

MISS HADLEY'S FINISHING SCHOOL

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By

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To My Mother

MISS HADLEY'S FINISHING SCHOOL

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I.

It was late afternoon of a warm September day and Lower Monroe avenue, the principal business street of Gaynesboro, Ohio, was thronged with people. It was the busiest hour of the day—closing time. Automobiles glided or rattled by, street cars, loaded and more often overloaded clanged ahead in both directions while pedestrians hurried to and fro or stood on corners looking anxiously up and down the street watching for an opportunity to dart across. Neither traffic officers nor traffic lights had yet reached the little, mid-western city. On a corner, in front of a drug store, a newsboy was yelling:

"Times! Times! All about the h-o-r-r'ble murder!"

Fannibel Hadley was one of the "hurrying throng," and, as she reached the corner the boy said, "Wan't a paper, lady?" She shook her head then catching the boy's eye seemed to change her mind. "Why, yes, I'll take one," she said as she extracted two pennies from her purse.

"It's on the third page—the murder," the boy said, as he deposited the pennies in his box, "I guess it don't 'mount to much," he added apologetically, "happened 'way off some'eres—nobody we know."

Fannibel smiled as she rolled the paper tightly and thrust it in the open-mouthed, straw bag she was carrying. Catherine, she knew, would not approve of this purchase. Papers were something they could

do without. A square further on, the street car turned aside and diagonally entered a little park. This marked the end of the line and the beginning of Upper Monroe avenue.

For years Upper Monroe avenue had been the most exclusive—the most aristocratic—residential street in Gaynesboro. The stately mansions of brick or stone, standing on the brow of a gently sloping hill, seemed to look down with a patrician air on the rest of the town. Their white columned porticos and broad, vine-shaded verandas, their beautiful, well-kept grounds with winding driveways, and cleanly scrubbed, red, brick walls, proclaimed them to be homes of wealth and refinement. A visitor to the town was always informed that the “best people” lived out on Upper Monroe.

But this was in an earlier day. In the words of a contemporary poet,—“nothing endures”—and so the passing years had brought changes to the aristocratic avenue. Old residents had passed away, one after another of the old mansions had been razed, and the grounds of from five to ten acres had been divided into small building lots. On these had sprung up snug bungalows, English type cottages and two-family houses of stucco or wood, with small evergreens or bayberry bushes nestling against their foundations, with boxes of petunias on the porch railing and smooth, green, little lawns stretching out to the cement sidewalk. It was still a pretty street but the older residents shook their heads sadly when talking over the changes time had wrought.

A few of the old mansions remained intact. The most notable among them was the Hadley Place, a two and a half story stone house that stood quite a distance from the street on the highest point of the hill. The grounds were surrounded by a stone fence

above which a hedge of box grew in riotous, untrimmed profusion. A narrow, flagstone walk wound alongside the pebbled driveway that led from the massive iron gates to the front portico.

During the régime of the first owner of the place, Cuthbert Hadley, the grounds had been beautiful and artistic to a degree. But years of neglect had left little besides the tall, elm trees, a few clumps of shrubbery and the remnants of a stone pergola leading to a now stagnant pond that had once been gay with water lilies.

Fannibel quickened her step as she reached the corner of the grounds. A light wind billowed the skirt of her pink, voile dress, and brown leaves—drifted in little piles on the sidewalk—crunched under her feet.

She turned in through the gateway—always wide open because, owing to rusty hinges, the gates could not be shut. She frowned thoughtfully as she wended her way up the driveway.

"The idea of trying to live in a place like this on nothing a year," she thought, "I do hope Catherine will see the futility of her plans."

She further hoped that Henry Brandt had come and that he had not yet gone. She wanted to hear his talk with Catherine—to help out with the argument if she could.

From the hall she heard cousin Henry saying, "Miss Emily Elliot is willing to pay sixteen thousand dollars, spot cash, and you couldn't do better than that, as Gaynesboro property is rated, not if you waited ninety-nine years."

"But the mansion is not for sale, Henry," Catherine returned, in a most decided tone, "I thought I made that perfectly clear five years ago—just after

Father's death. I cannot understand your opening up the subject again."

"Thought you might have changed your mind. See here, Catherine, this money, your half of it, rightly invested, would bring you in a snug little income. As for Fanny, she's got a good head, she might go in for some sort of business—something safe and practical."

It was well for Henry Brandt that he kept his face downward and so missed the flash of scorn that Catherine bestowed upon him.

"Henry," she began, when she had found her voice, "there is simply no use in our trying to discuss family affairs. Our viewpoints are too divergent. You can speak calmly of a member of your family—a female member—entering the marts of trade. For my part I would rather starve, literally starve, than to see Fannibel do what you suggest. Dearly as I love my sister, and I do love her; I would make any sacrifice, endure any hardship for her sake; yet I should rather see her buried than have her enter the ranks of working women."

Henry Brandt smothered an impatient exclamation. "You're way behind the times, Cathie," he said. "Women nowadays do about as they please, and you'll find mighty near as many women as men in business."

"The *men* of my family were not in trade," Catherine retorted, "my father and grandfather were lawyers. And—" here she raised her eyes significantly to a portrait that hung above the mantel; the portrait of a gentleman in a ruffled shirt, lace-trimmed coat and high choker collar.

"Oh, I know about the governor," Mr. Brandt returned, in a tone of forced patience, "you're forgetting that he was *my* great grandfather too. A

fine, old gentleman no doubt, though I never heard much about him. But, if you'll come down to facts, Catherine, you'll realize that all the money the Hadley family have ever had, came through trade. It all came from old Amos Hadley, fur trader and Indian fighter. I've often wondered what sort of man the old fellow was. Must have cheated the Indians out of their skins—literally and figuratively—to have amassed the fortune he did, in that day and age. But I'll say for him he didn't squander it. He had thought for those who were to come after him. And so did his son, Daniel. Daniel may have been a one talent man but he kept what was given to him and even added a little to it. If only old Cuthbert—”

Fannibel divided an apprehensive glance between Mr. Brandt and her sister. She was sorry the subject should have gotten switched to their grandfather, Cuthbert Hadley. Henry and Catherine could never agree on this subject and the argument, that was likely to follow, would surely bring on one of Catherine's headaches.

“Cousin Ellen” (Mrs. Brandt) evidently had the same thought for she interposed, in her characteristic soft, peace-making voice:

“Now, Henry I wouldn't say any more. Let bygones be bygones. I know how you feel about keeping the place, honey,” she continued turning to Catherine, “but it's just like Henry says—times have changed. This big house was all right in your grandpa's day—with a family and company comin' and goin'—but for you girls—”

But Henry Brandt's temper was aroused. “It *wasn't* all right in Cuthbert Hadley's day,” he stormed, “this mansion was in keeping with the rest of his folly. He couldn't afford it, nor the money

to keep it up, nor the hordes of company, the foreign travel—he couldn't afford any of it! He not only squandered his inheritance but piled up debts for someone else to pay. Bah, the very thought of Cuthbert Hadley gives me a pain in the neck."

Catherine was white with anger. "I suppose you'll begin maligning my father next," she said, quietly.

"Not on your life. There's a man I take off my hat to. When I think of how he buckled down to work to pay off his father's debts and help the rest of us on our feet! You girls couldn't think more of uncle Bob than I do. I owe him more than I ever have anyone and that's why I've always stood by you and Fannibel."

"Stood by us?" Catherine raised her brows inquiringly.

"Well, giving you advice," he returned, with an embarrassed chuckle, "we lawyers are supposed to *sell* advice, you know."

"He means sending us great baskets of provisions, paying our doctor's bills and all the other things he's done for us," Fannibel burst forth.

But Mr. Brandt silenced her with a look. "Seems like we're getting clear away from the subject in hand," he said, "discussing Cuthbert Hadley's mistakes and Uncle Bob's sacrifice don't get us anywhere. Catherine, I wish you wouldn't give me your last word about this sale—it isn't a matter to be decided hastily. Suppose you talk it over with Fannibel—she's as much interested as you are, you know."

"No, my sister and I have talked this matter over—many times. She knows my views. Please remember this time that my answer is final."

"Oh, nothin's ever final," Henry Brandt chuckled, good-naturedly, "it's a woman's privilege to change

her mind, you know, and if you ever do come to seeing things in a—r—*different* light, let me know. Hope it won't be too late," he added, ruefully.

In the bustle of leavetaking that followed Cousin Ellen whispered in Fannibel's ear, "I brought over a few things for your supper, honey. I knew, in reason, you'd be hungry and wouldn't feel like cookin' much—busy as you've been all day. I slipped 'em on the kitchen table as we came in."

"Oh, Cousin Ellen, you shouldn't have! Of course it's sweet of you, but you do so much—you spoil us."

"Nonsense! It's nothing at all," the lady returned as she adjusted her hat before the hall mirror.

As Henry Brandt took Fannibel's hand in parting, she dropped her voice almost to a whisper as she asked: "Did you tell her?"

"Not a word—didn't have a chance," he returned, "you'll have to break it to her yourself. Keep a stiff upper lip, girl. I'll stand by you."

Fannibel waved a final goodby from the front door and as the automobile glided down the driveway she turned to Catherine saying, "I'll get our supper now—I'm awfully hungry."

"Very well—I'd like my tea," the older sister returned, "but bread and butter will be enough. I don't care for a heavy meal."

This was Catherine's usual suggestion. She never cared for a heavy meal. People ate too much, she often declared.

A few minutes later she arose and went to the kitchen. The tea-kettle was singing merrily and Fannibel was taking the things out of the basket that Mrs. Brandt had left.

"Just see what Cousin Ellen brought us," Fannibel said, enthusiastically, as she placed the contents of Mrs. Brandt's basket on the table. There

were veal loaf—several generous slices—potato salad, hot rolls, two molds of blanc mange and a small cake.”

“Isn’t she a generous dear,” Fannibel gushed, as she poured hot water into the teapot and drew two chairs to the table.

“Oh, Ellen *means* well,” Catherine conceded, “but really I never saw people who seemed to care so much for food as she and Henry do. Such heavy, hearty meals. It’s positively in bad taste to indulge the appetite that way. I read such an interesting article the other day,” Catherine continued, “it was about a French lady—a member of a most notable family. She was in reduced circumstances—in actual want, in fact. She lived for weeks on thin bread and butter and tea but she always dined off a damask cloth with silver candlesticks and flowers—hothouse flowers when they were obtainable. It stated that the last money she spent was for hothouse roses.”

“What an esthetic lady!” Fannibel commented, flippantly.

Catherine frowned then wrinkled her brow as in deep thought. “Wasn’t it Ruskin who said, ‘If you have two loaves of bread, sell one and buy a white violet’—or was it a white hyacinth?”

“Something like that,” Fannibel returned, her mouth full of food. “But I wouldn’t,” she declared, emphatically, “if I had two loaves of bread I’d trade one for some meat—veal loaf for instance. My, isn’t cousin Ellen’s new girl a good cook?”

Catherine sighed and shook her head. Of course Fannibel was only teasing but really she didn’t seem to realize the importance of the refinements of life. She should remember that she was a Hadley. Catherine’s pride in her family was justified. Ever since the days of old Amos, the Indian fighter, the

Hadleys had been one of the most prominent families of Gaynesboro. Cuthbert Hadley had married a daughter of the Governor of Maine, and this marriage had given his descendants another line of illustrious ancestry—a strain of the bluest of blue blood. Not only that but through the marriage of a cousin of Mrs. Cuthbert's they were connected with the nobility of England.

Catherine began regaling her sister with tales of the past grandeur of the Hadleys but Fannibel listened absently and with a look of forced patience. Indeed she seemed to have something on her mind and, when her sister paused for an instant, she began:

"Cathie, we've just been going around in circles ever since Father left us."

"Going around in circles! Why, whatever do you mean?"

"Well, aimless, you know. Not getting anywhere."

Catherine regarded with a look of dignified reproof. Fannibel was in one of her perverse moods. She must not be encouraged in it. "I consider that we have done very well," she said, "we have kept our beautiful home, maintained ourselves in comfort and our social position is intact."

"But Cathie, we couldn't have gotten along at all if Cousin Henry hadn't helped and if we hadn't had all the furniture to sell. As for our social position, we never go anywhere or have any company."

"Now Fanny, dear, you are looking on the dark side of the picture. As you know I don't mind hardships or privations for myself, as long as our friends do not suspect our circumstances—and I am sure they do not. They suppose that it is my neuritis that keeps me from mingling in society. As for you, you

do go out. You seem quite popular with the young people of your set. I have been so happy to see you enjoying yourself."

"I don't know about enjoying myself but I certainly have wasted a lot of time, playing tennis and hiking about. But that's all over."

"Don't say that. Of course it isn't over—everything is going to come out all right I am sure. And now if you will excuse me I'll go back to my sewing. I must finish those little dresses so that I may get them off in the morning mail. When you have finished your work come to the parlor. I have something to tell you."

Catherine did fine sewing through the Woman's Exchange down in Cincinnati. She fondly believed that no one—that is none of their friends—knew of this. She always explained, when some one dropped in, and found her stitching away, that she was making Christmas presents.

Five years before Robert Dale Owen Hadley, father of Catherine and Fannibel, had suddenly passed away—a heart attack, the doctors said. When the estate was settled it was found that there remained the mansion and a few thousand dollars, enough to provide for taxes. Henry Brandt, who had administered the estate, had strongly advised selling the property and investing the money in some safe bonds.

"You and Fannibel could come with us," his wife, Cousin Ellen, had hospitably suggested, "we've plenty of room. Of course you could pay a little board if it would make you feel more independent. You might get a place to clerk at Selkirk's, Cathie, and Fanny could go on to the university and prepare to teach; or she might take a business course."

Catherine had turned a deaf ear to these sugges-

tions. She firmly refused to sell the home, nor would she listen to Fannibel's fitting herself for any kind of work. "My sister will take her place in society as befits a young lady of her family and social position," she informed the Brandts, in a tone that brooked no argument.

Catherine had not drifted aimlessly as Fannibel seemed to think. As soon as she had learned that they were left without income she had begun to consider what she might do to earn money without bringing reproach to the house of Hadley. She decided to write—for the magazines at first and, eventually, novels. If she became an author like Elizabeth Barrett Browning or Mary Roberts Rhinehart! Well, surely that would be no blot on the family escutcheon! As for Fannibel, after enjoying the usual round of gayety, she would marry. Why not? Wasn't she the most attractive young girl in Gaynesboro? Didn't she have family, beauty, brains, social position for a background? Of course they hadn't money but no one was supposed to know that; and, anyway, she wouldn't want Fannibel to marry a fortune hunter.

So Catherine had set about writing her stories and poems. That they came back in due time did not wholly discourage her for they were always accompanied by such courteous letters from the editors, assuring her that the story or poem, as the case might be, had not been returned because of lack of merit. So she kept trying. In the meantime, in order to obtain ready money, she began taking in the fine sewing. Her writing was mostly done in the evenings, in the privacy of her own room, and so Fannibel did not realize that Catherine's eye trouble was not entirely due to the needlework.

Oh, the years had not been empty! They had

been filled with hopes and plans, with heartaches and disappointments of which no one but Catherine herself knew.

They had not been entirely dependent on Catherine's needle for support. There had been, as Fannibel said, the sale of furniture. Mrs. Cuthbert Hadley, a descendant of an old, colonial family, had inherited much beautiful, old furniture. There were highboys and lowboys, chests, wonderfully carved and of rich, oriental wood; there were chairs and sofas, the work of renowned cabinetmakers, and more old china, silverware and bric-à-brac than is usually found in any one family. From time to time Catherine had been induced to part with some of these treasures to friends. She had no idea that her friends had concocted this plan of "helping the Hadleys out."

But hope is the last string to be broken on the harp of life and Catherine was not yet ready to acknowledge herself beaten. She had a plan, one that would not only provide for the creature comforts of herself and Fannibel but would add greatly to their social prestige. "How surprised the child will be," she thought as she threaded her needle by the kerosene lamp. Fannibel came in while Catherine was engaged in this reverie and dropped into the low chair on the opposite side of the table. She rocked in silence for a few moments, her brows wrinkled in thought, then she began:

"Cathie, there's something I want to tell you—something I must tell you. I tried to lead up to it at supper but didn't succeed so I'll come to the point at once. I am going in business." As Catherine echoed, "In business!" She continued, "Yes. Hazel Riggs and I are opening an Eat Shoppe. We've been planning it a long time—ever since she graduated

from the Domestic Science school. She will see to the cooking, plan the menus—all that sort of thing—while I look after the business end. We've rented the old Haller place," she continued, as Catherine maintained a stony silence,—“such a good location—and they are fixing it up lovely for us. Our color scheme is to be blue and gray and it will be carried out in tables, chairs, dishes and interior decorations.

“I suppose you are wondering where the money is coming from,” she smiled ignoring her sister's frozen look, “but Cousin Henry is lending me enough for my part. I gave him my note. He didn't approve at first—was afraid we might not succeed—but I talked him over. He saw that I was awfully in earnest.”

“But why didn't you talk it over with me?” Catherine finally said.

“Because I was afraid you would object—you've talked me out of plans before you know—and this time I am determined to go on.”

“And I am equally—or shall I say *more* determined that you shall not. I absolutely forbid your going a step further in such a mad scheme.”

“Forbid! Why Catherine!”

“Absolutely. As the elder sister and therefore the head of the family, I feel that I am within my rights in taking this stand. A Hadley keeping a restaurant! The thought is abhorrent. And now the matter is settled and I hope you will never refer to it again. You may tell the Riggs person in the morning that you have talked the matter over with your sister and she does not consider the plan feasible. That is all there is to it.”

“But Catherine,” Fannibel began.

“Not another word. Don't hope that I shall relent. I have a plan which I had decided to divulge to you this evening. Perhaps I should have told you

sooner but I felt that you were too young to be burdened with business matters. The plan I am about to unfold is altogether in keeping with our social station and family traditions. I am going to open a school."

"A school!"

"A finishing school."

"A—a finishing school!"

"Fannibel please do not echo in that school girl way. I shall explain."

Fannibel leaned back in her chair, with growing apprehension, while Catherine proceeded to outline the aims of her school which was primarily intended to fit young ladies for polite society. The general outline of study included courses in music, art, literature, dancing, outdoor sports, which included tennis, horseback riding, swimming and similar recreations. There were to be visits to historical points, hikes, picnics, and so on.

Long before Catherine had finished her outline Fannibel had begun to suspect that her sister had been reading the catalog of some well-established school.

"And now I have a surprise for you," Catherine continued, as she laid aside her "outline" and opened a table drawer from which she took out a current number of a leading, eastern magazine, "I have inserted advertisements in our local papers and in some of the leading magazines. This came today." She turned to the advertising department marked "educational" and reaching the magazine to Fannibel said, "There, read that!"

The advertisement announced the opening of "THE HADLEY FINISHING SCHOOL, Miss Hadley, Principal; Miss Fannibel Hadley, Associate

Principal." The advertisement was long and calculated to impress prospective students.

"There! Now you see why I could not, for a moment, consider your restaurant, or whatever you had elected to call it," Catherine said.

"But Catherine," Fannibel, returned, as the magazine dropped from her hands, "we are utterly unfitted to undertake anything like this. Even if you succeeded in getting scholars—which I don't believe you would, there would have to be teachers—one for each branch, servants, and our household expenses would be enormous."

"We shall have to have servants of course, but we ourselves will attend to the teaching."

"We? Why, we're utterly untrained. What could we teach?"

"I shall teach music and literature. I played very nicely before we sold the piano—as you must remember. I played *Monastery Bells* at a public entertainment once and that is a difficult piece—a *very* difficult piece. Professor Smallfoos told me so when he gave it to me. Also I flatter myself I am competent to select books suitable for young girls and we have the public library. As for the other branches; you will teach art—you took drawing lessons at the Miss Elliots you know and I recall that your thimbles and chairs were quite artistic. You play tennis nicely, know how to dance, to swim. I shall not encourage swimming, however, as I consider it dangerous. Oh, we shall get along splendidly. Girls who contemplate serious study would not select a finishing school. Our institution will be for those who only wish to learn social graces, to acquire poise, become perfected in the rules of etiquette in all its phases. I shall stress that point—indeed I have stressed it—in my circulars. But Fanny, dear,"

she added in a plaintive tone, "you are strangely lacking in interest. I am disappointed. I expected—I need your sympathy and support."

"Sorry," Fannibel said, as she arose from her chair, "but I'm afraid I haven't any more confidence in your plan than you have in mine. Of course I can't forbid your going on with it," she added, with a smile, "but I don't hope that you will succeed. I may as well say—it will save further argument—that I do not intend to give up my plan either. We shall open the Eat Shoppe tomorrow." And before Catherine could reply she had left the room.

II.

It could hardly be said that Fannibel's business venture was an unqualified success from the beginning. True there had been many patrons during the first week and the young women had received much extravagant commendation for their courage and enterprise. But the public is inclined to be fickle and, once its curiosity is satisfied, likely to forget. There had followed days good and bad. "Fat and lean," Hazel Riggs said.

"It's like that story in the Bible of the famine in Egypt—where the seven lean years ate up the seven fat years, or something like that," she said one day.

But sometimes it seemed worse than that—when the "lean days" far outnumbered the "fat days." The girls found it hard to keep their courage to the sticking point.

"But we *must*," Fannibel would say, "we just can't afford to fail after risking so much."

Catherine maintained her air of stern disapproval. "I am not in the least interested in your restaurant or whatever you call your business," she said one day when Fannibel tried to talk things over with her. Henry Brandt, who took his lunch at the "shoppe" every day, looked on and offered helpful suggestions.

"Give 'em plenty of good, wholesome food and charge accordin'," he said. "Give bigger pieces o' meat with the business men's lunches and cut out the desserts. If they want pie they'll be willing to pay extra for it."

This proved good advice. More and more busi-

ness men began coming in at noontime while women, out shopping, dropped in for a cup of tea and a sandwich or a piece of pie but more often decided to take the full meal. In due time the girls found that they had a regular clientele.

As the weeks passed evidence that the business was proving a profitable one was not lacking. With the first cold days a base-burner was set up in the back hall—before the fireplace—and a boy came mornings and evenings to fill it with coal and carry away the ashes. A new, roomy davenport had taken the place of the old settee in the front parlor. Then there were extravagances that Catherine's thrifty soul found hard to condone. For instance fresh eggs for breakfast and a better grade of coffee than they had been using. The crowning item was a car. A second hand car to be sure but a neat, stylish little coupe at that. Fannibel soon allayed Catherine's fear that she was indulging in reckless expenditure.

"It isn't an extravagance but an economy," she declared, "saves time. Anyway it only cost a song. Mrs. Selkirk practically gave it to me. She wanted to get Helen a new one for Christmas."

Then, one day, just the week before Thanksgiving, Fannibel took an afternoon off and with Catherine went shopping. Poor Catherine who hadn't purchased anything new for six years found herself being fitted out in a new, silk dress, French blue crêpe de chène strictly up-to-date in style, a new hat that exactly suited her and a fur-trimmed coat. There were other things—shoes, silk stockings, warm underwear and other accessories. Poor Catherine was too bewildered to remonstrate even when Fannibel insisted on getting a wine-colored silk and wool gown for afternoon wear at home.

"You need just that kind of a dress, Cathie," she said, "and this suits you to a T."

"But, Fannibel, could you afford all this," Catherine gasped, as she found herself beside her sister in the little taupe coupe, skimming along on their homeward way.

"Yes. I couldn't have though if it hadn't been for Cousin Henry. I had meant to pay another installment on his note this month, but I put it up to him—told him how badly you needed things—and he said, go ahead. Of course I know and *he* knows that he won't lose anything. I'm paying interest on the note."

The Hadley finishing school had not yet materialized. Catherine had persistently kept her advertisements in both the Cincinnati paper and the eastern magazine. She had watched hopefully for the postman but applications for admittance to the school were never forthcoming. At times she was almost ill with hope deferred. She couldn't understand this last failure. There were, scattered over this broad land, many girls whom she felt sure must be in need of just the kind of help she had anticipated giving. "And we are so eminently fitted for that kind of life. Fannibel is instinctively a lady. She would fill the position of associate principal of a fashionable school with dignity and grace. And now—" Tears of humiliation and self-pity coursed their way down her cheeks.

The sight of her sister gliding up the driveway in the taupe coupe, trim, alert with an air of happiness and prosperity, would have been gratifying had not that hateful spectre, "The Hadley-Riggs Eat Shoppe," lurked in the background. It spoiled everything. What did pretty clothes matter? What

did anything matter since the house of Hadley had dropped from its high pinnacle; since one of its members had allied herself with wage earners and shop keepers.

"But we've never—never since I can remember—been so comfortable," Fannibel once reminded her when she had said something to this effect.

"There are things of more importance than material comfort," Catherine returned sharply.

On New Year's day, Mrs. Penn, wife of Major Penn, a retired army officer, gave a reception. Mrs. Penn always gave a reception on New Year's. This was a yearly event of Gaynesboro and the most important social function of the season. There was always a lengthy account of the affair in the next morning's paper, with a list of the names of guests and a description of the gowns of the most prominent ladies present. The Hadleys had always been invited to these affairs but Catherine had attended but one. That was two years before her father's death. This reception had been one of her most cherished memories. She had worn a Burgundy silk dress, with sleeves of chiffon and a black hat with willow plumes. Her father, in her eyes, had been the most distinguished looking gentleman in the room and every one had seemed to treat him with such marked respect.

Others remembered how the Hadleys had looked that day. Catherine, tall, slender and graceful, with dreamy, dark eyes, had been striking in her dark, red silk dress and plumed hat. And R. D. O., with his drooping, white mustache and erect, graceful bearing *had* been distinguished looking. Also he had been treated with marked respect. He was always treated with respect wherever he happened to be,

and no man deserved the respect and good will of his fellow citizens more than did "Bob Hadley."

That had been practically Catherine's last appearance in society. The following year her father's ill health had kept her at home. Since then she had had nothing suitable to wear. She had been wondering about this reception. Would Mrs. Penn include them or would she, owing to Fannibel's work, leave them out. She was quite surprised therefore when, a week before New Year's the invitations came and with them a cordial, little note asking her to "pour." This was an honor indeed. She could hardly believe her eyes. Fannibel was radiant. "Why this is lovely, Cathie. Perfectly scrumptious. You'll have such a good time. Got your new blue dress just in time, didn't you?"

"What will you wear, Fanny?"

"Oh, I can't go—not this year. I explained to Mrs. Penn. We have several dinner parties to take care of on New Year's."

"Oh, Fannibel, do you think I'd go one step—"

"Why, there isn't a thing in the world to hinder you," Fannibel said, "and you *must* go," she added, "the Penns are so lovely. They been almost regular patrons of the shop."

"Oh!" So they knew about the eat shoppe. Catherine had hoped they didn't. She hesitated about accepting the invitation. She felt that she could not, under existing conditions, face the public. The Penns might condone Fannibel's action, they were notably broad-minded, kind-hearted folks, but others were not likely to be so charitable. There had always been, there always would be, a wide gulf between the upper classes and the trades people. "I know how mama felt about these things," she mused. Mrs. R. D. O. Hadley had felt very strongly indeed

on this subject. She was a good woman but she was also "a perfect lady." Like the Cranford ladies she had learned to practice "elegant economy," she darned stockings, sewed neat patches on underwear, kept a close watch on the little maid in the kitchen lest the potato parings be too thick or some bread crumbs wasted, but she had never lowered her social standards. She had on one occasion omitted Mrs. John Selkirk's name from her list of dinner guests because it was a very exclusive dinner—only the very best people being invited—and Mrs. Selkirk's husband was "in trade."

The Selkirks had lived this and other kindred slights down. They had flourished like green, bay trees, were now acknowledged as one of Gaynesboro's leading families and Mrs. John, herself, now a haughty and queenly dowager, was president of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, claiming descent from a "signer."

Oh, the years brought changes. Catherine realized this. But—a restaurant—er—eat shoppe. Catherine could not pronounce the odious words without her upper lip curling with scorn. If Fannibel had only called it a tea room, she felt that she could have stood it better. On the whole she decided to attend the reception. She might as well see how much or how little social prestige they had lost.

The reception was a success, as Mrs. Penn's social functions were apt to be. That she was a woman of culture and taste was reflected in her home. Catherine had a feeling of being suddenly transferred to another world, as she looked about and watched the young girls in dainty tulle or chiffon afternoon gowns, dispensing tea or coffee and little cakes to the guests. The crowning glory was the dining table with its lace cloth, dainty china and

silver and the pink candles in the tall, silver candlesticks, shedding a soft light over all. "It's a picture," Catherine thought, as she filled the delicate Spode cups from Mrs. Penn's solid, silver coffee urn. Opposite sat young Mrs. Robert Selkirk dispensing tea. Catherine herself added no little to the picture. She was looking her best. Good food and rest were beginning to have their effect and she had been able, for the time being, to cast off care and anxiety. Then, too, the blue dress was eminently becoming and she was wearing a sapphire necklace that had once belonged to Mrs. Cuthbert Hadley. This last item added greatly to her sense of well being.

Everything went well until, just as the afternoon was drawing to a close and the guests began to leave, Major Penn came hurrying to her, his gray mustache fairly bristling with eager friendliness. After the first greetings were over he began—

"Say, you must be proud of that sister of yours—she's a gem. She's got hold of a sensible, practical idea—that eat shoppe—and she's making a go of it. I take my lunch there every time I'm down town and so does my wife. And we often take our evening dinners there."

"Oh, the eat shoppe's lovely," young Mrs. Selkirk chimed in, "everything's so clean and pretty and such good cooking. Rob and I often take our evening meal there."

Catherine experienced a choking sensation. She had been able to forget the eat shoppe for the past few hours. She felt that she could not discuss it, but she nerved herself to the task. With an air of *sang froid* she was far from feeling, she said, lightly:

"Oh, the tea room is one of Fannibel's fads. You know how these modern girls are—always doing such startling things. Fanny's tremendously inter-

ested just at present but I dare say it won't last long." She was feeling that she had carried the matter off very well, indeed until she noted the blank expression on the faces around her and heard a repressed giggle behind her back. But the worst was to come. When she was putting on her wraps upstairs, she overheard some women talking in an adjoining room.

"So glad I don't have to get dinner this evening—we're going to the eat shoppe. Isn't it fine that there is such a place—where one can get real home cooking so reasonable? Just solves the servant problem, as I often tell Sam."

"Solves the Hadley problem is what *we've* been thinking," the other woman commented. "I'll declare I don't see how they have lived. I suppose the Brandts have helped them from time to time."

"Must've."

Catherine did not linger to hear more. She got out of the room somehow and down the stairs. She felt like bursting into tears—like screaming. "Oh, that people should *dare* to say such things." Then she suddenly decided to neither scream nor cry. She made a solemn vow, then and there, that Fannibel should be rescued from this laborious and degrading work, that the Hadleys should take their rightful place in the world. No, she was not beaten yet. She would show these insolent people how mistaken they had been. There was such a look of high resolve in her eyes when she made her adieux that Mrs. Penn wondered. Fannibel was to come for her at five o'clock and she saw the little coupe waiting in the driveway.

"Have a good time, Cathie?" Fannibel inquired as they drove off.

"Oh—er—yes," Catherine replied, evasively.

"I'm glad I went," she added, in such a decided tone, that Fannibel looked at her wonderingly.

"I am, too," she returned, "and I hope you'll go out more. It would do you good."

Catherine was up bright and early next morning. She seemed unusually cheerful and so filled with subdued excitement that Fannibel eyed her anxiously. "I do wonder what's up," the younger woman said to herself, as she started up town, "Cathie's got something on her mind. I do hope she's given up all idea of that school."

But Catherine had not. On leaving the Penns the evening before she had been struck with a brilliant idea. She wondered that she had not thought of it before. It was that the far west was the home of the new rich; miners, speculators, people of that type, who had suddenly acquired fortunes but were lacking in culture and knowledge of social usages. These were the sort of persons she must get in touch with—a school such as she had planned was just what they needed. She realized that she had made a mistake in inserting her advertisement in a Cincinnati paper or an eastern magazine. It should have appeared in a western paper—one of the leading journals of—say Denver, for instance.

As soon as Fannibel was on her way she repaired to the front parlor and, supplying herself with paper, pen and ink and also the catalogue of a well known eastern college, she set to work writing her advertisement. The catalogue had been most useful when she was planning the course of study for the school and she was finding it equally helpful now. Finally after covering and then tearing up several sheets of paper, she evolved an advertisement of the Hadley Finishing School that was calculated to make anyone interested in this sort of an institution

sit up and take notice. In a drawer of the old secretary, that had been relegated to a small room back of the hall, she found an old photograph of the Hadley mansion. She held it up to the light. How well she recalled the day it had been taken. She had been celebrating her fourteenth birthday with a party. Her stepmother had planned this picture as a surprise and each girl had been given one as a souvenir. She scanned the picture speculatively. The girls looked so young. Still, in this day, young ladies wore their dresses so short—"One can hardly judge a girl's age nowadays," she mused. She decided that on the whole the picture would answer her purpose very nicely. The next step was to learn the names of some of Denver's leading newspapers. Mrs. Embrey, her next door neighbor could help here—she had spent a winter in Denver with her invalid husband. That had been ten years ago, but still—.

The advertisement with the accompanying photograph was duly mailed. On the way home from the post-office Catherine began to plan her, soon to be reconstructed, household. First there would have to be a cook and the cook would need an assistant; then there must be an upstairs girl and a parlormaid. A man, too, would be indispensable to take care of the grounds, meet trains and all that sort of thing. She had decided not to limit the school to ten pupils and had so stated in her advertisement. They might easily take care of twelve or even more. Every girl would add one thousand dollars to their yearly income and there would be many expenses—many needs. Fannibel must have a new car—a sedan—for one thing.

Catherine was not, she trusted, unduly optimistic. She realized that it would take time to establish the school on a firm basis. There might be only a few

girls come this year—it was so late in the season. But by Fall—. Oh, by that time they must surely have the full quota. Then Fannibel would assume her duties as associate principal and the tea room—er—eat shoppe—would soon be forgotten. Or rather it would be regarded only as the passing fad—daring experiment, Mrs. Embrey had called it—of a young girl.

“Oh, things were going to come out beautifully.” Catherine was again viewing the world through rosy-hued spectacles.

III.

The winter, with its snow and sleet, blizzards and rain, with mild, slushy days between, dragged by. Then gradually the days grew longer, the sunshine more mellow and one morning Fannibel, who stood by the front parlor window drawing on her gloves preparatory to starting to her work, announced that the crocuses were out.

"Spring is really here," she added, "isn't it glorious? Another winter shivered through and now we may hope to be comfortably warm for a long time." Catherine did not reply, and, after a slight pause, Fannibel said, "Well, I must be off. Better drive down with me, Cathie, this air would do you good."

Catherine shook her head. "I couldn't—I simply couldn't," she whimpered, "the sight of that sign, Hadley Eat Shoppe, completely unnerves me."

She followed her sister out into the yard however and, after the little car had glided away, strolled idly about the grounds. It was an ideal spring morning with a shimmer of dew on the grass and the sky steeped in sunshine but she was not in tune with the day. She sniffed the flower-scented air in a listless sort of way as she gazed through the vista of years into the future. A hopeless future it seemed. Just a stretch of long, dreary, monotonous years. "I wouldn't mind so much for myself," she thought, "but Fannibel!" She sighed as she pictured her young sister gradually getting old and gray. Perhaps fat and blowsy like Mrs. Huston who kept the Farmer's restaurant. The last thought

was too much. Oh, it must not be—things must not go on this way. There must be some way—something that she could do. Just then there was a sound of footsteps and turning she saw a young girl coming up the driveway. "A pretty young girl but overdressed and—common-looking," was Catherine's verdict as she wondered who the visitor might be. She was not long left in doubt.

"Is this here that school that was advertised in the Denver papers?" the girl enquired.

"Oh, yes. This is The Hadley Finishing School," Catherine returned, her heart beginning to beat high with hope.

"Well, I want to see the head of it."

"I am Miss Hadley."

"You!" The inflection of the girl's voice was not flattering. Catherine began to be conscious of her faded gingham, morning dress. Still it was clean and she was wearing a lace collar. Also she was Miss Catherine Hadley, granddaughter of Cuthbert Hadley, and joint owner of the Hadley mansion. She unconsciously assumed a grand dame manner as she inquired:

"Do you wish to enter the school?"

"That's what I come to see about," the girl returned. "I 'lowed maybe I was too late—it bein' so near the end o' the year—but I thought I'd come and see. Nothin' like findin' out things."

"Oh, no. I mean it isn't too late. We enter students at any time, provided we have room. Do you live in Denver?"

"Not now. We've come back. That is as fur back as Cincinnati. We ust to live here. Pa and Ma was both *raised* right in this burg, and I was *born* here. But, gee! I'm forgettin' to interduce myself. My name's Molly Tandy, and Pa's name's

MISS HADLEY'S FINISHING SCHOOL

Colin, Folks ust to call him Cole—Cole Tandy. Maybe you've hyeerd of him. We ust to live out beyond the railroad."

"Out beyond the railroad" was equivalent to "outer darkness" according to Gaynesboro's social standards. The colony consisted of negroes and poor whites who lived in little shanties scattered promiscuously over "the commons" as the ground out that way was called. Catherine had never known any of those people. There was something familiar about the name of Tandy, though. Where had she heard it? Then she recalled a rather bright, good-looking Irish boy who used to mow the lawn and do odd jobs about the place. He had continued to work for her father after he had grown up and married. She also remembered that Cole Tandy had gone west. Her father had had difficulty in finding another man and had declared that he'd never again find anyone so dependable as Cole.

All this flashed through Catherine's mind as Molly continued her narrative, telling how "after Ma died, Pa got that homesick he all at once decided to come back to this neck o' the woods."

"Just wait here a moment and I'll let you in," Catherine said. The front and side doors were locked. Catherine had come out through the kitchen.

A few minutes later she was seated opposite Molly Tandy in the front parlor while that sprightly young lady explained the situation.

"You see it's this way," the girl began, "Pa done real well out west. He jest made money, hand over fist—it's got so's we've more'n we know how to spend. Pa's willin' to give us ever'thing—the moon if he could get at it—but us girls is that green we don't know how to ack, how to talk, what kind o' clothes to buy nor nothin'. When we go to a

the-a-ter er anywhere's we can just feel folks laffin' at us. Seems like the more money we spend the worse it is.

"Pa hired a woman to come and stay—paid her a big salary—jist to put us wise to things. She did show us some things—what to cook and how to set the table and things like that. Oh, I reckon she done the best she could but she was so uppity she got on our nerves somethin' awful. Pa jist had to fire her. Then me and Lizzie—that's m' sister—started into a select school, and that was worse'n ever. That is 'twas fer *me*. Lizzie got along better—she's faster to learn than I am-an' she two years younger too. She's jist seventeen last month. I was nineteen last October.

"Taint like we was really ignorant. We both went through the eighth grade. Lizzie's rale good in 'rithmetic and we both know grammer—I c'n parse anything—but I never could see how grammer helps you to talk right. I c'n see that our talk don't sound smooth and pretty like the way high-brows talk. Pa gits along better'n any of us. Mebby it's because he's talked with business men so much—he's jist sort o' caught on to some things unknowin'ly."

Before Molly had finished her recital poor Catherine's head was in a whirl. What could she do for a girl like that? She had expected the applicants for admission to the school to be somewhat unsophisticated but she hadn't counted on as utterly raw material as this. The girl was impossible. Still she must not turn her away—she couldn't afford to do that. How was the school to be started if she didn't grasp every opportunity to gain pupils. Oh, if Fannibel were only at home! She would know what to do. Fanny *was* resourceful. Leaving Molly

Tandy in the parlor she made her way to the telephone in the rear of the hall. She rang up the eat shoppe and asked for Miss Fannibel Hadley.

"Miss Hadley's busy—any message," a girl's voice answered.

"Tell her that her sister wishes to speak to her." A moment later Fannibel's voice came over the wire—"What is it, Cathie?"

"Oh, Fanny, dear, you must come home—at once. Something so important has come up—something pertaining to the school. You, as associate principal, are as interested as I am. Really, I need to consult with you."

"You don't mean that a girl has really applied for admission?" There was something suspiciously like smothered laughter in Fannibel's tone. Catherine didn't like it. This was no laughing matter.

"Yes, I mean just that. She is in the parlor," Catherine's voice had been kept low, lest Molly overhear, but now it sank almost to a whisper, "she will be rather difficult, I am afraid," she said, "I am anxious to hear what you think we had best do."

"Well, all you can do, just now, will be to give her some lunch. I'll be sending yours up in a little while and I'll put in a double portion. Don't worry, Cathie. I'll be home as soon as I can but it'll likely not be much before two o'clock—we're awfully rushed today. G'by."

"Just a minute, Fanny. Be sure and come in through the kitchen. I'll be watching for you. I want to talk with you before you see her."

"Oh, very well," and Fannibel hung up.

It seemed to Catherine that two o'clock would never come. She talked with Molly and grew more and more bewildered and discouraged. Then she

set her to reading a book of poetry, the girl soon tired of this.

"I don't like poetry," she said, tossing the book with a snap and laying it on the table beside her, "I can't seem to ever git the hang of it."

This gave Catherine an idea. She would read poetry to the girl or better still, insist on her reading it, and she could explain the meaning.

"You will like it better by and by," she said, "poetry is an important branch of our literary course."

"But I don't want to take no literary course. I jist want to learn how to talk and ack and what kind o' clothes to buy."

"We shall see," Catherine returned, indulgently. "Meantime you may find this interesting." *"This"* was a current copy of a household magazine that Fannibel had brought home the evening before. Molly turned over the leaves, commented enthusiastically on the illustrated advertisements, and was soon absorbed in a story.

Fannibel came at last. Catherine was in the kitchen waiting for her.

"Now," said the younger sister, as she sank down on the top step of the back veranda, "tell me about it."

"First, Fanny dear, get a chair. Those steps are getting so shaky I don't like for you to sit there."

The basement floor of the mansion opened directly into the yard. The space about the door was paved with brick and the floor of the back veranda, which was set up on high columns, or posts, formed a roof for the basement porch. Fannibel kept her car in this shelter. Fannibel arose, with a rueful smile. "I see I'll have to have this veranda repaired," she said, "I hate to spend a cent on this old

barracks, but it will be cheaper than building a garage. "Now about this girl," she said, when they were seated in the kitchen with the door closed. "You've asked my advice and it is to explain that we haven't any school. You might tell her that we contemplated opening one but were unable to get pupils and so we gave it up."

"Oh, Fannibel, you're cruel. Think what this means to me—to both of us. What it would signify having a large school—of the highest order."

"But Cathie, one scholar—"

"There must be a beginning. We couldn't expect to have a full school at once."

"But what could we do for this girl? How would you go about teaching her?"

"You could teach her tennis—and the other branches I suggested."

"But I haven't a speck of time."

"Oh, Fannibel, you'll give up that horrid business, won't you?"

"I most certainly will not," Fannibel returned in a tone that brooked no argument.

"Oh, Fannibel, you'll break my heart—" Catherine began, but Fannibel interrupted her saying, with a good-natured smile, "No, I won't, Cathie. You have a good, strong heart. Dr. Ellis said so last winter, when you had the grippe—don't you remember? But tell me more about the girl. Where does she live and how did she come to hear of the Hadley Finishing School. And does she know that she represents the student body?"

"Please, Fannibel. This is not a time to indulge in levity."

"I know," returned Fannibel, glancing at her wrist watch, "and I haven't much time either, so

tell me all you know and then perhaps I'd better talk with her a few minutes."

So Catherine began an account of events leading up to Molly Tandy's arrival that morning. Fannibel's eyes opened wide as the tale progressed. She had not known of the advertisement in the Denver paper.

"Well," she said, doubtfully, "I suppose I ought to go in and see her."

"Oh, yes. And while you're having your talk hadn't I better be preparing her room. That is another matter on which I wish to consult you. What room do you think would be best to give her? I'd thought of the small one—at the rear of the upper hall, you know."

"Better not bother. She may go back home this evening."

"Oh, Fannibel, you won't say anything—I mean, you won't send her away?"

"Oh no. But I shouldn't count on her staying if I were you. She'll probably leave when she finds she's the only student."

Catherine preceded Fannibel to the parlor, introduced her as Miss Fannibel Hadley, associate principal of the school. "My sister will attend to all the details," she added, as she turned to leave the room, "any arrangements she may see fit to make will be perfectly satisfactory to me."

Back in the kitchen Catherine began mechanically washing up the luncheon dishes while she made plans for the future of the school when it should have materialized, or, as she expressed it to herself, when it should be more firmly established. There would be so much for servants' wages, the cooks', the maids and the laundress. She had left the laundress out in her former calculations. She had, for

so long, been surreptitiously washing out her own and Fannibel's clothes in the basement that she hadn't remembered how necessary for a large establishment a laundress would be.

Twelve thousand dollars did not seem quite such a large sum as details of the overhead were added. When divided in a budget it dwindled amazingly. But still there would be enough. Catherine was not unduly ambitious, she hoped. She did not desire great riches, merely enough to keep up her establishment and enable herself and sister to take their rightful places in society.

"It will be difficult at first," she sighed, "very difficult, indeed."

She became a little bewildered as she contemplated the herculean task of fitting twelve maidens to enter polite society. How should she set about it? She would have to conduct classes, deliver lectures—lectures on art, on literature, on the art of conversation and kindred subjects. "Oh, dear, it would require a great deal of reading up!" But Fannibel, she reflected would be a great help. The child was so resourceful. But suppose Fannibel refused to help. She could be very willful as events had proved. But, worst of all, suppose this girl—Molly Tandy—decided that this was not the sort of school she wished to enter. Catherine shuddered at the thought.

"I just don't believe I could stand it," she thought, "I've had so many disappointments, I don't feel as if I could live through another one."

Fannibel returned looking both amused and perplexed. "She's going to stay, at least for a while," she reported, "I've promised that we won't get sore if she takes a sudden notion to leave."

"Oh, Fannibel, she said something like that to

me—hoped I wouldn't get sore—what *did* she mean?"

"That we wouldn't feel hurt—offended, you know."

"She is rather pleased than otherwise that there are no other pupils—seems she'd dreaded coming in contact with girls—afraid they'd 'poke fun at her.' It's queer," Fannibel continued, with a smile, "but it may be that we'd be able to give her more help than she could get at a school."

"A school! Fannibel you are forgetting that this is a school. A school of distinction. Our ideals—"

"Oh, I know," Fannibel interrupted, wearily, "but you know what I mean."

Catherine was mollified. "I've been wondering, Fanny dear. Do you think I ought to give formal talks—lectures?"

"Oh, no," Fannibel laughed, "I shouldn't bother much. About all you can do is to point out her grammatical mistakes—that will be a handful—and select books for her. I'll try to find time to show her something about tennis. After she's learned the rules there'll always be boys and girls hanging around the court to play with her. Then I'll help her with her shopping. That's where I may be able to give real assistance—first aid, anyway."

"By the way she says they used to live here. I don't remember ever hearing the name."

"Oh, Fannibel—it's so queer. They lived out beyond the railroad—that sort of people, you know. Her father—we always knew him as Cole Tandy—mowed our lawn for years."

Fannibel whistled softly. "The family, her father and sister, are boarding at one of Cincinnati's most expensive, exclusive apartment hotels; they are planning to spend the summer at Atlantic City and she

has an unlimited charge account at three of Cincinnati's leading department stores. She didn't tell all this in a boastful way. She was only stating facts—explaining how they were situated. Her father intends building or buying a home, eventually, it seems, but he wishes to look around first—doesn't want to decide too hastily."

"Think of it!" Catherine gasped, "Cole Tandy. Why, it's marvelous!"

"Isn't it!" Fannibel's eyes were shining. "Doesn't it make you proud of this land of the free and home of the brave; where folk, who have enough grit, can accomplish things like that."

"I must say, Fanny dear, that I don't approve of it. Oh, of course I'm patriotic, two of our ancestors fought in the Revolution, but I don't fancy our social system—or rather our lack of social system. It is so chaotic. Families come up from the lowest ranks—like these Tandys for instance—while those of the highest, noblest ancestry are forced into genteel poverty or worse. It isn't right."

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" Fannibel exclaimed inelegantly as she sprang up from her chair, "I must be getting back."

"But Fanny, it's only three o'clock. You usually stay until four."

"I know, but we're in a regular jam today. The pastry cook is ill and we're expecting a crowd this evening—the Kiwanis Club is having a dinner. We have to prepare the desserts and salads ourselves. I left Hazel making lemon pies.

"Oh, about Miss Tandy's room—I'd give her the small one next to mine. She'll probably like it better than being off by herself in the front part of the house. Telephone to Mrs. McCurdy to come and give it a thorough cleaning—see that the windows

are washed and all that. I'll bring out some fresh curtains in the morning. I'm going to take the girl with me up town—show her the way to the Eat Shoppe—she'll take her meals there, of course—and we'll stop at the library and get her a card. I'll select a book for her—that will take care of her for this afternoon. By the way, how about you coming down to the shoppe for supper—or dinner, whichever you call it. You've never been there. It would save sending your meal up."

"Fannibel, you know how I feel about that—er—eat shoppe, as you call it. I saw the sign once and it made me ill—positively ill."

"Oh, well," Fannibel shrugged, as she passed into the back hall, "g'by," she called over her shoulder.

Molly returned about an hour later. She had telephoned long distance from the Eat Shoppe to her sister, asking her to send her trunk the following day.

"And now I'll pay you," she said, as she counted out two crisp, ten dollar bills and a somewhat crumpled five, "then I'll settle down for a good, long read."

She had brought a book from the library—"The Winning of Barbara Worth." "Fannibel thought I'd like it—it's about the west—and I think I will."

"Shall, Molly," Catherine corrected, "you must learn to distinguish between shall and will."

"Why, I never knew there was a difference—that is I didn't think it mattered which you said. I generally say I'll."

"First person, *shall*, second and third persons, *will*. I'll is allowable, of course. I shall explain the matter more fully later on. But, since you are now my pupil I feel that I should not pass over any grammatical error, however slight."

"Oh, yer right. That's what I'm here fer—to learn to talk proper. You jist keep right after me an' I'm goin' to try my level best to catch on."

Catherine had begun to look a little bewildered before the close of this speech but Mrs. McCurdy had come so there wasn't time for further corrections.

Mrs. McCurdy was most enheartening. "So yev got a scholar fer yer school," she began. "That sure is grand, an', mark my words, ye'll have two more afore the week's out. That's the way things come in this world—good luck and bad. In threes. Have a death in yer family, you c'n just count on two more goin'."

Catherine felt greatly encouraged. She wondered if the two new girls would come together. Most likely they would. She decided to put them in the east front chamber so, as soon as Mrs. McCurdy had finished cleaning Molly's room, she set her to work making it ready.

Downstairs she found Molly, curled up like a kitten on the davenport, deep in the pages of her book. How beautifully things were going and how efficiently Fannibel had taken up her duties as associate principal of the school. And now, since the school was fairly launched—for three pupils was a good beginning, a *very* good beginning—the eat shoppe would soon be closed and the Hadleys would take their rightful position in society.

She felt in a most benign mood—like making some concession to her sister so she called her up and announced that she would come down with Molly for dinner that evening.

"Why, that's fine, Cathie, just fine," came Fannibel's voice over the wire, "any time after five o'clock."

IV.

"Here's a letter fer you," Molly Tandy called from the hall one morning some six weeks later, "it's got a foreign stamp on it and I can't make out the postmark atall."

"At all, Molly, at all," Catherine corrected her, carefully dividing the words, "I believe I have warned you against running your words together."

"I know yo' have," the girl sighed, "it's terrible the way I forgit."

"Keep forgetting would be better, Molly, and I don't believe I should use the word terrible for so mild an offence. We must guard against exaggerations, my dear. Learn to analyze your sentences and see if your words are really expressing what you mean." Molly looked so downcast that Catherine felt that she must modify her own speech. It would never do for the girl to become discouraged—dissatisfied.

"You are really doing very nicely, Molly," she said, "you have made wonderful strides during the six weeks you have been with us. My sister and I have both noted the fact with much satisfaction."

"Sure enough!—er—I mean, really! Well, now it's been awful good of you to take so much pains. I *do* try and mebby I'll catch on some time. But who do you reckon yer letter's from?"

"Whom, Molly, and suppose, rather than reckon. I believe I should drop the word reckon from my vocabulary, if I were you. You'll almost never have occasion to use it."

"Oh, it's no use—reck—er—I suppose I'm a reg'lar bonehead," and with a laughing grimace Molly fled from the room.

Left alone Catherine opened her letter. She had had little curiosity concerning it. A few weeks before they had received an important looking envelope from France and, on opening it had proved to be circulars concerning a certain perfumery that was soon to be launched on the American market. But this was different. It looked more personal, there was a shield with a coat of arms on it. Wonderingly Catherine scanned and finally made out the post-mark. It was from England. Who could be writing to her from England? She slit one end of the envelope—she would not for worlds have broken the seal—and drew out several closely written sheets of very fine paper. It was a personal letter. She glanced at the heading, read the salutation—"My dear cousin," then hastily turned to the last page for the signature.

"Oh—oh!" she gasped while the letter dropped from her shaking hands. She picked it up and, beginning at the first, read eagerly while wonder, light, doubt, hope chased each other through her mind. Having finished the letter she looked about the room in a perplexed, bewildered sort of way. It was as if for the first time she noted the forlorn condition—soiled and dingy wall paper, the faded carpet with holes here and there inadequately concealed by small rugs or pieces of furniture, and the thin, stringy window curtains.

"It's — er — positively untidy looking," she thought, "we must—we simply *must* do some renovating."

Just then Molly stuck her head in the doorway, saying, "I'm going down to the lib'ry. I've finished

that *Pride and Prejudice* book—gee, but they talked proper—and I want to get something else. What'd you get if you was me?"

"Were I, Molly," Catherine returned, mechanically, "why—I—er—hardly know what to advise. Something of Cooper's—the *Last of the Mohicans*, perhaps."

"I've read that—last week. Say, couldn't I get something livelier—more up-to-date?"

"Perhaps so. Suppose you ask the librarian. But be sure and insist, Molly, on having a book that is written in pure English, free from slang or dialect," Catherine directed.

"Yes'm," Molly returned docilely. "Oh, say," she added, as she turned back from the doorway. Then she clapped her hand on her mouth with a look of comic dismay. "I didn't mean that 'say,'" she explained laughingly, "I just wanted to tell you that I won't be back until late this afternoon. I'll go right on to the Shoppe from the lib'ry—I've got so I help Fannibel at the desk during the rush hour—and this afternoon I'm going to play tennis with some girls, so I'll just go down to the court soon's I eat my lunch."

"Very well," Catherine responded, readily. She was relieved to have Molly away—she would have a chance to think—to decide what to do.

She watched the young girl as, armed with her tennis racquet and book she started down the driveway. "She has improved," Catherine thought, with a sigh of satisfaction. In her sports dress and jaunty, little hat, Molly looked the part of a young lady of leisure and unlimited means. Thanks to Fannibel's taste and her own full purse, she was always tastefully and becomingly dressed. Her English was improving, slowly but perceptibly, and

she was learning to use her rouge and lip stick at least more sparingly. Taking it all in all, the girl was a credit to the school.

Then Catherine remembered that she had something more important than the school to consider that morning. Oh, much more important! She crossed the hall and opened the door of the long drawing-room. It had been the scene of many a brilliant social function in the days of the Cuthbert Hadleys but had been seldom used since. How musty and damp it smelled in there. She raised a window shade and looked about. "It's more dilapidated, if possible, than the parlor," she sighed, "and it will cost so much to have it made presentable and there is so little money. She wondered if she might be able to sell another piece of furniture. Well, she couldn't decide on any plan until she had talked things over with Fannibel. She went upstairs to take inventory. In the room above the parlor she found that the carpet was in a fairly good condition. It could easily be moved to the room below and, as the fireplaces were identical, it would fit. That was something. As for the furniture there was little left to sell, that is, if the upper rooms were to remain furnished. She returned to the lower floor. In her excitement she had forgotten the lunch hour. Oh, well, it was too late now—after one o'clock—Fannibel would soon be coming home. She went to the kitchen and found a glass of milk and a cracker. That would do nicely until dinner time. In the rear hall she hesitated. Should she call up Fannibel? She was sure to be busy at this hour. "I'd better just wait until she comes," she decided. But the next moment she was calling the Eat Shoppe. The spirit might be willing but Catherine felt that she couldn't endure another moment's suspense.

"Fanny dear, won't you come home as early as you possibly can. Something has come up—oh, such a wonderful something—I just couldn't resist calling you up. You'll come—right away—won't you?"

"But I can't just now—not for half an hour anyway. I'll come as soon as I can. But what is it? Another girl about to enter the school?"

"Oh, no. More important than that. It's quite—too—" In her excitement Catherine's voice broke in a little gasp. She almost felt hysterical.

"Well, I'll be home pretty soon now," Fannibel said and, with her characteristic "g'by," she hung up.

Catherine went into the front parlor and taking out some sewing settled down in her low rocker to wait with what patience she could muster her sister's coming. How solemnly and deliberately the old clock measured the time. She felt like shaking it to make it tick the minutes off faster. At last Fannibel's little coupe stopped at the front door.

"Here I am," that young lady exclaimed, as a moment later she entered the room and tossing her hat on a chair stretched herself full length on the davenport, "and now for that thrilling news—I don't know when I've been so wrought up. Shouldn't have been surprised to see a whole bevy of girls waiting to matriculate or whatever they call it."

"This is even more important than such an addition to our school would be," Catherine returned solemnly, as she arose and put away her sewing. "I hardly know how to begin telling you. If I seem somewhat tedious you will pardon me, I am sure."

She did seem at a loss as to how to begin. The ensuing pause was so long that Fannibel looked at her wonderingly.

"What in the world—" she began, but Catherine waved a hand for silence.

"You must know—must have been told—that our grandmother, Mrs. Cuthbert Hadley's, cousin—her own cousin—married an English lord, Lord Barnstaple."

"Oh, yes. I know about that."

"Her son, on the demise of his father, became heir to the title and estate. He was a second cousin to our father. My parents visited these relatives—I was very young at the time—but I remember it distinctly. My father had to take a trip to England on business and mother went with him."

"I've heard about that too," said Fannibel, suppressing a yawn, "your mother brought home that lovely, lace collar and the black, embroidered, silk shawl. Don't you remember showing them to me?"

"Mother was so impressed with that beautiful English manor," Catherine continued, as if she hadn't heard her sister's comment, "she told me so much of its grandeur, the army of servants, the rich carpets and furniture, the heavy plate and rare, old china, the jewels! Oh, Lady Barnstaple's diamonds must have been perfectly dazzling! Mother said she had never seen such—er—magnificence." (Such vulgar ostentation, was what Mrs. Hadley had really said.) "Our father corresponded with his cousin, Lord Barnstaple—at intervals, of course—throughout his life."

"I know—he used to sometimes get letters from England," Fannibel murmured. She looked at her sister anxiously. Could Catherine have suddenly lost her mind she wondered? Or, if not, what was all this leading up to. "The first Lady Barnstaple died and his lordship—er—I mean her husband married the second time, as did our father," Catherine con-

tinued, "two years ago he passed away. So, you see, the present Lady Barnstaple is a widow. The eldest son was a victim of the world war. He was the son of the first Lady Barnstaple. To the next heir, the present Lady's offspring, has fallen the title and estates."

"But Catherine—"

"Just a moment. I am not finished. There are three children in the family. A daughter of Lady Barnstaple, by her first husband—she also had been previously married—the present Lord Barnstaple, a young man of twenty-five, and a younger child, a daughter, Lady Frances. The elder daughter is Lady Joan. She is, it seems, a hopeless cripple. Very sad—"

"But Catherine—"

"This morning I received a letter from Lady Barnstaple."

"Oh, why—no wonder you were excited! Why this is wonderful! May—er—would you mind my reading the letter?"

"I think it would be better for me to tell you the contents." There were some things in that letter that puzzled Catherine. She thought it would be better for Fannibel not to know—well, everything—just now.

"But why did she write? Did she invite you to visit her?"

"No. Her son, Lord Barnstaple, is coming to America."

"How interesting! Are we supposed to get to see him. And what is he coming for—'foreign countries for to see, see see,' or is he on diplomatic business?"

"I suppose I may as well come to the point at once. He is coming for a wife."

"Oh, he's riding here to get married, like the duke in the old game song." Fannibel laughed, and she began humming under her breath, "I'm riding here to get married—get married—get married—"

"Please, Fanny dear. This isn't a subject for levity."

"But it does sound funny."

"It's very wonderful—an English lord, you know."

"But not unusual. So many impecunious noblemen come over to our country looking for heiresses. They seem to regard it as a legitimate method of raising money."

"But he is not like that. He is not mercenary. His mother distinctly—I might say emphatically—states that he is not mercenary. It seems that mere money would not interest him; that family and blood mean much more. She says—or I should say *writes*—that he cares more for blood than anything else."

"What an ogre!"

"Please, Fannibel, you're making it so hard for me."

"Very well. I'll be serious. Go on."

"I hardly know how to tell it—I suppose I may as well come to the point at once."

"Do. Just blurt it out and have it over with. He doesn't want us to select the future Lady Barnstaple does he?"

"No dear, it is you that he has chosen. He's coming over here to marry you. Think what it means, Fanny dear. You will be one of England's titled ladies, you will have servants at your command, unlimited means—"

"Cathie, wake up—you're dreaming!" Fannibel exclaimed, a note of anxiety in her voice. Again

"Oh, he's riding here to get married, like the duke in the old game song." Fannibel laughed, and she began humming under her breath, "I'm riding here to get married—get married—get married—"

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"Cathie, wake up—you're dreaming!" Fannibel exclaimed, a note of anxiety in her voice. Again

doubts as to her sister's sanity entered her mind; this must be an hallucination.

"No, I am not dreaming. Here is the letter. Read for yourself."

Fannibel read the letter through, pausing now and then as if to take in the meaning or, in other words, to read between the lines.

"There's some mistake, Catherine," she said, as having finished reading, she folded the sheets and slipped them back into the envelope, "This lady—what's-her-name must imagine that we are people of wealth and distinction."

"Oh, no. That is they *may* think so, but they would not be influenced by our *lack* of money. Don't you see that Lord Barnstaple's mother so distinctly states that he is not mer—"

"Oh, I know—"

"And we *are* people of distinction, as you put it. There isn't a family in this country that can boast of better blood. Two of our ancestors fought in the war of the Revolution. I am sure Cuthbert Hadley was the equal of any member of the English nobility and I am also positive that he so considered himself."

"Oh, no doubt he was as bold and brave as Marmion, himself. 'If thou sayest I am not peer,' and so on. But seriously, Catherine. These people have no idea that the Hadley family is represented by two indigent females. You will save yourself disappointment and humiliation if you will just write to this Lady Barnstaple and make a clean breast of it. Do write. Or, if you'd rather not, let me."

"Too late now," Catherine returned, serenely. "He was to sail on the second—that was the day before yesterday—so he's on the ocean now. She states that he intends stopping in some of the eastern

cities for sightseeing and will arrive in Gaynesboro about the twentieth."

Fannibel had assumed a sitting posture and with her feet drawn up under her, sat hugging her knees as she looked thoughtfully about the room.

"It looks pretty bad." Catherine, who was watching her, sighed, "I am wondering if this paper will clean nicely. We could paste those places where it is peeling."

"No, it will have to be papered. I hadn't meant to spend any money on this old barracks—we'll just have to sell one of these days—but if we're to stay through the summer, we may as well try to make two or three rooms habitable. We'll have this room, the hall and the dining room papered and we'll see what we can do towards furnishing up."

"But Fanny dear, the drawing-room is in a worse condition—"

"Oh, we can't undertake to renovate that. No one must see it. We'll lock the door."

"But Fannibel! We'll have to give a reception—that Lord Barnstaple may meet our friends, you know."

"That will not be necessary. Since he is coming we *must* see him; and we should invite him to dinner. We'd be quite lacking in hospitality if we didn't. But that is all that can reasonably be expected of us under the circumstances."

"Fannibel, you're talking so queerly. Don't you understand that Lord Barnstaple is coming to marry you. There will be the wedding to consider, and for this sort of wedding—an international affair one might say—"

Fannibel frowned impatiently. "Catherine don't be so absurd," she said, "and do put this nonsense

out of your head or you're bound to suffer disappointment."

"Oh, Fannibel, you won't refuse him—surely you don't mean to do that."

"No, I shall not refuse him," the girl spoke so emphatically that Catherine eyed her suspiciously.

"I don't mind fixing up the place a bit, and it will be fun to meet him—sort of break the monotony. If you just *won't* take the matter seriously it will turn out all right. I'll see Jim Crennel on my way back to the Shoppe and ask him to bring over his samples and he can start papering tomorrow, most likely. We'll have to have the woodwork painted too. Ivory white will be nice, don't you think?"

"Lovely! And, Fanny, the carpet in the room above isn't at all bad. It's somewhat faded but not in spots and it's whole and clean. You know that room has never really been used—not since the carpet was laid anyway."

"Why, that's fine. And perhaps we'll find something for the dining room. If not we'll get matting or a congoleum rug."

"And about the dinner, Fanny. Since we haven't room to give a large dinner it must be very select. Just the best people, you know. I hope you won't think it necessary to invite Cousin Henry."

"Why, Catherine!" Fannibel's tone was genuinely shocked. "As far as we're concerned, Cousin Henry and his wife are the best people. Think of all they've done for us. Took us in two years ago when we had the grippe, nursed us, paid our doctor's bill—and that's just one of the things they've done. Besides this Lord Barnstaple is the same relation to Henry that he is to us. You must not forget that he, Cousin Henry, I mean, is Cuthbert Hadley's grandson."

"It's hard to remember it—he's so different. But

I suppose you're right. It wouldn't do to leave them out."

"And Dolores—Dolores Pynne, you know. She is here for the summer."

"Oh, Fanny, I can't—I positively cannot invite that girl to my home. I shall be perfectly justified in leaving her out."

"Nonsense, Cathie. I know Dolores is a tease—she's a little cat sometimes—but she's cousin Ellen's own niece and Ellen and Henry are both fond of her. They never'd stand for our slighting her. Here she comes now, we may as well tell her about it."

"Hello, everybody," a girlish voice called from the hall, "I wish to see the principal of this finishing school."

"Come right in, Dolores," Fannibel called back, "we were just speaking of you. Now I believe in mental telepathy."

Dolores entered the room and bestowing a light kiss on Catherine's cheek, sank into a chair. She was a pretty young girl, in her early twenties, slender, dark-eyed and brimming with animation.

"And how is Catherine the great?" she inquired, "looking better, seems to me. And you, Fannibel, still disgracing your family making money, I see. I took my lunch at the Shoppe today. Catherine, that girl's going to bring our gray hairs in sorrow to the grave, the way she's carrying on. I could hardly get waited on there was such a rush. Bet her bank book's showing four figures by this time."

"Never mind my bank book. Speaking of the Eat Shoppe reminds me that it's nearly time for me to leave—I have some errands up town and we have some news. We have just been discussing a member of the English nobility—a lord."

"*Indeed!!* I never saw an English lord, I never hope to see one," Dolores began chanting.

"But that's in the past. From now on you may *hope* to see one and, before the month's out you will have seen one."

Dolores, with a look of intense interest, crossed her knees and leaned forward. "Explain your cryptic utterance," she commanded dramatically.

Fannibel told briefly of Lord Barnstaple's imminent visit while Catherine explained in full the status of the family, their great wealth, noble lineage, the grandeur and magnificence of their country home. "And the present earl, whom we are to have the honor of entertaining, is the grandson of Madame Cuthbert Hadley's our grandmother's own cousin," she concluded.

"And I'm to see this noble creature," Dolores gasped, "why Lady Catherine I could fall on your neck and weep. But what about my manners? I see I should have attended your finishing school. Too late, eh? Or couldn't you give me a short, intensive course?"

Catherine's cheeks turned pink but she managed to restrain her tears as she returned in a most dignified tone, "Polished manners emanate from a good heart. You, with your educational advantages: do not need a finishing school, but you should cultivate kindness and sincerity."

"M-m! Ruskin, himself, couldn't have said anything better," Dolores declared with simulated admiration, "and thanks for the tip."

"I must be on my way," Fannibel cried, as she arose from her chair, "want to ride down, Dorry?"

"Uh-huh," Dolores returned, springing to her feet, "now don't worry about me, Lady Catherine, I'm going to behave at that dinner—I can when I

try. I shall be just as *sincere* and kind—oh, so kind—to the young man. You'll see."

As, a few minutes later, Catherine watched the two girls drive away she wiped tears of anger from her eyes. "So *hateful!*" she said to herself, "always making scathing remarks about my school and holding the traditions of the Hadleys up to ridicule."

It would have been bad enough to have Henry Brandt at the dinner but to have him and Dolores both! Catherine wondered how she could live through such an ordeal.

V.

During the greater part of the following fortnight the Hadley mansion was the scene of a domestic revolution. Jim Crennel and his assistant ruthlessly tore paper from the walls of parlor, hall and dining-room; Mrs. McCurdy wielded her scrub brush and the air reeked with mingled odors of paint, varnish, wall-paper paste, soapsuds and furniture polish. Catherine, often with aching muscles and frazzled nerves but hopeful and happy through it all, moved here and there, supervising, directing and, with sleeves pushed back, doing with her might what her hands found to do. She found valuable ally in Molly Tandy. Indeed Molly seemed as interested in the rejuvenation of the old mansion as was Catherine.

"It's a good thing this Lord What's-His-Name waked us up," she said one morning as she sat busily hemming window drapes, "this place shore did need over-haulin'."

"You mean our rooms needed renovating," Catherine suggested, in a tone calculated to put Molly in her place.

"I'll say they did!" returned the imperturbable Molly. "Sometimes I've just felt like snatchin' down them old, rattly window shades."

"The word *them* is not to be used as an adjective, Molly. Please remember that. You should have said 'those window shades.' And, just reflect—wasn't your whole sentence just a little *outré*. Suppose you correct it." As Molly looked bewildered and a little hurt, Catherine's tone softened as she said, "I think

you felt that it would be better to either replace the shades with new ones or dispense with them altogether. Wasn't that it, dear?"

"Why yes, that's what I mean. My land, but you've got a fine education! You know how to say everything in such a perfectly elegant way. And it's good of you to take such pains with me. I reckon—er—suppose you must get discouraged sometimes but I remember more than you'd think. Honestly I do. It's something like the cross word puzzles. You'll look up a word in the dictionary and right away forget it, but when you see the same word again it looks familiar sorta, and, time you've hunted it up oncet or twicst more it sticks with you. 'Nother thing I'm gettin'—er—getting so's I understand how grammer c'n help. There was one sentence, f'r instance, that I never could see any sense in—'A verb must agree with its subject in person and number.' I've read that over fifty times I reckon and 'twas all Dutch, but, now, since you've corrected me and explained, over an' over, I c'n see, just as plain, what it means. Oh, I'll learn yet!"

"I'm sure you will, my dear," Catherine returned, much mollified, and so peace was restored.

There were times when Catherine regretted ever having admitted Molly into her home. There were other times—many of them—when she didn't know what she should have done without her. One thing was certain, she could not afford to have a break with Molly now. "The girl knows too much about us," she sometimes sighed. Poor Catherine was not in an enviable frame of mind these days, torn as she was between hopes and fears. At times she lulled herself into the belief that there was nothing to be apprehensive about. Fannibel was eminently fitted to fill any position in life however exalted; their

poverty, or, as she expressed it, their lack of material wealth was the only drawback and, since Lord Barnstaple was not mercenary—and had not his mother distinctly stated that he was not—that would not make any difference. Then again she would be beset with doubts. Suppose Fannibel were right; that the young man *was* mercenary and that he had his mother labored under the impression that the Hadleys were people of great wealth—American millionaires. How mortifying—how humiliating it would be for him to learn the truth!

Often she covertly watched her sister wondering how she was likely to impress a stranger. Favorably she was sure, in spite of the fact that Fannibel could not by any stretch of imagination be considered a beauty. "There's more than beauty in her face," she would say to herself, and she was right. Fannibel's mouth might be too large, her nose inclined to be snub and her eyes not particularly noticeable but there was such an indefinable stamp of high-breeding, good taste, and good sense in her bearing that one never remembered her defects. She had her good points too—many of them, Catherine thought. Her form was graceful and erect, her complexion good—as pink and white as a peach blossom at times—and her hair, soft and fluffy, and always brushed to a satiny sheen.

"She's such a lady—she would grace any home however palatial," poor Catherine thought.

In due time the work of renovation was completed. The three rooms merged from chaos into a state of order and cleanliness—more, a state of beauty and taste that eclipsed Catherine's most sanguine expectations.

"I'd no idea a little paint and wall paper would

make such a change," she said, "it was so dear of you, Fanny, to do all this."

"Paint and wall-paper, plus," Fannibel commented. "It's taken a lot of hard work to bring all this about and to you and Molly belongs the credit. I did very little."

The front parlor—living room, Fannibel called it—was, to use Catherine's words, an example of elegant simplicity. The blue Brussels carpet was in itself a transformation—"no danger o' catchin' yer foot in a hole," Molly said. The "rattly, old window shades" had been replaced by lace curtains and soft, silken drapes of Gobelin blue which blended prettily with the gray wall-paper. A rosewood cabinet, brought from the drawing-room and polished by Molly to a satiny sheen, stood between the two front windows and an inlaid escritoire had taken the place of the marble-topped table, now banished to an upper room. There were touches of color here and there; a bright Japanese bowl stood on the cabinet; and Fannibel had found, in the attic, an old chair which she had had reupholstered in gay tapestry, in which soft shades of red, green, blue and orange harmoniously commingled. Catherine had been a little startled when the chair was returned from the upholsterer but, since Fannibel had selected the tapestry, it must be all right, she concluded. The hall floor had been covered with matting and the Chippendale sofa and chair from the drawing room stood against the wall. Also, Catherine had had a wonderful carved chest of oriental wood brought from an upper room and placed under the hall mirror.

"I'm sure it isn't in bad taste," she told Fannibel, "Mrs. Humphry Selkirk had a chest—just an ordinary, modern one—in her front hall."

"Looks all right—fills that space, nicely," Fannibel agreed.

To Molly's mind, the dining room was the crowning glory of the house. The wall paper was gay—she had been allowed to select it—and the floor was covered with linoleum, of blocks of blues, reds and browns. Molly had also been allowed to select the window drapes and her choice had been a deep crimson that had almost made Fannibel gasp. The effect was all that could be desired, however. "Very pretty, indeed—gorgeous but not really bizarre," had been Catherine's comment. "Why, they're beautiful—stunning!" Fannibel declared, enthusiastically, "you should have been delegated to select the drapes for the parlor," and Molly had almost wept for joy. "It just shows that I *do* know *some* things," she said, with dawning self-confidence.

Molly had hung the dining room window drapes that morning, while Catherine had put finishing touches here and there, as placing the glass candelabra, each holding four blue candles, on the ends of the parlor mantel and picking fresh flowers for the green glass vase on the escritoire. Fannibel had just returned from the Eat Shoppe and the three women were looking over their work and finding it very good.

"Reckon—er—I mean I believe I'll go down to the tennis court," Molly said, "but if there aint—ain't I mean—anyone there I care 'bout playing with I'll just stop at the lib'ry and get a book and come on back home."

"Why, yes, Molly—that is, do what you like best. I think I shall allow you to select your own book. I've been thinking, Molly, that since you've been such a good girl, so helpful, you really deserve a little vacation."

"Oh, thank you," said Molly, in a doubtful tone, "but I don't want—that is I want to keep on learning as fast as I can."

After Molly had left Catherine and Fannibel settled down in easy chairs in the parlor for a cozy chat.

"Fanny, dear," Catherine began in a troubled tone, "I've been a little undecided as to what to do about Molly." Fannibel looked at her questioningly as she continued, "it will be most embarrassing, we cannot treat her like a servant and I don't believe it would be best to mention the school—it's hardly on a firm enough basis for that."

"No, I shouldn't mention the school," Fannibel murmured.

"So I've thought of suggesting that Molly make a little visit to her people down in Cincinnati."

"Oh, Cathie, you don't mean for her to miss meeting Lord Barnstaple! Why, she's been looking forward to it as much as we have. More, for that matter. We'll just introduce her as our guest."

"But really, Fanny—she's so crude—I'm afraid."

"Oh, Molly isn't so bad. She talks as well as lots of college girls. If she makes mistakes Lord Barnstaple will probably consider it American slang. For my part I'm just glad that she has this chance to attend with what she will probably consider an important social function. It's what she needs to overcome her timidity—mixing with people, I mean. Cure her of her inferiority complex."

"Catherine," Fannibel said, after a moment's pause, "I'd like to meet Molly's father—what's his name, Colin Tandy. I imagine he must be quite an interesting character to have accomplished what he has. Couldn't we invite him to the dinner? Molly would be no end pleased and she's done so much—"

"Fannibel, have you taken leave of your senses! But of course you are jesting, dear."

"Not at all. I like to do something to please Molly. She's taken such an interest—worked so hard."

"But to invite Colin Tandy to meet Lord Barnstaple! Have you no sense of social standards?"

"Yes, I have. Of course there must be standards. I don't, for an instant, believe that all men were born equal. But, for all that, Mr. Tandy and your noble cousin may not be so far apart."

"Fannibel! Lord Barnstaple is descended from generations of noblemen. The first of the family, to hold the title, was knighted by King Edward the third. The Tandys, on the other hand are of lowliest origin. There is no comparison between the families."

"M-m-m. I dunno. There had to be a first Barnstaple—earl, baron or whatever he was called. And he was a person who had achieved some outstanding feat—killed a lot of men with his battle axe during some war most likely. Then he was awarded money and lands and titles and lesser men had to kotow to him. Lord, no wonder war has been so popular throughout the ages! Such opportunities as it has offered! The Tandys are just starting out and Molly's father has, to my mind, accomplished more—building up the fortune he has—than if he'd killed a hundred men. He may not be able to trace back to a noble ancestry but his descendants will be. My, in three hundred years there may be those who will be putting on all sorts of airs because they are able to trace their descent, *in a straight line*, from Colin Tandy."

"Fannibel, you are talking the most arrant nonsense!"

Fannibel laughed merrily. "May be I am," she said, "but there's method in my madness."

"Fannibel, do you think Molly will ever be able to attain a degree of culture that will enable her to take her place in the best society. I am doubtful at times. She is so crude."

"Oh, but she'll get what she goes after. And she's going after the things she realizes that she lacks with the same spirit that her father went after his money, no doubt. I never saw such patience and perseverance. Such determination. She will not only find her place in society but, with her father's fortune for a background, she'll be an important personage. Don't you have any fears about Molly."

"Perhaps you are right. But speaking of backgrounds, Fanny, I'm sure you must now see the wisdom of our keeping the mansion. Suppose Lord Barnstaple had found you living in a bungalow or a small apartment."

"I don't believe it would have made a speck of difference."

"Perhaps not—he is not mercenary. But still these things have their weight. Young men are influenced by outward appearances."

Fannibel gave a mocking sniff.

"Fanny dear, your apparent indifference amazes me. Most any girl in your shoes would be in a fever of excitement."

"Most any girl in my shoes would think she needed a new pair," Fannibel returned, eyeing her shabby slippers ruefully. "I must get me some tomorrow and I believe I'll indulge in a pair of blond, kid pumps. I've always had to get black shoes because I had to figure on wearing them all winter—that is with winter dresses."

But Catherine was not listening. She had caught

sight of a stranger coming up the driveway. "Oh, Fannibel," she cried, excitedly, "why I do believe that may be Lord Barnstaple! His mother wrote that he would arrive about the twentieth—this is the eighteenth. Oh, isn't he splendid looking! Such a graceful carriage. Oh, don't ever tell me there's nothing in blood. But Fanny must we—that is one of us—open the door? It will seem so queer. Oh, if Molly were only here."

"But I thought you preferred Molly's not being here when he came," Fannibel reminded her mischievously.

"He's fine-looking but I had supposed he was a younger man," Catherine continued, ignoring her sister's thrust, "there, he's ringing the bell, Fanny!" But Fannibel was already in the hall.

Catherine listened intently. The stranger's greeting was cordial but rather loud. She could hear her sister's soft laughter, then, as the two entered the room, Fannibel said:

"This is Mr. Tandy, Catherine—Molly's father, you know. You must remember him."

Catherine was too surprised to speak at first. She quickly recovered her self-possession—she remembered that "Mr. Tandy" was one of her patrons.

"I remember you very well," she said graciously, as she shook his hand and indicated a chair, "I am glad to see you again and I assure you it has been a pleasure to have your daughter with us."

Mr. Tandy's honest, good-looking face beamed. "Well, that's mighty kind o' you to say that. Molly's liked it here and likely it's been good fer her. No doubt she's learnt a lot o'—o' fine manners," he finished, lamely.

"He means a lot of foolishness," Fannibel thought, much amused.

"My, but this brings back old times," Mr. Tandy began, in a reminiscent tone, as he leaned back in his chair and gazed through the window at the sloping lawn, shaggy with weeds and tall grass, "Last time I was here I mowed the grass. Reckon I'm too old and fat for that kind of a job now." He laughed heartily at his joke, Fannibel giggled and Catherine achieved a frigid smile.

At this moment Molly entered the room. Her face did not light up with pleasure at the sight of a kind, indulgent father as one might suppose it would. It resembled rather a thunder cloud.

"Pa, what does this mean—what are you doin' here?" she demanded.

"Well, yer sister an' me kept writin' fer you to come home and you didn't pay no attention. Seemed the only thing to do was to come and fetch ye."

Molly glared belligerently. "Now, Pa Tandy, I wrote to you and Lizzie about this here English lord's that comin' an' how we're goin' to give a party fer him—an' all, and fer you to come a-buttin' in and spoil ever'thing—it's just too bad!" The last words were choked with sobs and, as she finished, she sank into a chair and covering her face with her hands allowed her tears to have full sway.

"Why, Molly dear, I'm surprised," Catherine gasped, in a genuinely shocked tone, "you forget that you are speaking to your father. If it is your wish that Molly return with you," she added, turning to Mr. Tandy, "of course we shall have to let her go, much as we might regret it," she added with forced graciousness.

Mr. Tandy did not answer. He did not seem to hear. He was patting Molly's shoulder as he murmured in a soothing tone, "There, there, girl. Don't

take it so hard. Yer father knows best." But Molly only sobbed louder.

"Mr. Tandy," said Fannibel, coming forward from the corner of the room, "I'm afraid you don't know how we girls feel about these things. Molly and I have been so excited over Lord Barnstaple's visit. We've worked and planned, and Molly has such a pretty, new dress to wear to the dinner we're to give. Mayn't she stay on at least until that is over."

Mr. Tandy looked at her kindly but his lower jaw lost none of its curve of bull dog determination. "But we're all packed to go to Atlantic City," he explained, "would a' been settled there if Molly had come home when we wrote fer her to—like a good girl."

"Oh, I didn't know. But why can't you postpone your trip just a few days. Oh," she added, as if the thought had just come to her, "why not go on with your other daughter and let Molly join you as soon as the dinner is over."

Molly, whose sobs had continued, now declared, in a muffled tone, that she "wasn't goin' one step to Atlantic City 'til she got good and ready."

Mr. Tandy looked from Molly to Fannibel in a helpless sort of way. "It's not that I want to spoil my girl's pleasure," he said, "that's the last thing I'd want to do, but I'm not anxious fer her to meet one o' these lords. They don't amount to so much after all. Oh, I don't mean this—er—yer cousin—he may be a foine young man—but lords in gineral. My father left the auld counthry to get away from the likes of 'em. Reckon plain Amuricans air good enough fer me an' mine to associate with."

"But Mr. Tandy," Fannibel persisted, "under

the circumstances, surely there couldn't be any harm come of Molly's staying on for this dinner."

"Well now, what can a poorr man do," he chuckled, as he turned to Catherine, "might as well throw up me hands. There, Molly dry yer eyes. I'll do what the young lady says. That is I'll send Lizzie on ahead with Mrs. Ferguson—our rooms air all engaged—and I'll wait around until yer ready to go. I got some business to 'tend to any way."

Catherine did not return his friendly smile. Instead she turned to Molly saying coldly, "You will apologize to your father, please."

But Molly was already apologizing in her own way. Seated on the arm of his chair she was hugging him with all her might as she said:

"Pa, you're the grreatest old scout in the worrld, and, soon's this party's over, I'll go whenever you say the word."

"There now," he returned as he kissed her forehead, "I must be on me way." He pushed her from him and arose from his chair.

Fannibel glanced at her wrist watch. "I am going also," she said, "I'll drive you down town if you like."

Catherine glanced at her sister in displeased surprise. Really Fanny shouldn't have done that. It was well enough to treat Mr. Tandy with the courtesy due a patron of the school, but to appear with him in public in that familiar, offhand manner. Really she must speak to Fannibel. She was not pleased with the turn affairs had taken anyway. She would have preferred Molly's returning to Cincinnati with her father. As soon as they were alone she said, in her coldest tone:

"Molly, I am more than displeased with your behavior this afternoon. You should realize after

all my teaching that a *lady* would never indulge in such a display of temper.

Poor Molly did not realize that she was being made to bear the brunt of Catherine's own disappointment and ill humor. She looked up with a face filled with humble contrition, "I know it," she said, "and I'm terrible—er—I mean I'm *very* sorry, but I was just too mad to think straight. Mad enough to have bit a nail in two. You see, I knew that Lizzie was back of it all. She's been eggin' Pa on. Lizzie's smarter than I am an' she knows it. But for all that she can't tell what's best f'r me. F'r instance, she thinks that I've just been wastin' time stayin' on here; that I couldn't possibly learn nothin'—I mean anything—where it's so—well, where it's so quiet like. But I have. What with you correctin'—correcting my talk and Fannibel helping about picking out my clothes and me getting acquainted with all those nice young folks at the tennis court, I've caught on to a lot. And I've been happier than I would have been where there was—er—were a lot of girls to poke fun—I mean, girls to act uppity—you know—make me feel like I was just well, something the cat had brought in, as Lizzie 'ud say."

"My dear, you really must remember to choose your words," said Catherine. "You mean that too much adverse criticism, and from the wrong source, would have tended to retard your progress. And you are right. A small, select school is always preferable to a large institution."

"Golly! Wonder if I'll ever be able to talk like that!" Molly murmured, so lost in admiration that she again forgot to "choose her words."

"Well, I'm goin'—going to wash up a bit and change my dress, then I'll go on down to the eat shoppe and help Fannibel. They can always use one

more girl during the rush hour, no matter how many they have. I usually sit at the desk and take in the money and that gives Fannibel a chance to help fill the trays in the kitchen."

"Very well. And tell Miss Fannibel that I shall not come down this evening. I am not at all hungry. Some crackers and fruit will be sufficient."

"Don't you want me to bring you some ice cream and a piece o' cake?"

"Oh no—er—why yes, if you don't mind, Molly. That will be very nice."

VI.

After all it was Molly Tandy who caught the first glimpse of Lord Barnstaple. The evening following Colin Tandy's visit the young man had called up from St. Charles Hotel, announcing the arrival of himself and cousin, Arthur Blair, and asking permission to call on his relatives.

"I suppose it'll be all right to bring Mr. Blair along," he had said and Catherine had flutteringly returned, "Oh, certainly—any friend of yours," but she had not been altogether pleased.

"This Arthur Blair may be a prying person," she thought, as she hung up the receiver and went to tell Fannibel the great news.

The young gentlemen were to come the following afternoon. Catherine was in a flutter of excitement. She swept and dusted the parlor next morning, filled the green glass vase with fresh sweet peas, arranged the Spode teacups and saucers (the finest set in Gaynesboro) together with Mrs. Cuthbert Hadley's silver tea service on the low tea table and, from the attic brought a sword and military hat that had belonged to Amos Hadley. She had never cared particularly for the old pioneer but he *had* been a Revolutionary soldier and the hat, so she had been told, indicated that he had been an officer.

A young colored girl who, since Molly's advent had been coming once a week to help with the cleaning, was engaged for the afternoon. Her principal duty, as outlined by Catherine, was to open the front door when the visitors arrived and to usher them into the parlor. She was to address Catherine as

"Miss Hadley," to speak distinctly but not too loud and to keep within hearing distance of the little bell which would be near Catherine's hand and to come to the parlor door when she heard it.

Catherine had instructed the girl over and over and finally, lest there be a slip had rehearsed the ceremony.

Catherine did not go down to lunch that day nor would she allow Molly to bring her anything. "There's a can of soup here—that will do nicely. I'm really not at all hungry," she said. By one o'clock she was dressed.

"You'd ought to lay—I mean *lie*—down a while," Molly advised, "they won't be here fer hours. I'm goin' down to the beauty shop to get a marcel, but I'll be back in time to get dressed."

"Very well, Molly." At first she was indifferent concerning Molly's movements. If she were late—if she missed seeing the callers altogether—it really did not matter. But, after an hour had passed and Fannibel had not yet come, she began to long for Molly's return. Suppose Fannibel were late. She just couldn't meet Lord Barnstaple alone, she felt. Even Molly's presence—provided the girl looked presentable—would give her moral support. As the clock ticked relentlessly on she grew more and more nervous. Why didn't Fannibel come! She had urged her to get back in time to rest a while before she dressed. She wanted her to look her best—so much depended on first impressions. Finally Molly's step was heard on the back stairs and fifteen minutes later the young girl entered the room. Catherine gave a little gasp of pleased surprise at the sight of her. Her hopes that Molly would be presentable were more than realized. She was striking looking—a beauty, indeed.

"You look very nice, Molly," she said, with an approving nod.

"Aint—I mean isn't my dress pretty. Fannibel and I found it at Selkirk's the other afternoon. I was crazy about it—soon's I saw it—but I was afraid she'd think it was too gay."

"Not too gay. Quite suitable for a young girl and for an occasion like this." Catherine returned rather condescendingly. She had never had so pretty or suitable a dress in her girlhood.

The dress was a little sleeveless affair of ivory-white silk trimmed with a border of printed silk shading from deepest rose to pale pink. Her shoes and stockings were white and her only ornament was a long string of small pearl beads that encircled her neck twice and hung, twisted rope fashion below her waist.

"I've learned a lot about clothes since I come—came here," Molly said, as she sank down on the davenport.

She had learned a great deal. For instance that a striped, wool skirt and bright colored sweater would do nicely for tennis but was not suitable for an afternoon tea; that an elaborate evening gown would not be appropriate for an informal luncheon or any quiet party, besides other details of clothes lore.

Molly arose and strolled over to the window. A moment later, she called "They're coming—they're half way up the drive. My, he's nice looking. Fannibel couldn't help likin' him. But who's the tall gent—er—gentleman? Looks like a perffessor."

There was a pause, then the door bell rang. Catherine listened expectantly, but there was no sound from the back of the hall where Effie was supposed to be waiting. She rang the little bell on the

escritoire. There was no response. Then the door bell rang again.

"Never mind, Miss Catherine, I'll answer it," Molly said, as she darted into the hall. The young men were ushered in. It was all very awkward. Catherine was very much upset but she managed to get through with the introductions and get the guests seated. "Oh, where could that Effie be, and why hadn't Fannibel come home early, as she'd promised," she thought, as she sank down in her chair. She had hoped that Molly wouldn't talk—at least not much—but she was grateful as she heard the girl chatting brightly about the weather. An embarrassing pause followed. The weather seemd to have exhausted Molly's conversational powers. Catherine couldn't—"for the life of her"—think of a thing to say. Lord Barnstaple fidgeted uneasily, turned pink and stammered something to the effect that they had been surprised to find Gaynesboro so far from New York but had been more than pleased with the traveling facilities, and Catherine had murmured something in reply.

Lord Barnstaple was a handsome young fellow, boyish looking for his twenty-five years. His deep-set, gray eyes were fine and his white forehead and wavy brown hair girlishly pretty. But these marks of femininity were offset by a knobby chin and firm jaw. Mr. Blair was of a more rugged type, tall, broad-shouldered, older in bearing than in looks. One could hardly say that his eyes, behind heavy, shell-rimmed glasses, wore a mocking smile but Catherine could feel that the smile was there and was only being held in the background. It made her feel uneasy. Another pause—longer, more painful than the first—ensued. Then Catherine had an inspiration.

"How do you like America?" she enquired.

"Very much—very much, indeed," his Lordship responded, emphatically, and again Catherine could feel rather than see Mr. Blair's ironic smile.

Luckily at that moment a step was heard in the back part of the hall and Molly exclaimed in an undertone, "I bet that's Fannibel," and fled from the room. There was a sound of whispering, of suppressed giggling then, in a few moments the two girls entered the room together. Catherine always remembered how "perfectly wonderful" Fannibel was that afternoon. She greeted the young men cordially, with just the right degree of reserve, and settling down in a low chair began talking in such a natural, unaffected manner that soon they were all at their ease. Catherine was delighted. "I never realized that Fanny had such poise, such conversational gifts," she thought, as she watched the scene.

She tingled the little bell, which was to have been the signal for Effie to pour boiling water in the teapot. Fannibel arose and left the room, Molly following in her wake. Again Catherine was very much distraught. This was not at all as she had planned. How awkward it must seem to this nobleman, accustomed as he was to a large establishment with "an army of servants." Oh, that dreadful Effie! Then it occurred to her that something might have happened to the girl. She could have had a fall or have been taken suddenly ill.

Catherine had actually begun to fidget nervously when she suddenly remembered that a hostess must never seem perturbed no matter what happens. She immediately assumed an air of superb nonchalance and, when a moment later Fannibel came in with the tea, she forbore to question even with her eyes. She filled the little Spode cups, hoping her guests realized what they were. Fannibel passed them on and

Molly followed with a tray of small cakes which Fannibel had brought from town.

The tea seemed to clear the atmosphere and to melt whatever thin wall of ice that might have remained. The young people began laughing and chatting spontaneously. "Why, they seem to be actually enjoying themselves," Catherine thought, wonderingly. She could not keep from wincing however when she heard the irrepressible Molly saying:

"I didn't know the first thing 'bout tennis when I come here. Fannibel had to teach me the a b cs, you might say, but I've got so's I c'n play 'bout as well as the rest."

"She's an expert," Fannibel assured the young men, "don't be surprised if you hear of her entering some of the international contests."

There was one thing about Molly that Catherine had never before noticed although Fannibel had spoken of it. It was that Molly had an exceptionally pretty speaking voice. "Her soft drawl certainly mitigates her atrocious syntax," she said to herself, and it did not occur to her that she would probably have warned Molly against using so strong an adjective as atrocious in this connection.

The young men, to her surprise, were regarding Molly with admiring interest. It seemed that both were devotees of tennis. "Suppose we have an international contest, all by ourselves, one of these days," she heard Lord Barnstaple saying.

The young men finally,—it seemed to Catherine reluctantly—took their leave. Lord Barnstaple expressed his pleasure in meeting his relatives and Mr. Blair said with a genial air:

"Sorry I can't claim relationship but won't you take me in anyway. I'm a sort of family connection, you know."

"Oh,—I don't—know," Catherine stammered,

doubtfully, then remembered that Mr. Blair was an own cousin to Lord Barnstaple. There might be some significance in his words, and she hastened to add, "Oh, certainly! Yes, indeed! Any relative of Lord Barnstaple's."

"From now on consider yourself a cousin," Fannibel said as she smilingly gave him her hand.

Both young men promptly accepted the dinner invitation.

"Well, Molly, you've seen an English lord," Fannibel said, as the two young men disappeared beyond the last clump of shrubbery, "what did you think of him?"

"Why I don't know," Molly returned, in a somewhat puzzled tone, "he's awful—I mean real nice but he's not at all—at all—like I thought he'd be. If he wasn't a lord I'd have thought he was bashful—that is at first."

"I'm inclined to think so anyway. That is, he seems a little timid." Fannibel chuckled.

Catherine suddenly remembered the recalcitrant Effie. She began to recount her mortifying experience. "I never was so upset in my life," she whimpered. "Where *do* you suppose the girl can be? Was she in the kitchen when you made the tea?"

"Didn't see anything of her. I'd really forgotten that she was to come."

A search followed. The girl was not in the dining-room or kitchen, nor was she to be found in the basement. Fannibel went out on the back veranda and softly called her name. "I don't see anything of her—she's probably gone home," she reported.

"Somebody's in that closet," said Molly, and opening the door of the kitchen closet she drew Effie's trembling form into view.

"Why, Effie, what's the matter?" Fannibel exclaimed.

"Is he gone?" the girl whispered.

"Why yes, our callers have just left. But what is the matter? Why did you hide in the closet? Did some one frighten you?"

"Miss Fannibel, I'se mighty sorry to go back on Miss Hadley thataway but I jis' couldn't help it. I know it sounds sinful but I'd jis' as soon meet de debble, face to face, thataway, as de Lawd."

"Oh, she thinks Lord Barnstaple is God," Molly whispered, with a giggle.

"I see," Fannibel nodded. Then to the girl she said, "there was nothing to be afraid of, Effie. Miss Hadley will explain."

Catherine, deciding that Effie had taken French leave, had returned to the parlor. She was relieved when Fannibel explained how matters stood.

"I know how she got the idee," said Molly, "I heard you telling her to do this and that when the lord arrived. I thought she acted awful—very stupid. I see now what the trouble was."

"Don't scold her, Cathie, but do make it clear that Lord Barnstaple isn't a heavenly visitant—not even an angel. He is a lamb, though, isn't he?" she added.

"Oh, Fannibel! You like him then!"

"I like him a lot. Feel a little sorry for him."

"Feel sorry for him!"

"Oh, not very. He's bound to have his disappointments and he'll have to bear them like a man. He probably will. Now Cathie, don't wait up for me. The lady Rotarians are giving a banquet this evening. They won't be likely to begin eating until eight or after. Then Emily Gunther—she's president or toastmistress or something—will make one

of her pretty, long-winded speeches. It'll probably be all hours before we can get away. G'by."

Catherine watched the little car gliding away. She wondered what her sister had meant by saying she felt sorry for Lord Barnstaple and referring to his disappointments. Fannibel was a little vague sometimes. But she was wonderful! So resourceful. "Lord Barnstaple must have recognized her superiority," she sighed, then remembering the waiting Effie she repaired to the kitchen to explain Lord Barnstaple's spiritual status to the terrified girl.

VII.

Henry Brandt did not grace the Hadley dinner with his presence. His wife called up the day before to say that he had a cold and did not think it best to come out. "I'm not even sure about myself," Mrs. Brandt added, "my neuritis has been so bad but Dorry will come in any case."

What Mr. Brandt had really said was, that it was all a piece of Tom foolery, Catherine's trying to entertain an English lord—a piece of Cuthbert Hadley folly—and he for one was not going to encourage her in it. Catherine, secretly delighted that she was to be spared Henry's company, expressed her regret. "If only Dolores would stay away, too," she murmured, as she hung up the receiver.

"Since it's uncertain about the Brandts—even Cousin Ellen's coming, couldn't we invite some one else," she asked Fannibel. But Fannibel shook her head. "We mustn't undertake more than we have to," she said. "There will be Mrs. Embrey, Dolores and Molly, the two gentlemen and ourselves. That will make a nice little party."

But Mrs. Brandt came after all. She called up early next morning to say that her neuritis was better. "I just couldn't bear to disappoint you, Cathie," she said, "and we'll come early so's to have a visit before the others get there."

Catherine dreaded the pre-dinner visit with Dolores. The girl was *so* trying. "My nerves will be in a dreadful state by the time the gentlemen arrive, I know they will," she whimpered.

"But you must learn not to take Dolores's non-

sense to heart," Fannibel warned her, "make up your mind that you won't allow anything she may say to vex you."

Next day, an hour before the time set for the dinner, the Brandts' gray sedan came purring up the driveway. A moment later Dolores dashed into the room. She dropped a light kiss on Catherine's cheek, gave Fannibel's hand a little squeeze and then noting, for the first time the change in the room stopped as if spellbound. "My, my!" she exclaimed, "newly papered, new curtains and drapes, new car— but the carpet isn't new—it's just different. Where did you get it? Oh, I'll bet I know. At the rummage sale! They had some wonderful bargains there—"

"Dolores you ought to know that I never patronize rummage sales," Catherine interrupted haughtily.

"Don't, hey? Well, I do and buy when I run across something I want. There was such a beautiful Cloisonne vase that day—Mrs. Humphrey Selkirk gave it—that I was just crazy to buy but it was marked two-ninety eight and I only had two dollars to my name. And speaking of buying old things, if you ever want to part with that chest in the hall you'll let me have it, won't you? I've been coveting it ever since I first saw it—when I was a little girl."

"The chest belongs to Fannibel and, of course, she would never consider selling it. It's been in the family for generations—was brought from England during the reign of Queen Anne."

"My, think of it," Dolores sighed, as she sank into a chair, "No wonder you Hadleys boast of your good blood. It takes the bluest of the blue to own an article like that. Especially to have owned it so long. But how pretty you're looking, Lady Cathe-

rine. Your dress isn't pretty though—too old looking."

"Why, Dorry, I think that gray voile is very pretty," Mrs. Brandt remonstrated, "such a soft shade—and the cuffs and collar set it off so nicely."

Dolores shook her head. "Too old," she repeated. "How old are you, Catherine?" she asked, bluntly.

"I'll be thirty-five my next birthday."

"There you are! And you make yourself look like an old-fashioned woman of fifty. Fannibel, you

Presently Mrs. Embrey was seen crossing the expanse of lawn that lay between her own home and the Hadley mansion. In her heavily beaded, crepe dress and with her white hair piled on top her head in a most becoming way she was quite distinguished looking.

"There's one guest that will do you credit, Lady Catherine," Dolores said, as she glanced through the open window, "duchesses be hanged!"

must take this young lady in hand and get her some suitable clothes. Have her hair bobbed or at least marcelled and brought down low on her neck. By the way how do you like my dress? I picked it up at Selkirk's yesterday—for a song."

The dress was a pale yellow, crêpe de chène and was most becoming to Dolores' type. "It's very pretty," Catherine murmured, and she glanced ruefully at her sister. She had so much wanted Fannibel to look her best. Instead she was wearing a little, lilac sprigged lawn that she had "picked up" at the Selkirk sale the day before. It was quite becoming though and her blond slippers and light, silk stockings looked nice. "After all, I've heard that English girls—even the best class—dress simply," she reflected, "so it may be all right."

"Why Dorry! Mrs. Brandt expostulated, "you really mustn't!"

As soon as Mrs. Embrey was seated Dolores stationed herself at one of the front windows and, a few moments later she exclaimed in a tense undertone, her hands clasped tragically, "They're coming, Lady Catherine, the noble peer and his faithful henchman. Oh, I'm so—so flustered. Hold my hand, Fannibel!"

Fannibel smiled, as she glanced through the window then, turning to Catherine, asked, "Shall I open the door?"

"Oh, no, no indeed. Belle will attend to it," Catherine returned, emphatically. She had engaged Belle Brown, a young, colored woman of more than usual intelligence to cook and serve the dinner and, determined that there should be no hitch this time, had drilled her in the matter of opening the door and ushering in the guests. Belle proved a credit to her training. With the air of a butler she stood at the parlor door and announced:

"Lawd Bahnstaple and Mistah Blaih!"

If Catherine was ill at ease she did not show it. She went through the introductions very prettily and this accomplished, sank down in her chair with the comfortable feeling that so far things had gone well. "Molly is really quite presentable," she thought. But Molly, in her printed silk dress of morning glory hues, was more than presentable. Excitement had given a color to her cheeks and a sparkle to her eyes that made her really beautiful. Catherine was rather annoyed as she noted that Lord Barnstaple was regarding the girl with more interest than was warrentable under the circumstances. "He hardly seems to see Fannibel," she

thought jealously. She was relieved when dinner was finally announced.

As they entered the dining room Catherine was gratified to note that Mrs. Embrey's sharp gray eyes swept the table with an approving glance. The white damask cloth and napkins, the cut glass bowl filled with variegated sweet peas, the silver candlesticks with pink candles, the china, glass and silver were all in good taste. She had conscientiously placed the guests according to their rank with Lord Barnstaple at her right and Mrs. Embrey at her left. It didn't matter about the others.

"Lord Barnstaple," Dolores began as she unfolded her napkin, "I hope you aren't going to get all sorts of wrong impressions of America, as so many of your countrymen do, Dickens for instance."

"Oh, ah—er—really my impressions are most pleasant so far, I assure you," the young man returned, as his cheeks took on a pink tinge. "Besides," he added, "one hears only the most favorable criticism of America. Our—"

"Oh, I know," Dolores interrupted, "but still I am afraid you think we care for nothing but money. At any rate that we care more for money than anything else. We're really not like that at all. Our people—that is our best families—are utterly indifferent to money. We are not mercenary at all. We care more for family—blood, you know—than anything else."

Poor Catherine felt as if she must sink through the floor—anywhere out of sight—for the girl was quoting—almost verbatim—from Lady Barnstaple's letter. How could she have heard? "She hasn't. She's just so uncanny she seems to sense things," she thought, then she suddenly remembered having told Henry Brandt. He had accused the young man

of being a fortune hunter and she had explained—had quoted from his mother's letter. Oh, how foolish of her, and what would that awful girl say next, she wondered.

"Of course there are exceptions—I mean there are those who go in for money—even in the best families," Dolores was saying next. "Take the Hadley family for instance—and there is none higher—the founder of this western branch of the family, Captain Amos Hadley, was in trade. He amassed quite a fortune it is said—that is as fortunes were counted in that day. But laws, that's been so long ago. Nobody holds it against the Hadleys now. In fact I don't suppose anyone outside the family knows anything about it or remembers old Amos."

Mrs. Embrey had been glaring indignantly at Dolores, and as the girl paused, she said, in a tone of stern disapproval:

"Miss Pynne, I really cannot let your slighting remarks concerning Captain Amos Hadley pass unchallenged. He was one of the foremost men of his day and generation, able, broad-minded and public-spirited. He had already distinguished himself in the war of the American Revolution," the old lady continued, and turning to the two young men, "and after the hostilities were over, he came west, as did many of his comrades, to help build up the country. He probably did more for Gaynesboro in his day than did any other one man. It is said that he was largely instrumental in having lamp posts placed on the prominent corners, of having the streets paved with flagstones and the well, which for many years supplied the town with drinking water, was his gift. It still stands a memorial to him. The authorities would never allow it to be filled up."

"The old Indian fighter seems to have been a live wire all right," Dolores murmured.

Mrs Embrey chose to ignore this flippant remark and continued, "As to his having been forgotten you are altogether mistaken. Captain Amos Hadley will never be forgotten in this town. Have you heard, Catherine, that the city is planning to erect a monument to him. That is," she amended, "to the four outstanding pioneers who founded this town. Captain Hadley is one of them. The monument is to be placed on the public square near the fountain.

A murmur of surprise followed this statement. Catherine had not heard and she was highly pleased. Not that she had ever been particularly proud of the old pioneer, Amos Hadley, but it was gratifying that the family name was to be honored.

"I am perfectly amazed!" Dolores exclaimed, "now if it had been Cuthbert Hadley!"

No one paid any attention to Dolores' remark but she was not one to be squelched. "Cuthbert Hadley was the grandfather of our hostess," she exclaimed to the two young men, "he was indeed a great man—so cultured, so distinguished looking. Catherine, Lydia Barnes says her grandmother remembers Colonel Hadley distinctly and the old lady said that whenever she saw him on horseback she thought of Charles the First. She said he had that regal militant air."

Catherine stirred uneasily. She was not surprised to hear of her grandfather's having been compared with Charles the First. She did not doubt that he had been as kingly looking as the unfortunate monarch but, knowing Dolores as she did, she feared what might follow. Then, too, she had a vague feeling that all this discussion of the Hadley family might not be in good taste. She didn't really

know what people talked of at a dinner although "Polite Conversation" was one of the branches of her finishing school. Oh, why didn't some one change the subject! There was Fannibel, usually so resourceful, chatting in a low tone with Molly and that Mr. Blair.

"Why don't they talk of music or art or discuss the latest novel," she thought, then she became aware that Mrs. Embrey was speaking.

But Mrs. Embrey had not chosen art or literature as a topic for discussion but, of all things, Fannibel's Eat Shoppe. This was a tender subject to Catherine—one that she had never been able to bring herself to discuss with any of her friends. Indeed she had never condescended to enter it until after Molly's coming and then only because she thought Fannibel would soon be giving it up and it would be regarded as a girlish fad.

"Your friends are all so gratified with your success, my dear," Mrs. Embrey was saying, "and we feel that it is wonderful to be able to get a good meal—well-cooked and daintily served—so very reasonable. My only fear is that you are not making enough profit."

"We haven't aimed at large profits," Fannibel began, "but we hoped to please the public and get our business established on a firm footing—"

"Oh, they're making a good profit," Dolores interrupted, "the Hadleys are coming to the front—financially. What we—her family I mean—deplore is the loss of social prestige."

"I don't understand," Mrs. Embrey said coldly.

"Well, you know it really isn't just the thing for a girl of Fannibel's standing and—er—background

—to be in business at all. A sort of lowering of standards, don't you know."

The young men had been listening with evident interest. "Oh—er—the tea room up town, you mean!" Mr. Blair exclaimed, "really! We saw the sign and wondered if the proprietor might not be a relative of yours."

"It would be bad enough that way," Dolores sighed, "but for Fannibel! We all felt terribly about it. Uncle Henry was saying only last evening that it's hard to realize that Fannibel is Cuthbert Hadley's own granddaughter."

"I have never been said to be like him," Fannibel returned with a wry, little smile.

"You are like your father, my dear," Mrs. Embrey declared, "I see it more and more and others have remarked it."

"So I have been told," returned Fannibel, "and I always feel so flattered. If I could only live up to father I should be satisfied."

Mrs. Embrey nodded approvingly. "He was indeed a man of sterling worth," she declared, "my husband used to say that Bob Hadley—he never could get away from calling him Bob—could have made a fortune as a corporation lawyer, that he was one of the ablest men in the profession. But he chose rather to stay in this little, obscure town and earn the title of the poor man's friend. To be the poor man's friend, you must know, means doing a great deal of work for those who are not able to pay for a lawyer's services."

"I guess you're right about that," Molly burst forth, "I know Mr. Hadley won a lawsuit for Pa once and wouldn't charge him a cent. We was awful poor then—it was before Pa went west Pa always

thought the world and all of Mr. Hadley. I guess they was great friends all right."

To say that Catherine felt like she'd sink would be putting it mildly. That dreadful girl! "And I warned her not to talk," she thought, as she strove to keep back the tears of anger. She felt tempted to order Molly to leave the table, but after all that wouldn't help matters now. Nothing would. The young men—Lord Barnstaple, rather—could never overlook such a disgraceful outbreak.

A rather embarrassing pause followed. After all it was Dolores who came to the rescue. "Molly, may I tell these gentlemen about your father? The rest of us know," she added.

"Why yes, I don't mind," Molly returned, "only I didn't know you knew him."

"Mr. Tandy," Dolores began, "is an example of the opportunities offered to ambitious youth in this land of the free and home of the brave. He left this town a few years ago, a poor but honest young man. He has returned a millionaire and is respected accordingly. The Chamber of Commerce had a doings for him last evening. There was an account of it in the morning paper—on the front page with Mr. Tandy's picture big as life."

"Oh, Mr. Tandy!" the two young men exclaimed almost simultaneously. "We met him at the hotel," Mr. Blair added, "a most interesting man. I didn't know he was your father," he added, turning to Molly.

"Nor I," Lord Barnstaple supplemented, "though I might have noticed that the names were the same."

Molly did not reply to either of them. She did not seem to hear. She was exclaiming excitedly, "Pa's picture in the paper! Why, I didn't see it. But

come to think, we didn't get one. May I run down to the drug store and get one, Miss Catherine?"

"Better 'phone first and see if they have any left," Fannibel suggested.

Molly was out in the hall before Fannibel had ceased speaking. She returned a moment later looking crestfallen to say, "They're all sold out."

"Never mind, we have the paper," Dolores told her, "I'll bring it down to the Shoppe this evening."

The dinner finally came to an end—much to Catherine's relief. They were back in the parlor and Mrs. Embrey was showing the young men the governor's portrait and explaining that Cuthbert Hadley, grandfather of Miss Catherine and Fannibel, had married his daughter. Then she herself found an opportunity to explain that Fannibel's "tea room" was simply a girlish fad of which she would soon tire. "You've no idea what daring things our young girls do nowadays," she said, "it's the spirit of the times, I think. Why, when I was Fannibel's age, no young lady—that is in our circle—would have dreamed of doing anything to earn money."

But the young men did not seem interested. Indeed, they seemed slightly bored and, when Dolores suggested that they all go to look at some ancient ruins—an old mill that she declared had been built fifty years ago—they readily assented.

"The city is over a hundred years old and the mill was one of the first buildings. It must be over a hundred years old," Catherine reminded her, spiritedly.

Mrs. Embrey did not care to take the long jaunt so Catherine and Mrs. Brandt stayed behind with her while the others set out. They settled down in some rustic chairs under the old trees. Mrs. Brandt, as she always did, commented on the "beautiful view

from the terrace," while Mrs. Embrey, adjusting the folds of her skirts, began advising Catherine.

"You dress entirely too mature for your years," she said, "and you efface yourself altogether too much. You must dress more girlishly—more in keeping with your years—you really must. Consult Fannibel—get her to do your hair differently—and get yourself some new dresses. There will be many affairs given for Lord Barnstaple—I feel sure of that—and you'll be going out a great deal this summer."

"That's what Dorry told her this morning—that is that she dressed too old," Mrs. Brandt said, "and I think you're both right."

Catherine wondered. She decided to talk it over with Fannibel. Perhaps she would make herself a blue voile gown—or maybe a printed silk."

The shadows lengthened and finally the young people were seen coming up the path in the rear of the house. Fannibel and Dolores were in front with Mr. Blair while Lord Barnstaple and Molly were bringing up the rear. Molly seemed to be talking animatedly while his lordship listened with flattering attention.

"Well, here we are," Dolores called, "and now I'm sure these Britons will realize that America too has history."

"I hope they were impressed with the mill," Mrs. Embrey said, with a grim smile.

"They should have been. We showed them the portholes through which our brave ancestors shot at the Indians, and the road over which General Anthony Wayne and his valiant soldiers chased the 'red skin varments.' Wasn't that what they called the natives in those days?" she asked, at which Mr.

Blair chuckled politely while Lord Barnstaple gravely smiled.

Fannibel and Molly brought out some mats and they all sprawled out on the grass in a most informal fashion. Catherine was rather alarmed to see that Lord Barnstaple had managed to draw Molly to one side and that they were continuing their earnest conversation. "What does he mean by it?" she thought, "devoting himself to another girl when he is practically engaged to Fannibel." She was more than a little displeased. Presently the party broke up. Mrs. Brandt and Dolores drove away taking the young men with them while Fannibel soon followed in her flivver. Mrs. Embrey remained a few minutes to talk things over, then she crossed the lawn to her own home and Catherine and Molly were left alone.

Molly dropped down into one of the rustic chairs and began to chat in her cheeriest manner. To her mind the dinner had been an unqualified success. She did not remember ever having been quite so happy. "Every one had been so nice," she declared, "not a bit stiff."

"And that Lord Barnstaple—why you'd never think about him being so hightoned. He's that friendly and folksy—just like any other young man."

"You and he seemed to have a long talk," Catherine said sharply, "I wondered what you were finding to converse about so earnestly."

"Oh, he was talkin' about Pa mostly. Askin' how he'd made his money and how much he had and all that."

"And how did your father make his money, may I ask?"

"Well, it was oil at first. Pa bought a little piece o' ground out west there, intendin' to raise sheep.

Then one day he noticed that the water in the creek looked greasy. It smelled bad and the sheep didn't want to drink it. He had some men come and look at it. Then some more men come and begun borin' and pretty soon the oil just begun to gush. Pa sold out fer a million dollars and a bonus er royalty or whatever they called it. Since then I don't rightly know what he's done but he keeps on makin' more. Ma was afraid to spend anything at first—afraid he might lose it all he kept speculatin' so—but he fixed a million dollars in her name so's she couldn't never lose it. After that she begun to enjoy life. When she died he divided it between me and Lizzie."

"Divided it! A million dollars. Do you mean to tell me that you have a half million in your own right?"

Molly shook her head. "Just the interest on it. I can't touch the principal."

"But—why, that would be an enormous sum!"

"It's a-plenty. I told you I had lots o' spendin' money. When I want to buy some little thing for the house here you needn't worry. I don't mind—I'd ruther—er—I mean rather. And now I guess I'll run down to the li'bry and change my book and then go on to the Eat Shoppe. Or are we to eat here this evening—eat up what was left?"

Eating up what was left appealed to Catherine's thrifty soul but she felt that she could not stand any more of Molly's society. She wanted to be alone. "You may go—I shall eat a light supper here," she said.

Catherine did not eat any supper. She was not hungry and there was a disagreeable lump in her throat. She did make a cup of tea, however, and forced herself to drink it for she felt one of her headaches coming on. It had been a most trying

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day, worse in some ways than she had anticipated. Then too Lord Barnstaple's evident interest in a girl worth half a million in her own right and prospective heir to more was, to say the least, most disconcerting.

When Fannibel returned late that evening she found Catherine sobbing between her sheets. "Why what in the world, Cathie," she exclaimed in alarm, "what has happened?"

"Oh, Fanny dear, I'm afraid it's all over!"

"The worst is," Fannibel returned cheerily, "the dinner. Situated as we are—as they know we are—the gentlemen won't expect us to entertain for them. But I thought it all went off very well."

"Oh, Fanny—that dinner—the conversation I mean. And that terrible *faux pas* of Molly's—at the table you know.

"Oh, that. Well, I shouldn't worry. Molly is just Molly and she is so good and so pretty we should forgive her 'most anything. And, as for the young men, they seem to have taken quite a fancy to her. They were at the Shoppe for supper and Molly and Lord Barnstaple have a date to play tennis tomorrow.

But this information did not tend to raise Catherine's spirits.

VIII.

Mrs. Embrey herself gave the first of the social functions that she had predicted would be given in Lord Barnstaple's honor. She called next morning to talk the matter over with Catherine. The affair, a dinner, was to be the means of introducing the young nobleman to Gaynesboro society. It was to be the sort of dinner that would not only impress his lordship with the social standing of the Hadleys but show him that Gaynesboro was the equal, as far as social life was concerned, of any city in the country not even barring New York. As she unfolded her plans, Catherine realized that the dinner was indeed to be in keeping with the traditions of the Hadley family and she was grateful accordingly.

"We are very fortunate to have a friend like Mrs. Embrey," she told Fannibel that afternoon.

The invitations were sent out at once and when the Hadleys's came Fannibel was surprised to find that Molly's name had not been included.

"I don't understand," she said, "surely she knows that Molly is our guest. Shouldn't we speak to her—to Mrs. Embrey I mean."

"I should scarcely dare to dictate to a lady of Mrs. Embrey's standing," Catherine returned loftily.

"Oh, I'm sure it would be all right. It must be an oversight—she must have meant to include Molly."

Catherine looked a little embarrassed but her mouth took on firm lines. "It wasn't an oversight," she said, "Mrs. Embrey and I talked it over. She

doesn't hold with all this fuss that is being made over Colin Tandy—just because he has made a lot of money. 'It savors of worshipping the golden calf,' she says, and I quite agree with her."

"But I don't believe it's only because he's made money—it's because he's attractive—likable. Oh, of course his money is an asset. But really we owe it to Molly—to give her social opportunities. That is why she is here."

"We cannot force people to invite her to their parties."

"I suppose you're right. Anyway Molly probably won't miss much. I only hope she won't feel hurt."

Molly took Mrs. Embrey's snubbing in good part. "Don't you worry none. I know it aint—er—isn't your fault," she told Fannibel.

"Two superfluous words in your first sentence, Molly," Catherine corrected. Molly looked bewildered for a moment then smiled. "I see what you mean. 'Don't worry,' 'ud be enough. Oh, I'll catch on, yet," she added hopefully, at which Catherine sighed and shook her head.

The evening of the dinner found the old red brick Embrey mansion brilliantly lighted and beautifully decorated throughout. The dining-table, spread with a rich lace cloth, fairly glittered with its array of silver, cut glass. Hot-house roses filled the silver vases and the candles in the tall candlesticks matched the roses in color. The dinner itself was in the hands of a Cincinnati caterer and musicians from that city played soft, sweet strains from the rear of the long hall.

The party promised to be a very dignified affair indeed. For one thing the guests were all old—contemporaries of Mrs. Embrey's for the most part. There were none as young as Fannibel or Lord

Barnstaple and few, if any, as young as Catherine. Catherine had not exactly confided to Mrs. Embrey that Lord Barnstaple had come over to marry Fannibel but she had hinted that he was contemplating matrimony and she had also explained that he was not mercenary. The old lady had drawn her own conclusions and in arranging her place cards had seated Fannibel next to the young lord. Mr. Blair she had placed between Catherine and old lady Van Vleet who was very deaf.

"No reason in the world why Catherine shouldn't marry, too," she said to herself, as she arranged the place cards. Of course, Mr. Blair was somewhat younger but what did a few years signify? She was glad to see that the Hadley girls were both looking their best that evening. Catherine was wearing a simple but becoming, little gown of flowered rayon voile which a new pattern, a dress length of goods and her own skillful fingers had achieved since receiving the dinner invitation. Also her hair was marcelled and done low on her neck, as Mrs. Embrey had advised.

After the dinner was over the gentlemen, having waived the privilege of remaining in the dining room for cigars, joined the ladies in the long drawing-room. Lord Barnstaple at once became the center of interest. Miss Lydia Vigo's guest, Miss Henrietta Perkins, sought the young man out and inquired if he expected to lecture at any of the Chautauquas that summer. Miss Perkins lived on a farm midway between Gaynesboro and the village of Cloverly and Chatauquas were her hobby.

"Oh, no—no indeed," the young man stammered, "I'm not a public speaker."

"Oh aren't you, really," said Mrs. Austin, president of the Gaynesboro Woman's club, "but surely

you'll give a talk to our club—just an informal talk, you know. Of course the club year has closed but I had thought of calling an extra meeting for the occasion. It will be so interesting to hear your views of America. You will, won't you?"

"Really, I am sorry to have to refuse," Lord Barnstaple returned, as his cheeks took on a tinge of deep red, "I'm not at all accustomed to speaking in public," he explained.

"Oh, but just a very informal talk," she persisted, "just your frank opinion of the country. We like to see ourselves as others see us."

"We hope you don't view us through Charles Dickens' spectacles," Miss Perkins said archly. She was determined, as she afterwards said, to let the young man know that she, or rather that "American girls" read Dickens.

Lord Barnstaple was beginning to feel most unhappy but old Major Penn came to the rescue saying, "Don't pester the young man. He won't give you his frank opinion of the country—he's too polite. What he really thinks—what all Englishmen think—is that we're about a thousand years behind the times."

Lord Barnstaple joined in the laugh that followed this sally, then said, "Oh, you're mistaken in that. We all realize that America is quite up to date. And I understand you have some magnificent, natural scenery over here," he added.

"We have something more than natural scenery," Miss Henrietta Perkins flashed belligerently, "our art, music, literature rank with the best. We have history too," she added meaningly.

"The gentlemen know that," Dolores Pynne told her, "we showed them some of our ancient ruins the other day."

"Of course I do not know to what ruins you refer," Miss Perkins returned in a distinct undertone, "but I should like to show him our Bunker Hill monument."

"Speaking of monuments," old lady Van Vleet began, in her quavering, old voice, "there are so many beautiful ones in New England. I was there with my late husband in 1920—it was our last trip together. I had looked forward to seeing the Bunker Hill monument but I hadn't known there were so many others. There is one—a most impressive one—erected in memory of the minute men who fought at Lexington and Concord."

"Tell 'em about the verse that's on it," old Major Vigo said, his eyes twinkling mischievously,—'By the rude bridge that arched the flood,' then catching a look from the stern, gray eyes of his daughter, Miss Lydia, the Major subsided, with a school boyish grin. Miss Lydia crossed over to the chair near Lord Barnstaple and began telling him of "our California," its fruits, flowers and wonderful climate, dwelling especially on the old Spanish missions.

Meanwhile Lady Van Vleet rambled on, telling of seeing the woods in which Thoreau had built his cabin and having traveled the very road over which the Minute Men had chased the British soldiers, then finally realizing that no one was listening, she subsided.

Mrs. Embrey softly clapped her hands and, having secured attention, said, "I think we'll begin our card game now. Over in the library, please—the tables are arranged. Fannibel," she added, turning to the corner where Fannibel was chatting cozily with Major Penn, "you and Lord Barnstaple will not care to play with us oldsters, I'm sure, so I wish

you'd show him these views of western scenery. I'm sure he will enjoy looking at them."

"Well now!" Major Penn expostulated, "that's too bad—breaking up our flirtation!" "Too bad," Fannibel echoed smilingly. She was pleased, however for, while she did not share Catherine's hopes and plans in regard to their titled cousin, she preferred a tête-à-tête with him to a game of cards with the major.

Catherine was more than pleased with this arrangement. From her table she could see Fannibel and their cousin seated companionably on a sofa bending over the portfolio of views. The pictures seemed to be soon disposed of and the two young people had apparently settled into a cozy chat. This would be an excellent opportunity for Lord Barnstaple to "speak," she thought. She glanced across the hall from time to time and once she felt sure that the young man *was* speaking. He looked so earnest as he leaned toward her sister and Fannibel seemed so—so moved. Catherine's heart skipped a beat as she trumped her partner's ace and returned his look of displeased surprise with a beatific smile. She began planning the wedding. "This evening's crowd would make a nice wedding party," she thought, as she glanced over the room. "Such a distinguished looking company." Of course, it wouldn't be necessary to have all of them and she would have to have cousin Betty's folks from Baltimore. She wondered if Mrs. Embrey would lend her lace tablecloth.

Lord Barnstaple and Mr. Blair escorted the Hadleys home. As soon as the door was closed behind them Catherine turned to her sister saying:

"Oh, Fanny dear, did he speak? He *must* have, he looked so earnest while he was talking to you. I

could hardly wait until we got home to hear about it."

"Speak?" Fannibel repeated wonderingly, then as Catherine's meaning dawned on her she laughed, "of course not," she said.

"But why doesn't he?" Catherine demanded.

"Probably because there isn't anything that he wishes to say," Fannibel returned coolly, as she began unpinning the artificial gardenia from the shoulder of her blue, silk dress.

"Fannibel don't you—can't you realize that the young man came over here to marry you. It is all arranged—it only remains for him to speak. You will be mistress of that beautiful English manor, will have money, servants; you will mingle with lords and ladies, dukes and duchesses, on terms of equality. Oh, Fanny, I dreamed of the place last night! There were peacocks strutting on the terraces just as Mama described."

Fannibel had been frowning in a troubled sort of way and at last she burst forth: "Oh, Cathie, won't you put all that nonsense out of your head—you're sure to be disappointed if you don't. Bitterly disappointed. Give it all up and let's have as happy a summer as we can. There'll be more parties, dances, dinners and what not. And now to bed, as the immortal Pepys would say, and don't get up early in the morning."

Catherine sighed as she murmured, "Good night," and started up the stairway. She was disappointed but not without hope. "Of course he *will* speak," she said to herself as she arranged her new rayon voile on the hanger and put it away, "it's only that he fears to be precipitate." She was pleased that Fannibel was seemingly holding herself some-

what aloof as a modest, well bred young lady should.

"Still it will be a relief to have it all settled," she sighed, "this suspense is so hard on me."

IX.

Two days later came invitations,—one from Miss Lydia Vigo to a dinner dance to be given in honor of Lord Barnstaple at the Gaynesboro Country Club, and another to a pink tea given at the home of Mrs. Hubert Selkirk. Again Molly's name had not been included. Fannibel did not consult her sister this time. She did not even discuss the omission but took the matter in her own hands. Early next morning her car was seen gliding along upper Monroe Avenue an hour before its usual time. She turned into Berwick Mall, which was the name of the lane that led to the old Vigo homestead and drew up before the stately red brick, which, as Miss Lydia was fond of saying, had been in the family for three generations. Miss Lydia was surprised to see her and still more surprised when she learned Fannibel's errand.

"Really, Fanny dear, I don't see how I can grant your request," the lady began, "of course I'd do anything for you. I'm giving this party for your cousin on account of the long-standing friendship between our families, but—"

"I know—and it's dear of you," Fannibel interrupted, "but Molly Tandy is our guest, you know."

"Oh, but I shouldn't worry about that. We all understand. It's not that I'm snobbish. I'm not—not at all—and I believe in being kind to the poor. I'm always kind to the poor—but I will not toady to the vulgar rich. These social climbers!" Miss Vigo finished her sentence with an expressive gesture.

"But Molly isn't a social climber," Fannibel returned, "of course she's trying to improve herself and she's really very bright and very sweet. Of course I shoudn't presume to dictate but under the circumstances—Molly being our guest—I don't feel at liberty to accept an invitation which does not include her.

Miss Vigo looked alarmed. If Fannibel did not come Lord Barnstaple might not and her dinner dance, planned primarily to show the importance and superiority of the Vigo family, might have to be given up. "I'll talk the matter over with my father and see what I can do," she promised.

Fannibel's interview with Mrs. Selkirk was briefer. The little lady merely raised her eyebrows slightly but did not argue the matter. "Of course if it is your wish," she said, "I did not understand."

The next morning's mail brought the two invitations for Molly. The girl was fairly bubbling with excitement when she showed them to Fannibel at noon. "Why, that's fine," Fannibel commented. "We'll talk it over this evening—decide what to wear."

"Trouble is I promised Pa I'd go to Atlantic City with him and he's aimin' to start in a day or two now. Wonder if I c'n get him on the 'phone?"

"Try," Fannibel suggested.

Molly tried. She tried several times without avail. Mr. Tandy was not at his hotel and the clerk had no idea when he would return. Later in the afternoon, however, Molly got in touch with him and, when Fannibel returned that evening, was able to report that "Pa'd give in." "I told him I'd learn more goin' to these parties than I would at a hotel in Atlantic City and he seemed to think I might.

Anyways he says I c'n stay on here 's long 's I'm happy."

"Do you think he will be wiling for you to get some new dresses?" Fannibel asked.

"Oh, Pa's got nothin' to do with that. I got my own money—" "*Have* my own money," Catherine interpolated mechanically. "Oh, yes—thank you Miss Catherine," Molly nodded, with a bright smile, "*I have* my own money. I c'n get whatever you think I ought to have."

"Good! We'll go shopping tomorrow,—down to Cincinnati," Fannibel said, giving Molly's arm an affectionate squeeze as she sank down beside her on the davenport.

Catherine did not seem wholly pleased with the trend of matters and, after Molly had left the room, turned to her sister saying:

"Really, Fannibel, I'm not sure that it was right for us to interfere in Mr. Tandy's plans. Perhaps it would have been better for Molly to have gone to Atlantic City. And I hope you will be—er—well judicious in selecting clothes. Something simple, you know. Vulgar ostentation is never in good taste."

"I'll do my best," Fannibel returned, "and now I'm going to bed. We'll start early in the morning and have a full day. Addie Riggs is going to take my place at the Eat Shoppe. I'm so glad we have a chance at last to really do something for Molly," she added, as having reached the door, she paused for a last word. "I haven't felt that she was getting much for all the money she's been paying us."

Late the following afternoon the girls returned from their shopping expedition. Molly was tired but jubilant. "Just wait till you see what we've got—more pretty dresses!" she exclaimed, "I only hope

I'll have a chance to wear 'em. And now I'm going to take a bath and go to bed. I'm all in."

After Molly had gone upstairs the sisters settled down in the parlor for a confidential chat. "Cathie," Fannibel said, as she stretched herself full length on the davenport, "its grreat to be rrich. We've had a most wonderful day. It's the first time I've ever had a chance to give my taste full scope. Molly's faith in me was touching—she allowed me to select everything—I only hope I haven't failed her."

"I hope you remembered—" Catherine began but Fannibel did not seem to hear.

"I got you a new dress, too, Cathie—a rajah silk. White. And a new hat. I could select a hat as your head size is the same as mine, but I couldn't fit you in shoes. You must go down to Selkirk's in the morning and get yourself some white shoes and stockings."

"Oh, Fannibel, you shouldn't have done that! I don't need anything—my flowered voile will be suitable. We may need the money later."

"But you need your new dress and accessories now. I remember having read some place that 'true economy consists in doing without things when you need them in order to be able to buy them when you don't need them,' but I've decided to take no thought for the morrow. At least not enough to spoil today."

"Fannibel!" Catherine gasped, "really you must be careful. As associate principal of the school—"

"I know," Fannibel laughed, as she brought herself to a sitting posture, "I'll try to remember that I'm an educator, but I must tell you what a delicious lunch we had. We ran into Mr. Tandy about noon time. Accidentally it seemed though he and Molly may have arranged it. We went to one of the large

hotels and he ordered the most expensive dishes on the menu. The bill must have run up into dollars and he paid it as nonchalantly as I'd have paid for a glass of milk and a sandwich. Do you know, Cathie," she continued, "I like Colin Tandy better the more I see of him. He's so sensible and unpretentious, and he's really quite good looking. Such nice eyes and did you ever notice the dimple in his chin?"

"I suppose he's well enough in his way," Catherine returned dryly, "father liked him. But as for his spending money so freely, that is vulgar ostentation—something well bred people never indulge in. Our father never did. He was generous—generous to a fault—but there was never any display of vulgar wealth in our home."

"I'll say there wasn't. Poor old Daddy, I wish he could have had some of the good meals we serve in the Eat Shoppe. And I still think it's great to be rich."

Up in her room Catherine reflected on what Fannibel had said concerning "the desirability of riches." She hoped her sister was not becoming mercenary. "One should never be influenced by mere money," she reflected, remembering Lady Barnstaple's letter.

The events that followed were both disappointing and bewildering not only to Catherine but to Gaynesboro generally. First of all Mr. Arthur Blair sent regrets to both Mrs. Selkirk and Miss Vigo and accompanied Colin Tandy to Atlantic City. That in itself was not so important. No one cared particularly about Mr. Blair's movements. It was a different matter when Lord Barnstaple sent Mrs. Selkirk a note explaining that he was going to West Virginia on business and regretted that he would not

be able to return in time for her tea. Mrs. Selkirk was both hurt and indignant. She was not accustomed to having her plans lightly set aside.

"What possible business can your cousin have in West Virginia?" she demanded of Catherine and poor Catherine only shook her head and stammered that she didn't know, growing more and more bewildered the more she tried to account for the young man's strange behavior.

The pink tea came off at the appointed time however and was, at least to outward appearance, a success. The ladies wore their prettiest dresses, the young people giggled and chattered in their usual manner and the men deserted their various occupations for an hour or so during the afternoon to honor the affair with their presence.

But there was something lacking; every one felt it. As Catherine said, "The affair being in Lord Barnstaple's honor, his absence made it—"

"Like eating bread without salt," Henry Brandt finished the sentence for her, and she glanced at him in pleased surprise, as she returned, "why yes, that is one way to express it." She was further surprised when Henry admitted that it was too bad the young man did not seem to appreciate more the social efforts that were being made in his behalf.

Mr. Brandt seemed to take a sudden liking for his young kinsman. "There may be something in the fellow after all," he confided to his wife. "Of course he can't help being a lord. That's something that was wished on him."

Miss Vigo postponed her dinner dance a week on account of his lordship's trip and even then his acceptance was conditional. "He should be very glad to attend," he wrote her, "if his business would permit his returning to Gaynesboro."

"Business, indeed," Miss Vigo sniffed when she read the note.

She was in a fever of anxiety when the evening arrived and was highly gratified when Lord Barnstaple finally made his appearance. He was late, having just come in on the evening train. At first he seemed aloof—preoccupied, but his manners as always were impeccable. He dutifully danced with the young ladies to whom he had been presented. He danced several times with Molly Tandy as Catherine noted with displeased surprise. "He was so handsome—so altogether charming," she thought, "but could it be that, after all, he was mercenary." Catherine sometimes had misgivings on that point. Molly was looking very sweet and pretty that evening, but it never occurred to the older woman that a young man like Lord Barnstaple could find her interesting in herself. Later in the evening she saw that the young nobleman and her sister were sitting out a dance together and that they were evidently talking together quite confidentially. Catherine began to feel hopeful but a few minutes later Teddy Selkirk came to claim Fannibel for the next dance and Lord Barnstaple again sought out Molly. As she watched her sister dancing away with young Teddy, looking as happy and carefree as a child she with difficulty suppressed a sigh. "How can she be so indifferent—it isn't natural," she thought impatiently.

Before the evening was over Lord Barnstaple seemed entirely restored to public favor. Even when it was learned that he was leaving on the midnight train, accompanied by Colin Tandy, for an indefinite stay in the west, no surprise was manifested nor were any objections voiced. Even Mrs. Hubert Selkirk admitted that the young man would naturally want

to see the Rocky Mountains before returning to Europe.

But poor Catherine felt genuinely hurt and almost—not quite—gave up hope of Fannibel's ever becoming Lady Barnstaple. She even feared at times that the young man might eventually marry Molly Tandy. Hardly though. Lord Barnstaple was not mercenary and only one who was mercenary would prefer Molly Tandy to Fannibel.

Mr. Blair did not accompany his cousin on the western trip but stayed on in Gaynesboro. No one entertained for him and evidently he did not expect it. He seemed content to spend his afternoons playing tennis with Molly or going on hikes with her and other young people, enjoying picnic lunches in sylvan spots. In the evenings he usually took Catherine and Molly to a "movie" or a "talkie." Fannibel was always included in these invitations but she seldom returned home in time to go. On several occasions he took all three of the Hadleys—Molly being a Hadley for the time—down to Cincinnati to attend the Zoo operas, so called because they were given in the zoological garden. Thus Molly was having plenty of opportunities to wear her new dresses in spite of the lull in the social activities caused by Lord Barnstaple's absence.

"We're going to miss Arthur—I mean the boys—when they go back," Molly said, rather plaintively one day, "did you know they're goin' back to England soon's Rodney comes from Denver."

"Rodney! You mean Lord Barnstaple," Catherine gasped.

"Oh, Fannibel and I both call him Rodney—he asked us to. I was callin' him your lordship, which I c'n see now didn't sound right, and he said he was

Rodney to his friends. But, as I said, they're goin' back."

Catherine did not know anything about Lord Barnstaple's plans but she would not for worlds have questioned Molly. Time would tell. The next week an item in the *Gaynesboro News* announced Lord Barnstaple's return from the West and stated that he and his cousin Mr. Arthur Blair would shortly return to England. And, in the society column, it was stated that Mrs. Horace Van Vleet was giving a dance at the country club the following week as a farewell to Lord Barnstaple and Mr. Blair. Next morning came the Hadleys' invitations. No question of Molly's being excluded this time. Then came the eternal question, what to wear, and again Molly and Fannibel went shopping.

X.

The Gaynesboro Country Club building stood on the crest of a low hill a mile or so outside the city limits. It was the scene of many social affairs, for few of the Gaynesboro homes were large enough for important functions. The ballroom was more beautifully and lavishly decorated on the evening of what was long afterward referred to as "the Selkirk Ball" than usual, for Mrs. Selkirk was a woman of excellent taste and she "had spared no pains to make the party worthy of the one in whose honor it was given," as she told Catherine. The walls were banked with palms and ferns, vines clambered above the windows and where walls and ceiling met in a most realistic way while hot-house flowers filled the room with faint, spring-like perfume.

It was early when the Hadleys arrived but many guests were already assembled. It seemed as if no one wanted to miss a fraction of the party. From some hidden recess a harpist was sending forth soft, sweet strains of music which mingled with the chatter and laughter of the guests.

"My, aint—I mean *isn't* it lovely!" Molly Tandy breathed, her eyes shining with excitement. "This soft light makes it look like fairyland. My, I'm glad I didn't go to Atlantic City—think o' missin' this. And won't I tell Lizzie what a mistake she made not comin' to your school. I don't see any dress as pretty as mine, do you?"

Catherine did not hear her last sentence. She had noted, with surprise, that Colin Tandy had just

entered the room. She had not supposed that he would be invited.

"Your father is here—over by the door," she said to Molly. "You may join him if you like. But come to me before the dancing begins," she added.

As a relative of Lord Barnstaple's Catherine had been asked to stand in the receiving line. The Selkirks and Lord Barnstaple and his cousin were already in place so Catherine at once joined them. She was looking her best. But as Dolores Pynne said, Catherine had "emerged during these past weeks." Hope had indeed proved an excellent rejuvenator. She was wearing an evening gown—a simple little dress of soft chiffon, the shade known as ashes of roses. It was cut low front and back, but a filmy scarf of the same shade, draped her shoulders. The evening dress was one of Fannibel's extravagances. Catherine had protested against it but this evening she realized that her sister had been in the right.

"My flowered rayon wouldn't have been suitable," she mused as she looked over the room.

As soon as the guests had arrived and the gentlemen had joined the dancers, Catherine made her way to one of the easy chairs on the low dais that ran across one end and the two sides of the room. She had just settled down cozily, intent on watching the dancers when she was joined by Dolores Pynne.

"Looking lovely, Lady Catherine," Dolores said, giving her a little squeeze, "and ten—twenty—no, *thirty* years younger than you did last spring. And, do my eyes deceive me or isn't that the famous opal necklace?"

The opal necklace in question has once been a

cherished heirloom of Mrs. Cuthbert Hadley's. Fannibel had coaxed Catherine to wear it this evening. It was her only ornament and all that she needed.

"Suits you to a T," Dolores commented, "gives the final touch of distinction to your pretty gown. But doesn't our Fannibel look 'mighty laik a rose' this evening," she added, glancing over at Fannibel. "Like she was sitting atop of the world. That beaming look is suspicious. Do you 'spose she can be contemplating matrimony with the astute Mr. Blair?"

Catherine glanced apprehensively at her sister who was dancing with Arthur Blair, "Oh, I hope not!" she gasped.

Fannibel in her primrose, taffeta gown and with a string of imitation pearls that she had purchased at Selkirk's for ninety-eight cents around her neck, was indeed looking happy. So radiant that one did not notice what she was wearing but only remembered her face.

"However I didn't come over to discuss Fannibel," Dolores said, "but to congratulate you on the success of your finishing school. "Oh, I mean it," she added, as Catherine eyed her narrowly, "I'm being sincere this evening—absolutely. I've just been thinking that, if the new millionaires of this country could see what you have done for Molly they'd wear a path to your door, bringing their daughters to be finished."

Before Catherine could reply they were joined by Colin Tandy, who had come over at Molly's request, to pay his respects to Miss Hadley.

"Oh, good evening, Mr. Tandy," Dolores said, cordially shaking his hand, "we were just speaking of Molly. She looks so sweet this evening—quite

the belle of the ball—and doesn't she do credit to Miss Catherine's training."

"Yes, indeed!—er—that is I mean you've done a lot fer my girrl," he returned. At this point a young man hurried up to claim Dolores for the next dance and, as they left, Mr. Tandy sank, uninvited, down in the chair next to Catherine. "As I was sayin' you've done a lot fer my girrl," he repeated, "you and Fannibel, and I appreciate it. You've not only taught her fine manners but you've been good to her. She's been happier here than she's been since her Ma died."

Catherine flushed and her conscience pricked her uncomfortably. "She has seemed content with us," she returned, "and I feel sure that my sister's companionship has been good for her."

"Oh yes—yes indeed. I've been wonderin' what I could do fer Fannibel—I'd like to do something substantial you know—like settlin' a sum of money on her, er an annuity. I hinted something to her 'bout it down at the Eat Shoppe but she wouldn't hear to it. Said I didn't owe her a cent and that you and her had been the gainers—all that sort o' talk.

"The way I'm beginnin' to feel about money is that it's a big responsibility," he continued, as he crossed his right leg over his left knee. "If a person don't use it right—the way it'll do the most good—he's—well, fallin' down on his job. My other daughter, Lizzie, or Elizabeth, as she wants us to call her, feels that way about it. She's going to keep on with her education until she goes through college, then she says she's going to take up some kind o' work. She's got great ideas, Lizzie has."

"Very commendable," Catherine murmured absently. She was thinking of what he had said about doing something for Fannibel. She hoped her sister

would not be foolish enough to persist in refusing. She *had* done a great deal for Molly. It was only right—”

Her reverie was interrupted by Fannibel herself looking, as Mr. Tandy muttered under his breath, “pretty as a primrose.”

“How do you do, Mr. Tandy?” Fannibel greeted him, as she reached out her hand, “aren’t you proud of your little daughter this evening? I never saw anyone dance like her—she just seems to glide, or rather, to float through the air.”

Both Mr. Tandy and Catherine glanced over to Molly who was dancing with Lord Barnstaple. Molly was very proud of her new evening gown and well she might be. It was an imported gown that she and Fannibel had found in the French room of one of Cincinnati’s most exclusive shops. It was of blue chiffon, a fine filmy chiffon and of a peculiar shade of blue that exactly matched Molly’s eyes, and was embroidered, but not too lavishly, with rhinestones and seed pearls. High-heeled, silver dancing slippers and the sheerest of silver colored, silk hose completed her costume. Her only ornament was a necklace of small but genuine pearls, which her father, with Fannibel’s help, had selected a few days before.

“A very graceful dancer,” Catherine commented, “and she’s looking so pretty his evening.”

“Well, Molly’d ought to be a good dancer,” Mr. Tandy smiled, “her Ma was. And my father was the best clog dancer in County Cork, Ireland. I used to shake a wicked leg myself,” he added, with a chuckle.

“Then why aren’t you dancing this evening?” Fannibel inquired.

"Too old and too fat," he returned, his eyes twinkling boyishly.

"Nonsense! You aren't too old and as for being fat, dancing is the best remedy imaginable for that. Suppose you dance this next number with me. Here, Ted," she said, as Teddy Selkirk, a young college boy came up to claim the next dance, "won't you sit here and talk to Catherine while I dance with Mr. Tandy? He hasn't danced once this evening and it isn't right. Downright wicked with all these wall flowers waiting to be asked."

The young man obediently sank down in the chair beside Catherine while Fannibel and Colin Tandy joined the dancers. Ted was not in a good humor apparently. His dark handsome, boyish face was flushed with resentment and when Catherine remarked that it was a nice party, there was an unmistakable note of sarcasm in his voice as he replied:

"Very. Everyone doing homage to the nobility and gentry of England. Ought to cement the friendship of the two countries."

Catherine glanced at him sharply. "Don't you think it fitting that Lord Barnstaple should be treated with the respect due his rank?" she inquired.

He did not reply but after a moment's silence burst forth, "Say, Miss Catherine is it true that Fannibel's engaged to this imitation sheik, Lord Barntackle or whatever his name is?"

"Engaged! Fannibel! Oh, no. That is, I don't think so."

"Well, everybody's saying they're engaged but you'd know it if they were, so that takes a load off me. You might as well know that I'm in love with Fannibel and I'm going to marry her myself."

"You, why, Teddy, you're too young. You aren't

through college yet. Two years more I think your mother said."

"'Twould be if I went on but I'm going to quit and get a job."

"Oh, but you musn't give up your education!"

"That's what she says, Fannibel, I mean, and she thinks this is just puppy love—that I'll get over it—but she'll find out."

Further confidences were cut short by Fannibel's return, Colin Tandy following in her wake. Teddy went in search of his next partner and, Fannibel having glided away with Mr. Blair, Mr. Tandy again seated himself beside Catherine. But he did not seem to see her. He was watching Fannibel and her partner. Suddenly he broke the silence by saying:

"I like them two Blair boys, Arthur and Rodney."

Catherine fairly gasped. The idea of speaking in that familiar way of Lord Barnstaple. Hadn't he any sense of social values?"

"They've got the makings of good business men," Mr. Tandy continued, unaware of the offense he was giving. As Catherine's only response was a frigid smile he soon arose and sauntered away.

Had Catherine ever learned to dance she need not have been a wall flower that evening. One after another of the gentlemen had sought her out asking for a dance and, later in the evening, Mrs. Van Vleet, the hostess dropped in the chair beside her for a brief moment.

"I haven't had a chance to speak to anyone," she said, "but I felt that I must tell you how sweet you're looking and I see you've been having a good time. Too bad you don't dance. I saw Mr. Saunders Burton asking for a dance. He's such a catch. You must learn yet—you really must."

Catherine shook her head, then began congratulating Mrs. Van Vleet on the success of her party, "The most attractive ever given in Gaynesboro," she declared.

"Well, I think it's going off nicely," Mrs. Van Vleet modestly admitted, "and do you know Lord Barnstaple says that Gaynesboro is by far the most interesting city in America—that is of all he's visited—and it is rumored that Colin Tandy is considering settling here. Some of the big business men are trying to persuade him to—think what it would mean to the town. And they say that he may give the city an Old Ladies' Home. Wouldn't that be great! But I must go—I see some folks leaving and they seem to be looking for me."

Catherine's lips curved in a scornful smile as she watched her hostess' hurrying form. "The idea of speaking of Colin Tandy as if he were some great personage—almost the equal of Lord Barnstaple. Then remembering what he had said about Fannibel her face softened. "He was generous," she acknowledged. "Generous and," as Fannibel says, "likeable."

It was after one o'clock when the party broke up. The Hadleys were among the last to leave. Mr. Tandy took the whole party, including "the Blair boys," home in a limousine. They were all silent on the homeward way. Molly announced that she was "dead with sleep" and subsided in a corner without another word. Fannibel and the young men made perfunctory efforts at conversation but soon gave it up. As for Catherine her thoughts were all a-jumble. It had been a wonderful evening. How earnest Ted Selkirk had seemed. "But men are fickle," she thought as her mind went back to experiences of her own youth. Then she thought of

what Dolores had said. Had she been sincere? And what had she meant by saying the millionaires would beat a path to her front door. Surely they would come up the driveway. She wasn't sure she wished to continue the school. It wouldn't be necessary if Fannibel would only accept the money Mr. Tandy was willing to settle on her. Oh, she *must*. She must realize that it was her duty. Also, her right. She had done much—oh, so much for Molly.

The next thing she knew the auto had stopped before their front door, Molly, having tumbled out somehow, was mumbling "goo' night," Fannibel was thanking Mr. Tandy, in her pretty way, for bringing them home. Then the car rolled away and the evening was over.

XI.

Late the following afternoon Catherine sat alone in the parlor, a bit of sewing in her hands. She had been alone all day. Fannibel had gone to her business before she was up and Molly had slept until noon and then, in her sports dress and green sweater, had merely looked in to say she was going for her lunch and mightn't be back early as "Pa" wanted her to come over to the hotel. She hoped Molly would run in, if only for a few minutes, before supper time. She found that she liked Molly's presence in the house; she was a sunshiny person and usually had something to tell. Of course Catherine was not one to encourage gossip—"but a bit of piquant news now and then—"

Presently the side door opened, then slammed shut and immediately Molly's voice was heard in a lilting song. Catherine frowned and when, a moment later, Molly burst into the room, she said, in her most schoolmarmy tones, "Molly, I am surprised. I thought you had long since passed the stage of slamming doors and singing about the house."

"Oh, I know. But I didn't slam the door—the wind took it out o' my hands—and as for singing, I'm so excited it's a wonder I don't holler. I've got so much to tell I just don't know where to begin," she continued, as she sank down on the davenport and drew her feet up under her. "Might as well start out with the most important thing so here it is—I'm engaged to Lord Barnstaple."

Catherine felt herself turning cold. The news

was not really startling, for Lord Barnstaple's attentions to Molly had been marked. But something must have revived her hopes—perhaps what Teddy Selkirk had said. But now it was all over. It was Molly who would live in that beautiful English manor while Fannibel—a mist came before her eyes and it was with difficulty that she restrained her tears. Then she heard Molly saying:

"But it's Arthur Blair not Rodney that I'm engaged to."

"But you said Lord Barnstaple! Arthur Blair is not—"

"Yes, he is," Molly interrupted, "that is, he's going to be. Rodney's going to forfeit—no abdicate. Anyways he's going to give up the title and estates—everything—to Arthur. They're going over to England right away to fix it up. In writing, you know."

"Molly, are you sure that you know what you are talking about?"

"Yes, this is straight. No wonder you're s'prised. I didn't know a thing about it myself until since lunch. Then Arthur came over to the Eat Shoppe and said Pa wanted me to come to the hotel, that he had something important to tell me. Then I found that him an' Arthur had been fixin' things up. Oh, it wasn't settled. Pa said I was the one to say whether I'd marry er not and he insisted that I wasn't to be influenced by anything but my feelin's."

"But Molly—"

"Now Miss Catherine, 'spose you let me tell how it all came about—just like Arthur told it to me. We had a long talk this afternoon—after things was all fixed up." Molly leaned back among the pillows and, hugging her knees, began:

"To go way, way back, it seems like the ones that

had the title and estate kept getting more and more in debt. One would get in debt and the next, instead of working and managing to pay out, would just get deeper in the mire. By the time the estate came to Rodney there was practically nothing but debts. Just debts, *debts*, DEBTS! is the way Arthur puts it. The house is all run down—needs a new roof, new inside decoration—oh, everything, it seems. And the cottages, where the people that work on the place live, are just alive with mice and rats, bedbugs and cockroaches. Oh, things must be in a terrible mess, the way Arthur tells it. Rodney hadn't expected to be the lord—his brother was to've been. He's a civil engineer and had been counting on coming over to America to get established. Then all at once he found himself with the estate on his hands. He was for turning it over to Arthur, who was the next heir, but Arthur was in the same fix that Rodney was. He didn't have any money, nor no way of making any, and he couldn't run the place any longer without some—without a lot, in fact. They just didn't know *what* to do. Then old Lady Barnstaple got up this plan of his coming over here to see Fannibel. Seems she'd got it into her head that the Hadleys had oodles of money—was rich like Pa, you know."

"Oh, they thought we had money. Then he was mercenary."

"No, he wasn't. She was right about that. He just declared, Arthur says, he wouldn't marry any girl for her money. But some of your kin folks had sent Fannibel's photograph—taken when she'd graduated—and he'd liked her looks. So he finally consented to come over. Arthur was to come with him and they'd see what they could do. Well, seems as soon as they called on you they saw that Lady

Barnstaple had been mistaken. They saw, that first afternoon, that you and Fannibel was poor—as poor as they were themselves. Arthur says he was so discouraged. I thought he *looked* discouraged that afternoon, didn't you?"

Catherine recalled the sarcastic smile that Mr. Blair had seemingly with difficulty kept in the background on the afternoon of his first call and nodded, murmuring, "So *that* was it."

"But seems Rodney fell in love with Fannibel that very afternoon. He told Arthur, as they went back to the hotel, that he was going to give up the title and estate, 'Chuck the whole business,' Arthur says he put it, and get a job over here and marry Fannibel. That is if he could get her."

"Oh, I wonder if Fannibel knows!"

"Oh, yes, she knows. Seems they've had an understanding f'r a long time. Seems she was as taken with him, about, as he was with her. She wouldn't tell you until things were settled because she'd knew you'd feel so dreadful to learn that he was poor and that he wouldn't have any title er any money. Nothing in fact not even a job. He's been tryin' to get a job ever since he came over—that was what took him to West Virginia and around. Then Pa found that opening out West and he went with him. He's got a dandy position now—an enormous salary. And Pa says he'll have a chance to get on. Pa says he wouldn't be surprised if Rodney got to be as rich as he is in a few years. It was at the dinner—here that day, you know—that Arthur picked me out."

"When he learned that your father had money?"

Catherine enquired with a thinly concealed sneer.

"Yes," Molly returned, serenely, "soon as Dolores Pynne told about Pa's coming back a millionaire, Arthur says he said to himself, 'There's the

little lady that's going to help us out of all our troubles.' ”

“And can you reconcile yourself to marrying a man who so brazenly admits that it is your father's money that interests him?”

“W-e-l-l, you c'n see yourself how things were. He was in such a hole he just *had* to think of money. Reckon if Pa hadn't had money he wouldn't 'a thought of me,” she added, a wistful note in her voice, “but anyway I b'lieve he likes me. And I *know* I like him. I didn't realize how much I had got to carin' about him until it come time for them to go back to England. Gee, I hated like sixty, to think o' never seein' him again.”

“And when is he going back—when will the wedding be?”

“Why they're going to start back tonight—him—er—*he* and Rodney. But they're comin' right back soon's they get things all fixed up, then we're going to get married—have a double wedding. Rodney had to be at his job out West by September and Arthur thinks we might as well be married at the same time. ‘The sooner the better,’ he says, ‘because he's anxious to get started to work on the estate.’ But laws, I'm forgetting to give you Fannibel's letter and she told me to the first thing. Here 'tis. Now while you're reading it I'll fix us some supper. I knew you woudn't feel like going down town so I stopped at the delicatessen and got us some things: fried chicken, creamed potatoes, some ice cream and a sponge cake.”

Molly fumbled in her bag and having found the folded sheet of paper tossed it to Catherine and hurried kitchenward. With trembling fingers Catherine unfolded her sister's note. Think of all this going on and she not knowing anything about it.

But perhaps it had been best so. It would have been bewildering.

"Dear Cathie," the note ran—

"I hadn't time to come home this afternoon so I am scribbling these few lines so that you may hear of my engagement to Rodney Blair from me first of all. Molly will tell you of his giving up the title to his cousin Arthur. I don't want you to think that I have been wilfully keeping things from you but I knew that it would be so bewildering and so disappointing for you to know that Rodney was poor and that I should never live in that beautiful manor house that meant so much to you. I had made up my mind to marry Rodney no matter how poor he was or where we should have to live and, remembering how unhappy you were when I opened the Eat Shoppe, I thought it best to wait until things were settled. Molly has some news for you also—she will probably have told it before you read this. Poor little Molly, I'm afraid she may feel lonely and out of place over in England, but Rodney thinks Arthur is genuinely attached to her and will make her a good husband. Now, lest you begin to feel anxious about your own future—you are to do exactly as you like about the mansion. Sell it or keep it. Henry thinks you should sell and stay with them this winter but you will do what you like best. Mr. Tandy was in the Shoppe this afternoon and overheard what Henry said about selling. He insisted that we give him the first chance—that is, he said 'don't sell until you hear from me!' I readily promised. Seems he still has that bee in his bonnet about an Old Ladies' Home. What an old dear he is! Do you know he wanted to give me a pile of money—because I'd

been good to Molly—the idea! I may be late getting home so don't wait up for me.

Fannibel."

Before she had finished reading a thought had come to Catherine. She wondered if the loss of the estates might not yet be averted. If, by selling the Hadley mansion, they might not be able to raise money to pay those debts of which Molly had spoken. Of course it could be arranged. She would speak to Fannibel about it as soon as she came home. Then Molly called her to supper.

"It's a good thing all around that Pa made that pile of money out West," Molly said, as she took her place opposite Catherine at the little round table. Arthur says it will take a million dollars to pay off the debts and get the estate so's it a going concern. Pa's goin' to make the money over to him when we're married."

"A million dollars! Your father's going to give Arthur Blair a million dollars."

"Uh-huh," Molly nodded, "it'll *take* that much. But Pa told Arthur he needn't ever expect any more. He says people just need enough to be comfortable, no need of havin' so much they get extravagant ideas. 'Course I'll have my own money besides. Pa's goin' to add to what I've got so's I'll have a million—that is the income from it—of my own. It'll be a-plenty," she added, "Arthur's perfectly satisfied and so'm I."

Catherine was beginning to find Molly's chatter, her little unconscious airs of elation, hard to bear. Of course it was commendable for people like the Tandys to wish to improve their condition in life. She had quite approved of Molly's attending her finishing school and she had conscientiously tried to

teach the girl the niceties of social life. But that money—mere money—should be able to buy honors, rank, exalted social position! It was not right. No, no! It was altogether wrong. Such things belonged rightfully to persons of birth and breeding. It was all that she could do to restrain tears of righteous indignation.

Molly, suddenly noting Catherine's preoccupied air, stopped in the midst of a sentence to exclaim, "Here I am, runnin' on. Forgettin' how exciting all this news must be for you. Likely you feel one o' your headaches comin' on. S'pose you go and lie down. Never mind about the dishes—I don't need any help. I'll put on this smock o' Fannibel's. By the way we're goin' to a picture show—a talkie—Arthur and Pa and I—won't you come along."

"Thank you, but I do not care for picture shows," Catherine returned, and leaving the future Lady Barnstaple to "do the dishes" unaided, she repaired to the side porch to watch the sunset. As she settled down in one of the rustic rockers and felt the cool breeze blow against her cheek and fan her hair, she found her irritation melting away. It was wonderful, Fannibel's marrying Lord Barnstaple, after all. For Rodney was the real Lord Barnstaple—she would always consider him so—and what a sacrifice he had made for her sister—given up everything for love. She was glad there were some people who were above sordid influences. Then she recalled what Fannibel had written of Mr. Tandy's offering to settle money on her and of her polite refusal. Oh, she must not refuse—she would speak to her about it. It was only right considering all that Fannibel had done for Molly.

Presently Molly joined her. She was dressed for the picture show. "I thought I'd just wait out here

with you until the auto comes," she said as she settled down in a chair opposite Catherine.

"Molly," Catherine began, "I have been thinking—I am a little anxious about you. Do you think you are fitted to take your place as a member of England's nobility?"

Molly looked bewildered for a moment but her face soon cleared. "Oh, I know what you mean," she said, "and I'll own up I'm downright scared when I think of being with those people and you and Fannibel not there to tell me what to do. I told Arthur how I felt but he says it will be all right. He's going to have an old gentleman—one of his old teachers at Oxford—stay and teach me. Seems the old gentleman is too broken down to teach in college any more. Then I'm to take singing lessons and elocution—he calls it reading. Oh, Arthur says I needn't worry, we won't go out much at first—he expects to be so busy working on the estate. But there's the machine. 'By. Wish you were going along."

The auto soon rolled down the driveway and out the entrance gate. Catherine was again alone with her thoughts. But her thoughts grew hazy and indistinct. She was content to watch the billowing white clouds. The stars came out and the moon began to send silvery shafts of light through the dark foliage of the trees. Fireflies darted in and out among the shadows and the drone of insects filled the air. She drew a steamer rug about her shoulders, nestled back in her chair and here, hours later, Fannibel found her sound asleep.

"Why, Cathie, you out here," she heard her sister's voice saying, "I'd have come home earlier if I'd known you were going to wait up. Isn't it wonderful the way things have turned out?" she said, as she

sank down in the chair opposite, "Rodney feels like a great burden has been removed from his shoulders. He can begin life unencumbered. No debts, no cares or responsibilities—for his mother and invalid sister are to be provided for. And all through Mr. Tandy. How much we all owe him. Of course it's all to come out of the money he is to settle on Arthur—Lord Barnstaple."

"Addie Riggs is taking over my share in the Eat Shoppe," Fannibel continued, "I never supposed I should give it up with so little regret."

"Regret! I don't understand."

"Well, Cathie, I don't suppose you do. But my business venture has meant a great deal to me. Just think, I've been able to pay off Cousin Henry and I've saved up several hundred dollars besides. But let's not try to talk any more tonight—we're both too sleepy. But you must tell me how you feel about it all. Surprised, weren't you?"

But Catherine had decided not to let her sister know just how she felt or what she had thought. "I was greatly surprised to learn that Rodney contemplated giving up the title and all that it implies," she said in her most dignified tone, "but since it seems that it was inevitable, I have decided to make the best of it."

"That's a dear," said Fannibel, with a gurgling laugh, "and now we're all going to be so happy—so carefree." She stooped to give Catherine a light kiss then, after they had entered the house, began locking up for the night.

XII.

Some three weeks later the wedding took place, the double ceremony being performed in the parlor of the Hadley mansion. It was a quiet affair the only guests being the Brandts, Dolores Pynne, Mr. Tandy and his daughter, Elizabeth, and the officiating clergyman. Everything went off smoothly and if Molly's elaborate, white satin dress and the filmy, tulle veil with its diamond bandeau, seemed a little incongruous in the small company and beside Fannibel's simple, traveling gown, no one was inclined to be critical.

The white dress with its concomitants was Elizabeth Tandy's suggestion. "Of course it would not matter so much just for that evening," she said, when talking the matter over with the Hadleys, "but Molly 'ud like to have her wedding dress for a keepsake. And maybe show to her children. If she has daughters likely they'd set store by it."

Elizabeth, a slender dark-eyed girl with a shy, awkward manner and a thoughtful face was in spite of her democratic views highly pleased with her sister's match.

Six weeks passed—bringing the middle of October—and found Catherine living on in the old mansion. She had decided, or rather consented, to sell however and was only waiting Mr. Tandy's return to Gaynesboro to complete the deal. He had taken his daughter Elizabeth to a college preparatory school in the east and, although they had started the week following the wedding, he had not yet returned. The Brandts had urged Catherine to close the house and

come at once to them but she had persistently refused. "I shan't give up my home until I have to," she often said to herself.

Poor Catherine was finding herself between the devil and the deep blue sea. She realized that she could not live on in the mansion without income but there were times when she felt that she could not live any place else. Her plan, or rather the plan formulated for her, was to spend the winter with the Brandts, to visit Fannibel in the spring and after that decide on her way of life; whether she was to stay on indefinitely with her cousins, make her home with Fannibel or take a small apartment in the new building that was going up on the corner of Market and Monroe streets. She had not yet been able to even think of the matter without bringing on one of her headaches.

One afternoon the postman came up the driveway bringing two letters. One would be from Fannibel, she thought. Fannibel's letters came with great regularity and she had received one from Lady Barnstaple (Molly)—announcing their arrival in London. Fannibel's missive was, as usual, cheerful and newsy. They had found a house at last—a four-room cottage. They weren't buying much furniture as they might not be stationed there for long. "But it's wonderful what one can do with cretonne and boxes," she wrote, "You ought to see my dressing table."

Catherine sighed as she refolded the closely written sheets. She hoped Fannibel's residence in that dreadful place was to be indeed temporary. The other letter was from Colin Tandy. It was just a short note saying that he had reached Gaynesboro that afternoon and, if it was all right with her, would come up that evening and talk things over.

"So the end has come at last," she sighed, as she folded the letter. She made herself a cup of tea and, having finished her frugal supper, returned to the parlor and stationing herself at one of the front windows awaited Mr. Tandy's arrival. The evenings were getting chilly but Catherine had not yet indulged in fire. There was in fact no fuel. She had found some pieces of wood though and had arranged them in the grate ready to be lighted if anyone should come.

As she glanced over the sloping lawn and winding driveway tears filled her eyes. "It's going to be so hard to give it all up," she mused. She had decided to ask twenty-thousand dollars for the place. Henry Brandt objected most vehemently. "It would be regular blackmail," he had roared when she reminded him of all that she had done for the Tandy family. "The place ain't worth fifteen thousand—not the way property's selling and considering how run down the house is. If you want to hold out for sixteen thousand—but twenty. Bah! That 'ud be, as I said, before, nothing more or less than blackmail."

But Catherine kept her own counsel. She believed that Mr. Tandy was anxious enough to get the place to pay almost any price for it and, considering all that she had done for Molly, she felt that it was right for her to accept as much as he was willing to pay.

Presently in the gathering shadows she saw him coming up the path that wound along the driveway. She arose and lighted the wood in the grate which responded with a cheerful crackle. "He'll see what a cozy home this will make for his old ladies," she thought, her lips curled in a scornful smile.

"Well now, this is my idee of real comfort," Mr.

Tandy beamed a few minutes later, as he sank down in an easy chair before the genial blaze. He looked speculatively at the chimney piece and added, "that could be widened and made into a real, old-time fireplace."

"Oh, yes," Catherine returned, "it was a wood fireplace originally. My father had the grate put in. There is a verse—a couplet—just below the mantel. Perhaps you'd be interested—"

The couplet, inscribed in small gazed terra cotta tile, ran—

"Sings the blackened log a tune
Learned in some forgotten June."

Mr. Tandy bending over spelled the lines out. "Well now! That's fine—that's rale pretty!" he exclaimed, "I like poetry like that—something I c'n understand."

"It's a quotation—from Longfellow, I think," Catherine told him.

"Well, it's pretty—*whoever* wrote it," he declared emphatically. He sat gazing meditatively into the fire for so long that Catherine began to wonder if he had forgotten the errand that brought him. Then he broke the silence, saying:

"I've just been over to Molly's." He spoke as if Molly might be living across the street.

"You mean you've been abroad!"

"Yeh," he nodded. "Wanted to see how Molly was fixed and how the boy was makin' out. He's takin' right a-holt—that boy o' mine," he smiled, "had workmen busy on the dower house next day after he got home and, in two er three weeks had it all ready for the old lady an' her daughter to move in. They're livin' there—snug as bugs in a rug. She's a mighty nice woman—old Lady Barnstaple,

Fannibel's mother-in-law. Awfully anxious to see her new daughter. Said Rodney had promised to bring her over next year. Lady Frances, the youngest girl, is in London. Doing some kind o' social work. She's been makin' her own way ever since she was out o' school, her Ma says."

Catherine was more than surprised. A titled lady "making her way." What was the world coming to! "Molly is well, I trust," she said, when she had finally found her voice.

"Oh, yes, Molly's real chipper—an' busy as a bee. They're havin' the house—the Manor, they call it—done over inside and out. It's goin' to be a great place time they get through. It's a well-built house and the grounds lay pretty. Arthur was for Molly stayin' at a hotel down in London till it was all in shipshape but she wanted to be right there to see what was goin' on. I reckon she's right.

"I'm real pleased with the way Arthur's gone to work. He's got sound ideas. He's not countin' on making a pile o' money out o' the place, he says, but he wants to get it on the old time basis. Make the land productive. He's goin' to tear down all them ratty, bedbuggy shanties and build new cottages, stucco—with little lawns and gardens laid out."

But Catherine could bear no more. She didn't want to think of that Manor—with peacocks strutting on the terrace—and Fannibel living in a four-room cottage in a mining town. Noting her preoccupation Mr. Tandy changed the subject.

"Reckon you're missing Fannibel these days," he said.

"Oh, yes. And I'm missing Molly," Catherine added impulsively and sincerely. Molly with her unfailing good humor, her generosity and, above all,

her profound respect for the "Finishing School," had won Catherine's regard. She was surprised to find how much she was missing Molly.

Mr. Tandy beamed on her. "Well, well, the girls'll both be comin' home to visit ever' now an' then. Molly misses you too—you an' Fannibel. She sent her love and here I'm forgettin' to say a word about it."

"Reckon we're both likely to be lonely," he continued, "I feel like I'm losin' both my girrls. Lizzie's settled in that school and she told me not to expect her to come home even for vacations—says she's goin' to study, winters and summers, till she gets through college. Reckon by that time she'll be weaned away from her old father entirely."

"Oh, no," Catherine murmured politely.

Again he dropped into a meditative silence then, lifting his head, said, "I've been wonderin' if by any chance you could make up your mind to marry me."

Catherine felt that she must be mistaken—that her ears had surely deceived her. "I—I—marry you!" she stammered.

"'Course you've never thought o' such a thing."

"Oh, no! Never!"

"But if you'd think it over you might see that it isn't a bad idee. Molly's told me how much store you set by this place and I've been thinkin' we could fix it up. A new roof and paint for the outside; then furnaces, modern plumbing, new wall paper and fixin's, hardwood floors and rugs—the imported kind. Maybe new furniture but you'll know best about that. Molly's been tellin' me what fine antiques you got. One thing we'd take out this grate and set that log to singin' again," he added, his blue eyes twinkling boyishly.

"For the outside," he continued, "I reckon we'd have to get one o' these landscape gardeners. We'd want to repair that pergola and get the lily pond put in shape. Might be you'd like a rock garden in the rear but we c'n think about that later.

"'Course we wouldn't be stayin' here all the time. We'd be runnin' over to see Molly ever' whip stitch—and out to Fannibel's. Then there's N' York an' Atlantic City. But it 'ud be mighty nice to have a home like this—all fixed up—to come back to. After all there's no place quite like Gaynesboro. It's—it's *home*."

Catherine breathed an involuntary "Oh!" and he glanced at her anxiously. "'Course this has come on you sudden like and, apt as not, you don't take to the notion right off," he said, "but I don't want you to decide this evening. Think it over. Get used to the idy. I'll come back in about a week and you c'n see how you feel about it by that time. Might be you'd get more happiness out o' the match than you think."

He had been backing towards the hall door and, before Catherine realized that he was taking his leave, she heard the front door slam behind him. She ran over to the front window and watched his form disappearing down the driveway while thoughts chased each other through her brain. The house restored and redecorated throughout. Hardwood floors. Bathrooms. Beautiful tiled bathrooms like the advertising pictures in the magazines. Her priceless old furniture done over. Rugs—rich, costly rugs. A rock garden. Travel. Oh, it was wonderful. How surprised Fannibel would be.

"And pleased," she murmured, as she turned to extinguish the dying embers in the grate.