here, very Venitian, in fact, on a Sunday," said Dr. Kingsbury; "and I suppose the Lake steamer makes her usual trips on that day, under pretence of going to church."

"How glad the people must be who live on these islands, that they can get their mails so often," said Miss Roberts. "I suppose it is the excitement of the day when the steamer draws up at the landing."

Uncle Joe gave an involuntary start at the thought of the budget of business communications that must be following him around, or piling up formidably at his New York den

"Where are we going after we are over the visit, Uncle?" asked Travers, suddenly, more to change the subject than because he cared to know—for it was very delightful to have it sprung upon one as a great surprise.

"That's a secret," cried Uncle Joe, briefly.

"A secret! Oh, how delicious!" cried Martha Stanton, clasping her hands. "Don't tell us, dear Mr. Dodge," she begged, "until just the very minute."

"No, I don't intend to," said Uncle Joe, laughing.

"Well, here we are!" cried Geoffrey Carll, suddenly. "Mother, look, they are waving handkerchiefs at us from the wharf."

"Are we really going to stay there?" cried Cicely, with wide-open eyes and cheeks a-bloom; "why, it's Paradise!"

"It is, indeed," said Mr. Dodge, looking it all over critically as they drew nearer. "Yes, you've rightly named it, Cecy."

"We'll surely call it Paradise on Racquette Lake," said Cicely.

"I'm so glad you came, dear." It was Mrs. Carll who said it, and she leaned over to enjoy the bright eyes and flushed cheeks.

The "two days" to be spent at Mrs. Harris' charming camp became three, before the Dodge party could even think of getting

away. There was one excursion after another to enjoy, and several imperative calls "to do" famous localities in the vicinity. On the evening of the last day, Uncle Joseph having "put his foot down" that the departure should take place on the morrow, they all sat around the blazing fire of logs (the night being cool) in the spacious hearth that nearly filled one side of the entrance hall

"I am so much indebted to you," said Mrs. Harris, dispensing tea from a small table daintily apportioned, that the domestic had placed before her, "for coming to me. I can't tell you, Mr. Dodge, how you have brightened me up."

"Indebted!" cried Uncle Joseph, whirling around as he stood before the fire to regard her; "well, madam, it is good of you to put it that way."

"It is the only way to put it," said Mrs. Harris, with a soft little laugh, and dismissing a cup to the maid's care. "I shall be lonely enough after your departure, I can assure you."

"Mamma," said Lily Harris, a tall blonde, getting off from the settle where her willowy figure struck most picturesque lines in the firelight, "I want to go with Mr. Dodge and his party over to Blue Mountain Lake to-morrow."

"Lily, Lily dear!" reproved Mrs. Harris, quite shocked at this unconventional proposal.

"Indeed, mamma," cried Lily, "I'm not quite so bad as you think. Miss Brett and I have talked it over, and she gave me my invitation; didn't you, dear Miss Brett?" The girl now came up to Aunt Sarah's chair and threw herself on the rug, leaning her head on that lady's lap.

"I certainly did," said Miss Brett, her hand dropping on the yellow hair.

"But how will you get back?" queried Mrs. Harris, pausing, a cup half filled, to look at the two.

Lily laughed. "You tell her." she whispered to Miss Brett.



"WE'LL CALL IT PARADISE ON RACQUETTE LAKE," SAID CICELY.

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"We do not intend to let her come back," said Aunt Sarah, boldly, "if you will allow her to come to Keene Valley with us."

"Now, mamma, you positively must not say no," cried Lily, springing to her feet, unable to bear the suspense; "I've never seen Keene Valley, and you know I've been longing to ever since we've been in the Adirondacks. And every summer you say—'Wait, dear,' when I propose it.' Like a torrent it all came out, then she threw her arms around Mrs. Harris neck.

"Softly, there, dear," said her mother; "why, what a little untamed thing you are!"

"Please say yes," cried Lily, the firelight flickering over the two faces, making the mother's scarcely older than the soft outline of the young girl's.

"How I wish I had a kodak!" breathed little Mrs. Kingsbury, in a dark angle of the chimney corner.

"Mrs. Harris," cried Uncle Joe, marching up to the hostess, "if you want to show your gratitude as you call it, for our raid upon you, I beg you will let us take your daughter. I'll look out for her as if she were my own Cicely," declared Mr. Dodge, in a burst of feeling.

Mrs. Harris looked up and their eyes met. "She may go," she said, quietly. "Now, Lily dear, I suppose you will release my laces." Though she spoke lightly, she set a kiss on the red lips that carried its tender message.

"You lovely mummy!" cried Lily, her hands dropping from the dear neck while she returned the caresses with interest.

"What an atrocious pet name!" cried Dr. Kingsbury, from his seat by the fireside.

"Oh, that's the most beautiful relic of Lily's childhood!" cried Mrs. Harris. "She called me 'mummy' all through, in preference to mamma; it's my very own name, isn't it, daughter, and no one shall touch it?" She smiled across at her now and went on making tea.

After they had all settled down from the hilarity into which the admitting of Lily Harris into the traveling party had plunged them, "Do let us tell stories," cried Travers, "just as we do in camp."

"All right!" cried a chorus of voices.

"If stories are in order," began the doctor, when he could be heard, "I'm going to air that little adventure of Mr. Dodge's on the canal leading into Simon's Pond."

"Now, see here," protested Uncle Joseph, hastily.

"No use, my dear sir; revenge is sweet," said the doctor, shaking his head. "It's been surging within me ever since your cruel and tortuous narrative of a little affair between us in our Keene Valley home. I ache to be quits with you!"

"Go on," cried all the voices at once, Uncle Joe's frantic accents being completely drowned.

"Oh, I'm going," said Dr. Kingsbury, with never a look at him. "It is said that revenge is sweet, but I had no idea how completely saccharine it is. "No more sugar, please, Mrs. Harris; I don't need it."

CHAPTER XXV.

IDYLLIC DAYS

MR. DODGE heard the call of duty from Simon's Pond, but he didn't think it necessary to invite the rest of us to go," began the medical man, stretching his long legs lazily nearer the fire.

"Good reason why!" retorted Mr. Dodge. "You were all tired to death. Beside, I'd heard you say, you fraud you, that you didn't care a rap about Simon's Pond."

"That was because I hadn't been invited," said the doctor, carelessly. "I can't say what I might have expressed, if any desire had been exhibited for my company. Well, as I said, Mr. Dodge didn't ask a soul of us to go—make what you like of it," to the company. "He took a guide, of course—had to, and started."

"Where were the party located, if you please?" asked Mrs. Harris' gentle voice.

"You're a great story-teller, I declare!" cried Geoffrey Carlil, with the freedom of an old friend.

"Why, I supposed you knew. Beg pardon," to the hostess; "we, the Dodge party, were located at, where he," pointing to Uncle Joseph, "chose to dodge us."

"Horrors, what an execrable pun!" cried two or three.

"I consider it a fine one," said the doctor, complacently. "Well, the guide said 'twarn't more trouble to take a whole lot o' people, than one'."

"How did you know that?" demanded Uncle Joe.

"When I am telling a story," said Dr. Kingsbury, meditatively allowing his gaze to wander over the oaken wainscoting and ceiling, "I invariably weed out all useless padding. In other words, I don't tell what I don't choose to"

"Ah!" ejaculated Uncle Joe.

"Well, to continue, Mr. Dodge, the enterprising originator of this go-it-alone trip"—

"What horrible slang! Put him out, do, Mrs. Harris," cried a chorus.

"Mr. Dodge declared he would go to Simon's Ponds only in his own company, and that of the guides."

"Sensible man," breathed young Carll, "if he left you behind."

"And," continued the doctor, when he emerged from the laugh that overwhelmed him, "so he set forth with an evil conscience and a fishing basket, the guide enjoying the rest of the impedimenta, on his travels. Now you know there is a little canal running from Racquette River into the aforesaid pond. Well, I presume everything went well until this duet of travelers approached this same canal, for record sayeth not; but just as they were fairly in, and could see the glittering waters of the fair pond beckoning them on"—

"You ought to write a summer novel," observed Uncle Joe, drily. "I'd agree to take a hundred copies on the spot, if your descriptions are as good."

"The glittering waters of the fair pond beckoned them, I repeat," said the doctor, imperturbably. "When Mr. Dodge, otherwise called Uncle Joe in this party, who was leisurely pacing on the left bank of the narrow stream burdened by nothing heavier than his fishing basket and his bad conscience, he, Uncle Joe, looked back a moment to the guide laboriously pushing with toil-worn hands, the boat through the narrow stream. It was a crisis in our friend's career. The next seen by the guide was a pair of boot-soles raised at an unsightly

UNCLE JOE LOOKED BACK A MOMENT.



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height. And no doubt, my friends, that Mr. Dodge at this supreme moment of his life rejoiced that he hadn't given out invitations recklessly. He sank gently but surely into the canal before the guide's eyes."

"Where I wish you were now," cried Mr. Dodge, heartily.

"And yet when he came home at night to his lonely and affectionate family, he carried a splendid basket of fish, an open countenance that would deceive the very elect, and a close mouth."

"Save me from my friends!" cried Mrs. Carll, laughing. "Oh, doctor, you will carry off the palm for a revengeful spirit."

"Don't I?" retorted Dr. Kingsbury, dropping his banter. "Hey, Mr. Dodge?"

For answer, Uncle Joe leaned over and tweaked his ear. "I'll give you that for reply," he said, grimly.

Lily Harris, "like a flower out of her own garden," as Mrs. Carll had said in describing her to the Dodge party, now put in a plea for "one more day." "I can't get ready," she said, plain-



LILY HARRIS.

tively, when Uncle Joe said they must be starting on, at which he gallantly withdrew his objections and entered into the plans for the last frolic, which included a sail down the lake, to lunch with old friends, who were camping some couple of miles or so distant.

"They have a veritable camp," said Lily, "just as I wanted; but instead, mamma built this affair," running her eyes over the handsome buildings, worthy a large landed proprietor's estate. "What's the good of going to the woods unless you can rough it?"

"You'll find great enjoyment, then, at our little nest," said Uncle Joe. "I warn you before you go, you'll rough it there. No Queen Annes, nor any nonsense, I assure you, I've got. It's just pine wood trimmings inside and out. Not even 'set tubs'." Then he told Maum Silvy's cruel disappointment.

Lily clapped her hands and shouted, "Oh, I like that; it's just what I've been longing for—Keene Valley and a cabin!"

And so they had the last outing on the Racquette; Lily protesting that no one but Cicely should go with her in her own little boat, at which Aunt Sarah could not repress a small exclamation of distress.

"I'm afraid you'll upset," said Uncle Joe, frankly.

"Upset!" cried Lily; "you don't know me."

"She's handled oars ever since she was a little thing," said her mother; "I don't think you need be afraid, Mr. Dodge."

"I'll keep near them," said Geoffrey Carll, "so if they do upset we'll give a helping hand."

"Indeed you'll not," said Lily, with some spirit; "we are going to have this sail all by ourselves; aren't we, Miss Dodge?"

"Yes," said Cicely, in great satisfaction.

Geoffrey bit his blonde moustache and turned on his heel.

"Doris," he said, nonchalantly, "you and Martha come with me, will you?"

But his pretty cousins turned off—evidently their plans were made to go elsewhere, which was proved by Tom and Travers



LILY'S LITTLE BOAT.

dashing by with them in their boat, when the word to start was fairly given.

"I seem to be dropped out," said the young man, "everywhere," coming up to Mrs. Carll; "will you accept my services for this most charming of expeditions on the lake this morning?" making her a low bow.

"Most gladly, my son," she said, laughing; "and we can talk over our plans the better on the boat," she added, in a low tone; "for you are quite sure you would prefer to give up your plans for taking your uncle's shooting box this autumn, and spend a few weeks at Keene Valley."

"I haven't a question about it," said the young man, looking straight into his mother's eyes.

"The 'veritable camp' was reached after a somewhat circuitous sail among the islands, Lily meeting many friends among the gay craft on the liquid thoroughfare, and exchanging merry little sallies as they glided on. To Cicely this was the most perfect hour of all the idyllic life of the last four luxurious days, and she fastened her absorbed young eyes on the beautiful face over which drooped a large white hat, and the slender figure rhythmically swaying to the dip of the oars.

"What is the matter?" at last said Lily, turning to her.

"You are so beautiful!" said Cicely, quite as a matter of course, "and I cannot look away."

"Nonsense, child," said Lily, with a scrap of a laugh; "that is only because you haven't been around yet. Why, in New York where I live, there are scores of girls ever so much ahead of me in beauty. I'm only passably well-looking."

Cicely gave a gesture of incredulity, and cried, "Oh, no, Miss Harris, it can't be!"

"Well, it is," said Lily, with pretty decision; "there, now look beyond that bend. I call that much finer than our place, and I always wish we lived there."

Cicely looked, and saw in a shining bay, a cluster of rough little shanties, one or two of which almost touched the water's edge, the others were nestled in a dense grove of pines.

"That's more like our cabin," cried Cicely, looking at them eagerly, "than any place I've seen since we started on the 'Round Trip,' only we haven't the water."



THE VERITABLE CAMP.

"I shall just love your cabin, then, I know," said Miss Harris, sweeping the water with her oars vigorously. "I didn't upset, did I?" calling back over her shoulder to the other boats.

Geoffrey was just then saying to his mother, "Yes, we'll stay at Keene Valley, go through Indian Pass with them—for he

told me that they left that purposely to do on their return—then on to Ausable Chasm; provided they are willing.”

Gentle little Mrs. Carll drew herself up and said with the instinct of good breeding, “We must always remember that they may become tired of us, no matter how friendly people are; sometimes one wishes for privacy in traveling.”

Young Carll’s face fell gloomily. “I know it,” he said. Just then, Uncle Joe’s voice arose on the air across the intervening water. “I say,” he called out, “we were just speaking in this boat,” looking over at Miss Brett and the doctor’s wife—“I don’t mind telling you about it—how much we had enjoyed your company all along. I can’t bear to leave you at Blue Mountain Lake; I wish you were going on to Keene Valley with us.”

Geoffrey’s face flushed radiant. “Do you so?” he cried, aglow. “Well, we will if you want us—mother and I; won’t we, mother?” He was so happy there was no attempt to conceal it, and his mother said, gratefully, “You are so good, we should love to join you.”

So it was settled then and there.

“I hope you are satisfied now, Cicely,” said Travers, the following day, as the little steamer bore them along Marion River, “to find that a girl is honored by having something named after her in this great wilderness.”

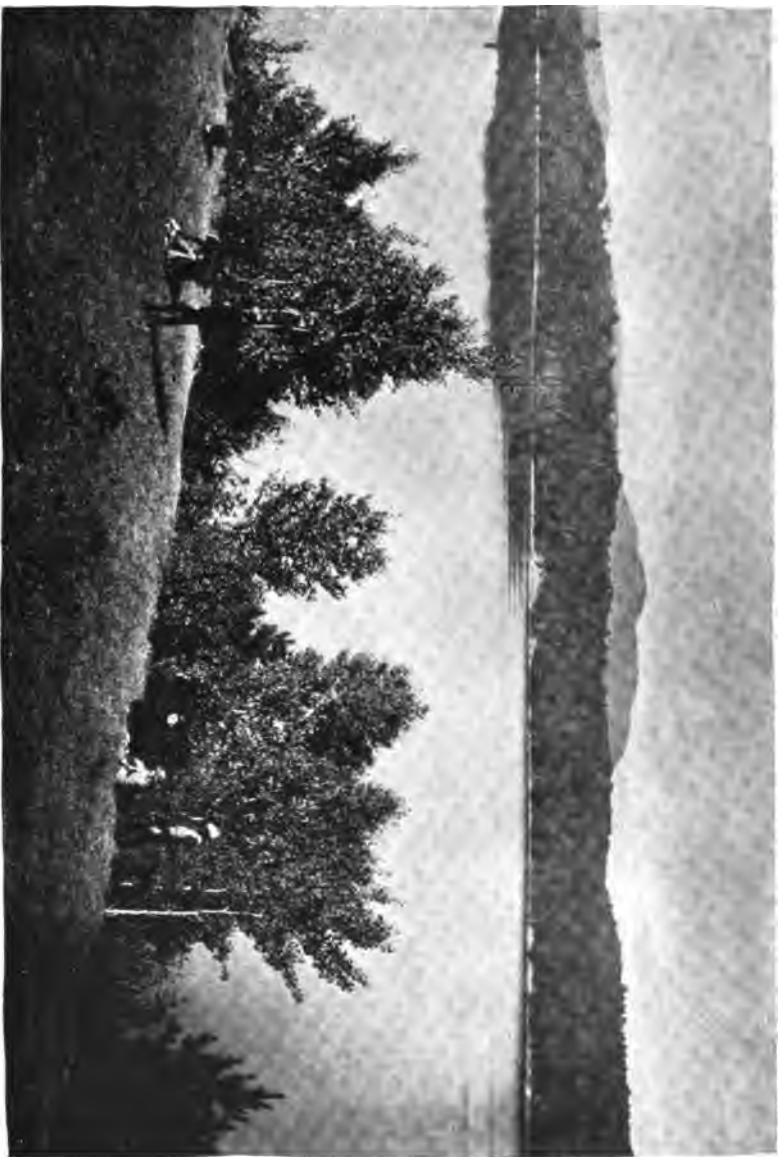
“How’s that?” cried Mr. Carll.

“Oh, Cicely bemoaned all the time we were camping on the Ausable—made the days hideous because all the celebrated places are named for men and boys!” said Travers.

“For shame, Travvy!” cried Cicely, with rosy cheeks.

“Don’t distress yourself, Miss Dodge,” said Geoffrey; “we know your brother.”

“Well, he don’t mean to say anything out of the way, I don’t believe,” said Doris, leaning over to whisper this into Cicely’s ear.



BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE.

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But it was not so low but that Travers, although he stood upon the boat-edge leaning upon the top, heard it, and for the first time he was struck by the fact that Doris Stanton was a remarkably pretty girl. He looked again at her and noticed that her ear was small and delicate, and that the curve of cheek and throat was perfect. Then he pulled himself together and stared out across the water.

"I'll make it right, Miss Cicely," Geoffrey Carll was saying. "The first pretty bit of scenery that you like—I mean, that we don't know any name for, we'll christen it for you."

"Oh, do, do!" cried the young people.

"This is sometimes called East Inlet, isn't it?" Aunt Sarah was asking Mr. Dodge.

"Yes; it's the biggest feeder of the Racquette. You see it brings in the Blue Mountain, Utowana and the Eagle waters—Hey?"

"The Utowana is a lovely name—Indian, isn't it?" Mrs. Carll was asking.

"I suppose so, madam. It's a sleepy little stream, isn't it?" said Uncle Joe, looking up and down the winding river.

"Very pretty," said Miss Brett, contentedly. "What are the young people doing?" she suddenly asked.

"There—there!" cried young Carll; "do you like that, Miss Cicely?" pointing across to the reedy shore, where a little cape ran out from a low hill, the water lapping its green sides.

"Oh, very!" cried Cicely. "It's lovely; isn't it, girls?"

"Then I christen it," said Geoffrey, taking off his hat with a low bow to her, "Point Cicely, and so it shall go down in all our note-books forever."

"Aye—aye!" sang out Travers, from his perch, while the others clapped their hands.

"Just hear those young folks!" cried Uncle Joseph, to the ladies. "They make a good time out of every little circumstance, bless their hearts."

CHAPTER XXVI.

BLUE MOUNTAIN LAKE.

UTOWANA LAKE had been navigated when the young people's enthusiasm broke into an impromptu song, in which the refrain seemed to be, "Utowana—I adore thee," causing Uncle Joe again to remark, "Just hear them, now—such spirits!" The little rustic landings had been voted "charming—picturesque," in all possible keys. They had passed through Eagle Lake, and were now, at last, on the little Blue Mountain Lake steamer.

"Now, I'm going to air my information," said the doctor. "I believe I haven't talked any scarcely to-day."

"Haven't!" cried Uncle Joe, in derision.

"Well, this lake is called Emmons, you know," said Dr. Kingsbury, imperturbably. "It is eighteen hundred feet above tide, and"—

"Give us a song," cried Uncle Joseph, turning around briskly. "Drown him out—hurry up, young folks."

"I adore thee, Utowana!" in all shades of voices responded, Geoffrey Carll's fine tenor swelling triumphantly, Traver's heavy "frog-bass" doing capital service.

The doctor held his ears, but proceeded—"It is three miles across"—"I adore—ore thee, U—to—wana!"

"It has islands, some very rocky. It is also called Tallow Lake, because"—

"Oh, if he's going to tell something really interesting, hold up, there, boys," cried Mr. Dodge, raising a sudden hand. "What's that, doctor—a legend? Trot it out."

"I was going to relate that it was called Tallow Lake because an old Indian was sailing through it with his canoe laden with venison tallow. Alas, the winds blew and beat upon that boat of grease! It was literally oil upon the troubled waters after that. Now Blue Mountain rises to the height of"—

"He's gone bad again," said Uncle Joe; "now warble your wildest."

"Let's give him—'Ninety-eight blue bottles were hanging on the wall,'" cried Travers.

"Yes—yes! Ninety-eight blue bottles were hanging on the wall. Ninety-eight blue bottles were hanging on the wall. Take one blue bottle away from them all, and ninety-seven blue bottles are hanging on the wall."

It seemed to Uncle Joseph as if that song must be heard back on Racquette Lake by the prodigious noise it made.

"It's worse than the loons," he exclaimed, with a shiver.

"Next verse," cried Travers, as leader.

"Ninety-seven blue bottles are hanging on the wall. Ninety-seven blue bottles are hanging on the wall. Take one blue bottle away from them all, and ninety-six blue bottles are hanging on the wall."

"Next verse. Ninety-six blue bottles are hanging on the wall. Ninety-six blue bottles are hanging on the wall. Take one blue bottle away from them all, and ninety-five blue bottles are hanging on the wall."

Just then Travers created a diversion by uttering a wild, discordant cry, and every one, singers and all, looked up expecting to see a loon.

"Wasn't that well done?" asked the boy. "Hey?"

"How did you do it?" cried Cicely.

"Oh, you see I'm like that fellow in Punch who achieved a double and twisted bow on his necktie—I gave my whole mind to it—want another?"

"If you do, we'll throw you overboard," said Tom.

"Oh, if I'd only had a kodak!" mourned little Mrs. Kingsbury; "that bridge at the outlet was simply irresistible! I'll never travel again without one."

"What, a bridge, Lucy?" asked her husband.

"No; a kodak."

"A-press-the-button-I-do-the-rest," said Travers.

"What a pity we didn't bring a phonograph," observed Mr. Dodge, reflectively.

A shout greeted this.

"Well, anyway, I can never forget how that bridge looked," said Mrs. Kingsbury, pensively; "that's one comfort. Only I want everybody else when I'm telling about it at home, to believe me."

"No one expects to be believed, who spouts over the Adirondacks," said Tom Fisher, coolly,

"Ye kin lie about everythin' else under the sun," said one of the boat hands, "an' 'twill be forgiven ye; but it's a tarnal sin to do it about these ere woods, fer they don't need it; they kin stan' on their own merits."

"I believe you," said Uncle Joe.

"What's the matter with the doctor?" cried Geoffrey Carll. "Do somebody stir him up; he must have gone to sleep."

"I'm hurt," said an injured voice, from under the doctor's old felt cap.

At this, Duke insisted on leaving his comfortable seat to prance on unsteady feet over nearer to the voice. "Where? Where?" he cried.

"In my feelings—they're lacerated and bleeding."

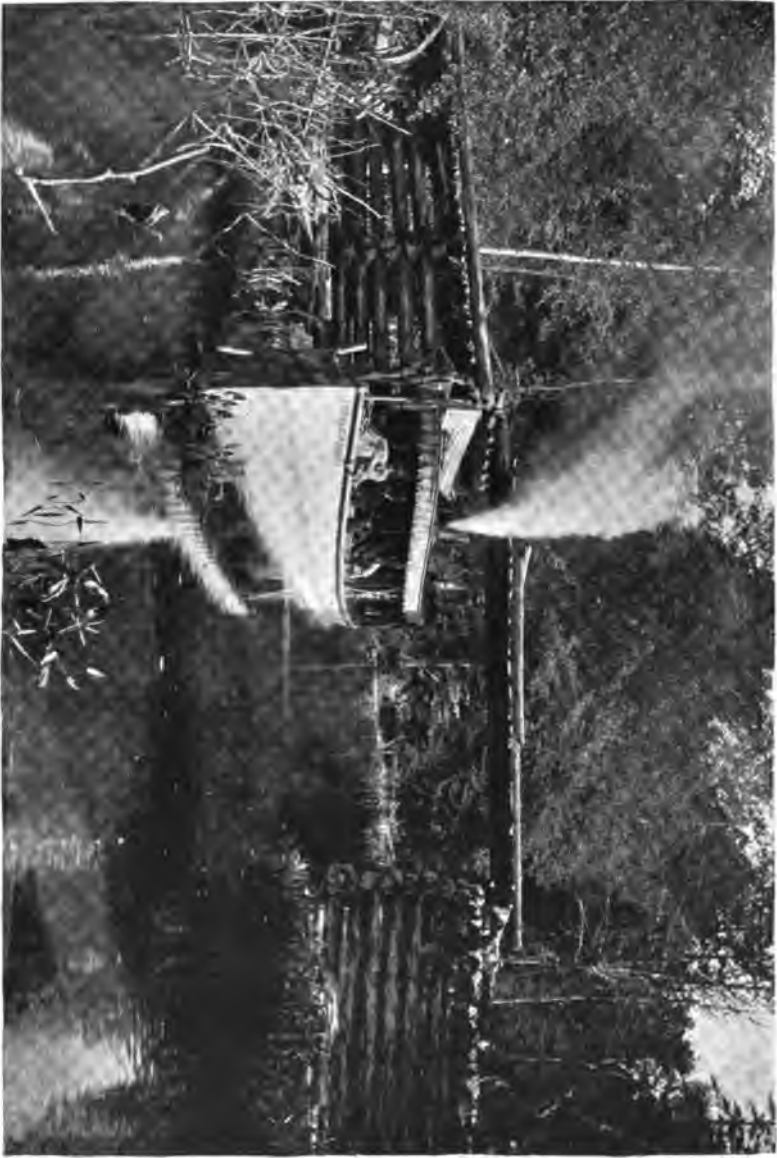
Duke emitted a loud, distressed cry.

"Hush—hush, dear!" exclaimed Aunt Sarah.

"Duke—Duke!" cried the doctor.

"He's all blooded—he said so—stop him bleeding," begged

“THAT BRIDGE AT THE OUTLET.”



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the little fellow through his tears, and appealing to them all.

"Child, don't you see he's laughing," cried Cicely, deserting the young people. But to Duke's distorted vision, the doctor's countenance seemed to present the contortions of misery, and he redoubled his wails.

"He's blooded all out!" he screamed. The next minute, he was elevated in strong arms, and set upon the railing at the end of the steamer. "Hang on there," said the doctor, winding his own muscular arm around the pole. "Now is this fine enough to suit you, Duke?"

"Ye—es," said little Duke, the tears running down his round cheeks; "but you are hurt."

"I'm as well as that fish there," pointing to a silvery back gleaming through the water as its owner disported in the ripples. "See him—only look. He must be a three-pounder!"

"How I wish I had my fish-pole," cried Duke, dreadfully excited. "I'd catch him then, I guess."

The little wharf for guests to the Blue Mountain House, became instinct with life when they came up, the usual array of boarders hurrying down to see who was aboard. Uncle Joe found one or two business friends among them, and he was appalled to find himself apathetically addressing them as if people of a by-gone age.

"Well, Dodge," said one of these gentlemen, clapping him on the back, "you don't seem to care whether stocks have gone up or down."

"Hang stocks!" growled Uncle Joe. "What do I want of them? I've been in the Adirondacks for three months."

"So I see," said the business man, looking him all over; "and brown as a berry. Well, I must say it becomes you. Well, well, well, all this crowd yours?" in amazement at the stream approaching with "Uncle Joe, my trunk hasn't come—

the little brown one." And "Uncle Joe this," and "Uncle Joe that."

"Yes," said Mr. Dodge, as unconcernedly as the principal of a female seminary. "Can't stay now, Rogers; my family wants me; see you later."

The business man of Wall Street looked after "that old bachelor, Mr. Dodge," in a maelstrom of relatives, unable to speak, and every time Uncle Joe came into view thereafter, he was treated to the same generous stare.

But Uncle Joseph was as unconscious of it all, and went on having a beautiful time.

"It's that young creature—Miss Harris, it's on the register, I believe—he's after," said Rogers, the business man, to himself, pacing the hotel corridor after supper with an eye to leeward for the object of his attention, as usual the center of his group. "She's pretty enough to turn any man's head, but Joe Dodge must be fifty-five, if he's a minute."

Just then out came Uncle Joe suddenly from the parlor with Lily Harris on his arm.

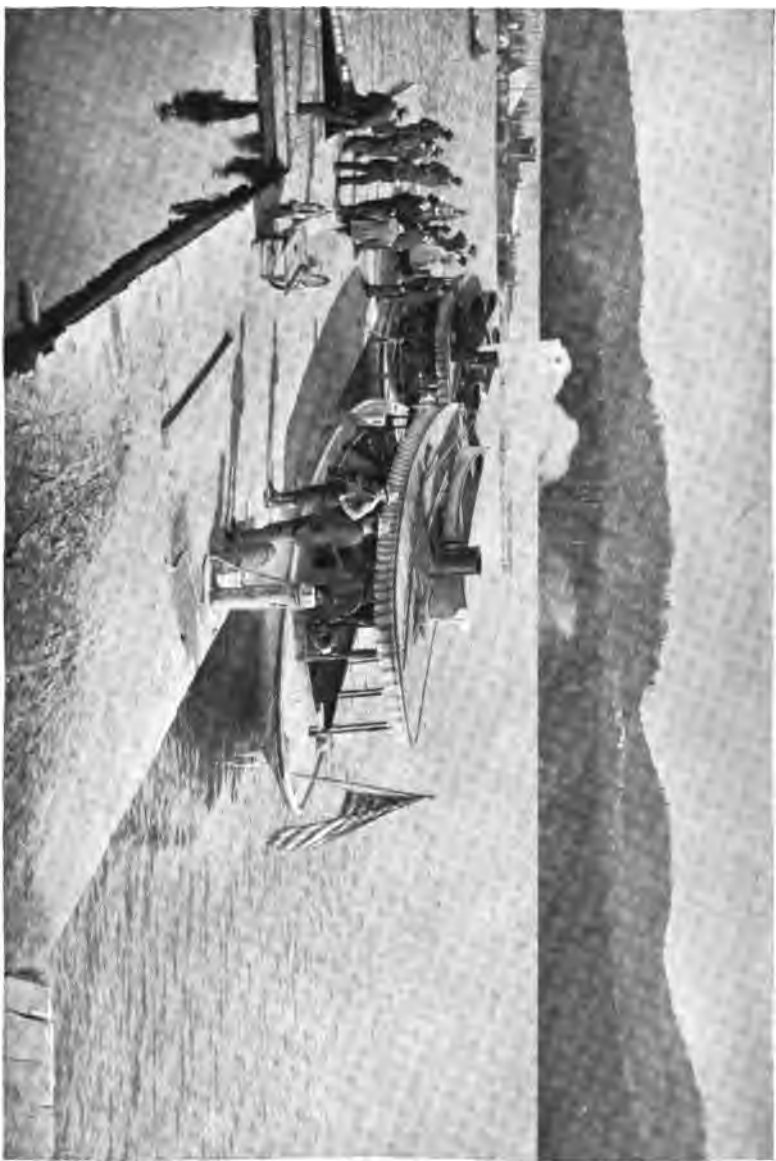
"How d'ye, Rogers," he said carelessly, as they passed; then he beamed on his companion, bending his gray head to hear what she said.

Rogers turned and looked after him. "The old story over again. Caught by a young thing for his money." And that night a letter went in the New York mail with the latest intelligence in the social world.

Lily Harris, worth several millions in her own right, was gaily saying—"Now it's to be a perfect secret, you know, Mr. Dodge, between you and me."

"Of course, my dear," said Uncle Joe, in his most fatherly way.

"I want dear Miss Brett to know it," cried Lily, impulsively. "I wouldn't think of doing it without telling her everything."



THE LITTLE WHARF BECAME INSTINCT WITH LIFE.

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But oh, don't let any one else know!" She clasped her hand over the other one resting on his arm.

"They sha'n't a soul hear a lisp of it," declared Mr. Dodge. "Horses wouldn't drag it out of me if you said not. Don't be worried, my dear."

"Oh, how I do long to get back to New York to have the plans made, and start it. It seems to me as if the poor children ought to be right this very minute in the Adirondacks!" exclaimed Lily, with glowing cheeks.

"Softly, softly, my dear," advised Uncle Joe. "'Rome wasn't built in a day,' you know. So you can take plenty of time."

"Oh, I can't, Mr. Dodge!" contradicted Lily. "Just think how the poor children in those dirty streets are dying by the hundreds in New York, and I never thought of it till to-night when I heard that lady at the supper-table say—'What charity it would be if somebody would build a large home up in the Adirondack wilderness for the tenement-house children!' Those were her very words, Mr. Dodge, and they stung me so that I couldn't hardly breathe." And she broke away from him, and leaned against a vine-covered pillar of the veranda.

"That was the reason you didn't eat any more supper," said Uncle Joseph, kindly, looking into her perturbed face. "Ah, Miss Lily, your mother will blame me if you don't thrive under my care."

"Dear Mummy!" said Lily, with tenderness. "And oh, Mr. Dodge, I'm so happy, too happy to eat, for now I've something I can do for other people." She came back and put her little hand through his arm, turning her luminous eyes to his face. "It will be the loveliest home—just think, the island Mummy gave me on the Racquette below us, to do what I wanted to with. At one time, I thought I'd build a little ideal place, with observatory and all that, where we could go to when we were tired of our own camp, and where I could sketch, and have

my artist friends. Oh, I'm so glad I didn't! Now my poor children shall have the whole of it!"

Then Geoffrey Carll claimed her for the German just beginning, and presently the on-lookers were criticising the beautiful Miss Harris—her Worth gowns, and her frivolous manners. "What a pity that great wealth should be entrusted to such a butterfly," observed a stately dowager, who never gave a dollar bill to the cry of poverty, without a terrible pang.

Uncle Joseph then sought out Cicely and her set, who were too young for dancing in large assemblies, and they got into a little coterie in the reading-room and planned the morrow's campaign.

"Of course it is 'to do' Blue Mountain," said Travers.

"I suppose any other plan would bring disgrace upon us at once," replied Uncle Joe. "There's a good trail up there from the Long Lake road."

"The view is one of the finest, isn't it?" asked Doris Stanton.

"So 'they say'," Uncle Joseph answered; "and we shall find that out like a good many other things, for ourselves. The mountain is three thousand, eight hundred and twenty-four feet high, so if the day is a clear one we ought to see something from the top."

"How long do we stay here, uncle?" asked Travers, after the chatter over the proposed excursion had somewhat subsided.

"As long as we all enjoy it," said Uncle Joseph.

Cicely gave a happy little wriggle. "The trouble is, uncle, we enjoy every place so much, we shall never get back to dear Keene Valley; I do so want to see it, and our home."

"In that case," said Mr. Dodge, with a laugh, "we might as well hurry up operations a bit. I must confess, now that the 'Lake Trip' is nearly over, I'm somewhat homesick myself for the old cabin. Oh, we'll probably work along over to Schroon in a few days or so."

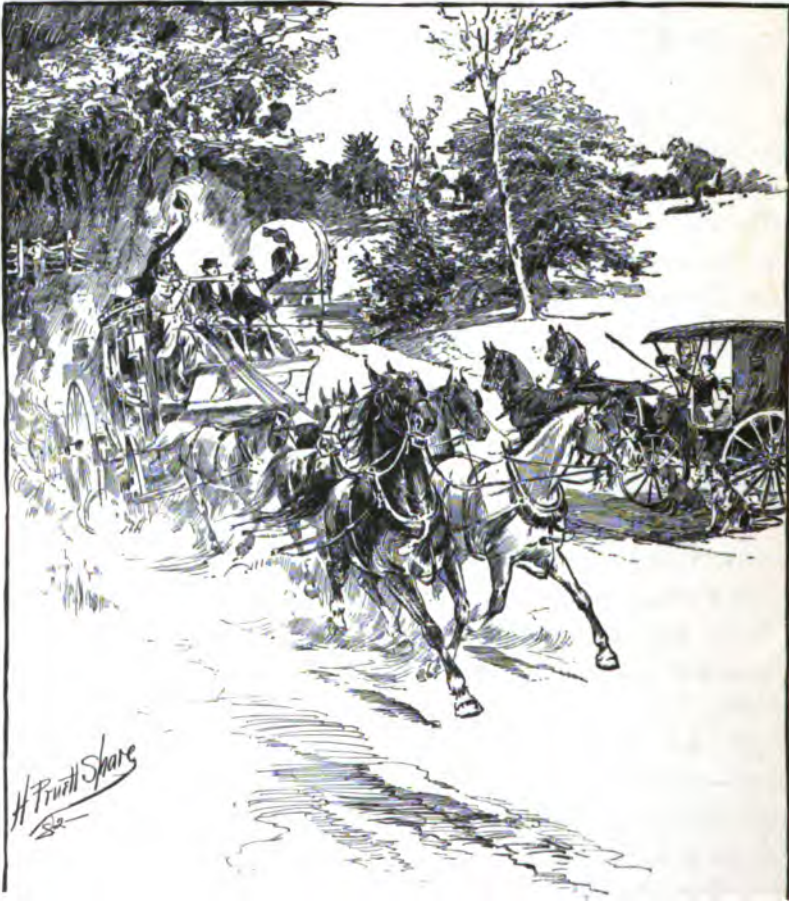
And in "a few days or so" Mr. Dodge had emerged with his party into "only half a wilderness," as Cicely said by way of describing, in a letter to "one of the Buxton girls," the low-lying mountains and general air of civilization around Schroon Lake.

"It is very pretty," wrote Cicely, "and it has a Paradox Lake the same as Lake Placid has, only named for another reason. There is a Mt. Pharaoh that you see one moment in driving along, popping up his head like a 'jack in the box,' then the next minute you lose him, and you think you were deceived, and that there wasn't any; then he pops up again. We are going up there 'to-morrow,' uncle says, as he always tells us when we ask when we are 'to do' anything. Oh, I forgot to tell you, at the base of Mt. Pharaoh is a cunning little lake of the same name, where people here say one can catch dreadfully big trout; Uncle Joe is going to take us all fishing there 'to-morrow.'

"There is a lovely island in the lake called Isolabella; it used to be Magdalen Island way back in 1798. We had so many islands in Racquette Lake that I didn't think I should care to see any more; but this is just as interesting, because I'm rested from islands, I suppose.

"When we leave here we shall stage it to Elizabethtown—just think, Patty Hitchcock, we shall be on the way 'really and truly,' as Duke says, to our own dear cabin, and we stop at Roots—everybody does—nine miles from Schroon Lake. It used to be the old tavern on the postroad between Canada and Albany, and it must have been funny then to have seen it and the few travelers who were brave enough to take the journey. I don't wish I'd lived in the old days, Patty; its much nicer to be traveling with Uncle Joe. He's more elegant than ever. We can see 'Blue Ridge' (not the Blue Ridge in North Carolina!) from Roots. They are only about a mile away. It's

a succession of little bits of mountains huddling up against each other—the Adirondacks are away off to the north and west; I tell you they look grand enough in contrast to the



STAGING IT FOR ELIZABETHTOWN.

little ones—and oh, don't I love them! Why, Patty Hitchcock, beside my father and Travers and Duke, and Aunt Sarah and

Uncle Joe and Tom Fisher, and you and the girls—and oh, the people, of course, we're traveling with and whom we love very, very much, those mountains are my best friends—they really are! And I shall come every single year I can, to just look at them and tell them so!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOME—AND INDIAN PASS.

A PARTY emerging from the dining hall of the Elizabethtown hotel, seemed in extreme haste to be off—an unusual sight in that famous hostelry.

“There’s our dear home-cabin waiting for us!” cried Cicely, quite wildly, and running down the hall. “Oh, can’t we start?”

“And Sheridan twenty miles away,” sang Travers.

“Do stop, Travvy,” implored Cicely, a little impatiently. “Aunt Sarah,” appealing to that lady, taking it composedly on a hall chair, “why do you suppose we don’t get off?”

“Because it isn’t time yet,” said Aunt Sarah. “Cecy dear, our cabin can wait,” with a laugh.

“But I can’t,” said Cicely, fussing up and down the hall. “Oh, dear me, who would think it would take so long to start?”

“Who wants a game of croquet?” asked Uncle Joseph, coming leisurely in.

“Croquet! Why, Uncle Joseph Dodge!” cried Cicely, a world of reproach in her voice, “there’s our home only a few miles away, and the idea of our stopping to play croquet!”

“Perhaps it would be better to prance the halls like wild savages—eh, Cecy?” said Uncle Joe, with a twinkle in his eye. “We’ve to wait exactly half an hour,” taking out his watch, “before the buckboards can be ready; and I’ve always noticed that time passes happier when one is employed.”

Cicely frowned a little, then the sunshine broke over her face.



"COME — FOR THE CROQUET GAME."

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"Oh, Uncle Joe!" she cried, "I'm sorry I fretted so. Come—for the croquet-ground!"

And in the middle of the game—"Buckboards ready!" rang over the lawn. Mallets were thrown down, and a stampede for the road ensued. Cicely held her breath and looked off toward the "happy valley," scarcely conscious that they were really off.

"Sheridan fifteen miles away!" sang Travers, from the other buckboard, to conceal his feelings. "Feel better, Cecy?"

Stopping at the Tahawus House only long enough to drop Mrs. Carll, Geoffrey, the two Stantons and Miss Roberts, who were to come over the first thing in the morning to spend the day at "the cabin." Cicely's impatience was now shared by each member of Mr. Dodge's family. Uncle Joe began to fidget around on the seat, and to fume "Can't the horses go a bit faster"; and even Aunt Sarah bit her lips to keep from saying anything that might betray her. Travers now openly cried, "I wish we were there," instead of "Sheridan only a mile away!" which he had intended to sing. Tom Fisher set his gaze on the distant hills to the left, determined not to take it off till some one proclaimed the cabin in sight.

When he did, it was at the sharp cry from Cicely's lips.

"Oh, it's on fire—see!" pointing to a column of smoke issuing from the knot of pine-trees guarding the home.

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Uncle Joe, yet making as if he would jump from the buckboard.

"It can't be," cried Aunt Sarah, yet her face was white. "Somebody has gone in to make the fire."

"They didn't know we were coming to-day," cried Mr. Dodge. "Drive on, there, I say."

"Hurry up," cried Travers, as the horses responded to the whip.

Lily Harris leaned over and thrust her little white hand into Aunt Sarah's palm, where it nestled comfortingly, but nothing

could assuage the anxiety of the returning family, as the buck-board spun over the enclosure, and up to the veranda.

"Some fellows have taken the empty house as their camp, probably," said Tom Fisher, in indignation, springing first over the wheel. "Yes"—peering in a window as the whole party plunged after; "there's one in there now."

Uncle Joe rushed past him; not observing the formality of opening the door, he burst it ajar with his good right fist, plunging within in a towering passion.

"Who are you?" he roared, "to invade—good heavens and earth, Farrington, when did you come?"

Mr. Farrington Dodge had no time to explain the precise hour of his arrival, so set upon was he now by his entire family. Lily Harris collapsed on a chair at the dénouement, then coming to herself, stole out to leave them alone. Pacing slowly along to the road, she turned down, her thoughts only half on the beauty around her—"I'm awfully selfish, I know, but I do wish he hadn't come yet, for now they'll be always together, and not half as nice company"—when a sudden turn brought to view a big green wagon driven by a woman in a slat sun-bonnet, who was frantically slapping the horse's back with the doubled-up ends of the reins, and calling out—"Get along—get-ap!"

Lily Harris stepped out hastily to the protecting angle of the fence, observing as the vehicle bore down upon her, that a large colored woman occupied the back seat, with a little girl of the same hue, around whose face was a startling fringe of small woolly braids.

"Whoa!" cried the woman in the slat sun-bonnet, pulling up the horse so suddenly he nearly sat down in the dusty road. "Do you know if the Dodges is home?" she bawled.

"Yes, they are," said Lily Harris, clinging to a bush to sustain conversation with the "Keene Flatters."

At this, the colored woman evinced a determination to get out. "I'm going to walk; I'm in too big a hurry to ride, Mis Badger."

"Stay where you be," said the woman holding the reins. "An' Biny, don't you jump. G'lang now," dealing the horse another cut, which projected him suddenly past the young lady.

"So that is Maum Silvy and dear little Biny," cried Lily Harris, scrambling down to the road again. "But I wonder who that unearthly female called 'Mis Badger', is."

A fortnight later, as September declined into golden October, Duke was kissed and made much of, and handed over to the doctor and his wife, Biny and Maum Silvy going back to Mrs. Badger's.

"As I'm to be permitted to see a little of the Adirondacks," said Mr. Farrington Dodge, "I'm grateful I fell upon you 'like the wolf on the fold,' just when I did."

"Strange you couldn't write when you were coming," said Mr. Joseph Dodge, whose temper had varied considerably during the last two weeks.

"Yes; and strange you could go around the whole circle of the Adirondack wilderness and expect to hear regularly," retorted his brother. "I wrote just as soon as I could know it was possible to get off earlier."

"Never mind, as long as you are here now, dear papa," cried Cicely, affectionately, clinging to his hand, "and for Indian Pass!"

Uncle Joe turned away his head that he might not see her, calling himself a villain not to be glad that the child had her father back again; and feeling suddenly like an old man with no home ties, and dropped completely aside.

The autumn leaves, gay with dashes of yellow and red, fell on them as they drove along. "It's the loveliest season of all the year," crooned Cicely.

"Father," cried Travers, "now you've come from South America, it's too bad to worry you; still it's proper to tell you that Cicely has one terrible habit."

Mr. Farrington Dodge turned and surveyed his rosebud of a daughter.

"She says 'lovely' on an average of a hundred and twenty times a day," said Travers; "and it's getting burdensome."

"If you'd only hear Travers sing," said Uncle Joseph, slowly, "you'd forget all minor troubles."

"In the same way that some humorist said 'tight boots made a man forget all his other miseries', I suppose," observed Mr. Farrington Dodge.

And so with laughter and nonsense they wended their way, faces and hearts turned to Indian Pass.

"It's so very, very different," said Mrs. Carll, when they were really at the gateway of the Pass.

"How, madam?" Mr. Farrington Dodge asked the question.

"I thought it was like a grove—narrow, with large rocks on both sides, but easy to travel—and now"—her gaze was troubled as it swept their surroundings.

"Are you ill?" asked Mr. Dodge.

"No; I am 'all made over, almost,'" with a little laugh, "since I came to the wilderness; but I am afraid I shall be a drag on the party."

"Dear me, no!" said Mr. Dodge, hastily; "this party isn't in the business of scrambling over its trips. There is no occasion to worry, Mrs. Carll, I assure you." He had all the briskness of his brother's manner, with a wonderful polish, that Joseph, who had none of it, called "blamed tact."

And Mrs. Carll forgot to sigh again.

For the first few miles after entering the Pass, the rise was gradual, so that with song and jest the party made their way easily along. Then the climb began.

Sometimes a tempestuous stream met them, dashing its way from some hidden cavernous recess whose depth had never been sounded by human plummet. Then little trickling 'summer-day falls', as Lily Harris called them, would tempt them all to linger and to forget that the sublime gorge engulfed them, shutting them in from all the world.

Then the trail would take a sudden turn—up to wild crags towering over their heads, the dim, ribbon-like path faintly discernible above, with almost a menace at them for attempting it, and the very boulders shutting them in would seem to laugh at these humans, who with song and jest approached nature in one of her fastnesses.

"So this is Indian Pass!" exclaimed Mr. Farrington Dodge, at one such moment when they halted by common consent.

"Well named—for it don't seem as if any one could get through but an Indian."

"The Indians called the whole region 'Conyacraga', didn't they?" asked Miss Roberts.



"SUMMER-DAY FALLS", AS LILY HARRIS CALLED THEM.

"Yes; and that meant in their vernacular 'The Dismal Wilderness'. And it will be the best part of the next century, may be, before a good deal of it is used as a pleasure ground. White men, as yet, haven't devastated it." It was Uncle Joe who furnished this last bit of information.

"It's a singular thing," continued Uncle Joseph, "that the springs that form the sources of the two rivers—the Hudson and the Ausable, beginning upon these rocks, are so near together that a man can stand one foot in each; and that in a time of flood, the waters do really run together. There is"—

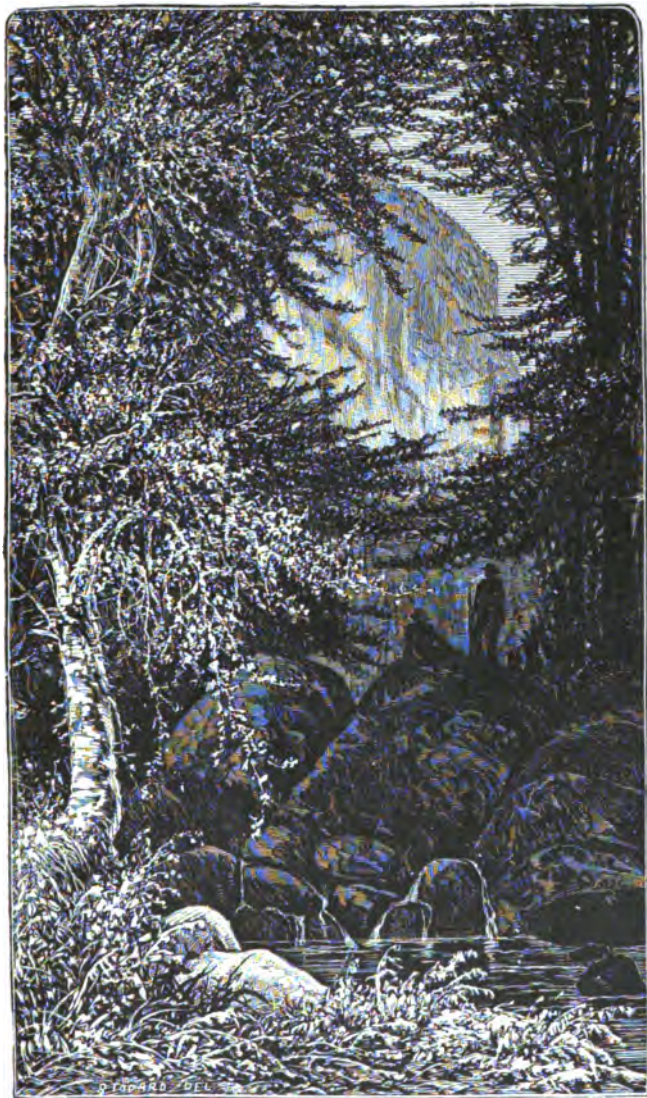
"What a fund of information this fellow has accomplished!" interrupted his brother. "Joe, you surprise me," clapping him on the back.

A faint cry startled them.

They were just entering the lower gate, as the narrowest portions of the Pass are called, pausing before they should take the final upward climb of a mile or more, and as the cry was repeated, Uncle Joe and his brother, and Miss Roberts and Aunt Sarah gazed frantically around over the beetling rocks and chasms.

"Some one has fallen." Mr. Farrington Dodge was the first to spring off behind a mass of jagged rock. Here he found Geoffrey Carll and one or two of the young people, pale with fright, bending over the form of his mother, who was sinking heavily into the young man's arms.

What was to be done? Nearly a mile onward the path was one rugged, tortuous climb, over rough boulders tossed by great convulsions of nature into masses inextricable often, even to the practised, sure-footed guide. Tumbling over this rough mountain trail was the white foaming water that now and then sprang out at them from behind the rocks like the face of a hidden foe mocking them; then gliding over the crags and precipices, till they grew perilously slippery for the human foot.



INDIAN PASS.

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"We are shut in here!" gasped Martha Stanton, turning white cheeks on them all.

"We can't go forward," shivered Doris, clinging to the tough, sinewy roots of a stunted tree, and the damp moss growing around its denuded trunk; "and carry her—oh, Cousin Geoff, what are we to do?"

Cousin Geoff looked at her blankly.

Then it was that Lily Harris sprang to the rescue. "Come on, girls," she cried, cheerily; "let's gather all the moss we can, and pile it on that flat stone."

"There isn't a flat stone in the whole place," said Travers, unguardedly.

Miss Harris gave him a gentle tap on the arm with her slender, white fingers. "Where are your eyes?" she asked, and pointing triumphantly.

"Goodness! You must be all eyes to discover one," he retorted. "So there is."

"Just like this," cried Lily, gathering a huge handful and scrambling over a tiny stream to pile the moss upon the rock in question. "Hurry, do, and bring more. There, now, Mr. Dodge, just lay her down here, and she will revive. She's tired to death; that's the trouble."

Mr. Dodge and Geoffrey brought over the slender figure gently and placed her on the soft bed. But there were no signs of reviving; and the son sprang to his feet, took one wild look around, and regardless of all eyes, he reached out an imperious hand. "Come Cicely," he said, hoarsely, "you can do it; make her speak to me!"

Cicely shrank back impulsively, looked with two frightened brown eyes into Aunt Sarah's face; the next moment she was kneeling on the damp moss, and had pressed her soft red lips against the cold white ones. "Dear Mrs. Carll," she sobbed. It was a piteous cry. The sick woman's eye-lids trembled, and

slowly unclosed as she said, "Don't be troubled." She tried to draw a reassuring breath. "I shall be all right in a minute."

"Come away." It was Lily Harris who drew them off. "You, too, Geoffrey." She was well enough acquainted with the son of her mother's old friend to be authoritatively familiar; then she gained Uncle Joseph's ear. "Of course we shall camp out here to-night?"

"Of course," echoed Uncle Joe, not knowing in the least what he said.

"In this gorge?" cried the governess, raising her hands and her eyes to the jagged sides of the rocks that shut out every other sight from their eyes but a narrow strip of blue sky, across which an occasional pearly cloud scudded. "We shall be dead before morning, the whole of us."

"Not exactly in this identical spot," said Lily, with a little laugh; "we can go back a bit. Don't you remember that place where we turned a short corner, and Mr. Travers said, 'This is our last chance to back out'?"

They all remembered the open space, comparatively speaking, where they had drawn up in a group before "turning the corner" into the narrow gorge.

"Well, we must get there," said one of the guides; "the young lady is right—and shake up a camp for the night."

"Dear Mummy!" Lily Harris sat up by the crackling, blazing fire that the guides had evolved in some miraculous way from the stunted trees in front of the tents improvised out of a rubber blanket or two. Mrs. Carll lay just within the folds, softly sleeping away her exhaustion. "You would, perhaps, be a bit panicky to see your daughter's surroundings to-night. So it is just as well that you are probably enjoying the slumber of the just, in our home on the Racquette. Fancy us, snapped in here between the jaws of a rocky monster, who may at any time crush us together like powder. Why not? The contortions

of nature in her colicky periods that made such a crack in the earth's surface as this Indian Pass, may return at her sweet will, and close the crack. Nonsense aside, Mummy dear, it's lovely here to-night (sweet Cicely's word), so uncanny and gruesome. I can't picture it—bank after bank tower over our heads as high as we can see, of green foliage-clad rocks, that is, if not foliage (for the trees are sometimes tired of life here, and give it up as a bad job) the beautiful hanging emerald moss sends out waving little armlets of verdure across the gray crags where nothing else will grow. And between them, slip and slide, and glide and prance, the silvery waterfalls and streams that tinkle and gurgle and splash into a waiting ravine below. Far above, as I occasionally glance up from my paper (the back of one of your old letters, Mummy, that never has left me, thank heaven for it now), I can look into the calm, bright eye of a star, shining on you as well, I am glad to think. And I know that, shut right in here, in this dark, narrow recess, away from all other human life and love and sympathy save that of our own little band, I am as safe and as cared for as if God took me by the hand and led me back to you. Not for a thousand worlds would I have left out dear old Indian Pass!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

ON the morrow, a reinforcement of guides, summoned by one of their own, bore out Mrs. Carll, back to civilization and the medical aid necessary to restore her exhausted strength. Aunt Sarah put down an incipient revolt over her own decision to accompany Geoffrey and his mother.

"I shall go," she said, quietly, when the young people began to howl over this announcement, and Uncle Joseph to look furious.

"Yes; I think you much better," said Mr. Farrington Dodge, coolly.

"Much better!" fumed Uncle Joseph; "what do you mean, Bub," using the old name of their boyhood days, "to say that, I should be glad to know?"

"Because I think Mrs. Carll needs her," said his brother, "and the children don't—I'm here now to take all the bother off your hands."

"Oh, as for that, we did very well before you came home!" said the senior member of his family, more furious still, turning on his heel.

Without Aunt Sarah, the glory of Indian Pass was dimmed indeed to more than the children, and it was a sorry little party that now took up the line of travel toward Point Look-out, the summit of the gorge. It mattered little to most of them, as they at last stood there, that a grand wall a thousand feet high, faced them; that enormous crevasses yawned and showed

their mighty rifts on every hand; that the awful signs of a beauty that had hidden itself away for ages from the gaze of man, now beckoned them into its presence. Aunt Sarah had left them; and they looked down into Lake Henderson beneath their feet and were glad that it spoke of an outlet into the world, where they might regain what they had lost.

It was here, in this supreme moment of their sight-seeing, that Mr. Joseph chose to speak to his brother privately.

“Farrington, a word with you!”

“All right, Joe.” The younger brother’s gaze was drawn in from the absorbing beauty of the scene, to rest on the face so near his. “I’m ready for any kind of a talk, long or short.”

“A few words will do it.” Uncle Joe sat down quickly on a projecting crag and plunged at once into the thick of it. “I’ve found, Farrington, what at my time of life I never supposed I should find.”

“Eh? Oh, yes; it’s a perfect view, isn’t it?” Mr. Farrington Dodge swept the whole area again with his keen dark eyes.

“View!” exploded Uncle Joseph, getting up to sit down again in the same place. “I’m talking about a woman, sir; I’ve found a perfect one, I’d have you know.”

“Good gracious!” Mr. Farrington Dodge howled his surprise, then faced his brother helplessly.

“Fact,” said Uncle Joe, calmly. “A woman whom I have learned to respect thoroughly, then to love.”

“Go on.” His younger brother waved a feeble hand and clung to his rock with the other. “May I inquire her name?” he asked.

“Miss Brett—Sarah Brett,” said Uncle Joe, proudly.

“Sarah Brett!” repeated Mr. Farrington Dodge, vacantly.

“Sarah Brett,” again said Uncle Joseph, coolly; “and I thank the Providence that took you off and brought her on the stage where I could see her for three months, every day of which

she has grown into a perfect womanhood in all the slightly mixed experiences through which this family has passed."

"She is very good," said the younger brother, at this, waking up to truthful praise; "very good, indeed."

"Good!" ejaculated Mr. Joseph Dodge, sharply. "She is one woman of a thousand, and if she will take an old fellow like me, I shall be only too proud and happy to make her my wife."

"Joe, you forget." Mr. Farrington Dodge straightened himself involuntarily. "She is very good—invaluable, in fact—makes a splendid friend, and all that. I'm sure we have cause to trust and love her for Marian's sake, if no other." His voice trembled in spite of all his self-control as he mentioned the gentle little wife who had so thoroughly trusted the faithful, tried friend. "But when it comes to marrying, why, that is quite a different thing. Remember, Joe, you are a Dodge."

"And she is a Brett," cried Uncle Joe, as stiff as one of the beetling crags over their heads. "Well, I've said my say, Farrington," holding out his hand, "and that is the end of it."

"And I," exclaimed his brother, coming to himself to grasp it. "if your mind is made up, Joe, will rejoice heart and soul. You know that, old fellow."

"My mind is made up," said Uncle Joseph; "the trouble now is to see about her mind."

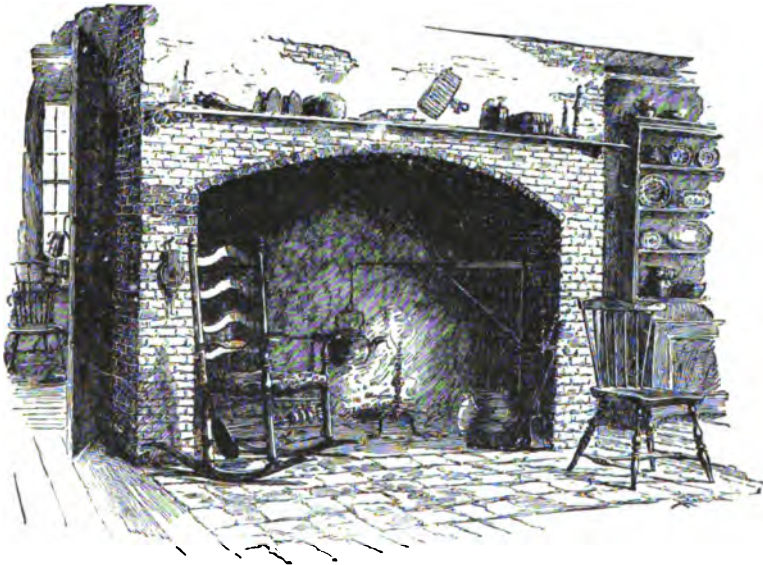
"Oh, my, ain't I glad de famb'ly has got all froo goin' Injun Passin' and such outlandish places, and now we can stay at home a spell!" Maum Silvy stood quite still, a week later, and surveyed the cabin kitchen with a radiant face. "Ain't dis yere a handy spot, though! Dere's my cheer right up by de fire. An' dere ain't no set tubs a clumberin' up de room—an'" —

"Why, Maum Silvy!" a merry voice broke in upon the delight resounding through the Dodge kitchen, "I thought your

soul had been longing for set tubs and all other modern improvements."

"Longin' for set tubs!" repeated Maum Silvy, scornfully, and turning around on Miss Harris; "whar'd you hear dat, honey. I 'spises modern 'provements; dis yere kitchen is jest to my taste now."

"Isn't the whole place just a dear!" cried the young lady, running in and beginning to prowl around Maum Silvy's most



"DERE, S MY CHEER A SETTIN' UP BY DE FIRE."

secret corners. "I love it, every stick and stone—oh, dear! and to think we must leave it all in two weeks; I positively can't bear to say the words."

Maum Silvy's round face furrowed up anxiously. "Tain't so very cold yet," she said, then hurried over to throw another stick on the blazing hearth fire.

"No," said Lily Harris, pulling up the swans-down edging

of her jacket closer around her throat; "but it will be before long—more's the pity. Well, where is everybody, Mammy? I've been asleep on my lounge, and now I can't find a soul."

"De young folks went off dere," said Maum Silvy, going over to the window to point down the road; "I 'xpect dey're at Mis Badger's."

"Well, where is dear Miss Brett?" asked the young lady; "I'd rather have her than all the rest of 'em, Mammy."

"I dunno, I'm sure; why, where kin Miss Sarah be?" said Maum Silvy; "she didn't tell me nothin' about goin' out. You say you kain't fin' her in her room, honey?"

"No, indeed; I went there the first thing," said Miss Harris, helping herself to a raisin from the plateful set out ready for seeding.

"Well, then, like enough she's gone over to Mr. Higginse; I mistrust she has," said Maum Silvy, thoughtfully, setting her hands on her hips to facilitate thought; "for one o' de chil'ren is sick, an' dat's enough to make Miss Sarah streak it fit to kill."

"Oh, dear, I suppose she is over there, then!" said the young lady, impatiently. "Well, I must wait till she comes home the best I can. Now I'm going to seed your raisins for you, Maum Silvy."

"Oh, no, honey!" cried Maum Silvy, protesting; "tain't fit work for you—kitchen work ain't. Look at dem white hands."

"I shall!" declared Miss Harris; "and if you don't get me a knife, Maumy," she added, imperiously, "I'll have to find one myself. Where are they?" she cried, running into the pantry.

"Oh, Lor!" ejaculated Maum Silvy, hurrying after, "I'll get you one, yer'll spile yer gown, Miss Harris, agin de flour bar'l—dar, honey, you come out an' I'll get one."

"See that you do, then," said the young lady, laughingly making her exit from the repository of Maum Silvy's implements

of trade; "or I shall certainly go back and help myself. There, you are just lovely!" as Maum Silvy came out with the smallest specimen of a knife she could find, polishing it upon her apron-end as she advanced.

"Ef she ain't dere over to de Higginses," she said, as she stood and watched the deft fingers at their task of raisin-seeding, working off a little of her amazement in silence, "pears like Miss Sarah must be about somethin' mighty pertickler."

"Well, I don't believe anybody wants her this afternoon quite so much as I do," said Miss Harris, fumbling over her raisins to pick out the soft, plummy ones first.

But she never made a greater mistake. Uncle Joseph Dodge was at this moment stalking off like a man to whom, a great desire being given, is bound to see it gratified at once.

Striding past Biny's poor little garden, he went with steady footsteps down a well-worn path that many feet had worn, to a ledge of rocks, a favorite resting-place for all of the family, and a nook in which to enjoy books or work.

As he neared the place he heard voices, and coming suddenly up to the little grove of pines at its base, he was somewhat startled to see a strange picture. There sat Aunt Sarah against a big rock, trying to sew under slightly aggravating circumstances. Her head was dressed with small pine cones, which Duke had stuck on in every conceivable way and position, while he, stepping back every now and then to watch the effect, was in the act of thrusting in another one over her left ear.

"Bless me!" ejaculated Uncle Joe, tumbling back at the spectacle, "I didn't know I was interrupting a case of hair-dressing."

"Isn't she pretty—isn't she real pretty?" chattered Duke, delighted to have a spectator of his skill. "Now, could you have done it so good?"

"Not if I was to be killed for it!" exclaimed Uncle Joe, critically. "I certainly couldn't, Duke, upon my word."

Duke was hopping from one set of toes to the other, and clasping his small hands in a transport.

"It seems wicked," said Miss Brett, quietly, "for me to sit here idling away the time when there is so much to do. But Duke couldn't be left alone without amusement, which he has had." She put her hand to her head with a smile as she finished.

For answer Uncle Joe sat down on the other end of the rock. "Duke," he said, to that frisky individual, who was prancing around joyfully before them, "there's a splendid place over back of those trees there full of pine cones—just elegant ones!"

"Where?" cried Duke, stopping his jig and coming up to Uncle Joe.

"Right straight off from these rocks." Uncle Joe took hold of the small shoulder emphatically and pointed with the other hand to a clump of trees and shrubs a short distance off. "There, my man, now start; you can get your apron full."

Without a word Duke got down on all fours, and slid off the face of the rock, his general way of travel.

Uncle Joe groaned to see his progress. "The little rascal won't be any time at that rate," he said within himself.

Aloud—"Miss Brett?"

She turned, from looking after the child, a troubled face to him, and lifted the gray eyes inquiringly.

"Something is wrong with the children," she thought, instinctively, "and he is going to tell me of it. I hope the children," she began.

"Let the children rest," he exclaimed, impatiently, "and breathe for yourself one moment. I've come to speak of myself."

"Oh, what is the matter?" cried Aunt Sarah, off her guard,

and looking up into the perturbed face. "Can I help? I will do anything in the world."

"You can!" said Uncle Joe, beaming on her gratefully. "It's nothing more nor less than"—

"I've got 'em, I have!" cried a small voice, gleefully, and two big eyes appeared above the top of the ledge, followed by the rest of Duke's body at an alarming rate.

"Well, oh!" snapped Uncle Joe, quite savagely, as Duke sat down and spread out his apron to inspect his treasures. "Hum—yes—oh! Those aren't the ones I meant, Duke. There are some bigger yet, very splendid ones!" he cried, animatedly.

"Where are they?" asked Duke, dropping the apronful and scrambling to his feet.

"Why, right near where you got these," said Uncle Joe, briskly. "You'll find them if you look smartly. Real big ones."

Down on all fours again went Duke, and the operation of descending the hill was repeated with all its variations.

"Yes; you can," reiterated Uncle Joe, with one eye on the retreating figure. "Miss Brett, I have found what I never expected nor cared in all my life to find, and that is—a wife! That is," he added, humbly, "if she will have me."

The gray eyes were at their widest extent now, looking full at him in sheer astonishment and distress.

"And so I am going to ask her," he continued, in a firmer tone. "this question—'will you be my wife?' I am going to tell her how I have learned to respect, admire and love thoroughly one whom I have seen in daily life for the past three months. What will she say?"

It was very still for a moment. They could hear Duke fretting away to himself; and a crowd of belated insects dallying over their heads, sent out a faint murmur through the soft October air.

“What will *you* say, Miss Brett?” said Uncle Joe, trying to be patient; but clenching his hand in despair on seeing Duke prepare to return. “If you can give the old fellow a bit of a liking”—he turned his kind, sturdy face into the strong light over against her—“it will be the making of him.”

“I don’t understand,” began Miss Brett, in a puzzled way.

“You see, no one could help loving you!” he exclaimed, honestly, with the enthusiasm of a boy.

She sat very still, her hands folded in her lap.

“There isn’t a single bit of a pine-cone down there,” grunted the little Duke. Then fortunately he caught his toe in a tree-root, and falling forward on the soft moss, his approach was a bit delayed.

“Thank Heaven for that!” breathed Uncle Joe; “but the little rascal is frightfully near. If you only had the least liking for me,” he blurted out in despair.

“If I had?” repeated Miss Brett, slowly. Somehow the gray eyes looked a little queerly just then. At any rate, Uncle Joe seemed to catch a gleam of hope, for he cried eagerly, “Could you learn to like me?”

“I have learned already,” she answered, honestly. Then added quickly, “but—it might not be best. I do so want to do what is right.”

Puff, puff. Up labored the Duke, manfully intent on vengeance for his long, fruitless search for the prolific patch of pine-cones. Uncle Joe turned suddenly over toward Miss Brett and held out his hand, that strong right hand, with a smile. “Come,” he said, and his fingers closed over the firm palm that obeyed.

“Mean, bad old things,” cried Duke, stalking up to them thoroughly out of temper, “those were down there! What you got hold of my Aunt Sarah’s hand for, Uncle Joe?” he shouted, standing still with wide eyes.

“Come along, old fellow!” cried Uncle Joe, radiantly, and

swinging him up to his broad shoulder. "I'll take you there myself, you stupid little thing."

"All right!" cried Duke, the third time going down the hill, while Aunt Sarah stole off to the house unperceived. "Now, aunty, I'll dress your head up beautiful when I come back."

"I never can live without you, aunty!" cried Cicely, that evening when it all came out, around the blazing hearth-fire, and down she went again into the depths of one of her father's big handkerchiefs, borrowed for the occasion; "never—never—never!"

Travers turned his back on them all, and paced to the window, looking out gloomily into the night.

"Don't try," said Uncle Joe, jubilantly. "You are coming to stay with us in our home. Ah, children, that is to be a home!"

"Aunt Sarah Brett, you always said you'd look after us," cried Travers, reproachfully, still not turning around.

"She isn't Aunt Brett any more!" exclaimed Cicely, tragically. "Oh, dear, dear, dear!"

"She's more than ever your aunty, I should say," cried Uncle Joe, affectionately. "Children, do forgive me," he begged, looking around on the defrauded little group; "and yet I've done you no harm, he added, brightening up. "Our house will always be your home. You've got to get a new one somewhere, thank fortune, so it might as well be with me—with us, I mean," with a happy look over at Aunt Sarah's blushing cheek. "So you see it's all right," he added, briskly.

"What are you going to have?" demanded the little Duke, who failed to realize the change in the family arrangements, and edging up, devoured by curiosity. "Any chickens?"

"Chickens, eh?" repeated Uncle Joseph. "Oh, yes, of course; at our country home you can have all you want, my man."

Duke trembled with delight; while Biny burst in—"I'd rather have pigs, an' scratch their backs."

"And there shall be pigs' backs by the dozen," cried the accommodating new householder, turning around on her, "for you, Biny. Oh, you must come; I couldn't get along without you."

"I'll come," said Biny, excessively pleased, and nodding her head frightfully, "jest whenever ye want me."

Duke drew one long breath, and marched up to Aunt Sarah, "I'm glad you're going!" he said.

Lily Harris, in a quiet corner of the fireside, folded her hands in supreme content. Here was an idyl spread before her, of what life might contain for the noble and true souls. She had happened on it by pure luck, and the girl drew her breath hard and looked at the two happy faces, middle-aged though they were, tinged with as roseate a glow of a beautiful affection, as if they were young things on the threshold of life:

"They're angels," the young girl cried to her own heart. "No, better than that—they are every-day-working saints."

"Father," cried Travers, suddenly turning in the pause that fell upon the little group, "don't feel badly, will you, if I don't want to go into your business."

The boy fairly ran over to the tall man's chair, and leaned upon it excitedly.

"Whew!" cried Mr. Farrington Dodge, startled out of his habitual composure; "this is a great time to tell of your feelings, it seems to me. This is Aunt Sarah's and Uncle Joe's evening."

"I know it," said Travers, shamefacedly; "but I thought you'd take it easier when they've just surprised us so."

"Perhaps I should, and then again perhaps I shouldn't," said his father, with considerable perturbation that he endeavored to conceal by poking the fire. "What do you want to be, pray tell?" he asked, his irritation growing.

"A doctor," said Travers, making a clean breast at once.

"A doctor!" Down fell the tongs with a rattle to the hearth. Mr. Farrington Dodge looked his son through and through.

"Yes, sir." Travers stood quite straight, now the matter was out. "That's just it; I want to be a doctor."

Mr. Farrington Dodge might be forgiven, that in the abrupt tumbling of all the fine plans for his son, he lost his temper so far as to say—"You knew what I had laid out for you to be, Travers, and for the first time in your life you have chosen to array yourself against me."

It was very dreadful. Cicely paled and clasped her hands, Aunt Sarah in the beautiful glow of her own happiness, felt it drop away for an instant at the pang over her boy's suffering. Uncle Joe started forward.

"Farrington—now that's all nonsense!"

"This isn't a matter for you to interfere in, Joseph," said his brother, getting out of his chair stiffly.

"Interfering! Who speaks of interfering?" cried Uncle Joe, bluffly.

Miss Brett drew a long breath, then leaned forward, and began her future life-work. She laid a gentle palm on the strong one grasping his chair-arm; Uncle Joseph whirled, looked down at it lying there so lightly, then up at her, the annoyance dropping from his face to leave a smile. "Oh, yes—er—yes, my dear; well, perhaps I did interfere, Farrington. Go ahead, do, and have it out with the boy."

"He called my Aunt Sarah 'dear'!" exclaimed the little Duke, still in a daze over the changed family relations.

"And why shouldn't I?" cried Uncle Joseph, radiantly. "Bless my soul, I'm going to, all my life now."

Travers stood directly in front of his father, and although quivering with the pain of the rebuke, he said gently—"Father, I don't mean to go against you—don't say that, but oh, I must be a doctor!"

"Must?" repeated Mr. Dodge, looking squarely at him. "That is a hard word for a boy to use toward his father."

"I must if I'm what God meant me to be," said Travers, firmly.

"Why?" Mr. Dodge couldn't help the question. It seemed to be wrung from him.

"Because it's the grandest profession in all the world!" cried the boy, with kindly eyes; "and because I've been with, for nearly all summer, a glorious man who's a doctor."

"Oh, papa!" cried Cicely, casting caution to the winds, and tumbling out of her chair to wind her arms about her brother, "do let Travers be a doctor if he wants to be! What should I have done when I broke my arm if it hadn't been for dear, dear Dr. Kingsbury; and Duke—oh, papa!"

"Just as my business is in splendid shape," cried Mr. Farrington Dodge, ignoring them both, to pace up and down the room irritatedly.

"Papa—papa!" Cicely left Travers, to run after him and tuck her hand into his. "Do let Travers be a doctor." Then she got up on her tiptoes and pulled the handsome head down so that she could whisper softly, "I think mamma would want him to be one."

Mr. Farrington Dodge started as if he would have thrust her aside, then said, brokenly, "Perhaps, daughter—well, it shall be as you like, Travers," looking over at his son, then left the room.

CHAPTER XXIX.

AUSABLE CHASM AND—HOME.

A CLOUD of dust in mad whirls forlornly chasing the last of two retreating buckboards, and back in the roadside a little knot of "Keene Flatters," Mrs. Badger in the center, to watch it all.

"You don't care," said one woman, a baby in her arms and another child just escaped from long clothes, hanging to her skirts, "if they do go, 'cause you're to be after 'em in no time."

"That's so," said Mrs. Badger, well satisfied; "as soon as I clean up a bit an' lock the house," with a backward glance at the cabin. "My brother John an' his fam'ly don't want me—there ain't much stirrin' here till spring. Then says I, I'll fly back an' get ready for my boarders."

"Are you really goin' to keep house for Mr. Farrington Dodge?" asked a curious native, with considerable awe.

"Yes," said Mrs. Badger, adjusting her slat sun-bonnet, "I be. Since him and her—meaning of course, my Mister Joseph and Miss Brett—concluded to get married, why, the other Mr. Dodge thought he'd be lookin' out to see if he could get me to keep his house. It's going to be right next door, you know—kinder handy, and most the same as bein' one fam'ly, as you may say."

"Certin'—certin'," assented the native.

"Did you say you thought maybe there'd be 'nuther weddin' amongst 'em before long?" asked a second "Flatter"; "I don't want to know, only I just thought I'd ask, Mis Badger."

"I didn't say," replied Mrs. Martha, with a far-away look, as if searching for the most elusive mountain peak.

"Oh!"

"Mercy me, who'd you think of, Mr. Hapgood?" cried the woman with the children. "Take care, Janey, if you'd fell down, you'd like enough broke your nose," as the small toddler made a headlong rush for the middle of the road and liberty.

Janey, with no visions of the woes of childhood, made a second dash, to be summarily seized by an intervening Providence in the shape of her mother's hand, pulled back and set down firmly on a roadside stone, from whence loud, angry shouts proclaimed her mind as to the injustice of the whole proceeding.

"Well, well, well!" ejaculated the mother, when she had done her duty to her offspring, "who did you think of, Mr. Hapgood, for mercy sakes, tell?"

"Well, I kinder thought, and then again I didn't know," said Mr. Hapgood, with a careful eye on Mrs. Badger, "but what that young fellow, Carll's"—

"You don't mean Miss Cicely?" cried another woman. "Like enough it'll be in time, it looks that way now; but she's a slip of a girl, and ain't out of her school frocks."

"It beats all how dull a woman can be if she's a mind to!" exclaimed Mr. Hapgood, quite incensed. "Young Carll's mother I'm talking of, and I'll bet a dollar Mr. Farrington Dodge marries her before the year's out."

Mrs. Martha Badger carried a face of imperturbable calm in the depths of her slat sun-bonnet.

"Oh—oh!" cried all the "Keene Flatters" together, Janey on her stone giving good assistance on the chorus.

"Ge-whitaker!" cried one of the men. "Why, he hasn't been on the Flats but two weeks."

"That's fourteen days," said Mr. Hapgood; "and—and no end of hours," gracefully waiving all attempt at arithmetic.

“Why, Zeke Johnson over in Keene hadn’t seen Tildy Smith that he married, only to one picnic, when he up and asked her. How long does it take for a man to make up his mind, I’d like to know?” he demanded, with the air of a person who knew the world well. “Won’t he get a pile of money, though!”

“There ain’t no need for him to marry money, I s’pose you know,” said Mrs. Martha, distinctly, “since he’s struck something, I don’t know just what, down in South Ameriky.” She folded her hands, and looked complacently around, as if the Adirondack wilderness, and the rest of the kingdoms of this world, were easily obtainable by Mr. Farrington Dodge. “Well, I must be going in to work,” and she made a movement toward the deserted cabin.

“Oh, Mis Badger, wait a minute,” cried Janey’s mother. “They’re all going to live in New York, and you with ’em?”

“Yes; we’re all going to live in the metrop’lis,” said Mrs. Badger, quite carelessly, as if her heart were not going like a trip-hammer at the mere thought of it. “They’ll stay up to the Ausable chasm only a few days till I can lock up here, and be off. Then I’ll run up after ’em and take a peek at things, then says I, we’ll steam off.”

“Well, I bet you a dollar,” cried Mr. Hapgood, as a clincher, “that he marries the widow before the year’s out.”

“Oh, Aunty,” Cicely was at this moment crying out, “we’ve left the little box of ferns—it was on my table; dear me, ho stupid of me!”

“Mrs. Badger will bring it,” said Aunt Sarah. “Don’t worry, child—she’s invaluable to pick up things.”

“And my traveling rug!” exclaimed Cicely, looking around the buckboard floor; “oh, dear!”

“Never mind; Mrs. Badger will”—

“And my shovel and hoe,” cried the little Duke, with a

wild pull at Pompey's chain. "We must go right straight back and get them."

"Hold on, there!" shouted Travers, from the following buckboard, where he had cleverly managed a seat next to Doris. "Pompey and all the Cæsars, you'll lose your dog!"

"No, I won't either," cried Duke, wholly diverted, and dragging Pompey away from an alluring edge. "There, lie down.



"THERE'S A STONE WALL BETWEEN THEM."

sir!" he commanded, huddling him up against Aunt Sarah's gown.

"How can we ever, ever leave this place?" cried Lily Harris, hanging out of her side of the buckboard to compass all that was possible of the glowing mountain-side.



THE GRAND FLUME.

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B **L**

"How? Why, by buckboard, to be sure," said Travers, not to be overtaken in a rush of sentiment.

"You saucy boy!" cried Lily.

"Oh, look, look!" Doris pointed down the swiftly flowing stream running by the road-side. "Isn't that a pretty picture!"

"What a pity that I haven't my sketch-book, and that we can't stop even if I had!" mourned Miss Harris.

"Well, here's some one else who has a sketch-book," cried Travers, "if you haven't, Miss Lily," at a sudden turn in the road. "Good gracious, that fellow looks as if he had something particular to say, and we had interrupted it," as they bowed by.

"There's a stone wall between them," laughed Lily; "and he's got his hands in his pockets—the idea!"

"And she's awfully homely," said Travers, critically. "No, I guess we haven't done any great harm."

"Just one more—oh, Travers, do get it!" called Cicely from the leading buckboard, and pointing an eager finger to a flaming bit from a roadside tree.

"Allow me!" cried Geoffrey Carll, leaping from the back seat; but Tom was too quick for him, and the branch was in Cicely's hand, and she was thanking them both and adding it to her big bunch of golden and red leaves.

Young Carll bit his lip and took a long look at Tom, striding on ahead.

"I'll not measure swords now," he said to himself; "he goes back to his school, poor fellow—let him have his little day." Accordingly Tom pulled down all the branches and walked into innumerable ditches and scaled fences, and in one or two instances climbed trees, and brought brilliant offerings of autumnal beauty to lay in Cicely's lap, without so much as an apparent glance from the young man in English clothes. But Geoffrey Carll took note of every leaf.

The next night, at the Lake View House, Tom Fisher was

rushing up-stairs three at a time, his usual way, when a head was thrust out from Mr. Farrington Dodge's doorway—"See here, will you," called the owner of the head. Tom came to a full stop, then obeyed, to find the door closed upon himself and the occupant of the room, who pointed with the open letter which he held, toward a chair.

"Sit down, Tom; I've something to ask you. Well, now," as Tom sank into the depths of a lounging chair, "how would you like to take up my buisness? Travers has deserted, you know." He tried to speak gaily, but made such a failure that he turned his back on the long figure.

"Eh, sir?" cried Tom, thinking he hadn't heard straight.

"My partner in New York writes that he wants a young man," said Mr. Dodge, with a wave of the letter at Tom, "to take Dickson's place—his health is broken and he's off to Europe; besides, Tom, I'd like you to represent me in the years to come when I'm gone, seeing my boy can't," and again he turned away

"But I suppose you want to be a professional man," continued Mr. Dodge, as the room was quite still, save for the crackling fire on the hearth; "and I don't blame you, Tom; boys must follow out their bent."

"But I don't care in the least for a profession," cried Tom, finding his tongue at last, and flinging his long legs recklessly about, he finally stood before Mr. Dodge with glistening eyes. "Don't think it, sir; on my honor, I want to be a business man."

"Here's your chance, then, Tom," cried Mr. Dodge, joyfully seizing his hand and wringing it; "and I'll say this much, my boy: next to my own son, I'd choose you to be my successor."

The next day was devoted to the Chasm. "I shall stay at

the hotel," said Mrs. Carll. "Don't urge me, my son; we won't have another scene like Indian Pass."

"You better try it, Mrs. Carll," advised Mr. Farrington Dodge; "there is nothing difficult about it."

"I am so afraid I shall be a drag upon some one."

"Nonsense, my dear Mrs. Carll! Let the others rush along, you and I will take it quietly." He had already established himself by her side, and Geoffrey seeing this, moved off, contented that his mother was well looked out for.

They all went down the series of steps to the entrance of the Chasm. "Prepare to shiver now," said Lily Harris, with a shrug; "dear me, I always hate these underground passages of nature, yet I invariably bring up at them, staring with all my might. Well, I suppose we've a devil's oven and a pulpit and a chair and all the rest of the Satanic furniture."

"Yes," said Miss Roberts, the governess; "I believe the list is complete."

"Miss Roberts," said Lily, glancing over the party, "doesn't it seem as if you and I were destined for each other's society for the remainder of this trip?"

The governess turned a puzzled face on the young lady.

"Look at us now. Those two," indicating Uncle Joseph and Aunt Sarah, "bless their dear hearts! no one would think of intruding on such bliss. Well, doesn't it strike you that Mr. Farrington Dodge and Mrs. Carll seem just a little preoccupied?"

Miss Roberts turned and surveyed the two in question.

"Well, now you speak of it," she slowly assented.

"And there is Geoffrey—poor fellow!" she said, softly, "and those young things. Well, now, Miss Roberts, it really looks as if you and I would have to make love to each other if we want the slightest bit of attention—look out, there are more steps!"

The governess laughed, and narrowly escaped tumbling down

the aforesaid thoroughfare. Just then a voice cried—"Come Duke, dear!" It was Cicely's clear call.

"Dear little unselfish thing!" cried Lily Harris, warmly; "I wonder if that child ever lost herself in her own pleasure; just look at her dragging Duke along."



MORE STEPS.

The governess glanced instinctively around at the father. "Don't look," begged Miss Harris, nervously picking at her companion's arm, her own gaze religiously set on the narrow line of blue sky above their heads; "the very air trembles with a proposal. Do come on."

Miss Roberts, with a sigh that there was not still another gentleman of marriageable age and intentions, stumbled on.

"Now I will personally conduct you," said Lily, going on with even footing, "my dear Miss Roberts, and enlighten your ignorance in regard to this most wonderful place."

"Oh, I am very well informed," said the governess, with a laugh. "I've been studying up the Chasm for a week, Miss Harris."

"Not if you have had it for breakfast, dinner and supper,

for a twelvemonth," said the self-appointed conductor, "can you say 'I know the Chasm.' Were you aware, for instance, that the village of Ausable Chasm was first called Birmingham, and that in 1877 it was"—

"Dear me, yes," said the governess; "that is the first thing I was told in the guide-book."

"In all your struggles for truth," said Lily, with added dignity, "although you may have discovered some unimportant things, and have arrived at the knowledge of the Horse-nail works, with the history of that enterprise from the laying of the first brick, I do feel sure that unless I personally conduct you through this labyrinth of nature, you will have cause for future regretful tears."

"We do seem to be conspicuously left together," said Miss Roberts, looking off to the little groups into which the party had resolved itself.

"Even the 'dark continent' has deserted us!" exclaimed Lily, with a wave of her slender hand in Maum Silvy and Biny's direction. "So come on, Miss Roberts, here we are at 'The Lodge'."

A little octagonal pagoda, with blue and amber glass sides, now received them, as a passage to the stairway leading one hundred and sixty-six feet down through the rock.

Here Lily gracefully assorted her portion of the company, tucking her hand in the small governess' arm.

"Let them go on," she whispered. "Fate has thrown you and I together; we'll stay so."

So the governess, "personally conducted," was led by Horse-shoe Falls, with its huge blocks smoother than the finest of mason-work could have finished them; Rock Island, and its charming little cascade, all the while subjected to a running fire of information from the prolific mind of the guide.

"This is the first 'Pulpit Rock' to be named as a part of

wonderful American scenery—I should say the only one,” corrected Miss Harris, as they approached it.

“Oh—oh!” cried the governess, with a little laugh.

“And here’s the Elbow, too,” said Miss Harris, coolly. “Look off there, Miss Roberts,” pointing to the left, “if you want to achieve Split Rock. It sha’n’t be on my conscience if you don’t see everything. Oh, don’t exclaim—wait till you get to the Devil’s Oven.”

When they did reach this last-named spot, Lily Harris paused and said, “This, too, is the sole ‘Devil’s Oven’ in the scenery of not only America, but of the world.”

“Isn’t it horribly poor taste,” cried Miss Roberts, “to name everything so after the Devil?”

“Why, no,” cried Lily; “I can’t see it so. Isn’t the Evil One rampant outside, and can’t you let him have one poor little chance in this gorge? I’m surprised at you, Miss Roberts. Well, then, you won’t like to be reminded that he possesses here an Easy Chair, a Punch Bowl, an Anvil, an”—

“The Punch Bowl is all right,” said the governess.

“Well, come on,” cried the guide; “this party won’t wait for us, and I’d be lost in more delightful surroundings. Just think, Miss Roberts, how it would sound in the New York papers—come!”

By the time the governess was safely piloted by Stalactite Cave, Hell Gate, and had seen Jacob’s Ladder, crossing the bridge over the river, in the same way “doing” the Punch Bowl, she had a great respect for the new talent in Miss Harris’ make-up.

“Let me rest,” she cried, sitting down on the first stone that did not present a slippery edge to the river; “and do stop talking.”

“Rest? The idea! You’re in the midst of the glories of nature, and you must see and hear.”

"Well, I'd rather have less glory," murmured the governess.

"Such insensibility," breathed Lily, gently, her eyes on the rugged precipices over their heads; then she put out her hand. "Come, now, we must get on to Jacob's well. It will be more appropriate to rest there."

This was really so interesting, that the guide forgot in her delight over the beautiful spiral rings, and tracing the probable course of the stones that had in centuries past worn their way through the rocks, that Miss Roberts revived a bit and really came out through the successive steps of their journey very creditably. So improved was she, that at the "Long Gallery" and Hyde's Cave she began to talk with as dangerous fluency as Miss Harris herself, causing that young lady no little alarm. And she was well pleased to overtake the others at the foot of the falls, where they were to take the boats waiting for them.

Then the enthusiastic exclamations pouring into her ear, changed to one of terror. "Oh, I can't ever get into one of those things!" cried the governess, grasping Lily's arm; "just think of being drowned in here!"

"Nobody ever was drowned here yet," said the guide, leaning on his oars.

"That makes it worse—to be the first. Oh, I can't get in!"

"Miss Roberts," said Lily, bending her slim neck to look into the little woman's terrified eyes, "here is a chance to be sublime. It only comes once or twice in a lifetime—let us take it now."

"There is nothing sublime at being drowned in a hole like this," cried the governess, irritably, and looking at the narrow cut between the solid rocks, then down into the black-water.

"Well, get in, anyway," said Lily, with a gentle push, "sublime or not. There—well, Travers," across to one of the other boats, "I suppose this is just to your taste."

"And I should say to yours," cried the boy, back again, looking at her sparkling eyes.

"She has talked me to death," declared the governess, sitting well forward on the seat and clutching the boat-side.

"Oh—oh!" disclaimed Miss Harris, with innocent blue eyes, "if all you good people could only have heard her eloquence!"

"Well, both of you would have been beaten had the doctor been with us," said Uncle Joe; "he has a tongue, now!"

"When does Dr. Kingsbury come to New York?" asked Miss Harris, not forgetting to accomplish every detail of the delightful progress they were making, as she waited for the answer.

"Oh, not till some time in November—he'll get snowed in if he don't look out," said Uncle Joe.

"How can you bear it, Travers?" cried Lily, mischievously.

"Oh, it's my time for being sublime," said Travers, back again.

Lily Harris relapsed into silence, only broken by the gliding of the boats on the dark, narrow stream, and the bits of chat and laughter sounding oddly enough in their reverberations from the rocks.

"It's just like life, I suppose," she said to her own heart, as they slowly wended their way through the "Grand Flume," shut in to only a glimpse of the sky; "yet we shall come out into the sunshine when it's time."

Aloud she said, with her old insouciance—"Just think—to-morrow we actually take the train for New York!"

Cicely, running along the main street of Port Kent, a roll in her hand, met Tom.

"Photographs!" he said, with a smile, and laying a finger on the parcel.

"I couldn't help it, Tom," said Cicely, with a little laugh; "I had so few."

"Only a hundred or two," laughed Tom, "more or less."

“Oh, Tom!” cried Cicely, “really and truly I had only ten of the Chasm; and just think how my book would look without any more of that dear, lovely place! Why, I should be ashamed to show it to the Buxton girls, and Tom, papa says I may go and visit Patty Hitchcock just after Christmas; only fancy *visiting* in Buxton!”

“I’m afraid when I go back to Buxton,” said Tom, slowly, with a sidelong glance at her, “it will be only visiting, Cicely.”

“Have you found another school, Tom?” cried Cicely, eagerly; “and oh, is it near New York? I do hope so,” all in one breath.

“Well, not exactly a school,” said Tom, his breath coming quick and hard. “And yet it is, Cicely; only I’m to be the scholar. And it is in New York.”

Cicely tucked her photograph-roll under her arm, and if Tom hadn’t rescued the parasol, it would have sought the dust of the Port Kent thoroughfare; but regardless of all, she clapped her hands like a child.



CICELY, A ROLL IN HER HAND, MET TOM.

"Oh, how very fine!" she cried, in a glow that entirely suited Tom. "Where are you going to be, Tom?" at last she asked.

"Cicely," said Tom, stopping short on the pavement to look at her, not mindful of the curious passers-by, "your father is to make a business man of me. I'm to be with him."

"Oh, Tom!" The color flew out of Cicely's round cheek, leaving her quite pale.

"Are you glad?"

"I'm just as glad as I can be, Tom!" Cicely's face was rosy enough now. "Only think how lovely—our Adirondack party to really and truly all live in New York. And to-morrow we shall be there, at home!"

THE END.



"TO-MORROW WE SHALL BE HOME!"

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE author desires to make grateful acknowledgment of the courtesy of Mr. S. R. Stoddard of Glens Falls, N. Y., who kindly extended to her the permission to use many of the pictures contained in this volume, selected from his large and valuable collection of photographs.

Mr. Stoddard, as is well known, has done more by his pictures and his pen, than any other person, to open up the great Adirondack Wilderness to the notice of the public; and it is due to him to say that the loving enthusiasm he has brought to his work, has invested the Great Forest with a charm that every intelligent tourist greatly appreciates.

The seasons that the writer of this book passed in the Adirondack Wilderness were filled with incidents similar to those here narrated, and with travel over the same routes, her party also making their head-quarters at Keene Valley.

BOSTON, MASS., September, 1890.

